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Every Church cries: "Believe and give."—INGERSOLL.

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Business.

The absorption of small businesses by large concerns is one of the fixed features of the commercial world. It means less competition, smaller running expenses, and it may easily be the case that the consumers are benefited, even though the distributors net larger profits. And once the larger firm is established, it is much easier to handle competitors. They can be bought out, bullied out, or starved out. The process is so simple, it has so many obvious advantages, there is small wonder that the keener brains of the religious world have for long been desirous of emulating it. For the competition of the Churches demands a great expenditure of energy, the cost of advertising and the expense of employing a large army of agents is very large, and it is openly said that if a working arrangement could be achieved the number of travellers could be reduced—"prevention of overlapping" is the religious phrase—there would be less competition, and, with a decrease of competition, less need for advertising. Hence the desire for amalgamation, or—again to put the matter religiously—the union of the Churches. * * *

A Distinction and a Difference.

At this point I am afraid my analogy breaks down. The union of small businesses represents a natural growth, and one of benefit to nearly all concerned. The union of the Churches represents a forced thing, and one that promises danger to all but a few. In business, the combine is handling an article that is in demand, and the promise of an increased sale is one of the chief reasons for the combine's existence. In religion, the fact that the Churches are stocked with something for which there is a decreasing market is one of the chief grounds for the amalgamation. If they were all doing well, there would be no desire for unity—except for that kind which made the Kilkenny cats famous. They desire to hang together lest they should hang separately. Their union is one of decreasing strengths, in the hope that by a husbanding of resources they may preserve institutions and ideas which the Fates have already doomed to destruction. * * *

Enter the Lord Mayor of London.

The unity of Christendom has been a dream of the ages. And desperate efforts have been made to achieve it. There has been wholesale murder, wholesale bribery, yes, and wholesale lying. All have failed. Courage has been proof against persecution, and honesty has withstood bribery. And now enters upon the scene Sir Charles Wakefield, Lord Mayor of London. Sir Charles was interviewed the other day by Mr. Harold Begbie, champion of the Mons Angels and fugelman-in-chief to the Salvation Army, and the interview appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*, since when a number of other people

have favoured the world with *their* opinion on the question. How much of the interview is Sir Charles Wakefield's, and how much of it belongs to Mr. Begbie, it is impossible to say. All Mr. Begbie's interviews have a close family likeness, which may be due to his selecting the people to be interviewed, or to their selecting Mr. Begbie as their mouthpiece. I do not think it necessary to compliment either on his choice.

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There Are Others.

The Lord Mayor's ideal is that of one great National Church, which shall in turn be the Church of the Empire. We are a great Empire, he says, and are becoming friendly with Russia. "Think of Britain, Russia, and India working together with a religious consecration.....India has the secret of mysticism. Russia has the secret of love. Britain has the secret of moral earnestness." Sir Charles, it will be observed, is characteristically British. Others may lead the world in mysticism, or love, or other things; *we* head the world in "moral earnestness." The pious Briton is nothing if he is not moral—and unenlightened foreigners are apt to suspect him most when he is. But Sir Charles should reflect that in this Empire, which the British Church is to dominate, there are others beside Christians. All the people, even in these home islands of ours, are not Christians. But if the whole population here were Christian, there are between seventy and eighty millions of Mohammedans in the Empire. In India there are not four millions of nominal Christians out of a population of over 300 millions. Perhaps it is our great "moral earnestness" which prevents Sir Charles realizing the offensive arrogance of speaking as though the opinions and feelings of about ninety per cent. of the population of the Empire are not worth troubling about. * * *

An Enlightening Proposal.

Sir Charles confesses that the achievement of unity seems easy "when I trust myself to my heart." "When, however, I allow my head to take possession of me, the whole matter becomes intangible and elusive." That strikes me as saying that when Sir Charles consults his own feelings, unity seems possible. When he looks at the Christians and *thinks* about it, it seems hopeless. Still, he is hopeful that if he invited representatives of all the Churches to the Mansion House, something might be done. "*It would be difficult for them to be theological.*" (The italics are mine.) And Dr. Clifford says that he has been chairman of a committee for *social betterment*, on which all sorts of religious people have worked together happily and effectively. These expressions are both instructive. And, unconsciously, they kill the idea of religious unity. The combination must be secular if it is to be real—not religious. Get them away from religion, says the Lord Mayor, and they will become reasonable and agreeable. Bring them together for a social purpose, says Dr. Clifford, and they will be reasonable and peaceful. Exactly. I have said the same thing myself thousands of times. It is secular

life that unites; it is religious belief that divides. But it is unity in religion that the Lord Mayor set out to achieve. And his only means of realizing it is to leave religion out altogether. This is not his fault. It is inherent in the subject. There is no real basis in religion for unity. A commercial combination of the Churches may be achieved in the face of a pressing danger. But that is all; it is a very different thing from unity in religious belief. * * *

Unity or Division.

On what is it that Christians of all denominations are to unite? The Lord Mayor suggests belief in the reality of God and in the approach through Jesus Christ. These are all mere words. Christians have never differed in believing in God or in Jesus Christ, the formula is too vague to admit of difference—among Christians. Their quarrel has been as to what was meant by belief in God, and what was meant by belief in Christ. On these points they differ as much as ever, and will keep on differing. And this will be so because religious beliefs generally fail to provide the condition of a sustained agreement. In secular matters there is, it is true, difference of opinion, and it is as well that there should be such. But there is a steadily growing body of accepted fact about which we learn to agree, and to use as a basis for further discussion. In religion there is no such basis of growing and accepted fact. The questions over which Christians were quarrelling nearly two thousand years ago they are still quarrelling over, and they will continue to do so while there are two Christians left in the world. The chief influence of religion is to divide. That is the one fact facing us throughout history. * * *

Church and State.

Fortunately, the unity of the Churches is never likely to become an accomplished fact. Religion to-day means privilege; and the interests of rival sects are too conflicting to admit of union. It would be a sad day for the country were it otherwise. That eminent Wesleyan, Sir Robert Perks, speaking as a layman, said quite truly:—

I fear that "one British Church," if ever constituted in these islands, would very soon overpower and master the State. Our own history, and the experience of our Ally, France, teach us only too clearly that of all tyrannies that most to be dreaded is a clerically governed State. If all the Christian Churches were consolidated into one vast ecclesiastical federation, speaking with one voice and marching with one step, it would not be long before such an organization would dominate Parliament, make or unmake the Government, and control the Throne. I think, therefore, that it would be a dark and evil day for England were the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Independents, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics, and the Salvation Army, with all the other religious communities to be united together in one great organic union.

With this I heartily agree. The greatest evil that can afflict any State is for it to be ruled by a religious organization. The history of Byzantium, of Geneva, of Scotland, of England, under Puritanism, is eloquent of this evil. There have been many attempts to run a State on religious lines, and to organize social life in terms of a special interpretation of the Bible. And everywhere the result has been failure and demoralization. * * *

An Abuse of Office.

We would suggest to Sir Charles Wakefield that, as a secular official, as the Chief Magistrate of the City of London, it is not his proper business to utilize the accident of his election to promulgate fantastic schemes

of Christian unity. He is at the Mansion House, not as a member of a Christian Church, but as a citizen; and he is Lord Mayor over people of all religions and of no religion at all. His business is, therefore, to keep his religion in the background. It is his own private affair, and if proof were needed of the disturbing influence in social life of religious beliefs, that proof would be furnished by his present action. Finally, if Sir Charles Wakefield is desirous of doing something to signalize his year of office, there is surely room for effort within the City itself. Shady finance is not unknown in the City of London, and abuses in connection with the great City companies have been more than hinted at by those entitled to speak. If Sir Charles Wakefield can do something to remove criticism in these directions, we fancy people will excuse his failure to secure the establishment of a gigantic national Church, which could not but become a gigantic national calamity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christianity Imperilled.

IN one of its leading articles the *Church Times* for June 9 admits that the Christian religion is face to face with formidable enemies, and that unless its official representatives come to its defence with exceptional insight and expert knowledge, the disbelief in it is sure to spread. "Spiritualism of any kind," for example, is described as "the ruin of Christian faith." If any one becomes a Spiritualist under the impression that he may remain a devout Christian, "he will quickly find that his old religion is regarded simply as suitable for children in knowledge," and that belief in traditional Christianity will become impossible to him. It is not our present intention to contest the correctness of that statement, all we wish to point out being that the *Church Times* is not at all a reliable guide in matters of fact. The very first sentence in the article just mentioned is entirely false. There is no truth whatever in the assertion that "the Rationalist attack on Christianity has spent its force," or that "almost the solitary figure of any eminence which still professes this unattractive and chilly creed is the now elderly and discredited Haeckel." It is true that Professor Haeckel is now an old man, whose work as a scientist is at an end, but we defy our contemporary to prove that he is in any sense discredited. He has been ignorantly denounced from the pulpit and in religious journals times without number, but denunciation, however violent, discredits nothing except the wisdom of the denouncers. The findings of modern science are not likely to be overthrown by Christian writers who have never even tried to understand them. The *Church Times* may sincerely believe that "there was never any real danger from Rationalism"; but the fact remains, and cannot be denied, that Christianity no longer counts in national life, and that the number of those who profess it is annually decreasing. It is doubtless true that "the negations of Huxley and Tyndall and the once popular, but now forgotten, Samuel Laing" could not satisfy the religious sense; but our able contemporary is apparently blind to the fact that such negations have completely destroyed the religious sense itself in tens of thousands of instances. Fifty years ago, unbelievers were comparatively few and far between, whereas to-day they are a great host in every community. Are not the clergy aware that they have lost the hold they once had upon the minds and consciences of men and women? Has not the Bishop of London been bold enough to declare that "the Church of the Carpenter of Nazareth has not the confidence of the present-day

carpenter," but is entirely out of touch with the labouring classes? The truth is that the negations of prominent scientists are now shared by the people at large, and that the Church of Christ is a spent force.

We must remind the *Church Times* and its readers that Rationalism was never so widespread and dominant as it is in the second decade of the twentieth century, a state of things for which we are largely indebted to such eminent Rationalists as Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and Tyndall. Even the despised Samuel Laing is so far from being forgotten that the cheap reprints of his works, issued by the Rationalist Press Association, are just now circulating freely throughout the English-speaking world. Indeed, we are prepared to affirm that Rationalistic teaching is more general and pronounced now than at any former period. Sir Ray Lankester, Sir Edward Schafer, Professors Metchnikoff, Elliot Smith, MacCallum, Minchin, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, and many other scientists, are enthusiastic Rationalists. So are Professors Bury, of Cambridge, and Gilbert Murray, of Oxford, both keen lovers of literature, but both equally loyal Freethinkers. Are all these men of no account in the estimation of the *Church Times*, and is their advocacy of freedom of thought and expression of no avail? What is Rationalism? Here is Professor Bury's answer:—

The uncompromising assertion by reason of her absolute rights throughout the whole domain of thought is termed *Rationalism*, and the slight stigma which is still attached to the word reflects the bitterness of the struggle between reason and the forces arrayed against her. The term is limited to the field of theology, because it was in that field that the self-assertion of reason was most violently and pertinaciously opposed. In the same way *Freethought*, the refusal of thought to be controlled by any authority but its own, has a definitely theological reference. Throughout the conflict, authority has had great advantages. At any time the people who really care about reason have been a small minority, and probably will be so for a long time to come. Reason's only weapon has been argument. Authority has employed physical and moral violence, legal coercion, and social displeasure (*History of Freedom of Thought*, pp. 18, 19).

Professor Gilbert Murray proclaims that "it is as much a failure of nerve to reject blindly for fear of being a fool, as to believe blindly for fear of missing some emotional stimulus"; but then he adds:—

I confess it seems strange to me as I write here, to reflect that at this moment many of my friends and most of my fellow-creatures are, as far as one can judge, quite confident that they possess supernatural knowledge. As a rule, each individual belongs to some body which has received in writing the results of a Divine revelation. I cannot share in any such feeling (*Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 152).

Is it in the least degree likely that these men of science and university professors have no admiring and approving followers? They hold practically the same views as those upheld by Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, the only difference being that the public now receives with favour what it angrily resented fifty years ago. Rationalism has prospered to such an extent that to-day its principles are commonplaces.

The *Church Times* asserts that "the religious instinct is part of men's endowment"; but we deny the existence of a religious instinct. There are many instincts in our constitution which we have inherited from our ancestors and from the lower animals, but religion is not one of them. Instincts are inherited reflexes to be found in plants and animals alike; but there is no such thing as an instinctive feeling or longing for God. Every child has to be taught to believe in a Supreme Being and a spiritual world. Deaf and dumb people reach mature years without any religious feeling or desire

whatever unless they are religiously trained. Is it not an acknowledged fact that no children, if left to themselves, would ever take to religion? The strongest argument for religious education is that without it religion would soon disappear altogether. Even the *Church Times* has employed this argument in opposition to the policy of Secular Education in Government schools. It is lamented that in spite of all the religious instruction given in the homes, in the schools, and in all the institutions of the Church, the majority of children arrive at manhood and womanhood without any religious convictions whatever. But if there were a religious instinct an infant would, in due time, take as naturally to religion as it does to its mother's milk. Our contemporary maintains that "religion can only be killed by religion"; but that is a radical mistake. Religion can be killed by sheer neglect. Drop religious education for twenty-five years, and in a hundred years there will be absolutely no religion left. As a matter of fact, religion is passing away already, despite the incessant activity of Sunday-school teachers and tens of thousands of clergymen whose business it is to preserve and disseminate it. The perplexing problem is how to check the religious decline, so bitterly deplored, that has been steadily going on for many years. Conferences are being held to consider the situation and to devise means to successfully deal with it. Great emphasis is being laid upon the necessity for the training of Sunday-school teachers, and the opinion has been expressed that the Church should ordain them for their office. Meantime, all the Churches mourn over their enormous losses. At the Primitive Methodist Conference just held at Nottingham, it was reported that there was during the year a decrease of upwards of 1,800 in Church membership, and a more serious decline of 6,000 Sunday-school scholars and several hundred teachers. It was admitted that the War could not be held responsible for such a series of slumps, though it may have accentuated the downward tendency. A reporter observes that if one takes these statistics along with similar ones in the other Free Churches, "it is clear that, as at present organized and appraised, these communions do not present a rosy outlook." And yet the reporter has the audacity to add that he, for one, "does not and will not believe that there is a real slump in religion."

Now, curiously enough, the *Church Times*, whilst believing that "the religious instinct" is part of man's endowment, "views with considerable apprehension the rise of the New Spiritualism which professes to be a religion, and is now preached everywhere by ardent and enthusiastic disciples." But why should a Christian newspaper be afraid of what it regards as a false religion? Is not the so-called religious instinct from God, and should it not protect those who have it against the seductive influence of any and every false religion? Does not our contemporary remember that once upon a time the Apostles had to appear before the High Council at Jerusalem, and that, having heard what they had to say for themselves, the members of the Council were frantic, and wanted to put them to instant death? Has it forgotten that a Doctor of the Law, who was held in universal respect, rose in the Council, and directed that the men should be taken out of court for a little while? That man's name was Gamaliel, at whose feet Paul once sat, and he addressed the Council thus:—

Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing

and drew away much people after him : he also perished ; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed (Acts v. 21-40).

If there is a religious instinct, it is of God, and God will see to it that its possessors shall not be led astray. If there is no religious instinct, as we maintain, there is no true religion ; so that so far as truth is concerned, there is no choice between Christianity and Spiritualism. But what is the difference between the two ?

J. T. LLOYD.

A Modern Crusader.

G. K. Chesterton: A Critical Study. By Julius West. (Secker.)

MR. GILBERT CHESTERTON is so well-known that one turns with a certain expectation to Mr. Julius West's critical study of the famous journalist, published by Mr. Secker. Mr. West contends that Chesterton represents a reaction against the views current in the later years of the nineteenth century. Yet Chesterton by no means represents contemporary thought. He has attacked Woman's Suffrage; he dislikes Jews; he is never happier than when telling the working-classes when they were wrong. The truth is, probably, that he is a Democrat who finds himself in the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. He is not a hard-shell Tory, for his humour is continually coming to his rescue, but he has delighted the Tories more than the Intellectuals. His humour is of the Peter Pan brand, that of the schoolboy who has never grown up, and the printed page remains to show his freakish, Puck-like prejudices. Quixote, democrat, Catholic, humourist—he is one of the oddest combinations.

In his *Victorian Age of Literature*, Chesterton used his strength tyrannously in the service of the most reactionary of Churches. He has nothing but insults for the great "intellectuals." Ignoring the long series of masterpieces that has come from the greatest of living English novelists, Chesterton says of Thomas Hardy that he is "a sort of village Atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot." Swinburne, a poet of rare genius, is accused of composing "a learned and sympathetic and indecent parody on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin"—surely an ironical suggestion in a Protestant country. In speaking of *Songs Before Sunrise*, he tries to belittle those superb lyrics by saying that they were songs before a sunrise that had never turned up. According to Chesterton, the great Victorians were "lame giants." Even Robert Browning is reproached for making "spluttering and spiteful puns" about Newman, Wiseman, and Manning. One of the greatest women of the century, Emily Bronte, is described as being as "unsociable as a storm at midnight." The only Freethinker to whom Chesterton is civil is James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, who, he informs us, "knew how to be democratic in the dark." As Chesterton spells his name with a "p," the compliment is a doubtful one after all. And this is the man who challenges the dogmatism of the Agnostic; convicts science of irrationality; and who pretends to find liberty inside the least progressive of the Churches.

Although he keeps his eyes on the path to Rome, and ensures by his robust piety a hearty welcome in sheltered homes and country houses, Chesterton has his good points. Compared with so many present-day writers, he is a jolly and breezy companion. He seems to say

with Sir Toby Belch, "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" He displays more than a passing acquaintance with Free-thought, and his writings are often barbed with iconoclastic jests, which must be as disconcerting to Christians as they are diverting to Freethinkers. Here is a pleasant diversion:—

Of all conceivable forms of enlightenment, the worst is what these people call the Inner Light. Anyone who knows anybody knows how it would work; anyone who knows anyone from the Higher Thought centre knows how it does work. That Jones shall worship the god within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun or moon, anything rather than the Inner Light; let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the god within.

From his abundant mine of epigram and paradox he shovels out diamonds and rubbish with a good-humoured carelessness. Listen to a few of his good things:—

Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.

Massacre is wicked, even with provocation.

What is the good of words if they are not important enough to quarrel over. If you called a woman a chimpanzee instead of an angel, wouldn't there be a quarrel about a word?

Bad writing is not a crime. Mr. Hall Caine walks the street openly.

The Christian martyrdoms were advertisements.

The newspapers which announce the giant gooseberry and the raining frogs are the modern representative of the popular tendency which produced the hydra, the werewolf, and the dog-headed man.

"My country, right or wrong," is like saying "My mother, drunk or sober."

What have we done, and where have we wandered, we that have produced sages who could have spoken with Socrates and poets who could walk with Dante, that we should talk as if we had never done anything more intelligent than found colonies and kick niggers?

Chesterton is such a boon companion, so fond of comradeship, so full of laughter, the joy of living, and the lust of argument, that the reader is content to regard him as a licensed jester. We forgive the cunning monologue for the inevitable epigram. Try as he will, he cannot keep humanity out of his books. His big, breezy nature refuses to be cribb'd, cabin'd, confin'd within the narrow limits of ecclesiasticism. Let him write what he will, he is always sure of an audience.

Far too much has been made of Chesterton's supposed likeness to Dr. Johnson, and Mr. West incautiously repeats the comparison. Thus, when someone said, "You cannot put the clock back," meaning that you cannot put events back, Chesterton answers triumphantly, "The reply is, you can put the clock back." Johnson was fond of verbal victory, but he would have disdained such verbal juggling as this. As Mr. West justly remarks:—

Chesterton uses his strength a little tyrannously. He is an adept at begging the question. The lost art called *ignoratio elenchi* has been frankly re-discovered by him to the surprise of many excellent and honest debaters who have never succeeded in scoring the most obvious points in the face of Chesterton's power of emitting a string of epigrams and pretending it is a string of arguments.

"Always the journalist," declares Mr. West, though he adds, "the journalistic touch when it is good means the preservation of a work." Before the integrity of this criticism Chesterton falls gently to pieces, and we may examine him in detail, a man of brilliant parts. His novels are constantly held up by theological digression, and the reader is made to pick primroses by the way

when he should rather follow the straight road of the story. Chesterton's stories should be read at leisure, in snatches. In his pleasant diversions, so full of challenges, lies his charm, for there is often wit and wisdom discreetly hidden under motley. Like so many apologists, G. K. Chesterton is more interested in Free-thought than many a Rationalist. Much can be made of his rebellion against his clerical environment, and Mr. West has a palpable hit at Chesterton in the gibe:—

Chesterton conceives of God, having carried the creation as far as this world, sitting down to look at the new universe in a sort of ecstasy. He enjoyed his new toy immensely, and as he sent the earth spinning round the sun, his pleasure increased. So he said, "Do it again" every time the sun had completed its course, and laughed prodigiously, and behaved like a happy child.

When Chesterton ascended the pulpit, his sense of humour must surely have slumbered. "Mythology and the newspapers cannot co-exist," is a lively and true epigram. Did it never occur to him that in introducing Superstition to a mixed audience he had done a rash thing? And if it had, would he have been better pleased at the knowledge that Chesterton the jester cuts a much braver figure in the imagination of the public than Chesterton the Catholic theologian? He also preferred to run his own show, and the jocose apologist for mediævalism will scarcely be regarded seriously, although he loves—

To prove his doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.

That Gilbert Chesterton should court approval as a modern St. George attacking the dragon of Rationalism proves to what shifts the champions of orthodoxy are reduced. Resplendent in motley, he attracts crowds by his high spirits and boyish wilfulness. Happily, he nullifies the effect of his own work by making his audience feel that nothing matters very much, and that religion is a joke played on the people. MIMNERMUS.

Exploring the Invisible World.

IN an earlier article the rise and progress of the atomic theory was briefly outlined. We have now to consider the unseen world contained within the atoms themselves, and we hope to show that recent research has revealed a fairyland of marvels which dwarfs all previous physical achievements to utter insignificance.

Every solid substance is composed of molecules, and these molecules are made up of atoms. The problem before us consists in the determination of the nature of the materials out of which these elementary atoms are constructed. Iron, copper, the precious metals, silver and gold, are all chemical elements. So are the gases, such as hydrogen, helium, and oxygen, but these are merely the titles conferred on certain modes of matter which cannot be reduced to simpler forms. Compounds may be separated into their elements themselves, the chemist can carry on no further process of reduction to simpler forms.

To the unaided senses such a heavy substance as gold appears uniformly solid throughout. But there are sound reasons for supposing that this useful metal is porous. This opinion is open to experimental proof, by simply placing a piece of gold in a mercury bath. The particles of mercury will force an entrance into the interstices which existed between the gold particles, and the gold will become heavier while its volume will remain unchanged. It is likewise known that the temperature of gold and other substances is regulated by the rate of their molecular motion. The vibrating molecules are made up of still smaller particles termed atoms, and

we are anxious to ascertain the nature of the atoms themselves.

The older atomists regarded the atoms as solid and eternal things, but this view has steadily yielded to more exact concepts. Herbert Spencer long ago asserted that our elements were in reality compounds, and this opinion has now become quite orthodox in scientific circles. But until very recently physicists were unable to form any clear conception of the architecture of the atom. Now, they possess very rational concepts indeed, and these concepts are not the outcome of wild guesswork but rest upon a solid foundation of trained observation and carefully checked experiment.

This may seem a large claim, but not only can particles be shown to exist compared with which the almost inconceivably tiny atoms and molecules are immense giants, but methods have been devised which enable the scientist to weigh and measure these ultra-microscopic particles as positively as the astro-physicist weighs the planets or predicts an eclipse of the sun or moon.

When a small body darts through the air at a high velocity it is invisible, but its presence may be determined by placing an obstacle in its path. An instrument known as the chronograph is employed for the purpose of determining the speed of projectiles. In the astronomical observatory this invention is utilized to automatically register the fraction of a second when a star crosses the eye-piece of a telescope. So refined is this instrument that it records the hundredth part of a second occupied by the transit of a star.

Other forms of the chronograph are used for determining the velocity of moving bodies. The most general plan consists in directing a bullet to pass through a series of screens set apart at a given space, and as the projectile plunges through these the rupture of each screen momentarily breaks the continuity of an electric current and causes the chronograph to register the precise moment when it flew past the screens. The speed of projectiles is thus exactly ascertained, but of course such extreme accuracy as this cannot be repeated with the electrons. Still it serves to illustrate the methods by which the physical chemist arrives at his understanding of ultra-microscopic modes of existence.

The foregoing analogy is employed by Mr. Charles R. Gibson, in his most excellent *Scientific Ideas of To-Day*, and it is, indeed, a serviceable one for the purpose in view. We may now proceed to trace the history of the discovery of the electrical particles which build up the atom. Commencing with the established fact that an electric spark will travel with greater facility through a vessel containing rarefied air than in the ordinary dense atmosphere that surrounds us, inquirers proceeded to further experimental investigation.

That an electrical discharge passes more readily through attenuated air is proved by a very simple method. A crystal vessel, known as an electric egg, owing to its egg-like appearance is attached to an air-pump. The egg is supplied with two metal rods. One of these rods is firmly fixed at the egg's base, and the other slides through an air-tight orifice at its apex:—

The whole vessel is air-tight, having an outlet at the base, which may be connected to the air-pump. By arranging wires from the two brass rods to the terminals of an induction coil, connected to a battery, electric sparks can be made to pass between the two little brass rods within the egg. We gradually separate the rods until the sparking ceases, owing to the intervening air space offering too much resistance to the discharge.

Proceeding with the experiment, the air-pump is made to exhaust a small quantity of the air in the vessel when the sparking again takes place. This proves that the

thinner air forms a better conductor. The pumping out of the air is continued until the sparking is transformed into a beautiful luminous stream. More and more air is withdrawn until the entire egg becomes a glowing body, and as the air grows rarer and rarer the luminosity segregates into numerous horizontal discs. At this point the air has reached so high a state of exhaustion that it no longer possesses its conducting powers, and considerable electric pressure is now needed to generate a discharge through the extremely thin atmosphere remaining in the electric egg.

During the course of such an experiment the contained air attains a state of exhaustion so great that the electrical glow from the glass globe's interior dies into darkness, but another phenomenon now appears, for the walls of the glass egg commence to glow with a greenish light. This phosphorescence varies in colour with different kinds of glass. But whatever its colour, there is the puzzling phosphorescence, and as there is no effect without a cause, an attempt has been made to determine the conditions which create the remarkable phenomenon in question.

Professor Crookes, the celebrated chemist, propounded the theory that a stream of radiant particles was discharged from the cathode terminal, and that these ultra-visible particles impinge on the glass walls of the egg vessel and give rise to the observed phosphorescence. Even in a high vacuum tube a certain percentage of air remains, and the molecules of this attenuated air are bombarded by the electrical current, become luminous, and display the glow which, as we have seen, suffuses our electric egg.

To the three recognized modes of matter—the solid, the liquid, and the gaseous—was now added what Crookes claimed to be matter in a fourth state. The reasoning is very beautiful. The molecules of solid bodies cling firmly together. Among liquids the molecules are less tenaciously held, and tend to slide over each other, and wander farther apart. This liberty of movement is still greater with gases. Gaseous molecules clash together and apparently repel one another. In the opinion of Professor Crookes the molecules of the fourth state of matter are as remote from the molecular state of gas as a gas is distant from the state of a liquid.

Matter's fourth estate Crookes preferred to term radiant. The hypothesis was a brilliant one, and although it was rejected when its author advanced it, it has since been proved to the point of demonstration. Many physicists regarded these radiant particles as the atoms themselves. Recent science, however, has determined the weights and measurements of these wonderful particles, and they are known to be the merest specks in comparison with the tiniest of all atoms, those of hydrogen gas.

These radiant particles, when Crookes first discovered them, were known as the cathode rays. Dr. Johnstone Stoney subsequently named them electrons, while Professor J. J. Thomson calls them corpuscles. Perhaps the term electron is more distinctive than either of the others, and it seems likely to prove the universally accepted appellation for these particles of matter in the fourth state.

Reverting to experimental evidence we observe that in a highly exhausted vacuum tube, inside which an electric discharge is taking place, the stream of electrons which accompanies the discharge, is absolutely invisible. But although the electrons themselves cannot be seen, the walls of the glass vessel display a phosphorescent glow which is generated by the impact of the invisible particles. Now, by employing a saucer-shaped cathode terminal, the electrons may be made to bombard a selected area on the glass. When focussed in this manner their path is invariably a straight line. Then comes another sur-

prise. If a magnet be introduced into the neighbourhood of the vacuum tube the shower of electrons becomes deflected from its original path. This is evident from the circumstance that the particles now bombard the vessel below their previous point of contact, and the stronger the magnet the larger the deflection of the electrons. Thus it is seen that the electrons act precisely like an electric current.

Not only have the electrons been weighed and measured, but their number has been estimated. The quantitative data now available have proved themselves of the highest value to the searcher after ultra-atomic truth. Elaborate experiments were devised to determine the speed of the rapidly vibrating particles in a vacuum, and their velocity was found to be tremendous. Later research demonstrated that by subjecting the flying electrons to the deflecting influences of magnetic and electric fields, the rate of motion of the streaming particles was more readily ascertained. The conclusions necessitated by these investigations coincided with those obtained through more refined experiments.

It was discovered that the velocity of the streaming electrons varied with varying conditions. Obviously, as the electrons are driven off from the cathode terminal of the apparatus by the agency of an electric discharge, their rate of travel will in some degree depend upon the force of the electric discharge. Their velocity will also depend upon the density of the air in the vacuum tube, as the molecules of the gases which form the air remaining in the apparatus will set up friction and impede their progress. In a tube in which the air is only moderately exhausted, the velocity of the electrons may attain a rate of 5,000 miles per second. This high velocity is vast when compared with the greatest speed obtainable for naval and military projectiles, but it represents a very feeble velocity for electrons. In a high vacuum tube from which air is practically excluded there are no atmospheric molecules to retard the progress of the particles when these are urged forward by a fairly powerful electric force. In such circumstances the particles will sweep through the experimental instrument at the stupendous speed of 60,000 miles per second. A velocity so enormous almost stupefies the imagination. It is equivalent to a rapid journey to the Moon, a distance of 238,000 miles, in less than one-twelfth of a minute.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

PROOF.

In front of the two men a ladder straddled across the pavement. High up a painter perched on his little hanging platform was whitening the sepulchre of a metropolitan stucco house.

The Freethinker was marching on boldly towards it, when, "Don't," cried his Cautious Friend, seizing his arm, "Don't, I beg you, walk under the ladder. It's so fearfully unlucky."

"Nonsense," said the Freethinker, heartily, "that absurd superstition shall not prevent me going underneath. Is the fact that two hundred years ago men were pushed from ladders when they were being hanged a sufficient reason for my not walking under a ladder to-day?"

"For my sake, then," said the Cautious Friend; "a mere foible perhaps on my part, but I wish you wouldn't. Besides, that man might spill his paint, or even fall on you himself."

"Very well," the Freethinker replied with good-humoured indulgence, "I won't go under it."

He stepped down into the street to circumvent the peril, and was instantly run down by an immense motor waggon.

"My God," said the Cautious Friend, devoutly, as he surveyed the mangled remains of the Freethinker, "see what comes of even having wanted to go under the ladder."

N. S. S. Annual Conference.

Report of Business Meeting.

THE Annual Conference of the Society took place on Whit-Sunday at Queen's Hall. There was a goodly attendance of members of the Parent Society and Branch members.

The Delegates were as follows:—Bethnal Green, J. Lazar-nick, R. Brooks; Birmingham, F. E. Willis, E. Clifford Williams; Camberwell, G. Wood; Huddersfield, R. Tabrum; Kingsland, R. Miller; Liverpool, Thos. How; Manchester, J. G. Dobson; Newcastle-on-Tyne, R. H. Rosetti; North London, A. Cunningham; South Shields, R. Chapman; West Ham, T. J. Thurlow.

Amongst the Vice-Presidents were W. Baker, E. Bowman, H. Cowell, W. Davidson, T. Gorniot, Miss Kough, W. Leat, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, J. Neate, Dr. R. T. Nichols, C. G. Quinton, Victor Roger, G. Rolf, Mrs. Rolf, S. Samuels, H. Silverstein, Miss Alma Stanley, and Frederick Wood.

Mr. W. Heaford, was absent in consequence of indisposition.

The abandonment of the Whitsun holiday prevented many provincial delegates and friends being present, but amongst those in attendance were W. Pitt, Birmingham; F. Lonsdale, Glasgow; G. Alward, Grimsby.

Mr. Chapman Cohen occupied the chair.

The Minutes of the previous Conference having been read and confirmed, the Executive's Annual Report (which appeared in our last week's issue) was read by the Chairman. Mr. A. B. Moss moved its adoption, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Dobson (Manchester). Mr. Willis (Birmingham), in supporting it, said he thought the Executive were to be congratulated upon the Report, which was a splendid survey of the field of Freethought at home and abroad, and, in his opinion, it would prove very inspiring to some of the younger members of the Society, and act as an incentive to them to do their best for the Cause. The motion for the adoption of the Annual Report was then put to the meeting and carried with acclamation.

The Financial Report and Balance Sheet were adopted.

With regard to the next item on the Agenda, the election of President, Mr. Cohen said he thought it would be better to take the motion (b) first, and, if the Conference agreed, he would move the suspension of the standing orders to permit this course.

Mr. Gorniot suggested that in order to save time Resolution No. 10 should be taken as an amendment to No. 5.

Mr. Cohen (Chairman) said that all he was anxious for was a peaceful solution of the matter. In his judgment, it was not an amendment at all, but a distinct alteration in the constitution of the Society.

Mr Gorniot's suggestion was put in the form of an amendment, seconded by Mr. Miller, and carried.

At this point Mr. Willis (Birmingham) was voted to the chair, which position he accepted on the understanding that he was not deprived of the right of discussion on the resolution.

Mr. Thurlow (West Ham) said it gave him very great pleasure to perform what he considered a duty on behalf of Freethought at home and abroad, namely, to move that Mr. Chapman Cohen be elected President of the National Secular Society. It had been his (Mr. Thurlow's) pleasure and privilege to sit under the presidency of Mr. Foote and Mr. Bradlaugh, and, having watched Mr. Cohen's career and summed up his capabilities, he felt certain that they could not do better than elect him to the position of President.

Mr. Brookes (Bethnal Green) said that his Branch had come to the conclusion unanimously that in these trying times, when advanced movements were threatened, there was no one else who could take the position of President so well as Mr. Cohen, whose election he had very much pleasure in supporting.

Mr. Willis (Birmingham) said he had much pleasure in associating himself with the remarks of the previous speakers. Mr. Cohen undoubtedly possessed all the qualities necessary for such a position.

Mr. Chapman (South Shields) said most of them were aware of the important part Mr. Cohen played in the history

(Continued on p. 410.)

Acid Drops.

The counsel for the officer responsible for the shooting of Mr. Sheehy Skeffington offered what he considered good evidence for his client's temporary insanity. They were told, he said, "about his wrestling with his God in prayer during the night, and of his appeal to the words of scripture as authority for his awful deed. Surely here was evidence that his mental balance had gone altogether over to the wrong side." This is a curious country. If you attack the Bible, and declare prayer to be an act of folly, you are denounced as a danger to the community. If you rely upon both prayer and the Bible, and act as though you do, you are declared to be insane. The only safe rule appears to be to believe the Bible once for all, and then take no further notice of it.

Every now and then there is brought to our notice a saddening exhibition of the hopeless insularity of British Christians. So profound is their national exclusiveness, and so inconceivable their prejudice, that they imagine themselves immeasurably superior to all others. An illustration of this pitiful bigotry has just been furnished by Canon Newbolt, in a sermon recently preached in the Parish Church of Crediton. The object of the discourse was to advocate the claims to generous support of the Central African Mission. But the preacher could not allow the occasion to pass without availing himself of it to tell, consciously or unconsciously, several despicable and pernicious lies.

Although the aim of the sermon was to solicit financial help for the Central African Mission, its subject was "The Apostle of Germany." According to a report of it in the *Church Times* for June 16, St. Boniface, an Englishman born and bred at Crediton, is painted as an ideal missionary, who went to Germany with his heart aflame with the love of Christ. We are told "the old and beautiful story of his devotion," of "how he broke down the superstitions of the heathen with unflinching courage," and of "how, at the last, he went to meet his doom undaunted and unmoved, if only he might show the German Pagan the true beauty of humanity, tenderness, and love." As a matter of fact, however, Boniface was by no means a lovable character. For the heinous crime of declaring that the earth was round, he cruelly denounced a Bavarian priest, called Virgilius, and secured his excommunication by the Pope. Excommunicated rival bishops, who refused re-ordination at his hands, were imprisoned, or tortured, and dubbed "servants of the Devil and forerunners of Antichrist." It was at the head of an armed force that he introduced himself to a new neighbourhood, and when his end came he was actually marching with a troop of soldiers. It was his boast that he had baptized a hundred thousand natives in one year.

After painting a wholly one-sided portrait of St. Boniface, Canon Newbolt proceeds to supply us with an equally false impression of present-day Germans. Poor Germany, it seems, has "lapsed almost into the state in which Boniface found it," and now simply "shows us what godless kultur apart from Christ leads to." Then the reverend gentleman pleads with Englishmen to "see to it that England never sinks as low as those our brethren beyond the sea in Paganized Germany have done." This is as glaring and inexcusable departure from the truth as it is possible for a man to be guilty of. The whole British pulpit appears to have lost all sense of truth, so far as Germany is concerned. We hold no brief for that country; but as to its being a Christian country, there is not even the shadow of doubt. Its leading men, like ours, boast of their devotion to the Christian faith.

A Cheshire man has reached his 102nd birthday, and Christian journalists are busy making paragraphs. Noah and Methuselah were spinning tops and playing marbles at that age.

The dear clergy are everywhere taking advantage of the War, and introducing the "thin end of the wedge." For

the first time for hundreds of years, a Rogation Service, to ask for a blessing on the crops, was held at Rochester Market.

During the torrential thunderstorms on Whit-Saturday, a number of churches in London and the suburbs were struck by lightning. Another example of the playfulness of Providence.

Mr. C. F. Dixon-Johnson, in a new sixpenny pamphlet on *The Armenians*, tries to combat the present anti-Turk and pro-Armenian opinions of most English and American people. According to Mr. Johnson, the lowland Armenians have been Christians since the year A.D. 300, and the moral results of 1600 years of Christian influences have not been satisfactory. The clergy are extremely superstitious, intolerant, and bigoted. There are various conflicting Christian sects, and English and American missionaries in Armenia, while they never succeed in converting a Mohammedan, do succeed in "turning one kind of Christian into some other kind." The Nestorian Christians use a sort of rattle or castanets at High Mass, and believe that the body of Jesus is preserved in the remains of Noah's Ark, on the top of Mount Ararat. Mr. Grattan Geary, who has travelled frequently in Armenia, says that "the hatred, malice, and uncharitableness characterizing the different native sects in their inter-relations could not be easily exaggerated." Travellers prefer to trade with Mohammedans rather than with the native Christians.

Sir Mark Sykes says that "priests connive at the murder of a bishop—the Church is divided at its very foundations. The keynote of the town Armenian's character is a profound distrust of his co-religionists and neighbours. Their bearing is compounded of a peculiar covert insolence and a strange suggestion of suspicion and craft." Sir Charles Wilson says that the Armenians are "deeply separated by religious differences." Christians in Armenia have not even the desire to dream of reunion, which some of them manifest in England to-day. We might mention that we have one Nestorian bishop in England; he is called the Bishop of Mercia, and his cathedral is at Oxford, and consists of a tin-tabernacle, with an average congregation of about thirteen people on Sundays.

An advertisement in a provincial paper runs, "Clergyman's widow, 36, abstainer, wants cooking." Evidently the lady has overlooked the place so often mentioned in her late husband's sermons.

A commission of bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Pittsburg, U.S.A., is occupied in revising the Ten Commandments in order to bring them up-to-date. They say that some of the Commandments are "verbose and argumentative." Gee! Is this the land of Billy Sunday?

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh has received a dollar from a Scotsman in America, who states that he stole an apple from a stall in the Cowgate, forty years ago. How apples do depreciate in value! Years before the whole human race was damned because some were stolen in Eden.

The Vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Field is organizing a series of "Mystery Pageants" in some of the London Churchyards to illustrate the "Battles of the Cross." We suggest that models of the rack, the Iron Virgin, and a representation of an auto-da-fe would lend realism to the spectacles, and exhibit some of the means by which these battles have been won. We hardly know how interpolated passages in ancient writings, slanders about non-Christians, and deliberate falsifications of historic events could be depicted; but these have also been some of the most powerful weapons with which the "Battles of the Cross" have been won.

In 1729 a Thomas Fairchild, who lived in Hoxton, left a sum of money for an annual Whitsuntide lecture on "The Certainty of the Resurrection of the Dead, as proved by the Changes in the Animal Kingdom." As it is endowed, the lecture has been delivered every year since 1729, and is still going strong. Given an endowment, and there will never be

wanting men to prove immortality, or anything else, from vegetables, raw or cooked. Great is the power of endowment!

Our sympathies are with the Rev. G. Wynne, Rector of Blandford, whose estate has been proved at £36,964, and Rev. H. F. Oliver, late Vicar of Scawby, Lincs, who has gone to meet his Saviour burdened with having left an estate to the value of £17,013. Such things help us to realize how thorny is the path of the Christian.

The *Aberdeen Evening Express* reports the case of the Rev. R. Stephen, of Perth, who was summoned by a young lady of his congregation for maintenance of an illegitimate child born in January last. The impropriety complained of took place in the church vestry after a prayer-meeting. The case was undefended.

The "voice" at public meetings is an institution, and it frequently is both witty and illuminating. At the N. S. S. Conference, one of the speakers asked, dramatically, "What are the 50,000 clergy doing now?" The "voice" got right there with the answer, "Looking after the soldiers' wives."

The Lord's Day Observance folk say that the modern tendency is to make Sunday a Bank Holiday. Possibly they think the ideal of a Bank Holiday is a nobler and a better one.

The clergy are continually asserting that Prussia is Atheistic. There is a striking comment on their veracity in the *Daily Chronicle* :—

The War has struck heavy blows at the finances of the Prussian Protestant State Church. The system hitherto prevailing has been to levy 20 per cent. of the value of the income tax for the support of the Church. A taxpayer who is assessed to pay £25 a year income tax is therefore obliged to contribute £5 to the support of the Church.

This would be sufficient for an ordinary man, but the dear clergy are such idealists.

"The dearth of churchwardens" is a heading in a religious contemporary. It looks as if Christianity were ending in smoke.

War Shall Not Cease.

I.

SINCE war must cease not, let us welcome war.
Her onset seek we never to evade.
But first Bellona shall be servant made,
Robbed of her bloody throne, suffered no more
To feast on life, but death; and turned her blade
Against the accursed shadows we abhor,
That still eclipse humanity full sore,
Leaving us shamed and brutish and afraid.
Now superstition, lying, futile lust
Are challenged for our enemies; now hate
And prejudice and malice writhe in dust
Before our armed goodwill. Find we our fate
Where banners of the pioneers still shine
And golden Reason holds her battle line.

II.

The warrior flags that gleam above her head
Are blazoned bright with everlasting laws
For which her mighty ones have waged her wars
And fought and fallen; yea, our starry dead
Have battled here, have triumphed and have bled
For Reason's patient and immortal cause—
The Humanists, the only conquerors
Whose victories are sung unblemished.
For love, not hate strive on; for love of man
Assail his ignorance and lift his heart
Higher than all the sorrows of his span
Can reach or quell; be it your soldier part
To purify and gladden and reclaim
In human Reason's ever sacred name.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

To Correspondents.

- M. BARNARD.—Sorry that the demands on our space prevent the insertion of your reply to Mr. Cook's letter. We have had to decline several communications on this topic for the same reason.
- K.—As early as possible. Very interested in your news, and we are quite sure where the *Freethinker* does "get a show," sales are assured. Fortunately, a deal of the prejudice against it seems to be breaking down.
- VERITAS.—Regret that we have no room at present. Thanks for communication all the same.
- A. BAYNES.—Thanks for good wishes. Pleased to learn how much the *Freethinker* is appreciated in your battalion.
- E. H. GRIFFIN.—Received with thanks, and shall appear shortly. Thanks for congratulations on what you are good enough to call "the greatly improved paper."
- J. MCCARTNEY.—We daresay that many of the difficulties in the way of people affirming on joining the Army are due to the ignorance of officials on the subject—as in your own case; but if all Freethinkers insisted on their rights, this ignorance would soon be removed. Glad to have your note on the subject.
- J. G. FINLAY.—Pleased to receive your congratulations *re* the *Freethinker*. As you infer, our difficulties are many, but life without difficulties would be a tame affair. And we shall surmount them all in the end.
- F. J. GOLDTHORPE.—Mr. Lloyd, as you will see, has dealt with the matter.
- W. P. ADAMSON.—We are not likely to be misled. Faint friends are always more trouble than bold enemies. Thanks for your interest in the *Freethinker*.
- C. R. HEARSON.—Thanks. We shall be pleased to see to distribution of parcel of papers.
- T. W. LOVE.—We are asking Mr. Gould to send you a list of his publications suitable for children.
- E. CEWIN (Liverpool).—Pleased to get report of your experience. Hope you will get what you desire.
- C. HARDMAN.—Thanks for addresses. They have received attention.
- A. E. COOK.—Crowded out this week. Will appear in our next number.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.*
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.*
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., and not to the Editor.*
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.*

Sugar Plums.

We have only space this week to say that the agitation against the L.C.C. resolution to prohibit the sale of literature in the parks is growing. Amongst other resolutions of protest, one has been passed by the Metropolitan Radical Federation, which represents a membership of 40,000, the South London Ethical Society, and several Trade Union meetings. The agitation thus commenced *must be kept going*. We again urge all societies that attach any value to freedom of propaganda to be up and doing, and impress upon individuals the importance of writing or interviewing their L.C.C. representative on the subject. An influential committee is being formed, about which we hope to say more next week.

We were pleased to see the *Star* taking up the question of the sale of literature in the parks, and speaking with no uncertain voice. It points out that since 1907 several attempts have been made to obstruct the right of public meeting, and calls the present attempt "a reactionary piece of Prus-

sianism." We reproduce the following as illustrating the tone of the article:—

Anybody who knows anything about open-air meetings in the parks knows that a man who has heard a necessarily brief sketch of a subject from a speaker, frequently—and naturally—wants to read his views at greater length, and in detail. For this purpose, pamphlets and newspapers are sold at the meetings. The profits, which are small, go to the societies concerned, and the advantage to the listener is obvious.

But the question at issue is a far more serious one than whether a man shall be allowed to buy a pamphlet in a L.C.C. park. It is whether the never-ending audacity of elected persons is to be allowed to exploit the political truce for their own reactionary object.....Let the L.C.C., in other words, "mind its own business.".....What we have to guard against with special vigilance is the attempts of the reactionary elements to encroach on popular freedom for its own partizan ends.

That is raising the issue fairly and squarely, and we hope that the people of London will realize it. It is the right of public meeting that is at stake.

The first of the out-door Demonstrations, held in Finsbury Park on Sunday last, was a complete success. Mr. Cohen was absent in consequence of a prior engagement, but a large and appreciative audience listened for two and a half hours to addresses from Messrs. Davidson, Hooper, Saphin, Rosetti, Miller, and Miss Kough. A resolution condemning the action of the L.C.C. in prohibiting the sale of literature was carried unanimously.

The second of the series of Freethought Demonstrations will be held to-day in Brockwell Park at 6 o'clock. The speaking will be attended to by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Owen, Miss Kough, and others. We bespeak the attendance of all Freethinkers who can be present. These demonstrations, to be effective, must be well attended. The larger the crowd, the better.

Mr. Eden Phillpotts, in the course of a letter accompanying the verses which we print on another page, is good enough to say that he finds the *Freethinker* "splendidly exhilarating," and flatters us by saying his lines owe their inspiration to our "Views and Opinions" of June 4. We refrain from publishing Mr. Phillpotts very complimentary reference to our work in general, although coming from one well qualified to express an opinion, we value it very highly. Our readers will, we are sure, appreciate Mr. Phillpotts' appearance in the *Freethinker*, and will join us in hoping for his return at an early date.

The Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. holds its Annual Picnic on Sunday, July 2. The programme is: Tram to Alcester Lane End, thence by boat at 11 o'clock from the Cottage, Mill Pool Hill, to Earlswood Lakes. Tea at the Chalet, Earlswood, at 4 o'clock, returning at 7. The price of tickets for boat and tea, 2s. 6d.; children, half price. Those requiring tickets must apply to Mr. J. Partridge, 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham. We hope that the summer will have arrived by July 2.

Miss Vance calls our attention to the fact that Whit-Sunday's Conference was really the fiftieth one held, not the forty-ninth; the explanation being that there were two held in one year. The Presidency of G. W. Foote thus ended with a round figure. The new President starts with the commencement of the second half century. What will the world be like by the time the full century is completed?

We hope that our readers are not slackening their efforts to push the circulation of this paper. We know that a great many are not, and the fruit of their efforts is manifest. But it is an uphill fight, and we are striving by every means in our power to keep the *Freethinker* unchanged during the continuance of the War. We believe that the interests of the whole movement will be best served by doing this, and we shall only make an alteration in either the size or the cost of the paper as a last resource. But it is a hard struggle, and for this reason our cry is for more readers. The *Freethinker* has not a tenth of the circulation it might have, and deserves to have.

N. S. S. CONFERENCE.—Continued.

of the South Shields Branch. Had it not been for the attractions of London, they would have had him at Shields yet.

Mr. Willis said they had now listened to four speeches in favour of Resolution No. 5; he thought, therefore, they might now take the amendment of the Camberwell Branch that the office of President remain unfilled for the present.

Mr. Wood (Camberwell) said that in moving the amendment he would like to explain that there was no personal animosity against Mr. Cohen, whose great ability they all recognized; but in the exceptional circumstances now ruling, and also having regard to the difference of opinion as to the utility of the office of President, it was thought by many that the election of a President should be withheld till the next Conference.

Mr. Moss opposed the amendment. Having regard to the reactionary movement taking place, it was imperative that they should have a strong man at the head of affairs, and Mr. Cohen's profundity of thought and zeal for the movement made him the only possible man for the position.

Mr. Silverstein said he had attended many Conferences, and few had been so well attended as this one.

Mr. Lonsdale (Glasgow) said when the question of the election of President came before his Society, there was no discussion upon it, as it was considered that Mr. Cohen just fitted in. It appeared to him that the amendment had been brought forward on account of some disagreement between some members of the Executive and Mr. Cohen, and he certainly thought that such matters should not come before the Conference.

Mr. Brandes (Camberwell) said there was no personal feeling or animus against Mr. Cohen. The reason the matter was raised was that many considered the Society was not sufficiently democratic in character, and there was grave risk that the office might result in a practical dictatorship.

Mr. Owen (Camberwell) said many of them objected to the combination of offices which not only existed now, but had existed in the past in the National Secular Society. There had been too much one-man government.

Mr. Davidson (Edmonton) said he belonged to a Branch which had been deprived of practically all its members owing to the War, and he therefore contended that, notwithstanding the fair attendance at the Conference, it was not really a representative gathering.

Mr. Rosetti (West Ham) said the prophetic instincts of the authors of the amendment were quite wrong, as the motion for the election of a President was supported by the West Ham, Bethnal Green, Birmingham, South Shields, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Newcastle Branches.

Mr. Baker (Camberwell) said that at the meeting of his Branch it was argued that theirs was a democratic movement, and a President was not necessary. He (the speaker) had been associated with the N. S. S. for over thirty years, and during that time he had known many good old Tories who were members of the Society.

Mr. Miller (Kingsland) said if they could dispense with a President for one year, they could do so altogether. He gathered that the objection to electing Mr. Cohen was that he would be acting in a dual capacity as President of the N. S. S. and Editor of the *Freethinker*. In answer to this he would say, first elect your President and then deal with the Editor.

Mr. Willis (Birmingham) said they were not justified, more especially at the present time, in leaving the Society without someone at the head. The President was elected for one year only, and if he did not suit them at the end of that time they could elect someone else. He appealed strongly to the members not to set up internecine strife, and not to leave the ship without a captain.

The amendment was then put to the meeting, and lost.

Mr. Cowell's motion "That in order to place the Society on a more democratic basis the office of President be abolished, and in place thereof a committee of three be appointed by the Executive to act in emergencies and report" was then taken, and also lost.

The original motion for the election of Mr. Cohen as President was then taken as the substantive resolution, and carried.

Mr. Chapman Cohen then took the chair as President, and thanked the Conference for the honour it had conferred upon him. He said he had been in the Society twenty-six years, during which time no one in the length and breadth of Great Britain could accuse him of any dishonourable action, no one had ever known him run away from a fight, and no one had declared him to be a fool. While he could not perhaps claim the warm devotional friendship that Mr. Bradlaugh or Mr. Foote had possessed, he felt that he had the support of the whole body of the National Secular Society. He hoped in a year's time not one of those present would have occasion to regret his election.

The Conference then adjourned for luncheon.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

The President said the next item on the Agenda was the election of Vice-Presidents.

Mr. Miller asked what useful purpose the Vice-Presidents served.

The President said that point could be more profitably discussed when they were considering the constitution and rules of the Society.

The motion for the re-election of Vice-Presidents was then put to the Conference and carried.

The proposal of the Birmingham Branch to add to the list of Vice-Presidents Mr. James Terry and Mr. E. Clifford Williams was unanimously agreed to.

Messrs. Savill and Jones were re-elected Auditors.

The President then moved the suspension of the standing orders to call attention to a matter of urgent importance with regard to the Society's propaganda. They would all have seen the *Freethinker* article on the action of the London County Council. There was no doubt about the seriousness of the position so far as the Society's propaganda was concerned. The object of the London County Council was, no doubt, to do away with public meetings in the London Parks altogether. Some years ago the Council insisted on Societies obtaining permits for the sale of literature. Mr. Foote thought that these might be applied for; but he (the speaker) thought at the time this was a mistake, as no interference was possible if nothing was sold which legally ought not to be sold. In the present fight the National Secular Society would no doubt have to bear the brunt of the work, and he proposed to submit to the Conference a resolution authorizing the Executive to do whatever was necessary, and that a copy should be sent to the Council and to the Press.

Miss Vance said the English League for the Taxation of Land Values and the British Socialist Party had intimated that they would be quite willing to co-operate with the N. S. S. in forming a Committee to consider the question.

The President then read the following resolution which he submitted for the approval of the Conference:—

"That this Conference strongly protests against the action of the London County Council in resolving to stop the sale of literature in the Parks and Open Spaces after September 30th, and bearing in mind that the sale of objectionable literature or annoyance of the public in the sale thereof is prevented by the Council's own regulations, bearing in mind also that no public statement has been made concerning the abuse of permits issued by the Council, this Conference cannot but regard the decision to prohibit the sale of literature as an unwarrantable interference with public propaganda, and hereby authorizes the Executive to take all necessary steps to induce the Council to re-consider its decision."

This resolution was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

The President then made a personal explanation with regard to a gift of £200 which had been made to him to use for the benefit of Freethought, which was given conditionally upon a further £200 being publicly subscribed. Some members of the Executive felt that the appeal for the subscription should have been made by the Executive, but the condition of the gift was that the money should be expended under his personal supervision, and the ready endorsement of this plan by the party left little room for discussion. The donor, the Executive, and the Conference had his assurance that the money would be used for the advancement of Freethought, and he had selected Mr. Lloyd and two other gentle-

men to see that the wish of the donor was carried out. He would cheerfully repeat the experiment if someone again made a similar offer.

Mr. Rosetti read the report of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Executive to consider the best means of carrying out Mr. Shore's scheme for Secular funerals. It had been decided that the best way was to form a Secular Burial Society, which would be a duly registered and legal Society.

The President said that no doubt the Conference would approve of the suggested scheme, and promise the Society's assistance.—Agreed.

Resolutions 11, 12, and 13 were then put to the Conference, and agreed to.

The President said, with regard to his own motion (No. 14), that the N.S.S. was about the only Society which did not take full advantage of propaganda in the public Press, and he thought very much more could be done in that direction. Mr. Moss supported the motion, and it was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Moss's motion reaffirming the Society's confidence in the policy of Secular Education was also agreed to.

Mr. Davidson, in bringing forward motion No. 16, said it had been clearly proved that the Home Secretary had supplied false information with regard to the rejection of Mr. Cowell from acting on the jury at the old Bailey. The motion was agreed to.

Motion No. 17, by the Liverpool Branch, was altered to read "to carry on regular propaganda work in (London and) the provinces," and unanimously agreed to.

The consideration of the Executive's report *re* Revision of Rules and Formation of Branches (Motion 9 on the Agenda) was deferred until the next Conference; meantime the new suggested rules were distributed, and it was agreed that these should, as far as practicable, in regard to the work of the Society, be put into immediate effect.

This being the first Conference held since Mr. Foote's death, the following resolution was put to the Conference, and unanimously agreed to:—

"This Conference, being the first since the death of its late President, hereby places on record its profound sense of the loss to the world of advanced opinion by the death of George William Foote, for twenty-five years President of the National Secular Society; it mourns the loss of a great soldier in the Freethought Cause, and feels that his life will serve as an inspiration to Freethinkers to carry to ultimate victory the principles for which he fought."

The proceedings then terminated.

Nietzsche and His Critics.

V.

(Continued from p. 395.)

Man must shake off that fear of the unknown and unexplored, he must gird up his loins and boldly explore the mysterious labyrinth of knowledge; he must learn to shake off the prejudices accumulated by centuries; prejudices which, by the force of heredity, have become part of his nature. He must unlearn a great deal, indeed most, of what he has learned, and which is merely error. But these errors and prejudices which he must unlearn compose his most sacred, his most cherished, his most firmly rooted beliefs. He is called upon to throw off the burdens of morality, of religion, of the State, and all other obstacles to the realization of his integral self. And how many care to wander through the labyrinths of the virgin forest, or navigate amid the reefs of unknown seas, in order to attain to the bottom of things; if, indeed, things have a bottom, or if that bottom only contains something disagreeable, something repugnant, or nothing at all.—Chatterton-Hill, "The Philosophy of Nietzsche," p. 75.

Perhaps, indeed, no greater pure intellect than Nietzsche's has ever dawned on this earth, and it is inevitable that such a mind must terrify as well as anger the majority of lesser minds with which it clashes.....Read Nietzsche for yourself, and be not content with the criticisms of those who think evil of him. He will shake you, buffet you, batter you like a whirlwind; and you will emerge from his embrace a saner, more tolerant, and probably more intelligent being. But judge him for yourself. Cease to let those whose domestic and moral predilec-

tions lead them to resent him, discuss this great artist for you and determine or inspire your free opinion. So to do is intellectual cowardice.—Eden Phillpotts, "The Literary Guide," April, 1915.

IN 1858, Nietzsche's mother, through her more aristocratic connections, was offered a six-year scholarship for her son in the Landesschule at Pforta, an ancient and famous public boarding-school, similar to our Harrow. Many great men received their training at this school, notably Fichte, the philosopher; Novalis, the poet and dreamer; and Schlegel, the philologist and Shakespeare-scholar. Nietzsche was fourteen years of age when he entered this school.

After so many years of the softening influence of home-life among so many women, the boy was, naturally, not very happy at first, the hours were long and the boys had to work hard. He shrank from the other boarders and seldom went out, except to meet his mother and sister at week-ends. The boy found some consolation in keeping a sort of diary, to which he committed his thoughts of self-contemplation and self-examination. It is here we find the young Nietzsche gradually sloughing off the antiquated beliefs of his fathers:—

He does not break away suddenly; but the writings of his favourite authors, Schiller, Holderlin, Byron, and the higher criticism expounded by one or two of his masters, did not fail to pervade the young mind. Slowly he hauled up the anchors of his life's ship to leave the moorings of the authoritative creed of two thousand years' standing, and sailed forth without guide or compass on the Ocean of Doubt.¹

As Mencken observes:—

Friedrich Nietzsche was a preacher's son, brought up in the fear of the Lord. It is the ideal training for sham-smashers and Freethinkers. Let a boy of alert, restless intelligence come to early manhood in an atmosphere of strong faith, wherein doubts are blasphemies and inquiry is a crime, and rebellion is certain to appear with his beard.²

In Nietzsche's case the rebellion appeared before the beard was due.

His last year at this ancient school was the happiest, as the discipline was not so exacting for the top-form boys. One day he dined with one of the professors, another day he improvised music on the piano for his friends—Nietzsche was passionately fond of music, even at ten years of age he tried his skill at composing motets. Nietzsche left Pforta in September, 1864; his certificate tells us that he was brilliant in Scripture, German, and Latin; good in Greek; but weak in Mathematics.

From Pforta, Nietzsche went to the University of Bonn; at first the gay and independent life and boisterous rollicking habits of his jolly fellow-students attracted him, but he soon began to hate the drinking bouts in the evening, the dawdling and courting in the streets, withdrawing more and more to his studies and his favourite recreation, music; his passion for which earned him the title of "Sir Gluck" from his fellow-students.

At Bonn, Nietzsche had the advantage of studying under Ritschl and Jahn, two of the most eminent philologists of the last century. In consequence of a dispute with Jahn, Ritschl left Bonn in the autumn of 1865 for the University of Leipzig; Nietzsche and several other students following him to that university. Ritschl, on his part, took a great liking to the clever, wayward young student, and at the end of Nietzsche's university career rendered him a great service.

Nietzsche's studies at Leipzig, between 1865 and 1867, were wide and deep; his sister says: "The amount of work my brother succeeded in accomplishing during his

¹ M. A. Mugge, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, p. 13.

² H. L. Mencken, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, p. 3.

student days seems almost incredible." It was at Leipzig that Nietzsche became acquainted with the writings of Schopenhauer; he was wandering about aimlessly, in a somewhat depressed state of mind, when he picked up, in the shop of a second-hand bookseller, Schopenhauer's principle work, *The World as Will and Idea*. He says:—

Glancing at it carelessly, I do not know what demon suggested that I should take the book home with me. Contrary to my usual practice—for I did not as a rule buy second-hand books without looking through them—I paid for the volume and went back home. Throwing myself on the sofa, I gave myself up to the thoughts of that gloomy genius.

Schopenhauer completely revolutionized Nietzsche's outlook on life, and his influence can be traced in all Nietzsche's works.

Whether we agree with Schopenhauer's philosophy—as presented in *The World as Will and Idea*—whether we are depressed by his pessimism or shocked by his diatribe against women, no one can deny the charm of his writings. If "clearness is the virtue of style," then Schopenhauer stands in the very front rank of great writers. Schopenhauer broke away from the style of the German professors, who enveloped themselves purposely in a mystic fog which it was impossible for ordinary people to penetrate, and not always possible for the learned. Schopenhauer wrote for everybody to understand; therefore he was boycotted, ignored, and died unrecognized in his own country, which is the reason why Nietzsche had never heard of him, although he had been dead some years. Nietzsche himself received the same treatment because he denounced German culture. "Schopenhauer never poses; he writes for himself, and no one likes to be deceived," says Nietzsche.

Schopenhauer's speeches are to himself alone; or if you like to imagine an auditor, let it be a son whom the father is instructing. It is a rough, honest, good-humoured talk to one who "hears and loves." Such writers are rare. His strength and sanity surround us at the first sound of his voice; it is like entering the heights of the forest, where we breathe deep and are well again. We feel a bracing air everywhere, a certain candour and naturalness of his own, that belongs to men who are at home with themselves, and masters of a very rich home indeed; he is quite different from the writers who are surprised at themselves if they have said something intelligent, and whose pronouncements for that reason have something unnatural about them,he knows how to be profound with simplicity, striking without rhetoric, and severely logical without pedantry; and of what German could he have learnt that?¹

In 1867, Nietzsche had to fulfil the obligation to undergo one year's military training—"against his expectation and wishes," says Mr. Mugge; but as conscription ruled in Germany, he had no choice. So, making the best of a bad job, he performed his duties to the complete satisfaction of his superiors, and he was proud to have been noted as the best rider in his detachment. He had been serving but a few months when an accident put a stop to his military career. While he was mounting his horse, the animal suddenly reared, dashing the pommel of the saddle against his chest, and throwing him to the ground. Nietzsche made a second attempt, and succeeded in mounting, keeping in the saddle for the rest of the day, until at length the intense pain caused him to swoon, when it was found that he had severely strained the breast, the pectoral muscle, and the adjacent ribs. "One of the few great philosophers," says Mr. Kennedy,—

who have had the courage to mount a horse and take

their place in the line of battle, Nietzsche was pleased with his military experiences. He was kept with a squad of artillery, and this may have been in his mind when he remarked afterwards: "Like the old artilleryman that I am, I have several shells in my ammunition locker which I have not yet exploded against Christianity, but I will shortly do so."¹

Nietzsche now returned to Leipzig University, to study under Ritschl, who implanted in the young student his own fervent love of Grecian culture. It was Ritschl also who prevented him from frittering his strength away on a multitude of subjects, in a desire to know everything, and made it Nietzsche's ideal to be master in one subject.

It was at this time that Nietzsche became acquainted with Wagner's music, and shortly afterwards with the great master himself. "The powerful personality of the famous composer completely enchanted the young enthusiast, and made him a most fervent admirer and follower of the wizard."²

Nietzsche's intention now was to get his degree as a Doctor of Philosophy, and then to make a tour of France, Italy, and Greece. But a great surprise was in store for him. The chair of Classical Philology in the Swiss University of Bale (sometimes wrongly spelt Basel) became vacant. The Bale authorities wrote to Ritschl for advice as to a suitable person. Ritschl recommended Nietzsche for the vacant post, giving a glowing account of his learning and genius. As a consequence, Nietzsche was offered the professorship at the unprecedentedly early age of twenty-four, and before he had gained his degree. Nietzsche accepted the position—although it meant giving up his foreign tour—and the University of Leipzig granted him his degree, without the necessary examination, in recognition of his work and his philological treatises already published.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

The Cursing of God.

JOHNNIE LINDSAY had cursed the Lord God. The parish of Kirkvale trembled in terror of the Almighty wrath. Johnnie Lindsay refused to apologize. The parish of Kirkvale quaked in anticipation of the Almighty vengeance. Johnnie Lindsay was aged nine years; the Lord God an eternity of years. The parish of Kirkvale lay crushed under a sense of the overwhelming insolence of the boy, and had barely strength to utter a weak and palsied platitude about the unknowable future of the young generation.

Johnnie Lindsay lay in his little bed (his rear elevation shrinking fearfully from the sheets), and damned the Lord God as cheerfully as the recent parental visitation upon his stunted body would allow. The expression upon his face was sullen and ugly. The mouth was set in a hard, straight line, and the dark brows scowled viciously.

Out of all proportion to the little "begrutten" face, a nose projected into the air and visibly swelled. A huge terra-cotta beak of colossal design, a fine piece of human architecture, but obviously out of place on the face of this youngster. "His grandfather's nose," an observant aunt had remarked on the occasion of Johnnie's birth. "And his other grandfather's ears," added another discriminating relative. Johnnie was really a job lot. And the older he grew, the more conscious did he become of the claims of his deceased ancestors to the various features of the "job." "Remnants," the other boys called him when he went to school. And then it was

¹ J. M. Kennedy, *The Quintessence of Nietzsche*, pp. 11-12.

² M. A. Mugge, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, p. 16.

¹ J. M. Kennedy, *The Quintessence of Nietzsche*, pp. 202-203.

his grudge against the Lord God began to grow and take shape. By the time he had learned the orthodox answer to the Bible-class question "Who made you?" he had learned to resent the manner of his making, and thought, with an unhealthy bitterness in his little childish mind, that the God who had made him had served him a mean, dirty, shabby trick. That was how he expressed it to himself.

"Remnants," however, lost its virtues as a nickname. It did not fit well long. Johnnie grew out of it. The special feature of the Lord God's scheme of decoration began to fill the horizon.

As the child got older his nasal organ grew in grace, until it looked as if the boy were becoming a mere appendage to his own nose. "He's naething but nose," reflected his sickly mother, as she watched him develop. And in the midst of her reflections she gave up the ghost—overcome, perhaps, with shame and disgust at having laboured wearily for nine months to produce a mere proboscis. "Ye seem to be growin' a' to the nose, laddie," the neighbours would remark, as they curiously beheld him. Johnnie winced, but acquiesced more or less politely. Until one morning his sister, with the characteristic impudent brutality of a near relative, maliciously assaulted the lad's tenderest feelings by addressing him as "Noser."

That day Johnnie Lindsay lost his identity for ever—lost it in his own nose. "Noser" stuck like a burr; and the victim developed the temper of a fiend as the days passed, charged with insults to his personal dignity. He knew his was an unusual organ. No other boy's nose got in the way as his did in wrestling matches and scraps. No other boy's nose cast a big shadow on the writing desk. No stranger ever asked, "Who is the little boy with the nose?" about any other body. Still, he had had enough of this baiting at home and abroad. And one morning at school Johnnie declared war against the whole human race. Every child who addressed him as "Noser" he thrashed, bit, kicked, or otherwise abused and maltreated. It was "Noser" against the world.

Coming home from school, he put the finishing touch to a glorious day by mauling and ill-treating the sister who had coined and issued the hated nickname for general use. The shrieks of the girl brought a woman on the scene, who, while rescuing the victim of Johnnie's passion, upbraided the boy for his conduct. "Think shame o' yersel', Noser, hittin' a lassie, an' her your ain sister."

"I'll hit you as weel," hotly retorted the young demon; "my name's nae 'Noser.'"

"A better couldna fit ye, wi' a nose like that," said the woman.

Johnnie ran amok again, and dealt the woman a swinging blow in the stomach with his loaded school-bag.

"O, ye little blackguard," sobbed the woman when she regained her breath; "may God punish you for this!"

"Damn God!" screamed Johnnie. "Damn you! Damn everybody!"

As he lay in his bed he reviewed the events of the day. Six "bleedy noses," three black eyes, a reformed sister, and a "felled woman"—all with his own hands—and the public knowledge at last of his private opinion of the Lord God. It was well worth the pain he was suffering now. He would do it all over again to-morrow if he heard the word "Noser" so much as whispered. Besides, he had been called by a member of the deputation a "terrible little devil o' a loon," and he would show Kirkvale he was really that sort of person.

A deputation of angry parents had waited upon his father in the evening and reported what had taken place, demanding that the "terrible little devil" be horse-whipped on the spot. Johnnie had been called before the petitioners and given an opportunity of expressing his regret for the attack upon the younger inhabitants of Kirkvale, and of publicly praying for forgiveness for his blasphemy against the Lord God. He would do neither. Instead, he intimated that he would fecht the whole school over again on the morrow if need be, and damn God as long as he lived. After this, only one course could be taken by a parent who held Solomon's teachings in high respect, and valued the opinion of the neighbours. That course was adopted—in the stable.

When Johnnie had retired, his father, having found an appeal to brute force a broken reed, came and tried an appeal to sentiment. Was a son of his to be a standing disgrace to the family and the whole countryside? Would the dead mother be pleased to hear that her boy had blasphemed in such a way that the minister would be bound to refer to it in the kirk on Sunday? Was there no shame in him? Was he to see his father lectured by the Kirk Session until he would never hold up his head again? To all of these appeals Johnnie had but one reply, "They shouldna ca' me 'Noser.'" He would not compromise his future actions, and the puzzled father left the room with the uncomfortable feeling that his son had suddenly grown too big for him to tackle.

Johnnie began to visualize future happenings. The visions flattered his egotism, and as he painted the scenes in which he was to play a part, he laid the colours on with a thick brush. The minister would refer in the pulpit to the wicked little boy who cursed the Lord God. Prayers would be said for him—but he would go on cursing. Then the minister would call at the house, and, with all the members of the family joining in, would beg him to leave off those terrible ways—but no; he would stay out in the garden and damn God more and more. Then the Kirk Session would come round. The elders and the deacons in their gigs would be driving up to the door to plead with him to stop it. But he wouldn't. The other boys would watch him over the garden-wall with admiration, as he walked up and down the paths cursing God by day and by night—with all those people in their gigs pleading to him for mercy's sake to stop. Then the king would come and offer him a bicycle and a pair of lop-eared rabbits to stop; but he would refuse. And then—then—yes; maybe then the Lord God himself would come down to beg him to stop damning him. By God! Johnnie's heart jumped. He gently felt all over his enormous nose with both hands. If he came into the garden, the Lord God himself.....

Johnnie fell asleep preparing a little speech on Noses and Gods.

F. L. B. G.

Obituary.

THE N.S.S. has lost a generous and faithful supporter in the person of Mr. Herbert King, of Syresham, Northampton, who died suddenly from heart-failure on Saturday, June 10, at the comparatively early age of 54. As an employer of labour, Mr. King was universally admired and respected; and although surrounded socially and commercially by those opposed to him on theological grounds, he made no secret of his opinions. His life is described by one who knew him best as "nothing less than noble." A loyal and devoted wife, who entirely shared her husband's views, and a young son, just about to enter commercial life, are left to mourn his loss. To them we tender our heartfelt sympathy. The cremation took place at Leicester on Wednesday, June 14.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON. OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, E. Burke, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Free-thought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. Cohen, Hooper, Owen, Miss Kough, and others.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, Debate between Messrs. Miller, N.S.S., and Bowman, C.E.S. Subject; "The Stupidity of Atheism."

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "The Existence of God"; 6.30, Messrs. Kennedy, Dales, and Saphin.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Stephen Hooper, a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 6.45, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram St.): 12 noon, Meeting to receive Delegate's Report of Conference.

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW (Jail Square): 3.30, R. Ogilvie, a Lecture.

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