

Mr. Bradlaugh spoke very eloquently to his constituents at Northampton in September, when he declared he would take a decisive step to be admitted next session to the full rights of a member of the House of Commons. "The Tories," he said, "have thrown down the gauntlet of illegal force. If I cannot break it by law, I will crumble that gauntlet with stronger fingers than any of which they dream."

The works of Huxley, Tyndall, and Herbert Spencer were recently stopped by the Collector of Customs at Montreal, and confiscated as being "immoral, irreligious, and injurious." The Premier, Sir J. Macdonald, intervened, and restored to the "immoral" literature its freedom. This is an illustration of the tendency on the part of a section of Christians to pronounce all literature which does not meet their approval "indecent" and "immoral." The Protestant Index Expurgatorius differs little from that of Rome, except that it is hypocritical.

Father Le Menant des Chesnais is a French Priest who is winning renown in this colony by unscrupulous attacks on Freethinkers. He gives no authenticated facts about the "sensuality" he imputes. We shall set him a good example in this respect. In the criminal statistics of France (see 'Journal Officiel,' February 14, 1880) there is published a list of condemnations for crimes against public morals from 1871 to 1879. Out of 43,249 lay teachers, 125 were committed for crimes against chastity, and 49 for misdemeanors, making a total of 166. Out of 9,469 religious teachers, all vowed to celibacy, 65 were condemned for crimes against chastity, and 11 for attempted offences of the same kind, making a total of 76 persons. Celibate priests and monks were guilty of more than double the number proportionately of offences against chastity as compared with laymen.

In the last Primer of Edward VI. there is a "Prayer for Landlords" which soon fell into disuse, perhaps from its offensiveness to many who did not recognise in it the economy which "buys in the cheapest and sells in the dearest market." Let the prayer speak: "The earth is Thine, and all that therein is, notwithstanding Thou has given the possession thereof to the children of men. We heartily pray Thee to send Thy Holy Spirit into the hearts of them that possess the grounds and pastures of the earth; that they, remembering themselves to be Thy tenants, may not rack and stretch out the rents of their houses and lands, nor yet take unreasonable fines and incomes, after the manner of covetous worldlings; but so let them out, that the inhabitants thereof may be able to pay the rents, and to live and nourish their families, and to relieve the poor." This prayer, if it had occupied a prominent place in recent times in the Prayer Book, might have shamed the Bench of Bishops into giving a few votes for measures limiting the power to "rack and stretch out the rents."

The series of lectures undertaken in support of "Christian Evidence" in Wanganui has given signs of moral disaster. The second lecture was by the Rev. W. J. Williams, Wesleyan Minister, and was marked by coarseness and slander. He referred to the "great Freethought champion Tom Paine"—though in the first lecture by Mr Gordon Forlong, Paine was claimed to have recanted and found 'the truth' on his death-bed. If Paine is in the heavenly mansion, his future companions in bliss ought to speak of him more respectfully. Colonel Ingersoll was alleged to have signed a petition to the President of the United States, asking permission for "obscene and filthy literature" to be sent through the post. The Secretary of the Wanganui Freethought Association wrote and asked Mr Williams for his authority. The answer was—the Rev. Joseph Cook of Boston, in a lecture delivered in Auckland. The report of the lecture, however, shows that Cook admitted Ingersoll had signed the petition under a misapprehension of its object, and had "withdrawn his name from the movement." This was carefully suppressed by Mr Williams, who thus stands convicted of making an accusation which he must have known—if he had read the report of the lecture on which he

founded his charge—was substantially untrue. Common candor and common honesty required that the qualifying statement should not have been suppressed.

## Notes & Queries.

### ANSWERS.

Replying to Query No. 5: University College, London, at which I was myself educated, is a great College at which "theological teaching is forbidden."—AGNOSTIC.

I know no better definition of Pantheism than that given in Brande's Dictionary of Science:—"In Metaphysical Theology, the theory which identifies nature, or the *To Pan*, the universe in its totality, with God. This doctrine differs from atheism in the greater distinctness with which it asserts the unity and essential vitality of nature; parts of which all animated beings are. The most ancient Greek philosophers were pantheists in this sense; Anaxagoras being the first who distinctly stated the co-existence with nature of a reasonable creator—'a mind the principle of all things.' In this sense, too, Spinoza may be called a pantheist."—B.

In answer to "Theist's" enquiry concerning the teachings of pantheism, I think the following extract from Mr. Lecky's "Rationalism" is clear and succinct:—"The pantheistic writings that flowed from the school of Averroes, reviving the old Stoical notion of a soul of nature, directed attention to the great problem of the connection between the worlds of matter and mind. The conception of an all-pervading spirit, which 'sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animal, and wakes in the man'; the belief that the hidden vital principle which produces the varied forms of organisation, is but the thrill of the Divine essence that is present in them all—this belief, which had occupied so noble a place among the speculations of antiquity, reappeared."—T.

There is no longer any doubt that hemlock—the Greek *Kōneion*—was that used by the Athenians to poison their criminals. The following symptoms are described in the Phædo of Plato:—"Socrates, having walked about, when he said that his legs were growing heavy, lay down on his back; for the man so directed him. And at the same time he who gave him the poison, taking hold of him, after a short interval examined his feet and legs; and then having pressed his foot hard, he asked if he felt. He said that he did not. After this he pressed his thighs; and thus going higher, he showed us that he was growing cold and stiff. Then Socrates touched himself, and said that when the poison reached his heart he should then depart. But now the parts around the lower belly were almost cold; when, uncovering himself, for he had been covered over, he said (and they were his last words), 'Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius; pay it therefore, and do not neglect it.' 'It shall be done,' said Crito, 'but consider whether you have anything else to say.' To this question he gave no reply; but shortly after he gave a convulsive movement, and then the man covered him, and his eyes were fixed; and Crito, perceiving it, closed his mouth and eyes." A case of poisoning with Conium (hemlock) described by Dr. Hughes Bennett in his *Clinical Lectures*, and experiments by Dr. Christison on animals, have established beyond all doubt its identity with the poison given to the great atheist. The action of hyoseyamus (henbane) is essentially distinct, producing delirium like that of delirium tremens. Cardinal Manning has made a mistake.—B.

In perusing your REVIEW of November 1st, I notice the reply of "E.T.," of New Plymouth, in answer to the query of "T." as to whether Dr. W. B. Carpenter acknowledged the truth of the phenomena of Spiritualism, Mesmerism, &c. Carpenter puts down the belief in Table-rapping, Table-turning, &c., as an example of "a variety of aberrant actions bordering on insanity." Quoting from a very able work on Spiritualism, "Undoubtedly Dr. Carpenter considers that his theory of unconscious cerebration explains the phenomena of Table-tipping, Table-rapping, &c." But any one who attempts to account for the manifestations of Spiritualism by so shallow a subterfuge as this, must remember that 99 out of 100 manifestations take place where there is no physical contact, and where there could be no unconscious cerebral action. It was long ago the method resorted to by Dr. John Borce Dods, of the United States—this back-brain theory or the unconscious cerebral