

Saturn lay concealed. Many of the laws were also deposited in his temple, for laws were sacred in that day.

"The Greek words which stand for Saturn and Time differ only in one letter, and on this account Saturn is represented as devouring his children and casting them up again, as Time devours and consumes all things which it has produced, which at length revive again and are, as it were, renewed: Days, months and years are the children of Time which he constantly devours and produces anew. The name of Saturn is said to be derived from the Latin. Satur—full—satisfied—meaning a God who is satisfied with his own comprehensive powers."

LETTER FROM W. B. COOKE.

NEW YORK.

FRIEND HARORAVE,—

You will see by the above that I am in New York City, of which I can say nothing at present beyond just mentioning for Eyre Evans that I met and had a conversation with his brother of the *Graphic*.

I have already given you some description of Buffalo; Rochester you know something of from a visit. I found it thick with Spiritualists—the best class I met there were the readers of the *Index*. My hope of Western New York is in the young lawyers and doctors, the younger branches of both these professions being far advanced in cultured Freethought. The working men here have formed themselves into a distinct party, and in proportion as they keep distinct from the Republican and Democrat their power will be felt; but I fear the tricks of professional politicians on one side, and their old predispositions on the other, will cause some of them to be seduced by old party cries, and prevent their nominations being successful, hence their power not being felt will not be sought after.

In Rochester I fell in with a strange specimen of an orthodox lawyer, and was surprised at his inviting me home to tea. I had to refuse that evening as Ingersoll lectured for one night only, I told him I would not miss the opportunity of hearing him. He pressed me to call at his office the following afternoon, which I did, and accompanied him home. I think he purposely forgot my name, and introduced me to his wife and family as the "Radical Missionary"; I afterwards discovered that his wife was a Materialist. I assure you that it was a pleasant reflection to think that he had the good sense to gratify his wife's taste by introducing a kindred spirit to her company. We had a spirited controversy, free from offence or ill-feeling. I felt that he respected the honest Atheism of his wife, and that neither her moral worth nor happiness was lessened by her opposite opinions, and could not but remark that in that respect he was superior to the Deity he worshipped, as the common orthodox belief is, that faith is the highest heavenly virtue and unbelief the direst calamity—with the penalty of certain unending torment.

Syracuse was my next place—a liberal and lively city. It has no organized body of Freethinkers under that name, but has a large and liberal element. Here the Unitarian element preponderates. Orthodoxy here is as rotten as icy snow under an April sun. It is percolated and honeycombed by a liberalism which will never freeze thought permanently again. The Rev. Ezekiel W. Munday, an Independent in fact as well as in name, is doing good work here by breaking down the barriers of prejudice. I heard him preach a good sermon on "Creed and Conduct," from the parable of the good Samaritan, in which he showed that the true man was the Samaritan Heretic, not the Orthodox Priest nor Levite. He repudiated, with something like scorn, the belief that good conduct could not be acceptable to God unless accompanied by true theology, maintaining throughout that it, and it only, was the one absolute test of worth; that it could be no pleasure to God to meet once in seven days to pray and praise him if it did not benefit us. He denounced the doctrine of Hell in unmeasured terms, and said boldly that it was better to

blot out both heaven and hell than have both. I spent an hour or more with him in his study, and have a standing invitation to visit him when I again visit Syracuse. I afterwards called on Bishop Huntington, and took his order for the *Fortnightly*. He is a fine specimen of the Evangelical English Churchman. He appeared rather timid of Spencer, Tyndall and Huxley, and I think regards them as a dangerous trinity; but being of a controversial disposition will fight them rather than shirk them. Formerly I was afraid of ecclesiastical drapery. I then considered it added dignity to the wearer, but experience is making me sceptical respecting human greatness. The more I see of society, the more I am convinced that the mental difference between man and man is nothing like so great as our false educations have forced us to believe. My associations and experience embrace persons widely divergent in professional calling, Judges, Statesmen, Doctors, Divines, &c., and it is only occasionally I feel myself in the presence of a master mind, and then not always one whom society has set aside for his greatness.

In Albany I had the good fortune to meet an old acquaintance; one well trained in Freethought in England, he is the active spirit of a good Freethought Society, comprising nearly one hundred members with an attendance of from two hundred to three hundred visitors. Their meetings are conducted in the main much like our own; speech or essay, after which a debate of about one and a half hour, the first opposition speaker occupies twenty minutes, following speakers ten minutes each. There is more talent in the Albany Society than in any Freethought Society I am acquainted with. They possess at least two good writers and four good speakers. The speakers are ready debaters, each with a well stored mind and easy, effective, and fluent delivery. The writers and speakers I name are much superior to myself. At the request of my friend I spoke twice there in reply to the leading opposition—once on "Rationalism versus Orthodoxy," and once on the "Resurrection of Jesus." There is also in Albany a literary liberal organization, called the "Young Men's Association," which offers political aspirants the first step on the ladder to fame, one of the candidates for President engaged Ingersoll to deliver two separate lectures. Between the first and second visit Dr. Irving Magee, a talented and popular preacher, who was nominated on both tickets as curator, replied to Ingersoll's lecture in his absence and stated that Ingersoll had, at the Delevan Hotel, called Jesus Christ "a dirty little Jew." On Ingersoll's second visit he challenged the statement, stating that if the Doctor did not give his authority for the unfounded assertion he should tell the audience, "it was a dirty little lie," the authority was not forth-coming and the Doctor had to father the "dirty little lie." The Association put Ingersoll in nomination as curator against the Doctor and he polled nearly two hundred votes. This tells well for the liberal pluck of Albany. I enclose voting paper. It will be gratifying to you to hear that the Albany Society were so favourably impressed with the heading of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL, that they have given orders for our printed motto, in the order on our paper, to be painted on the wall of their meeting-room—ornamentally, and in as attractive a style as their best artist can display it. I left the copies of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL with Mr. Joseph McDonough, who promised to do all he could to extend its circulation in Albany and Troy—two fine cities and each full of Freethinkers, but, I am sorry to say, trade is frightfully dull in both places. I expect to reach home by the Queen's Birthday. If you or any of the friends have leisure please drop me a line during the week—I long to hear how you are going on. I will give you a special letter on the Oneida Community during the week with a slight notice of American Social Communities; it was a subject I was much at sea on till I visited the State of New York and conversed with communists, and heard their story as well the story of their enemies.

April 1, 1878.

B. F. Underwood lectured at Springfield, Ill., April 14th, and will lecture at Kirksville, Mo., 16th to 21st; Warsaw, Mo., 23rd, 24th, 25th.