

Abroad.

BY P. W. GEER.

My first evening in Boston was very pleasantly spent with Mr. C. Elton Blanchard, with whom the Torch readers feel quite well acquainted. Mr. Blanchard is now business manager of The Arena, and has great hopes of making that ill-fated paper succeed. I have great faith in his business ability, and, according to his plans, I see no reason for failure. There is certainly room for a paper such as he proposes to make of the Arena, and good business management is all that it needs. Mr. Blanchard has only recently moved to Boston, and his wife and children were still in Cleveland; but he has a beautiful home rented, and as it was being put in order for him, we went out to see how the work was progressing. The house is situated at the edge of Franklin Park, and a more beautiful spot could not well be chosen in Boston. After examining the house, we took a stroll through the park. Franklin Park is situated in West Roxbury, and contains 527 acres. It is one of the finest parks in the country; laid out on the landscape plan, without disturbing the original topography of the landscape. Everything is natural. The hills, the grass, the trees and the shrubs are undisturbed. There are no signs, "Keep off the grass," and people are allowed to go where they choose, roll upon the grass, and pick wild flowers. Splendid macadam driveways are built through the park, and here and there is a rustic seat or oldstone wall. Here is where the "Schoolmaster," Ralph Waldo Emerson, lived and wrote. On a large boulder among the pines on "Schoolmaster Hill," is where Mr. Emerson is said to have done much of his writing.

Boston's parks cannot be beaten anywhere; in fact, the park system is the best throughout Boston. The metropolitan park system is grand indeed. There are nine reservations in all, containing nearly eight thousand acres. The Blue Hills reservation alone contains 3,953 acres, and on the summit of the highest hill the United States Government has an observatory. Besides these, the city proper contains many beautiful parks, such as Boston Common, the Public Garden and other parks and squares. "Metropolitan Boston" comprises the city of Boston and a district with a radius of ten miles from the city hall. Boston contains a population of half a million, and the other eleven cities and sixteen towns, which go to make "Greater Boston," contain about a million people. Cambridge, Lynn, and the other cities and towns included in "Greater Boston," all have separate

municipal governments. It is quite likely that the whole system will, some day, be incorporated in one city, and then it is quite likely that the city politics will be as corrupt as in New York and Chicago. At present, the best part about Boston is the cities, towns, parks and beaches around it.

Returning to the city, Mr. Blanchard and I ate dinner, and then went for a trolley ride through the subway. This subway is an immense tunnel, several miles in length, with its branches extending in various directions under the business parts of the city. It was completed last year, and cost five million dollars. It is owned by the city, the electric lines paying for the use of it. This is of inestimable value, as it enables the cars to make greater speed through the heart of the city without interfering with other traffic and endangering lives. Boston's streets are narrow and crooked, and street cars have no business on them. Washington Street is the principal business centre, and as it is narrow and winding, with electric cars running only a few feet apart, it is exceedingly dangerous for foot passengers.

My second evening in Boston was very pleasantly spent with my friend Ralph Washburn Chainey. None of the eastern cities are quite complete without a "Keith's Theatre," and Boston, being the chief of theatre cities, has the finest one of Mr. Keith's play-houses. It was to this place Mr. Chainey and I went, and the performance was very good indeed. Friday afternoon, Mr. Washburn invited me to his home in Revere, where I had a very pleasant time. We first went to the beach and looked out over the Atlantic. Revere beach extends for several miles in a crescent shape, and is owned by the Metropolitan Park Commission. A beautiful driveway has been constructed the entire length. Thousands of people bathe in the surf daily. The city of Lynn can be seen to the northeast. I walked with Mr. Washburn to his lovely home on a hill overlooking the city and ocean. He has indeed selected an ideal place to live and enjoy fresh air and delightful scenery. From his study window, Mr. Washburn can look out over the great Atlantic. I was pleased to meet Mrs. Washburn and her charming daughter, and enjoy a good visit and a splendid dinner. I was sorry I could not remain longer. I had to return to the city, where I had the opportunity of attending the graduating exercises of the New England College of Oratory, with the kind invitation of Miss Nellie Van Ness of Ohio. This was my last night in Boston; and as the next day was Bunker Hill day, and business would be suspended, I bade good-bye to my friends the Washburns,

and also Mr. Chainey, who arrived in time to join in the farewell.

Miss Van Ness is a young lady 23 years of age, and is deeply interested in the Freethought cause and the rights of woman. Her graduation address was on the subject of "Woman and her Possibilities." It was very cleverly written, and delivered with the air of an experienced lady orator. Miss Van Ness has splendid expression, a good clear voice, and an exceedingly graceful appearance on the stage. She speaks with earnestness, showing that she means everything she says. Surely there is a great future for the young lady, and she is well provided with good common sense. She is capable of accomplishing much in the Freethought work, if she decides to use her abilities along that line. She has sense enough to behave herself, and I have no doubt the Freethought world will hear from her.

Among the others whom I met in Boston is Mr. Walter C. Wright, son of Elizur Wright, so well known to Freethinkers. Mr. Wright believes as his noble father did, and is ever ready to assist our cause. The plan of the Liberal University suits him, and he is going to help make it a success. He very kindly invited me to spend a night with him at his home in Medford, but, although I regret it, I had to leave in order to reach the other points in my travels, and could not accept his kind invitation.

I feel that I am pretty well acquainted with Boston, and to describe it properly would require more space than the eight pages of the Torch afford. I spent some of the time sight-seeing. I went to the place on Milk Street where Franklin was born. Instead of a humble cottage, a huge brick building occupies the spot; but I like the place just the same, because a great Infidel was born there. I saw the Old South Church. It has been purchased by a committee of women, and is used as a museum, a much more worthy object than for the preaching of hellfire. I went to State Street and saw the spot where "The Boston Massacre" took place in 1770. While I admire the actions of the patriots, I can't help remembering that down that street a black man, in chains, was sent back to slavery, escorted by the U. S. Marshal and his thousand deputies. That is the trouble with New England. It was once the scene of many noble acts, but the stain of Puritanism is left upon it. At the head of State Street stands the old State House, and there I enjoyed a few moments looking at ancient things. I stood in the balcony where Washington stood to view the army after the siege of Boston, and where the Declaration of Independence was read. I am glad I didn't stand there then for I

wouldn't be here now. I saw the printing press that Franklin used, and many other ancient relics.

I went to the "Old Christ Church," and climbed the tower to where the lamps were hung to warn Paul Revere of the approach of the British. That was the best "hanging" that was ever done. Christ Church is a curiosity. The sexton showed me the old Bible and Prayer Book where the word "king" had been crossed out or pasted over by the patriots as often as it appears, and the word "president" substituted. Those were "warm" days. While the sexton was explaining some pictures of preachers, I slipped a copy of the Torch of Reason into the old contribution box and closed the lid. In the end of the church near the belfry, is the organ and the place for the choir. In the opposite end is the pulpit, extending to the level of the galleries. Back of the organ and above the gallery for the choir, is a small cooped-up place for the slaves. This is where the name "nigger-heaven" had its origin. At the rear of the pews on the main floor is a seat for two persons, whose duty it was to keep the congregation awake. Hell-fire wouldn't do it, so those fellows were provided with a pole each, and when a person would go to sleep, one of these men would march down the aisle and poke the sleeper with a pole. The slaves had the best of it then, for they were out of reach of the poles, and could sleep during the sermons. I next went to Faneuil Hall, "The Cradle of Liberty." There is nothing left of the original but the brick walls. The rest is being replaced with new fire-proof materials. Boston is full of grave-yards, and on many of the gates are tablets giving the names of some of the noted dead. It pleased me to be reminded that some of those persons are dead. I am sorry they ever lived.

On the whole, Boston has a great admiration for ancient things—many ancient lies, too. Most of the people of Boston really think that Boston is the centre of the universe. They think that the whole machine is really being run for Boston. If any of the Bostonians have ever gone to Heaven, I am sure they have associated themselves together, and call the locality "New Boston." So far as I am concerned, if Heaven is like Boston, I will go to the other place. I am sorry that so many good people are wasting their lives in Boston. They ought to go to Silverton.

On Bunker Hill day I went to the Arena office to have a farewell visit with Mr. Blanchard, then spent an hour or so in the Art Museum among the various and wonderful works of art, and then went to Charlestown to take in the celebration, and see the North Atlantic Squadron. I climbed the Bunker Hill monument. It is 221 feet