

# Freethought Review.

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"Asmodeus" discusses the truth and utility of Spiritualism at some length in the 'New Zealand Times' of the 23rd ultimo. He is candid enough to admit that "its own friends are often its worst enemies, " by their ill-judged, injudicious advocacy, intemperate "disputation, and contemptible credulousness," but is unconscious that he lays himself open to similar charges. His arguments are of the usual vague character so common among Spiritualists. Reason must be kept within bounds. Intuitions are trustworthy, he declares, and wide-spread beliefs are conclusive evidence of matters of fact, "if modern "spiritualism is a fraud and deceit, then are ancient "miracles (so termed) mere myths." No doubt; but two errors do not make a truth. The Freethinker laughs at "occultism," in which "Asmodeus" has such faith, because he knows enough of the history of opinion to be aware how easily the human mind becomes the slave of superstition. Looking at the question from the historical and scientific point of view, it is evident enough that spiritism is little more than theology in a state of decay. The old beliefs are rejected by the intellect, and the new do not at present satisfy the emotions. People have so long been taught that virtue will be supernaturally rewarded that they feel themselves defrauded when convinced that this is a delusion. As "Asmodeus" puts it, "the leading "principle of our advanced civilisation is the rights of "man,—he is to receive fair wages for his labour. To "tell a mason, or bricklayer, or carpenter, that rearing "a beautiful edifice was sufficient recompense for the "labour bestowed upon it, would be received with de- "rision. And so with every other occupation of life. "And yet the highest occupation of all, the practice of "virtue, the exercise of charity, self-control—in short, "the preparation for the hereafter, commands no "remuneration! If so, creation is a fraud, a mistake, "and the evolution of species a mockery. Our progress, "our science, our evolution to a higher phase of humanity "—a phase so high, so sublime, as to approach demi- "godhead—is all for nothing. Upon this part of the "question I have no issue with the creeds of the day, "but am chiefly concerned with those who take reason "for a guide, and, like Thomas of old, believe nothing "they cannot see and feel." This is an exquisitely naïve confession of inability to grasp the very elements of moral science as developed in modern times. Granting the utility of the notion of personal rewards and punishments in a future life, in the earlier history of our race, by which time was gained for social influences to produce altruistic sentiments which have now become hereditary to some extent, it is clear that just so far as a man does right, merely for the hope of reward, is his character inferior to that of the man who acts rightly without being influenced by any such motive. In our day it is only the criminal classes who are habitually influenced by considerations, which, transferred to another world, Christians and Spiritualists

profess to be the only ones that can prevent them from being as wicked as, on their showing, "Materialists" ought to be, but somehow are not.

"Surely this idea of compensation," says a writer in the 'Westminster Review,' "is one of the most exquisitely ludicrous that mankind has ever had. *Compensation! For what?* For an act of self-denial? But "what self is it that you deny? Not the good self, "certainly, for that is precisely what you *indulge*. The "'self,' denied, can be nothing but the BRUTE—the "greedy, selfish, cruel beast—and this it is which "wants to recover damages! The more you have "within you of this brute, the more damages you "claim! But the fact that you are not satisfied shows "you to be undeserving. The greater you feel your "sacrifice to be, the lower you stand in the scale. "Moreover, what *kind* of compensation do you claim? "Do you want to be better, or to be worse? If better, "you are claiming a repetition of the very acts by "which you represent yourself as damaged! Logically, "the damages can only be awarded to the brute. But "in that case your petition bears a wrong address; it "should be directed, not to God, but to the Devil!" The truth is that the character and conduct most conducive to the happiness of the human race is often in conflict with that of the individual, and the good boy "Tommy," as in the recent apologue in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' too often ends his career by "throwing "dust in people's eyes" in order to gain both "praise "and pudding." In the matter of dust-throwing, there are no greater proficient than the churches as represented by their especial "pillars."

Under the heading of "Esoteric Bosh," the 'Saturday Review' has an article dealing with some of the nonsense which seems to have so much impressed "Asmodeus" and his likes. It says:—"For nearly "ten years people who do not confine their reading to "novels have heard hints and rumours of a Theosophic Society, of a wonder-working Indo-Slavonic "American Sibyl, and of the marvellous 'Thibetan "adepts.' A wholly unreadable book, named 'Isis "Unveiled,' was published by some person or persons "interested in this movement. It seemed about equally "composed of 'Zanoni' and the 'Strange Story,' popular "conceptions of Eastern mysticism, a dash of American "spiritualistic twaddle, and other equally valuable ingredients, with an immense stock of ignorance about "the real nature of ancient religions. No one could "stand 'Isis Unveiled,' and afterwards shorter manuals "of the latest phase of credulity were put out under "the names of 'Occult Philosophy' and 'Esoteric "Buddhism.'" It goes on to say—"The evangelists "of 'Esoteric Buddhism,' which is a mixture of Yankee "gush and shrewdness, with some misapplied tags of "modern science, an exhaustive ignorance of the

"history of religion, and some miracle-mongering, have no doubt about the continued existence of several sorts of souls, some of them bogies. This draws them close to that intelligent body, the Psychological Research Society. For the patrons of psychical research Esoteric Buddhism has this charm—that it offers the greatest quantity of prodigies with the slightest possible basis of evidence." It seems that the whole thing has been exposed by Mr. Arthur Lillie, in a pamphlet called "Koot Hoomi Unveiled" (E. W. Allen). "Asmodeus" should read it, when he may possibly understand why the people he calls "fools" and "blind," "malignant and stoney-hearted," are not prepared to follow his lead. They know the country too well. The rank growth of the weeds of superstition indicate the proximity of the old theological bogs. It will take time to drain them, but the work will be done at last.

The vitality of erroneous opinions, when associated with self-interest, is well illustrated by the manner in which "protection" is growing into public favour. 'Hansard' supplies evidence that too many members of both Houses are profoundly ignorant of the very elements of economic science, which is perhaps not to be wondered at when it is remembered how small a portion of the public has as yet grasped the idea that political action has any connection with scientific knowledge at all. Implicitly, no doubt, the fact is recognised that, to secure good results, sound knowledge is required, but few people seem to realise that any knowledge bearing on the political life of a people, is, or may be, organised into a body of reasoned truth. In politics almost any fallacy will impose upon even intelligent men if it appears to jump with their wishes, and the more illogical an argument is the more it "tells" in an election or in a division.

As Mr. Herbert Spencer has pointed out, even our language has been moulded in accordance with economic ideas which are palpably fallacious. He says:—"It is, indeed, marvellous how readily we let ourselves be deceived by words and phrases which suggest one aspect of the facts while leaving the opposite aspect unsuggested. A good illustration of this, and one germane to the immediate question, is seen in the use of the words 'protection' and 'protectionist' by the antagonists of free-trade, and in the tacit admission of its propriety by free-traders. While the one party has habitually ignored, the other party has habitually failed to emphasise the truth, that this so-called protection always involves aggression; and that the name aggressionist ought to be substituted for the name protectionist. For nothing can be more certain than that if, to maintain A's profit, B is forbidden to buy of C, or is fined to the extent of the duty if he buys of C, B is aggressed upon that A may be 'protected.' Nay, 'aggressionist' is a title doubly more applicable to the anti-free-traders than is the euphemistic title 'protectionist,' since, that one producer may gain, ten consumers are fleeced."

An attentive consideration of this passage might have prevented Admiral Scott, who recently gave a lecture in the Colonial Museum on "The Development of the Industrial Resources of New Zealand," from

recommending that they should be bolstered up by the adoption of a protective policy, of which there is already a great deal too much in our tariff. How compelling the consumer to pay the producer more than he would have to pay the importer under a free-trade system could "maintain the quality of the goods and keep down prices," as he asserted, does not appear, and the proposition reduced to its elements is really a contradiction in terms.

Admiral Scott, who was introduced by His Excellency the Governor (who presided at the meeting above referred to), "as an old friend of his," is probably a clever and well-informed man. On many subjects he is perhaps an excellent authority, but it is a pity no member of the New Zealand Institute who was present at the meeting had the courage to point out that his assertion that "the gloomy state of England's trade was a consequence of her free-trade policy," was entirely erroneous. A gentleman who quoted from Mill ought to have known that, *cum hoc, ergo propter hoc* is the most vulgar form of the fallacy of generalisation, where causation is inferred from casual conjunction. Similarly in the case of the United States and Canada, whose prosperity he attributed to protection, entirely ignoring all those causes, such as vast unoccupied territories, a constant stream of immigration, great internal industrial freedom, &c., &c., which ensure progress in wealth in spite of the "aggression" of sections of the community upon the rest. It might as well be said that the cause of the wealth of London is the number of thieves it contains. With regard to the States, Mr. Mongredien has put the subject in a concrete form in his "Western Farmer of America," where he estimates that the American farmers are taxed 400 million dollars every year in order to make the fortunes of the Eastern States manufacturers! In his "Free-Trade and English Commerce" he proves conclusively that while England has benefitted enormously by free-trade in good times, countries where an "aggressive policy" has been in vogue have suffered even more than England in bad times. This is what might be expected, for any infringement of natural liberty is sure to produce evil in varied forms.

The Rev. Mr. Fancourt (Anglican) preached recently in Wangamui on the growth of the Freethought movement, and strongly urged his hearers to carry out the doctrine of Christianity in both letter and spirit. For the benefit of some of our Christian friends who do not know their Bible as well as they should, we will give them one text to start with:—James V., 14th and part of 15th verse: "Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Now this is clear,—no sending for the doctor. True, you might incur a criminal prosecution for neglect, as recently happened in England, where, in a Christian land, a Christian magistrate fined a Christian man for carrying out in the letter and spirit this text of the Christian Bible, and thereby losing his child. Furthermore, you would give to Freethinkers a second edition of one of the grimest of jokes they have had for some time; and if it should cause them to laugh, you have your reward in contemplating their punishment, for has not the gentle

and philosophic Jesus said, "Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep," *i.e.*, laugh and be damned!

A biographical notice of a very religious family, quoted by a very religious contemporary, states that "for five generations the family had been possessed of sterling qualities of head and heart, and that during that time there had not been in it a prodigal nor an infidel." Then follows the moral:—"It is better than keeping houses or lands to keep holding on to such precious legacy of faith and worth." Passing over with a smile the usual goody, truthful, regardless of police records, coupling of *prodigal* and *infidel*, we cannot but shudder at the intellectual and moral state of this family, which for five generations produced not a single doubter. Think of it! For five generations men and women thought David, Jacob, and Noah were holy men, and held up their unsullied lives as fit examples for children to follow. And then, no doubt, instead of holding on to houses and lands, they made over the precious legacy to the Church (or why the moral?). There is one thing certain, and that is, that owing to the progress of Freethought, the next five generations will not be so barren of infidels.

The 'New Zealand Methodist' gives as an instance of the power of special prayer, that for 120 years a ship has annually left England for the "Moravian Mission," in the arctic regions, without the loss of a single ship or passenger by storm, iceberg, or wreck. We wonder which the rev. editor prefers when he travels, a vessel well prayed for and poorly officered, or the reverse. We know which we prefer. Now, that ungodly Cunard Company, after thousands of trips at almost racehorse speed across the Atlantic, also boast that they have not lost a single ship. But then they take good care to pay highly for the best commanders obtainable! as perhaps the Moravian mission does, and so "keep their powder dry." But, Mr. Rev. Editor, is not this statement rather rash? Suppose next year proper precautions are not taken, and a vessel is lost. Won't the heathen laugh! It seems to us that you have placed your God under an obligation, and if a vessel or passenger should come to grief, that you will be quite justified, like the poor African, in smashing up your idol.

This naturally leads us into the question of insurance — and we wonder if this "Moravian Mission" insure their vessels, and, if so, whether the insurance companies make any reduction in premium owing to the "special prayers?" We have often thought it lacking in faith for the sects to insure their churches, for surely God can look after his own. However, by a late return we see that during last year over four hundred churches in the United Kingdom were struck by lightning. This surely must be because God, amongst the numerous sects of America, is somewhat perplexed to know his own; unless it is to reprove those unfaithful servants who have erected lightning conductors on the house of God itself.

The same paper also gives a graphic description of the great fear in an Indian village during a lunar eclipse — how, with the blowing of horns, sounding of gongs, etc. (like the concert before the walls of Jericho), the inhabitants endeavour so to frighten the moon as

to prevent her from swallowing the earth, or, having swallowed it, to compel her to disgorge it without delay. The writer then *naïvely* remarks that, as they always seem to succeed, so the Hindoos go back to their homes perfectly satisfied that they have rendered distinguished service to the whole human race. Just so! — enlightened Methodists, but poor heathen Hindoos! Now the poor Hindoos have some foundation for their simple faith, for a lunar eclipse always does pass away; but how about these Christian prayers, for rain, for instance, that are of no avail, unless the wind is from the right quarter; or for the conversion of Freethinkers, which are also of no avail, unless Freethinkers first agree to subordinate their reason to religious hysteria.

A truly faithful Christian, not understanding the spirit of the nineteenth century, has requested Bishop Moorhouse, of Melbourne, to pray to the Almighty God to strike with sterility the rabbits of Victoria, and so abate the rabbit nuisance. A few years ago this would have been looked upon as a most natural request, but now, owing to the spread of Freethought, it is ridiculed from one end of the colony to the other. We fail to see why, for surely the God who removed the sterility of Abraham's Sarah could, and should, impose sterility on the rabbits—for no one can deny that this would be a great blessing to man, whereas the propagation of the Israelites (if you can believe the Bible records) was one of the most damnable curses of ancient times; for, not content with murdering and raping the surrounding nations, this insignificant handful of "God's own people" actually presumed to crucify and put to death the creator of this vast and incomprehensible universe.

The Rev. Mr. Whitehouse (Anglican) gave a lecture in Wanganui on Freethought, and we were scarcely surprised, though rather disappointed, to find that it contained about as much argument and unproved assertions as the usual run of sermons. We were told that the Church need not fear Freethought, and that to shun enquiry shows that its foundations are false. We take the rev. gentleman at his word, and say that the Church has, and does, shun enquiry, and therefore its foundations must be false. Need we mention the names of Hypatia, Bruno, Galileo, Bacon, Vesalius, Colenso, and Darwin?—and further ask, what is the present attitude of the Church respecting evolution and geology?

Of course the French Revolution was dragged in, for we never yet heard a lecture on Freethought without this being instanced as a case of the excesses committed by a people when they have thrown over all belief in a God—totally ignoring the historic fact that these were the natural results of centuries of degradation and outrage, committed on the people by a tyrannical government and a corrupt aristocracy. And to the shame of the Christian Church, it was allied with the tyrants! Can it be wondered at that when the inevitable conflict came (a conflict foreseen and foretold by the prophet Voltaire), that the degraded people could not discriminate between the Church and the tyrant? No! And we say that that Church was largely responsible for these excesses, and truly reaped where it had sown!

Again, the rev. gentleman brought forward the old charge that Freethought destroys without building up, and, before it could meet with his acceptance, it must offer something better than the inspiring faith of Christianity. Even supposing that Freethought had nothing to give (which we will not admit), why, if we believe that Christianity is founded on superstition, that it is injurious to the moral and intellectual improvement of the human race—why should we be called upon to build something in its place? And we retort by asking the Church what it gave in place of the grand old philosophy and sciences of Greece and Rome? The page of history answers that it gave us the flames of the Alexandrian library, and the heavy blackness of the dark ages, when to investigate the mysteries of nature was to be charged with magic, and to doubt was to be burned at the stake.

After charging Freethinkers with picking out passages from the Bible away from their context and criticising them, the lecturer gave, as the testimony of Thomas Paine, that the Bible was the best of all books. If this is not picking out a passage away from its context, we do not know what it is. Can anyone in his senses (unless he is trying to throw dust in the eyes of his Christian audience), who has read "Paine's Age of Reason," bring him forward as a testimony to the truth of the Bible? It only bears out our contention that the day will come when the Deist, Paine, will be claimed as orthodox by the Christian Church—but, until this lecture, we had no idea that the time was so near.

Then we had the assertion that as science teaches that truth alone can live, how is it that Christianity lives?—totally ignoring the older and more numerous faith of Buddhism, Confucianism, etc. Also in the assertion that the Christian minister holds out a hope beyond the grave, totally ignoring the text about "broad is the way," etc. And how about election, and pre-destination, which has driven many a man to madness and despair?

In the ignoring of hell fire, and in quietly keeping in the background, or attempting to explain away the curses uttered by Jesus, the lecturer only showed the advance made by Freethought even in the Church itself. By all means let the Church grow out of the barbarous belief in hell, but we will put the logical question—if no hell, why a Saviour, for what are we to be saved from? Of one thing we are very certain—that the progress of Freethought is demonstrated by the fact that if this lecture even had been delivered thirty years ago, the rev. gentleman would have been deprived of his living.

## Passing Notes.

The following paragraph is taken from a Catholic exchange "Of the five thousand students in Belgium," says the 'Etudiant,'—supposing the Catholic University to be entirely theistic,—we can count two thousand atheists.' Then this college journal proceeds to applaud the situation, and points how these two thousand young men will be scattered throughout the country to spread the poison of atheism. Such is the infernal work now going on in Belgium." The "infernal" work now going on has borne fruits, which when compared with the "infernal" work under the priestly rule justify even a college journal "in applauding the situation."

Mr. George Chainey, who was converted from Methodism to Unitarianism some years ago, and afterwards from Unitarianism to "Ingersollism," announces that he is a Spiritualist now.

Mr. Gladstone has assured the ministers of the Free Church of Scotland that if a distinct majority of the Scotch members returned to the House of Commons at the next election were pledged to disestablish the Church of Scotland, the government would carry out the popular will.

Since the passing of the Act of 1870, allowing clergymen to relinquish their orders in the church, sixty-two of them have formally abandoned their holy calling. Among them two at least—namely, Mr. Leslie Stephens, the eminent writer, and the late Mr. J. R. Green, the popular historian, have left the church for Agnosticism.

The "Committee of Infidelity" appointed by the Salisbury Diocesan Synod state, in their annual report, that "the so-called National Secular Society continues to publish its objects and extend its agencies. There are few places of any considerable size in which it has not one or more branches, or agents, for the distribution of its publications."

At the Auckland Synod, Mr. A. Brown in moving that the churches be free and open, argued that "the reason churches were not better supported was because of the pew rent." Doubtful! If the inclination for church going existed, the pew rents would not long stand in the way,—but the inclination is not there.

At the Sydney conference of Freethinkers, upon the motion of Mr. Burnes, seconded by Mr. Winspear, it was decided to enclose in a congratulatory letter to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh the following resolution:—"That this conference of Australasian Freethinkers desires most earnestly to congratulate Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., upon his gallant, long-continued, and well sustained fight for political and religious liberty, and begs also to assure him of its warmest sympathy in his great and severe struggle, and its determination to afford him all the support in its power in his strenuous efforts to snap the galling yoke of bigotry which still oppresses the British people."

"If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be severely punished. *Without standing*, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: *for he is his money.*"—Ex. xxxi., 20-21. "I shall never forget the revulsion of feeling with which a very intelligent native, with whose help I was translating these last words into the Zulu tongue, first heard them as words said to be uttered by the same great and gracious Being whom I was teaching him to trust in and adore. His whole soul revolted against the notion that the Great and Blessed God, the Merciful Father of all mankind, would speak of a servant or maid as mere 'money,' and allow a horrible crime to go unpunished because the victim of the brutal outrage had survived a few hours!"—BISHOP COLERIDGE.

In a letter to the Committee of South Place Religious Society, Monseur D. Conway writes: "My wife and I have both and equally endeavoured to prolong our stay in England for the sake of our work in South Place, but have now made up our minds that we cannot remain in Europe longer than next year, if so long. If you should desire me to speak again of South Place in the early part of next year and I am able to do so, my present resignation will not prevent it. Meanwhile, after August, the society will again have the opportunity of listening to my colleague, to whom I have been looking, and still look, to commend himself to you as one able to carry on the work which I must leave. It is unnecessary that I should say more concerning the reasons that have impelled me to this decision than that they are of a purely private and domestic character, and include no dissatisfaction with South Place, or with the country in which I so long and happily resided. My residence in England was never pleasanter, and my relations with South Place, so far as I know, were never happier than at present. The giving up of South Place will mean for me giving up the ministry altogether. I have no intention of ever taking charge of a congregation. It seems a kind of death to leave the work to which 21 years, representing the heart of one's life, have been devoted; and, as the time of my departure draws near, I trust it may be attended with kindly sentiments, and that I may have the consolation of passing away amid peace and friendship."

A libel case was recently tried in Melbourne between two Presbyterian Ministers. The defendant was the editor of the 'Presbyterian,' and the statements published by him regarding the plaintiff were called "false and slanderous publications." Damages were laid at £99, but the jury awarded one farthing only.

"Jacob Terry," the American correspondent of the 'Otago Daily Times,' recently gave the following paragraph on the opening of a new bank:—"A new bank was opened with prayer the other day in Jersey city, because profit was not the object of its founders. Depositors will soon be called upon to exercise faith. Its promoters belonged to the lately-bankrupt Jersey City Bank, whose swindling manager piously thanked God he had secured the Church against loss, and who is therefore esteemed a godly and severely chastened man."

The Ottawa 'Free Press' contains the first intimation we have had of the fact that Mr. Chas. Watts intends residing permanently in America. Referring to this it says:—"By an early steamer, Charles Watts, formerly an associate of Charles Bradlaugh, having disposed of all interest in his English publications, arrives in Canada to reside permanently at Toronto, where a weekly organ is to be started and a magnificent lecture hall erected. A guarantee fund has been subscribed to keep Mr. Watts steadily employed lecturing throughout Canada." We had noticed that the Secular Review is edited now by "Saladin," whereas it was formerly under the editorial care of Charles Watts and "Saladin."

Mrs. Besant's opinions on the giving of "Home Lessons" to children are worth quoting in this column. The school hours are, in her opinion, too long already, and they should not be increased by book work at home. All new matter should be taught to children, for the most useful part of a teacher's work is teaching the young *how* to learn, not hearing what it has learned. It is the fresh matter in the lessons which the child finds it difficult to get hold of, and the teacher should endeavour to lighten this labour, and thereby save the waste of time and the nervous strain of anxiety on the part of the child in trying to learn and understand. As the brain is less fit for work at night than in the morning, no lessons should be done then, but the evening should be spent in play and light house work.

The 'National Reformer' recently gave further particulars relating to the story of the infidel who was struck dead while delivering a blasphemous prayer. Dr. Brookes, editor of 'Truth,' heard it from the Rev. Mr. Slaymaker, who "with great solemnity assured him it was true." This rev. gentleman furnished a statement when called upon for particulars, which alleged that the story was true, but "the occurrence did not take place under his observation,"—an "elder" was his authority. This elder proved to be a Dr. Anglin, whom it is not now pretended was present, but who had "talked with persons who were present." The Rev. Slaymaker has discovered, too, that amongst other inaccuracies, he was wrong in stating that the death took place at Gainsville, but it was at Jonesboro', Alabama, and he pretends that it was in 1842. The 'Reformer' is now pressing enquires at Jonesboro' where the young man's father is said to be still living.

The relationship between the increase of crime and the increase of Freethought is so persistently insisted on by Christian lecturers and preachers, that the following extract from the report of the English Commissioners of Prisons for the years 1883-4 will be interesting. It says that the "decrease in the prison population in recent years is very remarkable, on account of the length of period during which it has continued to fall or to stand at a low level in which respect it is quite unprecedented. The average population (17,914) has never since 1861 been so low as during the year 1882-4 but at the former date the population of the kingdom was only 20 millions, whereas it is now 26½ millions, *i.e.*, some 20 per cent. more. In no other series of years within record has the average prison population continued to fall for more than three years successively, after which a marked and continuous rise has been usual, but since 1878, when it was 20,883, it has fallen down to its present number, 17,194." This may be fairly attributed to the system of education carried on in England.

The Correspondence between Mr. R. Pharaayn and the late Mr. J. S. Mill, which appeared first in the FREETHOUGHT REVIEW, has been copied in full into the 'National Reformer.'

Reference is made to Mr. Pratt, Christchurch, in the 'National Reformer' as follows: "It will be remembered that amongst those elected Vice-Presidents of the National Secular Society at the Plymouth Conference was Mr. Wm. Pratt of New Zealand. Mr. Pratt, who is now in Europe, and with whom we had the pleasure of dining at Mrs. Besant's, whilst modestly disclaiming all title to the honour, warmly thanks the English Freethinkers for their vote.

A few issues back it was stated that some Canterbury folks had sent Mr. Bradlaugh a frozen sheep and in the 'National Reformer' of the 21st September we find the following allusion to it:—"We have to thank some unknown friends in New Zealand for the present of a frozen sheep, which has arrived in first-class condition and is highly praised by the butcher who has carved it into manageable joints"

The 'New Zealand Craftsman and Masonic Review' recently expressed itself clearly on the question as to whether a Roman Catholic can consistently become a Mason, and it says:—"We have never yet been able to see how a good and consistent Catholic can become a Mason. The old proverb about serving two masters applies here excellently, and we are strongly of opinion that any man wishing to act honestly must first and for ever break with the Roman Church before he can become a Mason, and no man has any right to seek admission to our institution before acquainting himself with what is required of him, in order that he may discharge his duty towards it faithfully and well."

The Rev. Dr. Clifford, in addressing the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, said—"Scepticism would not die. It was co-incident with the advance of healthy humanity, as growing pains were the signs of passage from youth to manhood. . . . It is inseparable from advancement, from the slaying of errors which accumulate about the Christian Church." After stating that Christianity was still as vigorous as ever, he went on to say that they had subdued "Straussianism," and were no longer afraid of evolution "for they had learned that evolution was not creation." Secularists, he said, "wrote and talked as though everything depended upon the ability of Christians to show that the opening chapters of Genesis were an anticipation line by line of Lyell's text-book of geology. They forgot that the most potent evidence for Christianity was manhood, self-subduing, heroic, missionary, world-saving manhood." The "most potent" evidences of Christianity seem to change with the Christians who are expounding the system. Most preachers hold that earnestness and martyrdom do not prove the truth of any belief.

A letter from the Rev. Thomas Campbell, of Razorback, near Auckland, to a disputant with whom he had been corresponding, contains the following passage as an explanation of the atonement:—"Suppose a firm in Auckland had a debtor who could not meet his liability, and the firm was to cast him into prison. But a kind friend of his interposed, a friend in whom the firm had the utmost confidence. He promised to pay the debt, and on the strength of that promise, the debtor received a clear discharge, even though the debt was not actually paid till a certain time, as agreed upon by the firm and the security. Indeed the friend was one of the firm." This is given because his correspondent desired an explanation respecting "Christ's bearing the sins of Isaiah, as well as the sins of those further back, even to Adam." Well, if this illustration means anything, it means this— that, as the debtor would not require to have any faith in the man who volunteered to bail him out, so long as he got free, so the sinners of all times, even as far back as Adam, need no faith in the "kind friend in whom the firm (up above) had the utmost confidence," and who has made matters all secure. The illustration seems to show that the "firm" who had the right to put the debtor into prison, showed "faith" in accepting the offices of a mediator, but it does not appear that the debtor needed any to receive his "clear discharge." If this is the doctrine of Thomas Campbell, there is a chance for Freethinkers, as faith does not seem to come into the scheme at all as regards the debtors.

We have received the 'Harbinger of Light,' criticising our remarks on Spiritualism. A reply will appear in our next.

A new edition of Dr. Buchner's "Force and Matter" has been issued. This work has passed through sixteen editions in German, six in French, four in English, three in Italian, and two in Hungarian. It has been translated altogether into thirteen modern languages.

A religious paper states that there is no monument to Calvin in any part of the world; but that the American Presbyterians propose to erect one at Washington. If this is done we would suggest to the American Freethinkers that they should also erect a monument in Washington to the martyr Servetus.

A writer in the Aberdeen 'Evening Express' recently stated that Paine was not the author of the "Rights of man," but that it was written by a persecuted Puritan in 1665. Paine, he says, secured a copy of the work and altered it slightly before publishing it as his own. We shall hear next probably that Burke's Reflections, to which it was a reply, were written before Burke came into existence.

Chas. Bright, lecturing in Sydney, alluded to the vitality exhibited by the oldest branch of the Church, that of Rome, as compared with the Church of England. The former, he said, was a clan, whose chiefs received the reverence and love which clansmen accorded their leaders, while the latter was a club whose god is social respectability. He anticipates that in time those opposed to freedom will have to range themselves under the banner of the former church, which still claims infallibility.

A banquet was given to Mr. C. Watts by some of his Secularistic friends before he left on his American lecturing tour. The veteran worker, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, occupied the chair, and in the course of his remarks dwelt on the relationship which existed between himself and their guest, and which had been caused by the stand taken by Mr. Watts a few years ago. Mr. Watts, in his reply, said that he had been trained in the school of Secularism with which Mr. Holyoake's name had been identified, and he had always been an exponent of constructive Secularism.

The Christian young men who make it a point to visit the Exeter Hall restaurant, have been paying more attention than was seemly (in the eyes of the authorities) to the young women who did the waiting, and in consequence the whole of them (the females) have been set adrift, and male waiters engaged in their place. The 'Weekly Dispatch' thinks it would have been more just had the offenders—the "weak headed modern Josephs and Saumpsons"—been punished instead. But then Christianity has always held women in a peculiar sort of estimation, and the action of the Exeter Hall authorities is on a par with the past history of their religion.

The proprietors of 'Lucifer—The Light-Bearer,' write from Valley Falls, Kas., as follows:—"Editor Freethought Review. We are very glad to receive the REVIEW in exchange, and hope that we shall continue to be the recipients of your courtesy so long as the REVIEW and 'Lucifer' are published. As we read of the progress of Freethought on the other side of the world we are greatly encouraged to persevere in our labour here, to struggle on in the cause of Universal Liberty. Wishing you abundance of success,—We are, respectfully and cordially your co-workers, HARMAN AND WALKER."

A correspondent at Rangiriri, Auckland, sends us a letter received by him from a Thomas Campbell, with whom he has been discussing religious matters by letter. From this letter we take the following extract, which evidently has reference to a former one from our correspondent. Mr. Campbell says:—"Your reference to Tom Paine does not do you any good. Do you for a moment suppose that any sane man would accept your unsupported assertion in preference to the evidence of the doctor who attended his death-bed? Also, of a man's open (sic) oath before a court, and of another man who knew him personally? And if I did not give you the nurse's evidence who attended him in his last illness it was because I was under the impression that I gave enough without it. She said, so horrible was the scene that she would never attend an infidel's death-bed again. Do you know better than they? Did you know him personally? If not, who told you these are wrong? Give your authority.

I said all along mere assertions are worthless." It would have been better if Mr. T. Campbell had not gone in so strongly himself for "unsupported assertions." If he could so glibly assert what he has, why did not he give the names of the doctor, the open oath individual, the "man who knew him personally," and the nurse? These assertions as to the death of Paine, have been so often made and met that it is almost inexcusable to combat them again seriously. The whole of these stories were examined by Mr. Cobbett, and he published a pamphlet on the subject, in which he shows that the nurse, after being cornered and severely cross-questioned on the matter, denied that there was any truth in the rumours, that the doctor distinctly denied that Paine ever recanted or expressed any desire to do so in his presence, or that he died a revolting death. The "open oath man," and the "man who knew him," could hardly know more on the matter than "the doctor who attended his death-bed," and the "nurse who attended him in his last illness." Now let us suppose for a moment that Paine did recant, how does it benefit Christianity or Theism. Paine was nearly all his life a Deist, he believed in one "God and no more," and hoped for "happiness in a future world," so that even taking the orthodox standpoint, death for him should have had no terrors. As we have quoted our authority, we should like to hear Mr. T. Campbell's.

## Progress.

### CANTERBURY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary of this Association, in his monthly report, writes:—

Sir,—Besides the music by the Choir and Band, with lessons from the History of the Early Fathers, and from the Apocryphal New Testament, the reading of correspondence, etc., our Sunday evenings have been taken up as follows: Oct. 19, "Richard Cobden and his Times," by C. J. Rae; Oct. 26, "Exodus," (with pictorial illustrations) by J. Williams; Nov. 2, "Mau," by C. Lezard; Nov. 9, "Sketches of the lives of three eminent Men (Socrates, Jesus, and Luther)," by E. M. Clissold; Nov. 16, "The Dying Creed,"—Col. Ingersoll, by F. C. Hall.

I would suggest that you give us an epitome of the new Affirmation Bill, as it ought, I think, to be generally known by Freethinkers. Sir George Grey said three years ago that whilst he lived he would never rest till such an Act was passed.

I wish Freethinkers coming to Christchurch and attending our Hall would hand up their cards, that a few words of welcome might be made; at present we only hear of their presence perhaps the following day.

All the wise men in New Zealand are of the South. There was the Rev. Gillies, and now another has turned up—the Rev. Dodds.

Sunday, the 9th inst., was Charity Sunday in the Canterbury Churches, and the Freethought Association had the impudence to have a collection in their Hall.—Yours, &c.,

F. C. HALL, Secretary.

Christchurch, Nov. 17, 1884.

### WELLINGTON SECULAR SOCIETY.

The report of the above Society for the last month reads as under:—

Sir,—Referring back to my last communication, I mentioned that a lecture would be given by "Ivo" (Mr. Joseph Evison), on Sunday the 19th Oct, Subject:—"Who are the Infidels?" this discourse he gave and delivered in a grand manner; in fact, "Ivo" is becoming a very impressive and eloquent speaker, he gave us a lecture on the following Sunday re "Chinese Gordon and the Taping Rebellion," pointing out in a masterly manner the horrors and cruelty of that war, and the disgusting way in which it was carried on by the English. Mr. Evison was able to give much information having served during the Rebellion.

On the 2nd inst. Mr. Donovan from Wanganui, kindly gave us a lecture on "Why does not God kill the Devil." He kept the audience amused the whole evening with his remarks on the absurd passages in the Old Testament.

Sunday the 9th November, the platform was again occupied by Mr. Evison, who recited some very choice readings from our Poets and Humourists.

Last Sunday, the 16th, we had the pleasure of listening to an able and very agreeable young lecturer, Mr. Isaac Selby, who took for his subject, "The World that is, and the World that is to come," he is a fluent speaker, and is very quick at repartee, when in debate. I presume he will be giving your city a visit shortly.

Our band of workers are pushing on the movement. We have altered the name of our Association into the Wellington Secular Society. We will, if possible, have our first marine excursion in about a month hence. Hoping the cause is progressing in Wanganui, —I am, &c.,

W. TYRRELL, Sec.

Lyceum, Tory St., Nov. 18, 1884.

## INGLEWOOD FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

"Still they come." Another sign of the progress of Freethought is the formation of an Association at Inglewood. The Secretary, Mr. Thomas Drake, has favored us with the following particulars:—

Sir, I duly received your letter containing information as to the formation of Freethought Associations, and laid same before our Committee which desires me to thank you for your kind attention to the matter.

Probably you would like some small account of our proceedings up to present date, as I know the interest you take in all local Associations which have for their object the emancipation of the mind from superstition.

About six or eight weeks ago a few friends and myself, being aware that there were many both avowed and unavowed Freethinkers in the neighbourhood, thought it desirable to organize an Association, knowing that unity is strength and that a dis-organized body of Freethinkers possesses no more strength than a dis-organized army would, disbanded and spread abroad amongst the people without a leader or place of rendezvous. We therefore entered into negotiations for the purchase of the empty Primitive Methodist Chapel and section, in Inglewood Town, but these negotiations fell through and the Wesleyans rushed to the front and bought the building, evidently to keep Freethought from having a prominent position and footing, but alas! no sooner had the "dearly beloveds" completed their purchase, than Freethought hammers and paint brushes were at work converting a four-roomed cottage into a meeting room and reading room, which it is proposed to open to members and the public formally on Sunday afternoon, the 30th inst., at 2.30 p.m. sharp, when short addresses explanatory of the objects and reasons for what has been done will be delivered by three gentlemen who are on the committee. There is no doubt that it is high time that Freethought made some effort to assert itself and let the world know that it is not the mean, vile thing some of the preachers of the whale story, the snake story, and other similar gull-baiting narratives assert that it is. We are often defamed publicly from the pulpit, and no doubt privately during the house to house visitations of "these gentlemen," and in our present un-organized state, not one word can be heard from us in reply. The minister from his lofty pulpit situate up amongst the ceiling joists can make any statements he chooses respecting us, represent us at one time as near akin to lunatics, and at another as "wishing to lead unclean lives," as Father Le Menant des Chesnais did lately at Wanganui, with the Mayor of that town sitting peacefully in the chair and by silence giving consent to the slander, and not a word can the Freethinker say in his own defence. Some of the newspapers are too crowded with other matters to allow religious discussions in their columns, others are too bigotted, or are the avowed organs of Superstition.

In our chief town, New Plymouth, may be seen Salvation Barracks and placards about such cheerful and refreshing matters as Red-hot Shot, Blood, Hell-fire, and Damnation, and lads who would run away at the cocking of a toy pistol, "fight the good fight," put on the armour of righteousness and the breastplate of something else, and generally get into the same pot-valiant state that Mr. Winkle did when he was about to make his renowned attack on the small boy.

On our country roads the religious monomania seems to take another form, the rustic population does not go in for uniforms, cornet blowing, and parading, but it resorts to mad-holes and creeks, and gets dipped by three or four gentlemen who kindly stay amongst the settlers, live in their best parlors, sleep in their best beds, and eat up all their superfluous hams, jams, pickles, cream, and honey. They do not take money from anyone, only One Pound a head for each person when dipped and any stray five pound notes the well-to-do converts can be persuaded to give them. They have no particular religious doctrine except that you must either be "dipped or damned," and that you should not play music or read newspapers. There are about four of these Evangelistic teachers or preachers, and they succeed best apparently amongst settlers who live on muddy roads and swampy places where low fevers occasionally make their appearance. During the late cold winter, vehicles loaded with dripping wet human beings were to be seen taking them back to their homes, huddled together, and some have suffered from severe illnesses in consequence. But I fear I have trespassed too far on your space, so Hoping for the days when Common Sense may conquer Superstitions.—I am, &c.,

THOS. DRAKE.

## WANGANUI FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary's report for the past month reads as follows:—

Sir, Nothing of special importance has occurred in connection with our Association during the past month if we except the replies given to the Rev. Mr. Whitehouse's lectures on Freethought, delivered in the Princess Theatre, on the 13th and 20th. These lectures were no doubt given in order, if possible, to stem the tide of infidelity that has set in in Wanganui. From an orthodox point of view the lectures may be said to be strong. Indeed, some of my Christian friends considered them absolutely unanswerable. Our President, however, took upon himself to reply to the Rev. gentleman the Sunday following each lecture, and succeeded in refuting the arguments advanced, apparently without much difficulty. More telling remarks could hardly have been given.—Yours faithfully,

J. BECKRELL, Sec.

Wanganui Nov. 24, 1884.

## WAVERLEY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We have to thank the Vice-President of the Waverley Freethought Association (Mr. H. F. Mason) for the following items:—

Sir,— Things have not been very lively with us, so far, this month, I would point out to members of our Library that books should be returned with more regularity. They are no doubt interesting to the holders, but other members are desirous of having their share of the good things.

We have received copies of the "Propagandist" and "Young Secularist," both new publications.

In my last I referred to the action of two members of the Library Committee. Some one, evidently determined that my remarks should not be overlooked, posted the letter on the dwelling of one of the persons referred to. In the same letter I remarked that,—"we have many friends who have not declared themselves." Some anonymous scribbler wrote in the margin of a copy that was in the reading room, "amongst the ignorant." The writer is no doubt wise in his own estimation, and able to comprehend what is meant by the "stern realities of faith," of which Mr. Whitehouse spoke. I would advise this anonymous scribbler to throw off the glamour, when he will see that his remark is the opposite to the truth.

We have received a letter from Dr. Hughes' agent, enquiring as to the prospect of a short season here. Much as the members of this Association would like to hear the lecturer—and in fact all others that are spreading the propaganda—we have not been able to send a very encouraging reply. If, however, he should decide on visiting us, he may depend on a hearty reception, and the cooperation of the Society, individually and collectively.

I noticed in last month's issue a letter from Mr. Crowhurst, in which he alludes to a certain sect of fanatics that appear to be gaining converts in Stratford. For the last two years we have been favoured with some of the same genius. They believe in total immersion, and here are known as "Dippers." Scores of amusing anecdotes are related of them. For instance, one of them, it is gravely stated, on being informed that some of his sheep were on their backs, replied with an upward glance, that, "the Lord would care for them." Some of their actions, though, are not so amusing, but show utter absence of the first principles of humanity. A man was buried here a short time since. Unsuccessful attempts had been made to convert him. In consequence, the edict went forth, that none of the saved ones were to attend the funeral. One of their number dared to show this last mark of respect, and received his conge. They believe that no one but themselves will enjoy eternal bliss; the remaining insignificant portion of the human race, must writhe eternally in the lake of fire.—Yours, &c.,

H. F. MASON,

Vice-President.

Waverley, Nov. 24, 1884.

## WOODVILLE FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary of the Woodville Association forwards the following particulars:—

Sir,— I have much pleasure in stating that the above Association, after having had to contend with many adverse circumstances, have reorganized, and present prospects seem to forebode a more prosperous career, numerically and financially. Very little has been done during the past three months, the only things of interest being a debate between Oswald Hugo, Physiognomist, and Mr. Dinsdale, Spiritualist; Mr. Dinsdale affirming the reality of spirit life and their intercourse with mortals, Mr. Hugo taking the negative side. A debate has also been held between Mr. Rendle, Methodist, and our courageous President, E. A. Haggan, Esq. The subject was, "Does the Mosaic Record of Creation and Modern Science agree?" Mr. Rendle affirmative, Mr. Haggan negative. This debate, so far as the Christian side was concerned, was a series of Extracts from, and papers by, various authors, Thomas Cooper being one. Things went fairly well with the 'Christian Advocate' until he, having exhausted his extracts, took a line of his own. I should say lines, as he made some of the most rash and foolish statements with reference to the antiquity of man ever made. In fact, his assertions were in some instances direct contradictions of his extracts. Yet one of his friends (whom we have reason to believe is an ex-parson), writes to a Methodist paper representing the Christian side as having scored a great victory. I myself, after the debate, challenged Mr. Rendle before witnesses to debate on the antiquity of Man, but he was not game. In regard to the reorganization of our society, we have somewhat altered our rules and offered facilities for the Spiritualistic Freethinkers to join with us, which they are now doing, Mr. Dinsdale the recognized Leader of the Spiritualistic element, having been elected Treasurer and Vice-President. We who love to read the smallest item of information of a progressive nature, and to distribute to others, miss very much the once periodical supply of literature from various friends, amongst whom our esteemed friend "Blue Pencil," has been the largest contributor. We hope ever to be remembered by such friends, as notwithstanding what may happen to us as an organization, there are two or three of us who, having put our hand to the plough, will never turn back, but distribute literature when our friends who can afford it send it us.

Yours Fraternaly,

GEO. HUTCHINS,

Secretary W.F.A.

Woodville, Nov 23, 1884.

## AUCKLAND RATIONALISTIC ASSOCIATION.

Mr. W. C. Dennes, Hon. Sec. to the above Association, forwards the following interesting report for the past month:—

SIR,—Very little of interest has occurred since my last month's report. Our association speedily increases in numbers, notwithstanding the fact that a Spiritualistic Association has been formed and commenced holding meetings. For some weeks past we have depended upon local talent to supply us with readings or lectures on Sunday evenings, which have been fairly successful. Next Sunday we are promised a lecture by Miss Louise Crawford, of the Crawford Dramatic company, on "Church and Stage," which we will trust draw a good audience. The well and favourably known Freethought lecturer, Dr. Hughes, of Sydney, passed through our city on his way to Wellington, where he lectures for a Sunday or two previous to his lecturing here, in which place he intends staying sometime, as he has engaged the Opera House for six months from the 7th of December. As it will be positively necessary for him to make a charge at the doors, the question of Sunday charging is likely to be tested at an earlier date than we have been expecting—which is most desirable. The fact that the Doctor has engaged the Opera House independent of our Association may possibly temporarily injure us pecuniarily, but if he is what we have been led to expect—an elegant, educated and thorough Freethought lecturer—the cause itself may be permanently benefitted, and that is of far more importance than the temporary numerical or pecuniary advancements of a body that might after all drift into a sect. Promising a detailed account of the progress of events after having heard one or two of his lectures, —I am, &c.,

W. C. DENNES, Hon. Sec.

## NORSEWOOD FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We were not aware of the existence of this society and are much obliged to Mr. Ljungqvist, for the following note. We trust that in future he will forward a monthly report to take its place in our "Progress" column.

SIR,—It may perhaps interest you to know that even in this out-of-the-way place Freethought is making progress. An Association called the "Norsewood Freethought Association" has been in existence here for the last three months. When we opened, every Christian in the place was of course shocked, and sundry blessings were invoked on our heads, besides our being consigned to a place supposed to be hotter than Africa. On Sundays, warnings were hurled from the pulpit telling the congregation to beware of that monster, "Freethought," who had made his appearance amongst them. Wherever two or three Christians gathered, the conversation was sure to end with "those Freethinkers." As most of the settlers are orthodox Lutherans, and prejudice runs pretty high, our progress has necessarily been slow. Our meetings, held every other Sunday, have not been as well attended by the Christians as we could wish, but our members have been very regular in their attendance. Some very interesting addresses and readings have been given, mostly by our President, Mr. L. Aug. Mathison.

We have arranged to lend books and pamphlets to non-members, so as to reach those who object to being termed "heathens," the name that is applied to us. Yours &c.,

C. R. LJUNGVIST, Secretary.

Norsewood, Nov. 17, 1884.

## Correspondence.

## SPIRITUALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.'

"Upon my day of life the night is falling,  
And in the winds from un-summed spaces blown  
I hear far voices out of darkness calling  
My feet to paths unknown."—*Quotation.*

SIR,—The question is often asked—Of what use is Spiritualism when we have in modern Christianity all that is needed for man's spiritual welfare and rule of life? For those who do not care to investigate spiritual phenomena, the question is a natural one, and similar questions might be asked by those who value systems of morality only that are based upon truth, and about the utility of which there can be little doubt. If it be necessary, however, to believe something in order to lead a good moral life, of the two, Spiritualism is the least objectionable. It will, no doubt, be admitted by you "stupid Freethought people" that there are men of good moral character in the churches, just as it has been acknowledged that there are Freethinkers even in this colony that tower in moral grandeur head and shoulders above them. I have just read an article upon Spiritualism in the "New Zealand Mail," by "Asmodeus," which I should like to deal with in detail did time permit. I can only say that his arguments were far from being convincing, and the hypothesis of the sun-flower turning "were no sun visible" did not strengthen them. Like others who have written on the subject, he does not seem to get far from where he started, but does a good deal of going round and round. There is one thing, however, of which he cannot be accused, viz., bringing to the front and parading the names of Spiritualists eminent in the literary and scientific world. Spiritualists are never tired of this. It no more proves, nor is it any evidence of, the truth of Spiritualism than if I were to point to the barbarous races that were Spiritualists to disprove it. Spiritualism can be traced from the illiterate savage of the past to the cultured and educated man of the present

—from the dying Zulu, who whispered in his friend's ear. "I go to the spirit of my fathers, and we will fly beside you on the wings of the wind, and drive the game into your path," to the venerable poet of France, Victor Hugo, who said, "I feel in myself the future life; I am rising, I know, towards the sky; winter is on my head, and eternal spring is in my heart; I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds that invite me." These words are expressive of a deep sense of immortality, and are just what might be expected from a man of Victor Hugo's temperament. They are eloquent, but they give us no information. His only evidence is his own feelings. "The thirst for the infinite proves infinity." And we have also a man, whose memory will be held in everlasting remembrance, telling an audience of Freethinkers that for his part he knew that man lived hereafter; but for all that, the question has been asked, and it has not been answered to my satisfaction—Is Spiritualism a system of faith, or a system of facts?—"ours, &c.,

J. G. M.

Masterton, Oct. 22.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We very much regret that, owing to extreme pressure on our space, we are compelled to hold over several communications which were intended for insertion in this issue. They will appear in our next.

## The Freethought Review.

WANGANUI, N.Z.: DECEMBER 1, 1884.

## HARE'S SYSTEM OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

## II.

"Everybody shall count for one, and nobody for more than one."—BENTHAM.

The fundamental novelty of Mr. Hare's scheme, which has been fitly called one of *personal* representation, as distinguished from the nominal representation of streets and fields, is the fact that an elector is not restricted in his choice of a candidate to the two or three persons who may be put up for his particular district. He may, if he prefers to do so, vote for a candidate who stands in any other district. The effect of this is that those persons, scattered over the country, who approve of the policy or characters of any given man, may, by sum of their votes, succeed in returning him. Constituencies would thus be bound together by a genuine community of opinion and interests. The system may be fully understood by considering it in the following way. Let it be imagined that all the candidates and all the voters in the country are, for the purposes of the elections, assembled in one immense hall. The number of representatives to be appointed having been settled upon, it is desired to group the voters so that each person elected shall represent an equal number of constituents, and that the voters shall be enabled to fall into sets having similar interests and aims. The electors are to be divided into as many groups as there are to be representatives; and each representative is to be the representative of an equal number of electors. Suppose, now, that the electors are asked to record their suffrages by grouping themselves one by one round the candidates of whom they most approve; the candidates, of course, being so placed as to render this as convenient as possible; and it being understood that each elector's vote can tell in favour of only one candidate. The most obvious thing which would first be noticed would be that some candidates would be surrounded by a very large number of voters, some by barely enough to elect them, and the remainder by only a few. The very eminent and popular men, in fact, would have most of the voting power precipitated on them; and in consequence of this waste we should fail to have the full number of representatives elected. Some further device is therefore necessary. If, then, as the voting went on, officials were so disposed that they could see how the knots were forming, it would be possible for them to give such information to the electors as would obviate the risk of votes being thrown away. For example: if, after any candidate had received sufficient votes to elect him, or to adopt the nomenclature of Mr. Hare—if, after he had completed his *quota*, his group were to be reinforced by some elector desirous of voting for him, this elector would be told that his object had



already been attained, his favourite having been elected without his aid. Here comes in the all-important provision. *The elector is free to go and vote for any other candidate whom he would like to see elected.* His vote, once thrown away, is not thrown away beyond recall. Once more, if the second candidate upon whom he happens to fix should in like manner not require his assistance, he has only, in descending order of preference, to vote for a third or fourth or fifth, and so on until his vote is wanted. He may thus feel assured that, unless he is one of a hopelessly small minority, his vote may tell in favour of a desirable man. In like manner, could it be made clear to our hypothetical elector that, even with his assistance, a given candidate could not possibly be returned, it is evident that he would probably prefer to support someone who, coming next in his favour, at the same time possessed a chance of being successful.

The result of all this would be that every body of men who, having similar views, could form a quota, would obtain a representative of their own. Of course it is needless to say that no elector would have to give a second vote unless he chose; at the same time should he abstain from doing so it is evident that he must be indifferent about the issue.

The foregoing illustration, although its details are of course imaginary, gives an exact idea of the principle of the new system. The parallel, of course, breaks down at certain points, notably in its failure to secure secrecy; but what we are anxious to bring out is the essential principle of Mr. Hare's scheme. If the illustration in question is carefully followed out, a real idea of the system will be grasped. Of course, in the imaginary plan sketched out, the arrangements assumed for the ordering and counting of the voters are unrealizable, as many of the conditions of an illustration often are. It is necessarily impossible for the electors to meet in one place and to group themselves in the corporeal sense which we have figured to ourselves. But what cannot be done in this manner can be effected by the working of the intelligence directed mechanism invented by Mr. Hare. We have now to see what this mechanism is, which is to have the same effect as if elections could be conducted on the primitive principle we have been for the moment following.

A printed list of all the candidates (extracted from a gazette previously published), with particulars of their places of residence and so forth, is placed in the hands of each elector in the country who cares to apply for it. The electors then proceed to record their votes in the manner about to be described. In the first place, there are polling-booths conveniently situated all over the country just as at present, which are in charge of ordinary returning officers; and electors are to present themselves at the places of election nearest to their abodes. Each elector, on making his appearance and having his right to vote verified, is presented with a ballot-paper which is in no way likely to puzzle the least instructed mind. At the head of this paper, in a single transparent sentence, is explained the way in which the voter is to express his will; and the explanation so given is not one whit more complex than the directions conveyed on one of our present ballot-papers. We will, for the sake of clearness of exposition, resolve the act of voting into two processes. The elector having the printed schedule to choose from, is to *write down the name of the candidate by whom he would like to be represented.* He need not, unless he wishes, do more. But it is plain that, as in the fanciful case already dealt with, the elector thus incurs a risk of wasting his vote, and so being virtually disfranchised. Yet manifestly, unlike the elector in our illustration, he cannot possibly know how the voting is going on. He cannot, therefore, be aware whether his favourite candidate will require his vote; or, on the other hand, whether he will stand a chance of election even with that vote. Mr. Hare's plan therefore allows the elector to *provide beforehand* for either contingency in case it should arise. He may write down, under the name of his first choice, the names of any other candidates he pleases, in the order in which he desires them to stand their chance. If the first candidate is elected by the assistance of this vote, of course the subsequent, or provisional votes, do

not count. But if this first candidate does not require the vote in question, or requiring it cannot make up his quota, the next vote of our elector comes into play, or if this has the same fate as the first the process of sifting goes on until an operative vote is reached. By this simple machinery the same results are obtained as in the marshalling which we supposed to take place in our preliminary illustration; only in the real election the elector has to provide beforehand for possible waste of his vote. It is important to understand that, beyond the simple operation described, the elector has nothing more to do. He merely writes down the names of a number of candidates *in the order in which he wishes them to stand their chance of appropriating his vote.* It is even provided that, instead of writing down names, numbers may be used instead, these numbers being taken from the schedule. All the rest is done by the returning officers, registrars, and subordinate officials, working under an efficient system of checks and counter-checks. Ample facilities are also provided for enabling the agents of any of the defeated candidates to verify the whole series of calculations. "Those who come to the examination of the system for the first time," says Mr. Hare, "will probably be surprised to learn that, so far as there is anything to be done by the voter, this is the whole extent of the complexity from which so many politicians have shrunk." The working of the system may be understood by any person of moderate capacity who will take the trouble; but if any voter is too indifferent to do this he may rest content with recording his vote. The electoral engine will grind out a result which will give equitable effect to his wishes.

The total number of votes having been counted at a central office, the quantity is divided by the number of representatives to be elected. The result is the quota which a candidate must obtain to secure his return. Let us apply the principle to the case of New Zealand. There are 91 seats in the House of Representatives, and at present 137,686 electors on the rolls. Assuming every elector to vote, and dividing 137,686 by 91, we get 1513; which is the quota required to elect a member. Every set of 1513 voters has a right to a member. Let us contrast the action of the system in a definite case with the action of the old one. At the late general election for members of the House of Representatives, the following was the final result:—

There were recorded:

For successful candidates, 42,408 votes:

For defeated candidates, 35,264 votes.

The 32,264 voters are therefore unrepresented. Under the Hare system the result would have been approximately:—

52 members returned by 42,408 votes:

39 members returned by 32,264 votes.

The majority would thus rule, but the minority would be justly represented in proportion to its strength.

As to the number of names of candidates each voter may put down, Mr. Hare proposes no restriction at present; although he points out that provision can be made for effecting this should experience render the step desirable.

Fair rules are provided for deciding the order in which the candidate's names shall be printed. It is sufficient to say here that the order is not alphabetical.

It is necessary to have some plan for deciding which particular votes shall be given to a seated candidate, and which carried on to elect others. This is not a point which affects the electors; as, under any rule, they are sure of getting representatives to their mind. It is admitted that, under certain circumstances, it might make a difference to a candidate; but, as Mr. Hare points out, elections are not conducted for the benefit of candidates, but of the electors. Mr. Hare settles the question by recourse to a few simple rules, whereby the grouping of the votes is effected by reference to "locality, and the numbers of alternatives each voting-paper displays." Of course preference is given to papers containing only one vote, these being counted in before the others take their turn.

Such is an abstract of this admirable scheme; which, in the region of political science, may justly be regarded as one of the greatest triumphs of the human understanding. It has been tried in America, in the election

of the state legislature of Illinois; and with highly satisfactory results. It is also given effect to in the election of the Upper Legislative Chamber in Denmark.

The principal objections which have been urged against the system have been successfully answered by Mr. Hare; either by anticipation or in the way of subsequent reply. Mr. Mill, who of all our public teachers was last given to making unguarded statements, was of opinion that nothing had been said on the negative side which would bear examination. The following is a summary of the objections raised, with the replies thereto in brief; although of course it is not possible to give more than an outline of the consultation. As set forth by Mr. Mill they are as follow:—

*The scheme is unworkable.* Those who tell us so are people who have barely heard of it, or have given it a very imperfect consideration.

*Loss of the local character of representation.* Towns and counties are however represented when the people who inhabit them are represented. The fallacy contained in the objection is like the economic pitfall of mistaking money for wealth. Any advantage arising from the representation of localities would still be possessed; for, in case of the common interests of any place being sufficiently marked, its inhabitants would vote for a candidate chosen from their own ranks.

*Impossibility of guarding against fraud at the central office.* But any defeated candidate who might harbour suspicions could, by means of his agents, institute a close scrutiny into the whole process of the election, the papers showing which would be accessible at the central office.

*Undue power would be given to knots and cliques. The system could be worked for party purposes.* The answer to these two objections is that no one pretends that organization would cease to be advantageous; but under the present system scattered elements count for nothing; under Hare's they would have just the influence their numbers entitled them to.

*The people will never understand the system, or consent to its introduction.* This is a judgment on their capacity which has nothing to support it, and which they have a right to resent. They have never been given a chance of understanding it.

On the other side, the advantages of the scheme are many. Taken from the writings of Mr. Hare, Mr. Mill, and Mr. W. R. Ware of Harvard College, they are the following:—

Every minority of sufficient strength to form a quota could obtain representation.

It protects the minority from the tyranny of the majority.

It protects both minorities and majorities from the tyranny of party chiefs.

It promotes freedom of individual action.

It secures perfect co-operation and organization.

It gives every voter a representative after his own heart, whom he has actually helped to elect.

No one would be professedly represented by a member against whom he had voted.

It gives every representative a unanimous constituency.

It gives the representative a certain security in the tenure of his place.

It affords a natural and reasonable method of rotation in office.

It makes it for the interest of every party to put forth its best men.

It makes it worth while for good men to become candidates. At present many able and independent men stand no chance, by reason of their being too good. An oyster-knife is sometimes a more efficient implement than a razor.

It is suitable for the election of one candidate or of a dozen.

It admits of the efficient filling of vacancies.

*It is easy for the elector to cast his vote intelligently.*

It is not difficult to count the votes with precision and promptness.

Very few votes are thrown away.

Every ballot is assigned as the voter who casts it desires.

When to these advantages we add the one which ought to have especial interest for ourselves, namely that it would tend to promote a feeling of nationality, the case in favour of this highly equitable and ingenious system seems complete. The need for substituting it for the old and corrupt one is great now and will soon become urgent. The conditions of the colony are highly favourable to its early introduction. All classes of our people show unusual quickness in apprehending political truths; even our conservatives seeming scarcely so stupid as their brethren in the mother country. But the colonists, whilst feeling the evils arising from the present system, have not been made to see their cause, or to see how the reformed scheme would make things better. It would be a good thing for the community were some admirer of Mr. Hare to publish in a cheap and simple form an adaptation of the system to New Zealand. Mr. Hare's treatise, admirably complete as it is, is sold at a price which places it beyond the reach of those who most need to be convinced. But, if nothing is done to popularize the system thus, it is at least not too much to ask that as little needless difficulty may be raised as possible. The newspaper writers who are constantly telling the people that the people cannot understand the scheme, or that they would strongly object to it if they could, are by so speaking creating the very prejudice by which they justify their action. Let them try the opposite plan of expounding and advocating the plan, and they will not long have to complain of public want of understanding. Possibly, having once declared against the feasibility of the reform, they may think themselves bound in consistency to maintain their opposition; but this is not the part of wise or candid men. "Constancy in mistake is constant folly."

K.

## THE ROMANCE OF RELIGION.

IN the course of a sermon criticised by us in our October number, the Rev. Father Cassidy told his hearers that "common sense in matters of religion is "only common nonsense," and, apparently with the object of proving that he is entirely devoid of anything so dangerous to faith, he has since preached a sermon, fully reported in the Napier 'Daily Telegraph' of the 6th September, on the text, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The main argument of the sermon appears to be directed to proving that if life and nature are regarded from the religious point of view, "whatever is, is right." This is a very old idea, and is deemed satisfactory by that vast majority of the human race who are content to take words for things. As Hume says, "You find certain "phenomena in human nature. You seek a cause or "author. You imagine you have found him. You "afterwards become so enamoured of this off-spring of "your brain, that you imagine it impossible but that "he must produce something greater and more perfect "than the present scene of things, which is so full of "filth and disorder. You forget that the superlative in- "telligence and benevolence are entirely imaginary, "or, at least, without any foundation in reason, and "that you have no ground to ascribe to him any "qualities but what you see he has actually exerted "and displayed in his productions." Ignoring all such considerations as these, the Rev. Father imagines he knows all that his God intended to do before the creation, when "the thunder of eternal bliss beat on "the immaterial and untrodden world," whatever that may mean, while at the same time "all is silent" in spite of the thunder "all is joy, glory, majesty, and "power, that no mortal eye hath ever seen, no ear "hath heard, nor hath it ever entered into any created "heart to conceive." No doubt the scene must have been very magnificent, for "all is there and nothing "more. No light, no heat, no stars or planets yet ap- "peared; no angelic choirs sweeping through space, "and echoing faintly over that mysterious land their "song of gratitude and praise." On the whole, Tom "Hood's description of November in London, when there was "No sun no moon, no night no noon, no

"any time of day," applies very fairly to this remote period, "where nought is everything, and everything is nought." "But," continues the preacher, "the hour of love and mercy was drawing nigh. God's love has grown beyond Himself, and the myriad angel bands now throng the Courts of Heaven. But it does not end there; it goes further still. The fiat of a new creation has gone forth—matter is created." In making this statement we fear the Rev. Father is not strictly orthodox, as, according to the Biblical account, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and nothing is said about the creation of matter, nor are we told that the Hebrew Elohim (in which name, translated God in our version, theologians have recognised indications of the Trinity, and scholars traces of a more primitive polytheism) became less selfish in time, which is the real meaning of the sentence "God's love had grown beyond himself." Accepting the statement for what it is worth, however, it is not easy to see any great exhibition of love towards his creation on the part of the Deity, if Father Cassidy's philosophy of the plan of salvation is sound. "When the world was a paradise, and all was radiant and fresh from the Creator's hand, man was made to live an endless life of joy on earth, and when it should please him to wing his flight elsewhere for joys greater still." How this latter feat was to be accomplished does not appear, though it is a pity it was not performed before that unfortunate interview between Eve and the serpent took place. In that case, however, the whole plot of that theological romance, for the truth of which the churches have vouched for so many centuries, would have been spoilt, and Father Cassidy's sermon would never have been delivered. For granting his premises, the whole argument is clear enough. It is the usual story, put into unusually flowery language. Man fell, and was punished for falling, and the whole creation went more or less wrong in consequence. It has, however, been put right, to a certain extent, by that curious magical process known as the Atonement, or, at any rate, that distributive justice which we fail to find in this world is produced in another. Hence we ought to rest contented with things as they are. But for this the wicked would have by far the best of it in this best of all possible worlds. "If a human ruler," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, "admitted that the punishment inflicted by his laws had very little deterrent effect, but argued as a set-off that he kept the greatest part of his subjects in perpetual confinement and incessant torture, we should say that, whether by his misfortune or fault, he had a very ill-regulated kingdom. Yet, when we try to reconcile ourselves to the existing evils by assuming the existence of this supernatural balance, we necessarily present the universe after this fashion. Whether it is an edifying thing or not I cannot say. I do not see how it helps to strengthen our belief in the safeguards of morality. The explanation is simple enough. The world is what we see it, abounding in misery and wickedness. If you believe in a moral governor, you are bound to put extraordinary limitations upon his power to vindicate his benevolence, or to limit his benevolence in order to vindicate his power; and, in either case, you take away with one hand that safeguard to morality which you give with the other. Meanwhile, in any case you have to stop all logical gaps by talking about mystery. It is simpler to admit that the whole is a mystery, and to cease the effort to play ourselves with words." Is it not, too, better to hold with Mill, that whatever imperfect realisation of benevolence and justice yet obtains in any human society is the work of man himself, struggling upwards against immense natural difficulties, into civilization, and making to himself a "second nature, far better and more unselfish than he was created with," than to regard it as dependent upon the truth of supernatural theories, assumed without sufficient evidence, and daily proving more and more inadequate to explain the facts to which they are applied.

Implicitly, Father Cassidy admits that the world as we really know it is no such theatre of divine munifi-

cence as his theological fairy tale presupposes, when he calls attention to the "inequality of condition and perpetual change of prosperity and adversity" which prevails in it. Without knowing it, he adds the weight of his testimony to the truth of the modern doctrine of evolution, when he points out that to the struggle for existence is mainly due our progress in civilisation, and denounces "socialism and communism as foolish inventions," which "would be the destruction of society and the world could we imagine them to succeed." But in what does their folly consist, but in the fact that, like theology, they substitute imagination for reality, and their advocates think that all is accomplished when a beautiful picture which accords with men's wishes is exhibited to the admiring gaze of the multitude. The experienced course of events is the great standard by which, in the ordinary affairs of life we all regulate our conduct. Our real faith is faith in the laws of nature, and this faith admits of constant verification. What we have to ask ourselves when deciding upon any particular line of action, is, not how far will this be pleasing to some idol made of human ideas, but, how far is it in accord with natural law? Does our knowledge of nature and of human nature, the personal and inherited experience of mankind approve or condemn it? The true answer is often difficult enough to find,—what chance is there of obtaining it when the very mode of asking the question is erroneous? Apart from the region of conduct, the contrast between theological and scientific method, is equally marked in the sphere of knowledge. Compare Father Cassidy's wild visions of the unknown, "where sheer no meaning takes the place of sense," with what such a work as Geikie's "Text Book of Geology" teaches of the early history of the earth and its inhabitants. Look at the nature of the evidence on which the two opposite conclusions rest. The one, the traditions of ignorant ages, recorded by unknown persons whose imaginations supply many of the assumed facts, which are in their nature improbable in the highest degree; the other, a system of reasoned truth, resting on facts and principles capable of direct verification at any moment. Such sciences as geology and biology demonstrate that the Biblical account of the creation and the fall of man, on which the whole theological system is based, is entirely erroneous. The Adam of Paradise is a mere dream, and the whole story on which the Rev. Father has lavished so much vague eloquence is chiefly a product of the mythological tendencies of primitive man. That man existed long before the supposed creation of the Biblical Adam, is proved to demonstration, and that life and death were co-related phenomena millions of years before man's appearance on the scene, is equally certain. Historical criticism is rapidly establishing beyond all question the further fact that Christianity itself is but a phase of opinion. Where mere erudition sees nothing but the supernatural, scientific scholarship traces the evolution of the dogmatic idea from antecedent conditions. A whole class of pre-Christian literature, of which the book of Enoch is the type, is being gradually made to yield up its secrets, while the bearing of the ancient religions of India upon the Christian problem is becoming more fully appreciated. In short, physical, moral, and historical science is rendering it more and more impossible for intelligent persons who read "bad books"—that is, books dealing with facts instead of fictions, and devoted to the discovery of truth instead of to the bolstering up of decaying superstitions—and such books will be read by constantly increasing numbers as education improves—to believe what Father Cassidy preaches. More than this, the time will come when every thinking man will see that sin and crime refer to purely human relations, and will laugh at the claim of his church to forgive impossible sins against a hypothetical God, whose forgiveness they do not want so long as they commit no sins against their fellow creatures. Rewards and punishments will be seen to have no connection with the supernatural, and the sanctions of morality will be recognised as physical and social. Even now, such childish reasons as this sermon gives for "the inequalities of punishments and afflictions in this life" can impose on none

but the most ignorant and superstitious. The grotesque idea that the good are punished for their small faults, and the bad rewarded for their equally small virtues, to adjust an account which is only finally balanced in another world, in order to vindicate the "justice of God," can hardly be deemed satisfactory even by Father Cassidy himself, in view of the enormous disproportion between condition and character actually existing. Then, too, whole classes never have a chance of being anything but both wicked and miserable. On the other hand, whole classes have every chance of being both good and happy. As Beckey Sharp said, "it is easy to be virtuous on five thousand a year." The whole theological theory thus indicated is a rank absurdity, though perhaps not more absurd than many other attempts to "justify the ways of God to man." The simple fact is, that, as everyone knows, character and circumstance act and re-act upon each other. The business of mankind is to so adjust each to the other as to produce the best result. To do this, the widest knowledge of facts and principles is essential, and the fullest individual liberty for their application. To all this theology is bitterly opposed. Where it does not directly hinder, it diverts men's minds from the solid ground of fact to the cloud lands of fancy. Instinctively recognising that "ignorance is the mother of devotion," it discourages all real knowledge, and often with the best intentions, is at the present moment the great antagonist to human progress.

R. P.

## HELPS AND HINDRANCES.

When I was a young man, and for some time, both before and after that particular period of the world's history—it was quite the fashion to praise "the good old times," to sigh or swear according to the sex, or the temperament of the speaker, over the degeneracy of the present, and even now there are occasions when the most optimistic of philosophers are tempted to say in tones, tinged more with sorrow than with anger—"Ah, this sort of thing was managed very differently when I was a boy." Well! perhaps all the changes wrought by the hand of Time are not exactly unmixed blessings. Probably, could all the modes and attributes of civilization advance at the same ratio, many errors now to be deplored would not exist. As a democrat I most heartily desire, that intelligence should keep pace with political liberty. As a Freethinker I earnestly desire that the spirit of constructive secularism should walk hand in hand with the Iconoclasts. There is much truth in the assertion that—"A country would be better governed by a wise and virtuous aristocrat, than by a corrupt oligarchy, or an ignorant, and consequently vicious democracy." Society, however, has practically outgrown the age of despotism, and oligarchies are few and far between: the democratic tendencies of the age are patent to all observers. The genius of innovation has inserted the thin end of his wedge, even amongst those most conservative nations ruled respectively by the Pope and the Prophet. Moslem or Papist they must move on with the stream of time, or die. Slowly, sluggishly, unwillingly, yet they must move or die! True there is impending death in either case; in stagnation the death of people, in progress the death of creeds.

\* \* \* "Creeds dissolve the soul,  
Corrode and eat the fibres of the hearts;  
Make alabaster images, ablaze  
With sunshine on great Heavens height,  
Seem dark and foul as fens from Accron.  
Creeds are the leaden weights dead coarse-men wear  
When they are buried from lone ships at sea,  
Freighted wherewith they never rise again."

Marking the tendency of the age, how important is the duty of every man, who has, himself made free, to strive by word and deed to help onward the good work of human redemption, Yes! redemption from the bonds of ignorance. The Christian priesthood and their dupes of every sect and shade, are continually asserting that we owe all that is worthy of admiration, to the influence of their religion. I have travelled in several of the Continental countries of Europe, where the most consistent of Christian creeds, namely, the Church of

Rome held sovereign sway, and in every case, without exception they were the most backward nations, as regards a general knowledge of the useful arts. And as for the morality of the people I cannot ask to record in the pages of the Review the ocular proofs I have had of their degradation. I am not blind to the vices that exist in protestant countries, I was compelled by my official position in England to see a great deal of it; Parliamentary Statistics, and the records of the daily press, reveal the damning proof of the inefficiency of eighteen hundred years of Christian teaching: but from the Lands-end to John o' Groats, the traveller will find that vice, with scarcely an exception, hides herself; amongst the upper ranks of Society, she puts on the garb and outward semblance of virtue, and so through every grade she masks, until at last she skulks in the dark purlicus of the crowded city. Nine-tenths of the "Social Evil" that haunts the streets of London puts on the outward form of Modesty, but Modesty is as rare as ice in the gay cities of Southern Europe. From my experience therefore I have come to the conclusion, that, the more rigidly the dogmas of Christianity are enforced, the greater hindrance is it to moral and intellectual progress. The student of human nature, of morality, and social science has no need to travel beyond the waters of the English Channel, the terrible state of Ireland under priestly rule is a sufficient proof of its baneful influence. The following paragraph copied from the 'Pall Mall Budget' of August 8th, is one instance among many of the happy effects of theological teaching:—"Serious disturbances have occurred at a holy well at Mother, in Ireland. The well has from ancient times been resorted to by penitents, and sufferers from physical ailments in search of relief, and festivals have recently been held there. The religious observances, however, have been followed by desperate faction fights, in which much blood was spilled and many heads broken. On Wednesday the local magistrates sentenced twelve ringleaders to various terms of imprisonment." If the evil of ignorance and superstition ended with the breaking of a few heads, it would not, so much matter—a few yards of adhesive plaster would set it all to rights. But the heart burnings, the thirsting for revenge: not all the fabled waters of Bethsaida could heal such sores. Having said this much about the hindrances to human progress I will in a few brief and comprehensive lines, point out what I humbly conceive to be the surest helps.

Individual work, and united action. While the friends of political freedom bravely struggle to amend the laws, and extend the franchise, let every Freethinker strive by precept and example to preach the gospel of humanity, and shed abroad the light of brotherly love. Let every man and woman endeavour to realize the fact, that it is his or her special mission to help the weak, to succour the lowly, to sooth the sorrowing, and while bigots fight for the love of God, let us, the Secularists of New Zealand, *work* for the love of Man.

"Work for some good be it ever so slowly."

"Work with a stout heart and resolute will."

And with that end in view I will cap my homily with a

## HYMN

FOR THE CHILDREN'S LYCEUMS.

Hark! the little Children sing  
Welcome to the new-born spring,  
Flowers of Earth and breezes mild  
Welcome to each little Child.

Now the chilling frost is gone,  
Daisies sparkle on the lawn;  
The Crocus and the Primrose shy  
Are peeping upward to the sky.

In the bright green willow trees  
Gently swinging to the breeze  
The Goldfinch and the Linnet sing  
Welcome to returning Spring.

Let us all with cheerful voices  
Help sweet Nature to rejoice;  
Merrily my Children sing,  
Welcome to returning spring.

## Science Notes.

In the official report of the improvements of South Pass, Mississippi River, it is stated that during the year 1883 a terrific cyclone passed over the works, and damaged the East jetty for the length of half a mile, concrete blocks 28 tons in weight being torn away, or turned over.

Experiments have been made on the Rhine with cable towing: that is, a chain or rope is fixed at both ends of the route to be traversed, and passed over a steam-winch attached to the tug-boat, which picks up the cable in front of the latter, and drops it again aft by means of guide pulleys, hauling along the vessel and barges attached to it. The relative consumption of fuel up stream was as 1 to 4½ in favour of the cable boats against the paddle or screw boats, the average ratio up and down being as 1 to 3½. Against this greater economy in fuel of the cable system must be set the considerable expenditure for first cost and maintenance of the cable itself.

Mr. Hoek, of Vienna, has produced a hot air engine of 30 h.p., in which the fundamental notion is the forcing of regulated quantities of air, by means of a compressor, through the fire grate and burning fuel of a furnace, where it serves in part to maintain combustion, and the rest is mingled with the gaseous products, and is conducted to a working cylinder, in which the mixed gases act upon a piston. To obviate excessive wear, a certain proportion of water is discharged among the hot gases, and evaporated by and mixed with them on the way to the working cylinder. Thus, whilst the temperature is reduced, there is generated, in compensation, a quantity of steam-gas.

M. Pasteur's hydrophobia experiments are proving most satisfactory. He lately caused nineteen mad dogs to bite thirty-eight others, half of which had been inoculated with the hydrophobia virus and the remaining half left untouched. All the latter died of rabies, while those inoculated are well and perfectly healthy, although they will be carefully watched for a year, to test whether the inoculation does permanent or only temporary good. M. Pasteur holds that rabies is produced solely by the bite, and that accordingly a law compelling dogs to be inoculated would in the end completely extirpate hydrophobia.

Professor Cope divides mankind into three classes, the mercantile, literary, and scientific. The first is occupied in accumulating material possessions. It is a good training-school, he says, but a bad state to be permanent. The literary mind deals with the manner rather than the matter of things, and it is prone to mistake symbols for facts. The scientific mind occupies itself with realities, and finds chief value in the truth. Its pleasures lie in mental rather than material possessions, and it counts its wealth in ideas. It differs from the mercantile mind in this, that it gives away its commodity for the benefit of others, while the mercantile sells to the highest bidder!

Recent revelations of science have added a new terror to life, for we have been told that the houses we live in, the air we breathe, the clothes we wear, and the food we eat may all be more or less infected with bacilli, microbes, *et hoc genus omne*. According to the investigations of an Hungarian scientist, named Jules Schaarschmidt, one more has to be added to the above agencies of infection. He tells us that not only coin but paper money is affected by bacteria and minute algae. Having examined a quantity of Hungarian and Russian notes he found this minute vegetation even upon those that were newest and cleanest in appearance. "On the surface of all the paper money," he says "is always to be found the bacterium of putrefaction." Various micrococci, leptoriches, and bacilli are frequent in the deposits on the surface of paper money. These are matters of etiriosity, but may perhaps have a practical bearing, for Dr. Schaarschmidt concludes his paper with a suggestion that opens out further possibilities. "From a hygienic point of view also," he says, "the investigations of the commonest household objects may not be superfluous, and I would especially call attention to those forms as occurring on the means of instruction—viz, the handbooks, &c., used by our young scholars." We have here another instance of science upsetting our most cherished ideas, for who in the light of the above revelations would dare to talk like the curate in *Love's Labor Lost* of "the dainties that are bred in a book"?

The temperature of the sea is practically the same for a depth of 30 feet from the surface, the effect of the continual agitation above this level; but below this depth the temperature is considerably less. The "Blake" observers found North of St Thomas, in the West Indies, 36° Fahrenheit at a depth of 27,000 feet, while at the surface it was 80°. The Challenger surveys showed a somewhat similar result.

## Reviews.

*The Young Secularist*: Edited by W. C. Andrade.  
Melbourne: Woodman Bros.

We have received the first two copies of a new Freethought paper entitled "The Young Secularist" published in Melbourne. The first number contained an excellent engraving of Thomas Paine, while the second issue had a portrait of Charles Bradlaugh. A short sketch of the lives of both these worthies is given, and there are notices of Thomas Burt and Diderot, both of which will serve to give the young people an idea of the story of their lives and opinions. The choice of a tale to appear in such a publication hardly appears to have been wisely made; "The Outcast" is excellent reading for grown up persons but children will not be able to understand and appreciate it. The other contributions and selections are of a very readable character and the Young Secularist is sure to be popular in Freethought families where the want of some counteracting influence is so strongly felt. When children are accustomed to read short Freethought papers, and to observe the style in which religious subjects are approached in these papers they afford better ground for the Freethought teacher of the future to work on, than if they had been impregnated with religious errors, the effects of which take so long to get rid of. We wish our contemporary every success feeling confident that it has only to find its way into Freethought families to be appreciated.

## REMARKS ON SECULARISM.

The recent announcement of the intention of our friends in Wellington to consider the advisableness of adopting the word "Secular" in lieu of the word "Freethought" as the name of their Society, has suggested a few remarks as perhaps interesting to those of our readers unacquainted with Secularism as an organization in England. About twenty years ago Mr. George Jacob Holyoake applied himself "to the re-inspection of the general field of controversy." The result was that one of the first principles laid down by that gentleman to rule the movement was "that they should recognise the sincerity of the clergy and the good intention of Christians generally." That a Secular Society was meant to include "the various classes of persons known for their dissent from the popular Christian tenets of the day: these various classes, of course, comprehending those who reject the authority of miracles, allege general objections to the inspiration of the Bible, question the dogma of the immortality of the soul, and who cannot subscribe to the arguments supposed to establish the existence of a Being distinct from nature.

The wondrous manifestations of nature should not be degraded to a secondary rank: the Nature which we know must be the God which we seek.

Precedence should be given to the duties of this life over those which pertain to another world: this life being the first in certainty, it ought to have the first place in importance.

Science is the providence of man: absolute spiritual dependency may involve material destruction. By science is meant those methodized agencies which are at our command—that systematized knowledge which enables us to use the powers of nature for human benefit. By spiritual dependency is meant application to heaven by prayer expecting that help will come to us.

That there exist, independently of scriptural authority, guarantees of morals in human nature, intelligence, and utility.

## Notes &amp; Queries.

## QUERIES.

## THE SOUL.

Reading 'Knowledge' lately, I came on some interesting correspondence on the soul. One of the correspondents put the following queries, which I should like some of your readers to try and answer:—

1. Where was the soul before the body came into existence?
2. What did it do?
3. Where are all the souls yet to come into bodies not yet born?
4. Can an immortal thing be born?
5. If a soul can have a beginning, why can it not have an end?
6. What could the soul do without the senses? (Science teaching us that at death all the organs of the body are destroyed, and with them the senses).

TRUTHSEEKER.

## ANSWERS.

## THE AUTHOR DISCOVERED.

It is more than probable that I shall be too late with my reply to the correspondent who sent you this:—"Can you or any of your readers inform me who is the author of the following lines, and about the time they were written.—J.P.

"I sent my soul through the Invisible, some letter of the after-life to spell:

And by-and-bye my soul returned to me and answered:—  
'I myself am heaven and hell.'

"Heaven, but the vision of fulfilled desire,  
And hell the shadow of a soul on fire;  
Lost on the darkness into which ourselves,  
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire."

A cutting from some paper (name forgotten), in my scrap book, tells us that the author was the Persian poet, Omar Khayyân (or n), and this information concerning him is given:—"Omar lived in the latter half of our eleventh, and died within the first quarter of our twelfth century. He was a philosopher of scientific insight and ability far beyond that of the age and country in which he lived. He was one of the eight learned men whom the Sultan of Persia employed to reform the Calendar, 'a computation of time,' says Gibbon, 'which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.' He was also the author of some astronomical tables and an Arabic treatise on algebra. Malik Shah, the Sultan, showered favors upon him, but he was content to lead the life of a philosopher, with moderate worldly ambition and moderate wants. Like Lucretius, he failed of finding any Providence but destiny, and any world but this; and so he set about making the most of it, and takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of sense above that of the intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested." A thirty-six page octavo volume of his verses was published by Bernard Quaritch, of London. I enclose a number of stanzas.—E. C. WALKER, Editor 'Lucifer' ('The Light-Bearer'), Valley Falls, Kansas.

## THE GAME OF LIFE.

A book of verses underneath the bough,  
A jug of wine, a loaf of bread—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the wilderness—  
Oh, wilderness were Paradise enow!

Some for the glories of this world, and some  
Sigh for the prophet's Paradise to come;  
Oh, take the cash and let the credit go,  
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum!

The worldly hope men set their hearts upon,  
Turns ashes,—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,  
Lighting a little hour or two, was gone.

Think, in this battered caravanserai,  
Whose portals are alternate night and day,  
How Sultan after Sultan with his pomp  
Abode his destined hour, and went his way.

Ah, my beloved, fill the cup that clears  
To-day of past regret and future fears.

To-morrow! Why, to-morrow I may be  
Myself with yesterday's seven thousand years!

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best,  
That from his vintage rolling Time has pressed,  
Have drank their cup a round or two before,  
And one by one crept silently to rest.

Myself, when young, did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument  
About it and about; but evermore  
Came out by the same door wherein I went.

With them the seed of wisdom did I sow,  
And with my own hand wrought to make it grow;  
And this was all the harvest that I reaped—  
"I came like water, and like wind I go."

There was the door to which I found no key;  
There was the veil through which I could not see;  
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE  
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

Strange, is it not, that of the myriads who  
Before us passed the door of darkness through,  
Not one returns to tell us of the road,  
Which to discover we must travel too?

The revelations of devout and learn'd,  
Who rose before us, and as prophets burn'd,  
Are all but stories which, awoke from sleep,  
They told their fellows, and to sleep returned.

I sent my soul through the invisible,  
Some letters of that after-life to spell;  
And by-and-by my soul returned to me  
And answered, "I myself am heaven and hell."

Heaven, but the vision of fulfilled desire,  
And hell, the shadow of a soul on fire,  
Lost on the darkness from which we ourselves  
So late emerged, in which so soon expire.

We are no other than a moving row  
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go  
Round with this sun-illumined lantern held  
In midnight by the master of the show.

Impotent pieces of the game he plays  
Upon the checker-board of nights and days:  
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,  
And one by one back in the closet lays.

The ball no question makes of ayes or noes,  
But right or left as strikes the player, goes;  
And he that tossed you down into the field,  
He knows about it all—he knows—he knows!

The moving finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all your piety or wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

And that inverted bowl we call the sky,  
Whereunder, crawling, copped, we live and die;  
Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for it  
As impotently rolls as you or I.

And fear not lest existence, closing your  
Account and mine, should know the like no more.  
The eternal Sâki from that bowl has poured  
Millions of bubbles like us, and will pour.

Oh threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!  
One thing at least is certain—*this* life flies;  
One thing is certain and the rest is lies;  
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

With earth's first clay Time did the last man knead,  
And there of the last harvest sowed the seed;  
And the first morning of creation wrote  
What the last dawn of reckoning shall read.

Yesterday this day's madness did prepare,  
To-morrow's silence, triumph, or despair.  
Laugh! for you know not whence you came, nor why;  
Weep! for you know not why you go, or where.

What! out of senseless nothing to provoke  
A conscious something to resent the yoke  
Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain;  
Of everlasting penalties, if broke!

What! from his helpless creatures be repaid  
Pure gold for what he lent us dross—alloyed—  
Sue for a debt we never did contract,  
And cannot answer—Oh! the sorry trade!

Oh thou, who man of baser earth didst make,  
And even with Paradise devise the snake!  
For all the sin wherewith the face of man  
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take!

Thomas Boyle, temperance and religious lecturer, was recently committed for trial for criminally assaulting two boys. It was asserted in evidence that he quoted Scripture to the lads as his justification.

## NOTES FROM AUCKLAND.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

Auckland is to have its Museum opened on Sunday at last, and it is the last city in the colony to come to that decision. Yet the people of Auckland are as pleasure-seeking a community as there is in these islands, but they make great profession of what passes as piety while owning very little of the genuine article. In September a requisition was presented to the Council in charge of the museum, requesting that it should be opened on Sundays. Several Christian sects regarded such a proposition as heretical, and, with that intolerance which has for centuries been synonymous with Christianity, they got up petitions to keep the museum shut. These petitioners were of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian type. They were not joined by the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. On the contrary, it is now said that Bishop Cowie, of the Anglican Church, has long been in favour of opening. The puritanical observance of Sunday is a modern phase of Christianity not three centuries old. It is also a local phase, manifested chiefly in England and Scotland, but utterly repudiated on the Continent of Europe. It has been imported here as other home matters have, and though somewhat diluted to what it is in the parent country, is nevertheless the backbone of what a large proportion of the population consider genuine Christianity. This opinion is held in defiance of early Christian tradition, for if New Testament narrative possesses a grain of truth, Jesus was a most violent opponent of Sabbatarianism. Yet these Sabbatarians, in the most fulsome manner, profess to be the close followers of this same Jesus. The infatuation of these sectaries is due, first, to their ingrained egotism—they are confident that none mean so well as they do; second, to their passion for domination. Except liberty to themselves they have no other conception of liberty, nor have they any disposition towards it. To bring over such minds to the side of liberty, you must touch them through their pockets and interests, then they may be brought over to be professed supporters. That the Auckland Museum is to be opened on Sunday is due to a fortunate chance. Peculiarly, the Museum has been embarrassed. The revenue was derived in part from subscribers of £1 each per annum. A large majority of these subscribers have been for years in favour of opening, but the minority threatened that if it were opened they would discontinue their subscriptions. The Council quailed before the intimidation of this minority and deferred indefinitely the action they would most willingly have taken. However relief came, and from a most unlikely source. Over a year ago an old man named Costley died. He lived as if he were poor. An old clothesman would not have given more than ten shillings for his wardrobe, but he died legally worth about £100,000, unearned increment on city property he had bought away back from the year 1840. The bulk of this large sum he apportioned by will amongst seven public institutions. The share which fell to the Museum was about £12,000. This relieved that institution from all embarrassment, made it independent of the bigoted governing minority of the Institute, and now the public will be able to enter it on Sundays. With the new lights that have lately been shed around on the land question, Mr. Costley's very liberal act may be viewed from a very different stand point to what it would have been viewed a few years ago. From that new stand point, Mr. Costley in bequeathing his property to institutions designed for the benefit of the community did merely an act of justice. The increase in the value of his property was due entirely to the numbers and enterprise of the community, and not his exertions. He may have acknowledged this fact—may have been a disciple of the Henry George school, and, following up his convictions to their practical end, have resolved honestly to return to the community that increment which the community had earned.

It is not an uncommon opinion that Governments are backward in reforms and improvements, but in this instance that opinion is not borne out, for the Government years ago imposed this condition on the Council of the Museum, "that it should be opened on Sundays as soon as the other Museums were so opened," but the Council have for years been boycotted by the illiberal, and no doubt in their own estimation, pious minority of the members of the Institute.

## GLEANINGS.

'NATIONAL REFORMER.'

There are seven Freethought Associations in Canada.

Mrs. Besant's "Atheistic Platform" seems to have taken with the public, the sales being very large.

Mr. Bradlaugh is glad to learn that Mr. Stout has been re-elected President of the Dunedin Freethought Association.

Newdigate Newdegate is begging for money to pay his law costs, and all the Tory leaders have signed his begging petition.

Fifty new members joined the National Secular Society in one week, and four new branches were being formed at the same time.

In the first division of the advanced stages at South Kensington, four of the five candidates from the Hall of Science Schools who qualified were women.

In consequence of the death of M. Goffin, the illness of M. Rothmaler, and the state of things in Brussels, the next International Freethought Conference will be held in Antwerp in 1885.

The Diderot Centenary Committee, after obtaining the authorisation of the French Government to inaugurate the Diderot statue, invited Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant to attend. Work, however, prevented their acceptance.

The Hall of Science Schools are maintaining their high reputation. Of twenty-six sent to the South Kensington examinations all passed. They won't need any more of Sir Henry Tyler's advertisements in the House of Commons.

The 'Church Reformer' has discovered that "*the present oath (of allegiance) is non-Christian, if not anti-Christian,*" and uses Malcolm McColl's argument to show that the oath was altered from "on the truth faith of a Christian, so help me God" to admit men who deny the Christian faith.

In a late number of the 'Reformer' is an acknowledgment of subscriptions received from Nelson, N.Z. The subscribers, in a note, said—"On behalf of ourselves and the other subscribers, we tender you the hand of fellowship and sympathy, and trust that the day is not far distant when your indomitable courage and splendid skill will prevail for the complete discomfiture of your enemies." Such messages from this far-off land show that even here the fight for constitutional right is eagerly watched.

A Mr. J. St. Clair challenged Mr. Bradlaugh to a debate on the moral or constitutional right of the House of Lords to delay passing one half of a Reform Bill until "its concealed half was before the nation and the House." He also named forfeits which were to be paid for deviations from facts, immoral arguments, fallacies, or ambiguities during the debate. Mr. Bradlaugh replied that he was of opinion that the Lords had repeatedly acted mischievously since 1760, and also in the Franchise matter. He accepted the challenge, but asked for a banker's reference, and two sureties for the amount of fines. The forfeits to be divided between the London Hospital and the Masonic Boys' School. Mr. St. Clair could not meet the conditions.

'SECULAR REVIEW.'

There is a Freethought journal in Spain. It is called 'La Tronada.'

Saladin (Stewart Ross) has challenged the Rev. Canon Richmond, of Carlisle, to a debate in the columns of that paper.

The above-mentioned cleric, speaking of Mr. C. Watts, said "he ought to be met somehow or other," and that "perhaps it was not wise to meet him on the platform; but he must be met, and his followers must be met." As the Rev. Canon objects to the platform, Saladin offers the 'Review' columns.

Cardinal Manning told the last Temperance Congress that Christians "are the only men on earth who are stained and shamed by the manufacture and consumption of strong drink. Indian, Oriental, and Chinese were bound by their religion not to take it, and they only broke through the rule where the Christian name had spread."

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## REDUCTION IN PRICE OF LAST YEAR'S CARDS.

In order to further increase the sale of last year's cards, the publisher has decided to reduce the price of the large size to 6d each, and the small ones to 3d each. They have been carefully reprinted this year, and many corrections made in the drawings. Over 3,000 of these cards were sold in Wanganui last year to send away to friends out of the Colony, and the publisher is confident that when his new cards are seen, a most extensive demand will arise.

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