

CORRESPONDENCE.

OWEN SOUND, April 22nd, 1878.

To the Editor FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL:

DEAR SIR,—The incessant hammering which we, the Free thinkers of this town, have sustained, at the hands of that champion of Christianity, Prof. C. Braden, during a period of nearly three weeks, in which he lectured almost nightly; has not had the effect of leading us back as stray sheep to the paths of Orthodoxy; on the contrary the ineffectual efforts which he made to dispel the doubts of Scriptures; and refute the arguments of Infidels; have if possible more thoroughly convinced us of the truth of the position held by Freethinkers. That, together with the cowardly attempt made by our local Rev. comforters, to place us, as it were, outside the pale of society, by their (infamous petition to the Town Council (which you have already noticed in your JOURNAL) has roused our energy and indignation, and "few but undimmed" we have re-organized our association; resolved, that the fast-spreading revolution in religious thought shall have the assistance of our combined efforts.

We held a special meeting on Sunday, 7th inst, at the house of a friend; the attendance was good. Mr. T. W. Hugo, president, in the chair. The necessity for appointing an asst. secretary arising from the long and unavoidable absence of our secretary, Mr. W. S. Cain, was met by appointing Mr. G. S. Caldleck to that office.

Some unfinished business in reference to platform and by-laws was disposed of. A motion to the effect that steps be taken to have this Association re-organized as a branch of the Toronto Freethought Association, was unanimously adopted. A committee was appointed to secure a permanent place of meeting; other business of minor importance was transacted. Mr. Hugo then favored us with some well selected readings, which were heartily applauded.

I have no doubt that when we have a meeting room of our own, our assemblies will be regular and well attended, for the cause has many sympathizers in the town who have never openly avowed it, who may be induced to stand by us when our Association is better organized. I cannot close without expressing how glad I was to see those hearty congratulations which you have received on the course you have taken with regard to "Clerical Scandal." I believe these congratulations were well deserved. Your action in that matter is a characteristic incident showing the highly moral aims and objects of your JOURNAL. With wishing success to our Association, and all similar ones, wherever they may be, and to your plucky little JOURNAL, I will conclude.

Fraternally yours,

J. S. CALDLECK,

Asst. Secretary O.S.F.A.

EDITOR JOURNAL,—

MEAFORD, May 11th, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—

You will see by the enclosed sheet that there was a public meeting in Meaford, last Monday night. You never witnessed such miserable means adopted to stifle Freethought and debate, as was carried on at that meeting by the clergy, seven in number. They had prepared resolutions to petition the Council not to grant the Town Hall for Mr. Underwood to lecture in, and also to petition the mayor not to grant me the drill shed, (a large building here), but the town hall and drill shed too, have been promised me, if needed, so my clerical brethren have been foiled in efforts to prevent Freethought being advocated in Meaford; "But I think you never saw seven Rev. gents taken to task, and bearded to their teeth, as those were on that occasion. Had I spoken twenty-five years ago to those men as I did on Monday night last, the audience would have considered that they would be doing, both God and society, a dutiful act to put me out of existence, but instead, there was applause all over the church, when I branded them with moral cowardice and dishonesty, for taking wages for advocating a religion that they had neither ability nor courage to defend in debate, or even allow another to do so for them. I fully

expected the Meaford papers would denounce me for speaking so disparagingly of their ministers, but not one word of rebuke from either of the papers. Braden came to Meaford on Friday, and lectured in the Town Hall last night. He gave the ministers a rebuke for adopting the course they had taken, as he said "they might as well strive to prevent the sun from rising, as to prevent freedom of thought by such means," if, as he said, "you intend to put down Freethought, you must do so by force of conclusive argument." He spoke very disrespectfully of Mr. Hargrave, for the manner in which he had treated him in the JOURNAL, he styled it "base and untruthful," but to-morrow night I shall take the JOURNAL to the Hall, and request Mr. Braden to read the correspondence to the audience, to show them that he has not been so unjustly dealt with as he imagines, and if he refuses to read the matter complained of, I will read it for him, as only his own words are given. I don't know if we shall arrange for a debate, as Braden wants to have the entire control of points for discussion. He don't seem disposed to take the negative of the Bible being of human origin—shall know more on the matter in a day or two and will let you know.

Do you intend having Mr. Underwood in June, as he informs me, he can come then, because if you do, I shall certainly have him come to Meaford. Must conclude with my best wishes for my Infidel friends in Toronto.

Fraternally yours,

JOHN GROOM.

LAKE SUPERIOR, April 22nd, 1878.

FRIEND HARGRAVE,—

Having made a trip to Duluth, the Chicago of the North-West, (as was to be, but is not), where Freethought blooms and Bro. Mitchell is working hard to kick the devil out of the constitution, while orthodoxy is using its best endeavors to keep the clover footed gent, their best friend, in their midst, I thought perhaps a few items might prove interesting to the readers of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL. Although the gallant steamer "City of Owen Sound," had about 250 passengers on board, very few incidents worth recording transpired. The ever varying and beautiful scenery of the Sault Ste Marie, the different mining and fishing stations and other objects of interest were passed and duly admired. Dame nature seemed to have been on her best behaviour, and to have decked herself in her best bib and tucker during the up trip, and not until we had safely landed our passengers in Duluth did she show herself in any of her blustering angry tantrums; then she let herself out in grand style. Old Sol, the head of the family, hid himself under the bed out of sight till the Dame's wrath had subsided, and promised to be home early every night except lodge nights. The good lady acted in a very ridiculous manner, she roared, howled, throw things around promiscuously, wept, thundered, flashed, shrieked, and then womanlike, wound up with a good cry. Saturday morning, as if wishing to make amends, she appeared bright, glorious and radiant with smiles, and was withal so good humoured, that the afore-mentioned head of the family thought it safe to come forth from his hiding place and go a fishing. The "Nor'easter" was over.

During the trip, a tall, gaunt, hungry specimen of a newly fledged Presbyterian minister, dressed in sable robes, and an immaculate white tie, seeing me reading the last issue of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL, went for me, lively at first, but cooled down when by easy stages I got him floundering around in the meshes of Free Will and Predestination, then, having got the say, I comforted him with an exhortation on the soul-inspiring doctrine of total depravity, introduced him to the Patriarchs and their families, thence to the flood and creation, etc. At the start he rode me rough shod, telling me I'd be damned if I would not believe, have faith, and come to Jesus; but I respectfully declined his invitation. He afterwards sent me some tracts by one of the waiters, but did not try to rope me in to the fold any more—I'm so sorry. During our stay in Duluth, I dropped in on our friend Mitchell of the Duluth Tribune, and found him well, in good spirits, and as