

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

SALADIN THE LITTLE

AN EXPOSURE.

BY

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SALADIN THE LITTLE.

SALADIN'S MOTIVES EXPOSED.

UNION concentrates force and thus becomes strength. As in physical matters so in social and political struggles, he who promotes union paves the way of victory. Down yonder mountain slope those dozen babbling rills skipped and danced for ages : they tripped their way to the sea with sweet music, but without much practical benefit to man. The great engineer perceives in them a source of power ; he unites them ; factories are built on the spot ; families obtain food ; the straggling village grows into a town. The music of the rills has lost none of its sweetness, because it is accompanied by the merry prattle of childhood ; their independence is gone, but on their grave bloom the loveliest of flowers, domestic peace, domestic plenty, domestic happiness.

Union is useful in all things. All parties in Church and State recognise its value. To those who advocate unpopular opinions, who endeavor to expel error and restore truth, who struggle to disperse the mists of prejudice and the clouds of bigotry, union is the very breath of life. With it we may do something, without it we are like one of those independent rills, wasting on rocky ears "the majesty of our prose and the thunder of our poetry," as we tread our weary way to our long home. We worked hard, early and late ; and is this our reward ? Ah ! laurels wreath the victor's brow. There is no prize for unsuccessful merit. Wouldst thou be useful in thy day and generation ? Sink thy petty independence, fall in like a loyal soldier, and fight to the bitter end.

A great responsibility attaches to those who would destroy any union that has been formed for good purposes. They disable others without adding to their own strength ; they clog my carriage wheel, but increase not the velocity of their own waggon. Some there are in our day who think they can redress the grievances of their country by destroying the implements, and mutilating the cattle of their neighbors, as there are those who endeavor to spread secular principles by pointing out to the enemy some imagined weakness in secular armor. The dastardly crime of the former is great, but insignificant as compared with the dastardly devilry of the latter, just as one weed less in the field of thought is more than ample compensation for a county run wild, and one flower more in the garden of truth outweighs a million times the decrease of exports and fall of revenue.

Secularism is unpopular enough. Secularists are the Ishmaels of the age. Our hands are against all prejudices and all prejudices are against us. The force of prejudice is strong ; the hosts of prejudice are many. If our little band is to make any headway at all against the foe, it is our bounden duty to unite. The union is ready. It is the work of brave men and women who have devoted themselves to the cause. It is known by the title "The National Secular Society." Whatever this society may have left undone, it has, at least, erected a platform from which to attack bigotry, built halls dedicated to the cause of Freethought, and enlisted under its banner many gallant soldiers, who might otherwise be wasting their energies and exhausting their strength in hopeless struggle against overwhelming odds. This society it is that has made active and public Freethought propaganda possible in England—a very gratifying and satisfactory result, mainly due, as no honorable man would deny, to the eloquence and, above all, to the indomitable energy of its President. All Secularists and Freethinkers ought to support this society, if only to show their Christian opponents that it is possible to unite in brotherly love without being hammered into shape by blind faith on the anvil of terror.

But this is not to be. The Freethought party must, it seems, go through the ordeal of schisms and heresies. The heretic, in this instance, is one *Mr. W. Stewart Ross*, an enterprising publisher and bookseller of Farringdon Street, but better known, perhaps, as editor of the *Secular Review* under the *nom de plume* of "*Saladin*." This gentleman has during the last two years written against this society. His opposition is not that of a philosopher combating error; that opposition would have been welcome. There is malice in his every word, resentment and petty pique. Such criticism can do no good, can be acceptable to none but the enemies of Secular progress. He who plays into the hands of the enemy, but weakens the cause he pretends to champion. I am not objecting to criticism. As a Freethinker I freely grant to others what I claim for myself. Freedom to think presupposes freedom to speak: without the latter the former would be sheer mockery. *Saladin* has given himself plenty of rein. I do not propose to copy his diction or imitate his style. There is no need in the nineteenth century to don the controversial armor of the dark ages. Vitriolic epithets do not strengthen a proposition; all they do is to act as a label to the intellectual contents of the individual who uses them. Between *Saladin* and me there will be no occasion to use them, as the facts are emphatic enough.

What, then, are the motives of *Saladin's* opposition to the National Secular Society? What the *raison d'être* of the heresy which he is at so much pains to christen with his name? I must remind the reader that *Saladin* professes to be a Secularist, a Freethinker, an Agnostic, etc. His motives should be exceptionally pure. In attacking us, a Christian would be allowed more latitude than an Agnostic. To the former everything is fair, for we are his sworn enemies. The latter should kindly point out our errors and suggest corrections, for he is our friend. Enemies indulge in lies and slander, whereas it is a friend's holy office to tell the truth.

Now, *Saladin* calls all the members of the National Secular Society *Dirtites*, *Cat-and-ladleites*, *Knowl-*

tonites, Malthusians, and other complimentary expressions of similar odor, in the coining of which he enjoys an unenviable notoriety. Whenever I read abusive, insulting expressions, I generally conclude that the writer has no case and no confidence. These puerile word-toys are unworthy of a grown-up man. Dirtites indeed! It were idle to expect sober criticism from such an unbridled tongue. But to go on. The National Secular Society teaches Materialism, Socialism and Malthusianism. These doctrines Saladin hates and detests: they are worse than the Incarnation, the Resurrection and the Atonement. Nay, suppress these horrid opinions, and Saladin would consent to let the Cross stand and the fire of hell burn for ever. This is the odious trinity of his abomination—Materialism, Socialism and Malthusianism; and the National Secular Society promulgates these vile doctrines—vile Society! Does it? Let us see. In this Society's Almanac for 1887, p. 34, I think that the Principles and Objects of the Society are:

“Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference: it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

“Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

“Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

“Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.”

Not a word do we find here about Malthusianism, Socialism, or Materialism, but rather a platform on which every honest Freethinker could stand, a flag under which all unselfish Secularists could fight. If Saladin has no reason more valid to offer for his opposition, he stands condemned out of his own mouth.

Saladin has other reasons. The President of the National Secular Society is a Malthusian; but he is also editor of a Freethought paper, and in that capacity he reviewed a book entitled *Elements of Social Science*, and expressed his opinion that the book was honest and useful. It should also be stated that this review was written nearly thirty years ago. Why may not the President be a Malthusian, or anything else if he likes, so long as he is a loyal and sincere Secularist? It is only as a Freethinker that his opinions must not clash with the published principles of the Society over which he presides. On other questions, more or less intimately connected with Secularism, he, like every other member, has a right to use his private judgment. Indeed, I always thought that the right of private judgment, on all matters whatsoever, was the essence of Freethought—that it recognised the government of reason, and not the impostures of faith or the despotism of any individual. But another School of Freethought has arisen in our midst: the fundamental article of its creed has been stolen from the putrefying rags of the Galilean. "Believe or be damned," was the old watchword. "You are free to think but, as I do," is the badge of this heresy, the chief priest of which is Saladin, who discards the mantle of freedom, for the Nessus-robe of intolerance. Oh! Saladin, fie, fie, fie, for shame! A tiger loves his tribe and protects his kind; but you, a Freethinker, strike your brother Freethinkers and, on the stage of life, for the sake of a little rascal gold, play a traitor's part. Freethought has come to this. What a deplorable falling off!

So with regard to the recommendation of the *Elements of Social Science*, the President has a perfect right to recommend the book, if he thinks it a book worthy of being read. Verily it is a memorable book. Its contents cannot be the rubbish that Saladin and his school pretend they are. It has already in England reached its twenty-fifth edition. It is translated into ten modern languages, practically all the languages of the Continent. The French translation has reached its third edition, the Italian its fourth edition, the

German its sixth edition—a proof that this book finds most readers where education is most spread and culture most general. Scholarly Germany rises up in judgment against Saladin. Mr. G. J. Holyoake recommended the book. It is called “a blessing to the human race” by Ernest Jones, a name that will, I venture to predict, be fondly remembered in England, even when that of Saladin is forgotten. Some of the most eminent organs of the medical profession, both in this country and abroad, are lavish in praise of the treatise. Surely in the face of this cloud of witnesses it behoves Saladin, I will not say, to reconsider his opinion, but to be more tolerant towards those who form a different estimate of that remarkable book to his own. I make this suggestion for Saladin’s good, not to purchase his vote and favor for the *Elements*. That book has found a place in the literature of Europe, whence Saladin’s sordid criticism and blatant incompetence will no more dislodge it, than will a barking cur snatch from the sky the pale autumn moon.

An *index expurgatorius* drawn up by a Freethinker! Nettles on rose bushes; poison from the grape; the night of error from the sun of light. The Farringdon School of Freethought usurps the functions of the Holy Office. No Freethinker of that school must read a book that bears not the *imprimatur* of Saladin. Retrogression not progress is the order of the day. The legitimate corollary of suppressing books is to destroy men. When a man’s right to think, read, and write is taken away, the next step is the deprivation of his right to live. The next rôle for Saladin is that of Torquemada or Bonner. Luckily for him Smithfield is near. I blush for Freethought when I see it draped in the bloody robes of the Inquisition. I am seeking the motives of Saladin’s opposition to the organised Freethought of our day. I have examined those which he publishes with commendable regularity in his journal week after week. But they are pretences, shams—all gas. The views of the President of the National Secular Society on certain questions outside the platform of that society cannot be the cause of Saladin’s inextinguishable hatred. There are hundreds and thousands of

members of this society who are not Malthusians. I am a member of this society, but I am not a Malthusian, not yet, at all events. When, on the other hand, he calls, in sweeping condemnation, all the members of this society Dirtites, because they advocate socialistic and Malthusian principles, he knows that he is telling an untruth and playing the hypocrite. Even if they did, and if Malthusian principles were dirty, it does not lie with Saladin to call them by that name. Saladin knows that, none better, in his heart of hearts. I must refresh his memory, for he seems to be burdened with unaccountable forgetfulness. To call the National Secular Society Socialistic and Malthusian is an unparadonable misrepresentation, to put it in the mildest possible way. In the *Secular Review* for 1884, Saladin offers "to proclaim himself a liar," if certain charges were proved against him. I shall give him an opportunity of displaying his honor and love of truth before I have done with him.

In an ancient historian, I find that individuals have two sets of motives—one for the public, which is a pretence, the other for themselves, which is real and genuine. The publicly stated motives of Saladin's opposition I have demonstrated to be untrue, and unworthy a Freethinker, even if they were true: these evidently, are the pretended set. Would a man who deals in pretences, who puts forward reasons, for his conduct, which he knows to be false, would that man be called truthful? I must seek for Saladin's motives elsewhere. In prosecuting my search, I shall have to lift many a veil which I would fain leave untouched. But Saladin's cant, hypocrisy, and misrepresentation compel me to do my duty, and I will do it with care, but without malice; with truth, but without vindictiveness.

In the year 1884, Saladin became sole proprietor of the *Secular Review*, having bought it of Mr. Charles Watts, whom he previously assisted in editing that journal. Then he had an opportunity to examine the financial condition of his investment. That examination was not one to make him jubilant. The paper was running into debt. A large percentage of the sub-

scribers were bogus subscribers. This state of things was very distasteful to Saladin's Scottish shrewdness. If it were possible for him to worship a god, that God would be money. An admirer of Saladin's goes so far as to say that the editor of the *Secular Review* cares nothing for Freethought, except in so far as it brings grist to the mill. The written statement of this gentleman is quoted *in extenso* in the *Secular Review* without a shadow of an editorial note to repudiate such base, sordid motives. Weary and disheartening must those weeks and months of deficit have been to Saladin. There he was laboring like a giant without being able to earn literary salt. Week after week, he was turning out of his intellectual workshop, leaders and essays and rhyme that shook the great white throne, carried dismay throughout the length and breadth of heaven, and made the hierarchies of earth totter to their base, but the inhabitants of England, thankless crew, would not buy the *Secular Review*, would not support and encourage the greatest writer of the nineteenth century. His efforts were Titanic, his remuneration considerably less than zero. Were it not for the honor of his name, and the glory of his dear Scotland, he would have washed his hands of English Freethinkers and locked up the Agnostic Restaurant in which he figured as caterer, carver, and customer, without a rival or companion. The game was not worth a rushlight and the Freethinkers of England were unworthy of him. If the *Secular Review* was to pay, *it must seek buyers outside English Freethought*. Saladin's shrewdness soon saw this.

How to extend the market of the *Secular Review* became henceforth the subject which engrossed Saladin's thoughts. An accident helped him, as unexpected as it was gratifying. Within a hundred miles of the Cotswolds lives (and long may he live!) a venerable and munificent gentleman, who is nothing if not original. He conceived the bold scheme of building a Secular school, and has had the courage to carry it out. Now, under the roof of this noble-minded man lives a noble-minded lady, whom to see is to esteem, who has devoted herself absolutely to the cause of Freethought.

This lady was commissioned by the daring reformer to put herself in communication with some of the leaders of the party, with a view to start the school, he himself not wishing to figure publicly or prominently in the administration of the institution, for he is a benefactor of the unobtrusive, unassuming kind, whose delight it is to do good, and who find their great reward in the happiness of others, not in the nauseous eulogy of flatterers. The lady obeyed. She had been for years a reader of the *Secular Review*. She entertained, and still entertains, a high opinion of Mr. Charles Watts, while she regards with special esteem that gentleman's gifted wife. Mr. Watts's connection with the *Secular Review* had, she was at the time aware, been severed, but she was loyal to the organ which she had been so long in the habit of reading. She went to hunt up the present editor of that journal. She paid him a visit.

That visit changed the course of Saladin's boat, and explains the otherwise unaccountable metamorphosis of the man. After the first intoxication of success was over, he reviewed his position and prospects in the light of the great honor he had received. The first Secular School in England had been made over to him by deed of gift. Was not that something to be proud of? Who said that Saladin's services to Freethought were not recognised? Behold a proof to the contrary—a very tangible proof too in the shape of a substantial building and a respectable plot of ground, together with many other delights and enjoyments that the world wots not of. Modesty is not a foible of Saladin's. The world ought to know how nobly he has been paid for his "pencraft." The world shall know it. A golden image is set up in Farringdon Street to commemorate the event, while Saladin and his satellites in the *Secular Review* crow the song of triumph, the strutting pæan of petty pride, *cock-a-doodle-doo! cock-a-doodle-doo! cock-a-doodle doo!* That visit did it for Saladin—fed his vanity.

He could now claim recognition at the hands of English Freethinkers. Was it not he who was selected to be the proud trustee of this splendid bequest, an Agnostic school whence all gods were banished except

Saladin? But alas! he has never made it known that his co-trustee was a Christian. Did this trouble him? Not in the least. And what has been the result to Freethought of the possession of this school? How many boys has it educated into Agnosticism? Has it ever been full? Never, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary. In the current issue of the *Secular Review* is an advertisement "that there are a few vacancies for Young Gentlemen as boarders." And what has been the cost? In the course of the lunacy inquiry, the other day, on poor Mr. Bullock, it came out that he paid into the London and Westminster Bank, on June 28, 1884, the sum of £900 to the account of Saladin and his Christian co-trustee. This was for three years expenses; but in September, 1885, another £300 was applied for and eventually obtained. For the manner in which Saladin obtained two other sums of £600 each as loans, and two cheques for £8,000 and £5,000 as gifts, from Mr. Bullock, see *Gloucester Chronicle* of Dec. 11, 1886. It was time to assert this claim. The object of his fond dreams was within his reach. But there was a leader in the field whom the party did not at all desire to abandon. What of that? Would not Christian England rejoice at any attacks made on this man, whom she hated for his ability, and detested for his influence? She would not too nicely examine the source of the attacks, or the motives of the aggressor, so but the attacks be violent. Saladin will oblige Christian England. He launches on the unnatural crusade against the veteran Freethinker, he a raw recruit of thirty-five weeks' standing, against him a trained warrior, grey with the burden of thirty-five years of meritorious service. Ye gods, what a spectacle for the world! One Lilliput shooting needle arrows at Captain Gulliver! That visit spoiled Saladin—puffed him with presumption.*

And the *Secular Review*, can it not be made to pay now? Is there no means of converting the deficit into

* Even the alleged insult of the Building Society is now admitted to be deserved. There was some foundation for it after all, as is admitted, in self-righteous indignation, by Saladin in the *Secular Review* for Nov. 7, 1886. Why did not Saladin admit this before?

a surplus? What is the good of prestige, of renown and unrivalled genius if, in this free England of the nineteenth century, all these advantages and gifts cannot make a paper pay? Saladin will make a good bid for success by smashing gods, if smashing gods will yield a revenue; if not, by smashing anything. God-breaking, after Saladin's fashion, was not profitable: the people of England were too obtuse to grasp the meaning of this celestial genius, whose writings carried terror to Paradise but created no sensation on this planet. He will attack the National Secular Society, which has never wronged him; he will throw as much mud as he can on the President of that Society, in the fond hope that some of it may stick? Not at all, that for his mud-throwing he may earn a penny and keep the mud-mill going. Of course, in attacking the President of the National Secular Society, Saladin is still attacking a god. In the *National Reformer*, Nov. 21, 1875, p. 327, Saladin writes thus:

“And Theists, if you'll have a god,
Hail one where Bradlaugh stands.”

And

“Assail us as we rank around
The hero of our choice.”*

His success in attacking this god is measured by the good old golden standard, far more decisive than the thunder of his declamation and the lightning flashes of his wit, against the gods of Sinai and Calvary. The *Secular Review* is floated; Christian purses contribute to repair its timbers and patch its storm-rent sails. The Christian Evidence Society is one of its largest purchasers, and its lecturers and emissaries take good care that it is well advertised. Without breaking entirely with his Agnosticism he must, however, humor and indulge this generous Society. The articles which they so freely circulate are vile personalities, contemptible slanders, blatant vitu-

* It is only fair to state that this Saladinesque rhodomontade was inserted in the *National Reformer* by Saladin's then friend Mr. C. Watts, during Mr. Bradlaugh's absence in America.

peration and splendid indignation. Just the field in which Saladin has no rival, and long may the field be all his own! So, in order to keep his customers, Saladin has to attend the literary market as a sandwich-man, hawking his wares. He carries two boards; on the front one is written: "A Terrible Attack on the Dirtites! 'The Death Agony of the National Secular Society!' All by Saladin. Price twopence. Only twopence for a work of art." On the other board this legend is inscribed: "'Sarai's Petticoat on Sale!' 'A Hunt for Jesus in Holy Vomit!' Two withering satires by Saladin. Price twopence; only twopence. Worth a guinea each." He has to wear a reversible coat, the one side Calvary cloth, the other Agnostic tweed. A disgrace, this, that to an honorable man is worse than literary death; but Saladin recks it not. Has he not increased the circulation of the *Secular Review*? The journal, which two or three years ago was all but dead, now circulates "from the rosy cradle of the dawn to the western chambers of the sun." That visit wrecked Saladin: it made him a lover of filthy lucre.

Such is the Farringdon school of Freethought of which Saladin is the apostle and hierophant in chief. It was founded by Envy and Jealousy; it is supported by Slander and Personalities; it is administered by sordid meanness and unblushing Hypocrisy. Sham, Pretence, Humbug and Cant are the leading professors. The secretary is crass Ignorance.

SALADIN'S QUALIFICATIONS TO LEAD EXAMINED.

WHAT are Saladin's qualifications to lead? I have asked a most impious question. Who can be ignorant of Saladin's claims? Are they not much better known than Paul's and more universally acknowledged than Churchill's? Are they not printed every week in the *Secular Review*, a journal that circulates "from the rosy cradle of the dawn to the western chambers of the sun"? Are they not vouched for by independent admirers, whose number is legion, and whose testimony

may be represented by X, or better still by O? True, too, true, alas! Yet I would fain catalogue his titles for the sake of any stray ignoramus to whom the *Secular Review* may be a sealed book.

Saladin is a man of imposing birth, the greatest writer since the death of Homer, a profound metaphysician, a stirring poet, a consummate scholar. Saladin is a gentleman *sans peur et sans reproche*; a man who lives for a cause, not self; truthful and truth-loving as Epaminondas; a man of spotless honor, the preacher of a lofty morality. Such is Saladin as painted by his friends and admirers. Beautiful picture! I must examine it more closely.

Oh! fame is a soothing balm for all sores. With it for a blanket one could lie easy and contented on a bed of thorns. How happy must Saladin be with this companion! Biographies of him have issued from the press; then came reviews of the life story, followed in turn by correspondence on the reviews, so that Prince Bismarck is not "in it" with him. No wonder, for the chancellor of "blood and iron" is only the son of a poor German nobleman, while Saladin, through the yielding virtue of two of his female ancestors, claims descent from the most royal of Scotland's kings and the most gifted of Scotland's bards.* I do not blame or reproach these dear old souls. Their blacksliding is a proof that they were daughters of Eve. The temptation was terrible, but, (rest the turf lightly on their immortal breasts!) great was their reward, for out of their weakness sprung Saladin, in whom there is no guile, who knows not sin.

Saladin wields a powerful pen. His prose is racy and vigorous, but with a tendency to be prolix. In some of his verses there is the verve and go of genuine poetry, though he writes too often in blood. His judgment is sadly at fault, as his idea of literary art is very confused. Insult is not wit; farcical vulgarity is not humor; vituperation is not satire; personalities are not the essence of sarcasm. In Saladin's writings these terms are considered synonymous.

* See *Life of Saladin*, by Hithersay and Ernest.

He may be a great metaphysician, but I do not remember having read many of his writings in that line. Since I have been a reader of the *Secular Review*, Saladin has confined himself, for the most part, to theology and historical criticism. One thing, however, strikes me as being remarkable. Saladin professes to be an Agnostic. Agnostics maintain that there are certain questions to which the only legitimate answer man can give is, "I do not know." The origin of the world is such a question, and yet Saladin* affirms that the base of the universe is psychic not somatic. This may be a profound ontological fact, but it is not Agnosticism. At all events, metaphysicians, dealing as they do with general propositions, are not distinguished for accuracy in details. Miniature is their abhorrence: hence they are, generally speaking, failures as scholars. This metaphysical turn of mind may explain the villainous state of Saladin's scholarship. I am aware that to question his scholarship will, in some quarters, be deemed as absurd as to deny the rotundity of the earth, or as blasphemous as to rob Jesus of his divinity.

What is scholarship? Precision, elegance, accuracy. Saladin lacks these qualities and is accordingly, not entitled to the name of scholar. He is very strong on one point—spelling: so are the pupils in our Board Schools. An error in spelling he detects at once, and makes no allowance for slips of pen, hasty writing or anything whatever. Now to spell correctly is good, and desirable, but it is sheer memory. A bad speller might write excellent sentiments. Correct spelling is not, necessarily, a mark of scholarship. But even here Saladin fails. Even in Orthography he is at sea. In recent numbers of the *Secular Review*, under the headings "At Random" and "Editorial Notes" I have seen these gross blunders—*freizes* for *friezes*; *Belgiae* for *Belgae*; *Germaniae* for *Germani*; *scaribaeus* for *scarabæus*, *Sephor* for *Sepher*; *Tishreden* for *Tischreden*. But enough of this. It is below criticism, but as it is the height of Saladin's scholarship, I am compelled to descend to his level and learn the art of sinking.

* See *Secular Review*, June 28, 1884.

The editor of the *Secular Review* professes to be very strong on languages. Has he not had an Academic education? French, German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, he has them on his finger's ends. As specimens of his knowledge of French we have *savans*. But unfortunately there is no such word in that language. *Chacun a son gout*, is a favorite quotation of Saladin's; a scholar would write *gout*. He speaks of the possibility of Jesus standing to Joseph in the relation of *filles heritières*. I have read a little about Jesus, and have had him presented to me in different lights, but to Saladin belongs the credit of making him a *girl*. He wishes a correspondent to hold his tongue, he conveys the polite hint in French, *tachez vous* which means, "to defile." Saladin would be a guide in French of questionable value.

In the limited portion of the *Secular Review* which I have examined for the purpose of this paper, Saladin has, as far as I am aware, only once shown his acquaintance with German.* He refers to Luther's *Table Talk*, under its German title of course, and calls it *Tishreden* for *Tischreden*. His first German coin is a counterfeit.

In Greek, his scholarship is likewise of the superficial and slovenly kind, crude as a child's first pictorial attempts. He writes *πάσα γραφή* instead of *πᾶσα γραφή*. Quoting the famous oracle in Herodotus, he makes it untranslatable by introducing the word *διαθας*, which is not only nonsense but not Greek even.†

His Latin quotations are more numerous and, naturally, the crop of blunders is in this field more luxuriant.

* The reader will please observe that I have only read the italicized quotations in the *Secular Review*. Had I made a more thorough investigation of it, I could fill a large pamphlet with the editor's mistakes and blunders. In fact I have never read an article of Saladin's without detecting in it gross errors, if he dares to push out, ever so little, from the shallows of declamation. Even Saladin is safe on that plank—the refuge of sciolism.

† He talks in one number of his journal thus: "The positive *οντος* of no law of nature is known." What is *οντος*? This sentence is philosophy, or rather was intended to be such, but *οντος* knocked it into nonsense.

He has discovered a new plural for *Cœlebs*, which he spells *Cœlebses* instead of *Cœlebes*. He quotes from Augustine this sentence: "Quid est enim pejor, mors animae quam libertas erroris." Now, elegant classical Latinity is not a strong point of this saint; but assuredly he knew the elementary laws of the Latin language—how, for instance, and to what extent the adjective agrees with the noun. He could not but be aware that words are used to convey to others his meaning. In the same quotation the great Augustine is made to violate the rules of accident, syntax and sense. But Augustine could never write such arrant nonsense. It is to the pen of the scholarly Saladin that the world is indebted for this linguistic puzzle, and the world will estimate the Latinity of the editor of the *Secular Review* at its market value—considerably less than nothing. The man who palms such impostures on the people, and complacently regards them as the offspring of a ripe and mature scholarship, ought to sail to Anticyra. He, more than once,* in his journal puts to the discredit of Wetstein the following barbarism—"tota haec oratio ex formulis Habraeorum consinnata est." In Latin is no word *consinnata*. Wetstein was a scholar, and it is a cause of pain to see his works thus defiled. Saladin more than once quotes from a certain "Henricus *Seynensis*." There is no such name in the catalogues of the British Museum. There is no word in the Atlases I have consulted from which could be formed the appellative *Seynensis*. There was a Henricus *de Senesis*, and he might be called *Senensis*.†

* See *Secular Review*, March 22, 1884, and Oct. 23, 1886. Saladin's scholarship has not improved during this period. Apparently he does not cut new ground in his reading, the bulk of many "At Randoms" which, as they issue in 1886, held *Civilisation* spell-bound, having appeared a couple of years before. *The Book of God*, which threatens to exceed the Bible in length and depth, may be patched together from the *Secular Review* of 1884. Saladin moves like a planet in a certain orbit, save when he quotes foreign or dead languages: then he is most erratic.

† Mrs. A. R. Wilkie "shares," we are told, "with the editor of the *Secular Review* much of the *perferidum Scotorum*." Whatever is *perferidum*? What does it mean? What can be the meaning of this conundrum? I should like to know what it is that Mrs. A. R. Wilkie shares with Saladin. Not scholarship, I hope.

In Hebrew he commits wild vagaries. Inspiration is said to be the work of **בת קול**. I don't think there is in the Hebrew language a word **בת**. What Saladin intended to write was **בת**. I am able to correct his blunder here because he has been kind enough to state to his readers in intelligible English what he managed to conceal in his, but nobody else's, Hebrew. In the same number of the journal he transcribes two specimens of Semitic printing: one he calls Chaldean, the letters being curved and rounded; the other is named *real* Hebrew, in which the characters are rectangular. He wants his readers "to form some idea of the wide difference" between the two specimens.* There is no real difference: the letters are the same, the *manner* of writing being different. He wants his readers to believe that the second specimen is later than the first. This is absurd. It requires more skill to make round and curved strokes than to make straight lines. The shape of the characters or the *manner* of writing, is the chief criterion in deciding the age of manuscripts. Saladin is ignorant of this fact, having spent too much of his time in spelling. At the foot of the same page he gives a word-for-word translation of Gen. i., 1, from the Hebrew. This translation shows that Saladin has no knowledge whatever of the language. The word *eth* he renders by *them*, as though it was a demonstrative pronoun, qualifying *gods*. It is nothing of the kind. In itself *eth* has no meaning. It only shows that the word to which it is attached is *not* in the nominative case. Therefore the word here cannot be taken with *gods*, because *gods* is the nominative case. No scholar before Saladin took it in that way.

This is the man that poses before the world as the scholar *par excellence* of English Freethought. I may be told that the knowledge of languages is not essential to a public teacher. I quite agree. I am of opinion that no good or useful purpose is served by lugging

* Why did not Saladin print the *same* passage in the two styles? Why select Deut. iv., 1, 2, to represent Specimen No. 1, but Gen. i., 1, to represent No. 2? See *Secular Review*, March 6, 1886.

quotations from foreign and dead languages into journals which are to be read by the people, of whom ninety-nine per cent. know nothing about those languages. If, however, they are made, then, for the honor of Freethought, let them be accurate. Saladin's quotations do not reflect much credit on his readers or himself. The intelligence of the former must be very low to be satisfied with such rubbish, and Saladin must know this, otherwise he would never have dared to insult them with words that never were used, and sentences without a meaning. Of the languages he so often quotes, Saladin knows nothing or next to nothing. He cannot translate easy passages from them into English, not even with the aid of a grammar and a dictionary. As to Hebrew he cannot read it. But he was taught these things at a celebrated university. Then he is no credit to his teachers. Education seems to have had on Saladin the same effect as inspiration had on the writers of Israel: it leads him from, not to, truth.

Let us leave language and try other fields. He does not know the names of the two sects of Islam; at least he calls one of them Shites. I have already pointed out his ignorance on the evolution of writing. It was Saladin that wrote the following gem:—"The two angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal to two right angles." This language is very unscientific, as the geometry is outrageous. A boy in the sixth standard at a Board School would smart for this blunder. So it matters not into what fields of knowledge Saladin may go, one companion always follows, never deserts, his great patron—that faithful attendant of Saladin is ignorance.*

* A ludicrous instance of Saladin's literary knowledge and historical attainments, or want of them, is furnished by him in the *S. R.* of Jan. 15, 1887. In answer to a correspondent and with a view to advertise his patch-work book he speaks of only four copies of the Bordeaux New Testament being known to exist in England. After stating where three of these are he says "the fourth is in the possession of the Duke of Sussex. It is to the latter copy that *God and his Book* is indebted." Is it a fact then that Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, is still in the flesh, and is it a fiction that he was buried at Kensal Green in 1843 at the age of 70? Or is the matter explainable on the ground that

I admire the scholar and his impersonal existence, who hates error as he hates poison, to whom truth is the very bread of life, who carries his honors meekly and unostentatiously, who entertains a special affection for two classes of men, those who excel him in knowledge, and those who detect errors in his works. Oh! how I admire the scholar. But Saladin is not a scholar. He decks him in tawdry tinsel to catch the ears of the mob; he has not the gold of scholarship, but the dress of pedantry; he wears arms which he cannot use; he never was in the temple of knowledge—what he knows of the service he picked up from the conversations of the wise. He dons the plumes of the bird of knowledge, but under them are the feathers of the crow. Let him return to his rookery. In the name of all that is sacred, let him prostitute no longer the scholar's holy name, no longer degrade the holy cause of Free-thought.

Saladin lives for the cause not self. Does he? This would cover a multitude of sins. In my opinion, it would sponge away every blemish. He has been resolving plans of great pith, to be carried out in the West of England, when a certain auspicious event happened. There was a house to buy, lands to cultivate, and money to be made. Are commerce and conveying, Freethought? Is this the cause for which Saladin lives? He would have nothing to do with the Secular School unless he had absolute control of the money. If there was any objection on this point at head-quarters, he would require a salary for doing secretarial work. If the salary offered were satisfactory, he would accept it, if not, he would sever his connection with the institution. What about the cause for which he lives? It is to be hoped that he will reconsider his decision, for if Saladin leaves it, the school will soon die out, and this would be a serious blow to Freethought, the cause for which he lives. The generous founder of the School will, I have no doubt, humor Saladin's seeming selfishness, and secure his

Saladin stole the whole of the paragraph from a controversial journal of fifty years ago when the Radical Duke was living? O Saladin, Saladin

powerful aid, to carry on the school, by giving him absolute control of the endowment fund. Some of the money will, of course, be spent in buying a mansion, close to the school which will be very useful to a city man with a family. Seaside expenses will be avoided, and Saladin rendered stronger and stronger to battle for the cause—stronger and stronger in pocket. Some of the money will be required to grow apples, plums and grapes to send to market. Is this Freethought? Perhaps not. But it will be the means of securing Saladin's co-operation. Is this, then, the cause for which Saladin lives? Aye, and the only cause he has ever lived for. Does not living for a cause imply heroism? It does. And heroes, are they not few and far between? They are. But there are millions of heroes who live for their cause after the manner of Saladin. This is the measure of Saladin's unselfishness. He lives for the cause, and that cause is self.*

Saladin is a gentleman, a man of truth. He calls his opponents, some of whom are as good as he, Dirtites and Squirtites. All clergymen and ministers, many of whom are men of culture and integrity, he names Beetles and Holy Wastrels. The manners of a gentleman are not these. Saladin must have picked up his ideas of a gentleman from a social school, the head master of which was a Thug or a Yahoo.

In his journal for July 3, 1886, Saladin says that Peter Agate is not a Christian, while in October 31, 1885, we are told that the same gentleman had found Jesus. Which is true? The founder of the Secular School handed it over to Saladin by a deed of gift, because, it is written, he was an admirer of "At Random." That is not true. A correspondent is informed that the school is full. At the time of writing that statement was not true, never has been true. The fact is, the school will not fill—the cause of which is obvious; and many are the dodges to which

* This paragraph was written before the bubble burst on Dec. 7th, and before the £13,000 was ordered to be given up. But I let it stand.

Saladin resorts in order to have a large number of boys on the books—the motive for which is manifest. In various numbers of his journal he declares that he attacks a certain society because of its principles. In engaging a gentleman, once upon a time, to fill a post of which he is the patron, Saladin informed that gentleman what salary was paid to his predecessor. But he didn't tell the truth, committing that sin for which Ananias suffered death. And yet Saladin is a man of truth and he can permit himself to write of his own "sterling sincerity and inviolable honesty." It is easy to write oneself a saint.

Saladin is a man of honor. One of his contributors thanks him for a suggestive word. Saladin accepts the compliment, though the credit, whatever it is, of coining that word was not his. All that comes into Saladin's net is fish. He wanted a translation of some Latin extracts that appeared in his journal. Unable to do it himself, he applied to a friend who had the trouble of doing the work, while Saladin pocketed the money, for he sold the translation for a guinea, nor offered a penny of it to the translator. Saladin falls foul of nearly every one whom he comes in contact with, if that person dare differ from the editor of the *Secular Review*. Mr. Charles Watts, Dr. Lewins, and Lara have all been scourged by him. Lara is, at one time, his second self, and highly honored. Lara deserved the honor, for he was, without doubt, by far the ablest writer on the journal. But in Oct. 1885 Saladin throws him overboard, and, coward-like, stabs him as he falls. In a recent issue, Lara is again praised to the skies. Men of honor are consistent. But Saladin's honor is a very Proteus. Mr. Bradlaugh is generally regarded as a man of ability. Opponents recognise his intellectual power. The Lord Chief Justice of England—no mean judge—has paid many a tribute to his eloquence and knowledge. Saladin himself some years ago hailed him as a hero and a God. But now he goes back on his former convictions and, out of malice which he has been long and tenderly nursing,* he vilifies this gentleman in

* Saladin did not quarrel with Mr. Bradlaugh as he states, because the latter had insulted him. I have often heard Saladin declare that

language that would have discredited a bargee, and been considered improper in the purlieus of Seven Dials. And yet Saladin is an honorable man. It would be interesting to know Saladin's definition of dishonor.

The best specimen of his honor is this. He attacks the National Secular Society week after week, in that beautiful language of elegant filth of which he is a master. Is it because that Society is Malthusian, Socialistic and Materialistic? I have proved that it is not so. Because the President of that Society is Mr. C. Bradlaugh, his god and hero in 1875? That's it. To remove any doubt on the subject refer to the *Secular Review*, Aug. 21, 1886, where you will find the real reason of Saladin's animosity and rancor stated by himself, in a moment of impetuous forgetfulness. After stating that he fancied he had been insulted by Mr. Bradlaugh; that if he were wrong he would be glad to have his error pointed out to him; that he is a man of forgiving disposition; that he had been for a long time expecting an apology; Saladin ruefully declares that no apology was made, and then adds, sighing from the bottom of his wounded heart: "Am I too insignificant a person to apologise to, however much my feelings may be wounded?" That long-expected apology never came. Saladin was thought an insignificant person. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ*. This man, the soul of honor, and essence of truth, attacks a certain Society, not because he has any quarrel with that Society, but because the President of the same considers him an insignificant person. He grossly slanders thousands of honest people who never wronged him, because the President of the National Secular Society answers his buffoonery with silence. He calumniates a whole party to feed fat the grudge he bears to the leader of that party, because that leader holds him to be insignificant, who can "with his pen and ever-increasing influence of his journal make the strongest man in Europe wince." And Saladin is a man of honor, a gentleman *sans peur et sans reproche*.

he had been long watching for an opportunity to attack the "god" of his earlier years. Such people do not watch in vain.

Then, in that number of his journal from which I quoted above, he holds out a promise that if an apology (of course, Saladin calls it *amende honorable*) be made to him, he will sheathe his sword and help to build up the breaches in the ramparts of Freethought, breaches that are entirely due to his rancorous spleen and inordinate vanity. Impudent cynicism never penned a more audacious proposal. Week after week, month by month, and year after year, Saladin has been most shamefully attacking a certain society which, on his own showing, never wronged him, and which, to my knowledge, is morally and intellectually his superior. Now he promises that, if the President of this Society will be kind enough to notice him, and gracious enough to remove the stigma of insignificance from him, he will bury the hatchet. Mr. Bradlaugh is perfectly at liberty, and is certain, to act as he thinks fit. But what amends does Saladin propose to make to the innocent Society he has so foully calumniated? There are words and deeds which an apology cannot blot from the memory. For Saladin's insults there is no *amende*. Take a plebiscite of the National Secular Society: the verdict would be—"Leave Saladin alone in his insulting insignificance. Let us have no commerce with the man. His insolence is colossal, exceeded only by his ignorance." This is the code of honor which is observed by Saladin, the apostle of a pure cult, the priest of a spotless Freethought. May English Freethought never adopt this horrid code, written by the pen of malice, with the ink of petulance, on the paper of dirty insignificance.

Saladin is the preacher of lofty morality. Is he? And does he act up to the height of his doctrine? That is the test of moral excellence. It is possible to have three kinds of moral teachers. There are those who tell others to do what they themselves neither practise nor believe—the loaf-disciples and hypocrites and blood-sucking parasites of creeds and creedless societies; their name is legion. Next we have those splendid souls, who by word and deed do all they can to lift humanity from the misery of its environment, without for a moment forgetting that they are frail;

that they fall far short of the high standard they have introduced into the world; that it is easier "to show twenty what were good to be done than be one of the twenty to follow their own instruction;" that, in a word, they are men. In this class are to be placed the greatest reformers of the world, humanity's very gods, from Jean Jacques Rousseau to Sakya Muni. The pen of the former trembled, his heart rebelled, as he reflected on the vast distance between the ideal and the actual. Honor him for an honest man—a very rose-plant indeed. Buddha, "the best friend of man," requested his apostles, the "army of beggars," to perform one miracle and one only—to confess their sins before the people. A miracle! aye, a million times more stupendous than the raising of the dead to life. To tell the truth is a trite advice, but oh! how few take it and carry it out in life! The third class of moral teachers is made up of those who practise what they preach. This class had never a representative until these latter days. Even now there is in it but one man—Saladin. Hail him, Freethinkers of the universe. He is purer than Francis of Assisi, holier than Gautama, more sinless than Jesus.

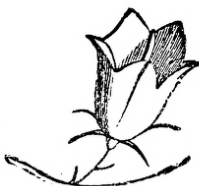
There never has been such a champion of conjugal purity as Saladin. To him marriage is an inviolable contract. The keeping of this contract often entails unhappiness, begets troubles and quarrels, sometimes ends in suicide or murder, or both. "Never mind," says Saladin, "nothing can justify a breach of this contract." Admirable this. Glendower can call spirits from the vasty deep. Will they come? is Hotspur's pertinent query. Does Saladin honorably perform his part of this inviolable contract? Does not his pen, like Rousseau's, tremble when he preaches his ideal evangel? Rebels not his heart now and then? Rises not his memory against him, to point out the places and fix the dates of his backsliding? Oh! Saladin, oh! Saladin, you are shod with hypocrisy and mantled in catchpenny cant. It pains me to expose your faults—for you are a Freethinker. I waited long to see if you would descend from your lip morality, and appear as a man among your fellow men. In vain. You con-

tinue to shoot your envenomed arrows from your castle of humbug. You spare nobody to gratify your spleen and rancor: in the interests of truth I must refresh you memory.

I know how you propagate the cause of Freethought—by attacking your comrades. I should like to know how you observe the marriage contract. Have you the courage of Buddha, as you have more than his holiness? Dare you tell the world how you keep the inviolable contract? I care not to enter more fully into this matter, nor would I now touch on it, but for your inexplicable hypocrisy. I am not given to pick out the faults and slips of any man or woman. Scandal-mongering is not in my line. I know that you are a man and must have your weaknesses. Pray remember this fact. Do not throw the mantle of dissimulation over your humanity. Do not say that you are above hawking your genius for filthy lucre while, at the same time, you write elegies over the death of your child and trade on a father's sacred grief at a penny per copy. Confess that you are a man. If you cannot rise to this heroic level, at least cease to throw dirt on people who are as pure and sinful as yourself.

Such is the real Saladin that aspires to lead the Free-thinkers of England. He has immortalised himself as the founder of a heresy on original foundations. The heretics of the past revolted, from love of truth, he rebels from vanity. He proclaims the purity of his motives, because nobody else would or could. He claims to be a scholar, much in the same way as an inflated bladder claims to be full of matter. He parades his tastes and gentlemanly manners: if he speak true, there is only one gentleman in the world, and that makes one too many. He is a man of honor and calumniates a party from jealousy of the President of that party. He is a man of truth, and tells lies because people will persist in considering him small. He lives for a cause, and that cause is self. He is the one sinless progeny of eternity, but his holiness resides in his tongue and pen, not in his life and conduct. He prostitutes a great historic name. Saladin was a syno-

nym of heroic valor and loyal chivalry, until Mr. Stewart Ross assumed it. Whosoever will raise such a man to the place of leader, let him by all means. If there be anybody desirous of rallying round such an intellectual and moral composite, let him by all means. But English Freethinkers, ye who criticise principles and not persons, shun him like poison. His teaching will spoil you. Ye who seek truth and are not ashamed of your humanity, avoid this man, before he contaminates your better nature and converts you into automatic compounds of vanity and hypocrisy like unto himself. Any party, save English Freethought, is welcome to such a leader.



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