

# The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN    ■    EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

VOL. XXXVII.—No. 1

SUNDAY JANUARY 7, 1917

PRICE TWOPENCE

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## Views and Opinions.

### A New Year's Motto.

One of the few writers of European celebrity who has kept a level head during the last two-and-a-half years, Romain Rolland, has suggested that in the New Year all writers should adopt as their motto, "An end to lying." We must, he said, "rid our social conscience of the lies which education, the State, the vested interests of tradition, the habit of indolent pride, the fear of trouble or of effort, are stifling modern life." And for himself M. Rolland adds, "I desire nothing more than the right to think freely." Nothing more than that! But that is everything! Given that, and all else follows. It is the supreme gift which Nature, the State, Society can bestow on mankind. To paraphrase an old saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of mental freedom, and all other things shall be added unto you."

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### A Gigantic Revolution.

An army of Knights of the Pen sworn to write nothing but the truth! What a revolution that would mean in the world's affairs! The proposed League of Nations—after the War—would be nothing in comparison therewith. It would mean the creation of the greatest revolutionary force known to history. It is nothing to the point that the difficulty of ascertaining what is truth would still remain; it would be enough if all wrote nothing but the truth as they saw it. It would mean an end to the journalist who, with his finger on the pulse of popular passion or prejudice, spends his life pandering to the one and hardening the other. Consider the effect on life if politicians, diplomats, and parsons—the three classes which cultivate falsification with the greatest assiduity—were to resolve that henceforth they would write and speak nothing but the truth! Half the pulpits would be empty to-morrow. The present generation of European diplomatists and politicians would, for the greater part, have to relearn their trade. Newspapers that thrive by the exploitation of ignorance would suspend publication. An end to lying would mean an end to so much—and to so many. It is too much to expect.

The disruption would be too great. M. Rolland presents the world with a high explosive bomb as though it were a harmless New Year's card. A German submarine sinking a hospital ship is nothing compared with this attempt to wreck so many of our cherished institutions with a motto.

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### Other Need for Clear Thinking.

Mark the phrase, "I desire nothing more than to think freely." But freethinking, if it is to be profitable, means clear thinking; and that is of all things the most difficult, and, therefore, the least practised. For two years and a half this country has been at war, and the mind of the people is as much muddled as ever; is, as much as ever, at the mercy of any catchpenny phrase that happens to be current. Only the other day we were reading an article in one of the papers to the effect that this War had shown the ineffectiveness of Internationalism. The War has shown exactly the contrary. It has demonstrated that the only way to end war is by the cultivation of a genuine spirit of Internationalism. To what else is the War due but to that exaggerated Nationalism which believes it to be the "destiny" of this or that nation to impose its culture, or its institutions, or its rule upon the rest of the earth? Germany, it is said, began the War because it suffered from the mania of desiring to impose German rule upon the European world. And what is that but Nationalism run mad? And have we not had in this country much talk for years about Britain's destiny to cultivate the waste, but profitable, parts of the earth? Have we not seen, since the War started, the creation of a sixpenny weekly with the object of obtaining "British supremacy on the sea, in the air, on the land, and in the markets of the world"? Supremacy, mark. Not the need for Britain to play its part in the development of the earth, but our supremacy—with all the rest of the earth, of necessity, playing second fiddle. Wars will never be stopped by that ambition. It is the seed-plot of all militarism—past, present, and future. The world does not need the supremacy of this nation or of that. It needs the co-operation of all—the cultivation of a wise Nationalism, purified and kept within the bounds of reasonable service by the ideal of international help and brotherhood.

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### Way for the Young.

"An end to lying" as a New Year's motto is excellent, and to rid ourselves of the lies with which education and tradition have saddled us is an essential to any useful social reorganization. Last week we suggested, in a paragraph in another part of this journal, that since our wars—whether they be justifiable or no—are made by old men, it might be as well if the age for military service were fixed at fifty and upwards. And the fact of the control of the world's affairs being in the hands of old men is a consideration of the gravest import. Consider the position of affairs. In this country—the same truth, it may be remarked, holds equally well of other countries—the control of affairs lies in the hands of the old men. Not only that, but in the political



world this power runs very largely in families. Consequently, on both the personal and the family side, we have largely government by tradition; not by the needs of time, but by the more or less questionable wisdom of the past. It is notoriously difficult to get new ideas considered in governmental circles—as difficult almost as to introduce new ideas into the Church. And a very powerful cause of this is the fact that our rulers come to their task with formed ideas of what is to be done, and how it is to be done, and at an age when it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to get them to take new views. The result of all this is that just as in all the Churches we have a priesthood which lives to perpetuate ideas that ought to have died out several centuries ago, so in the State we have a Secular priesthood which habitually lives and thinks in an intellectual atmosphere of four or five generations ago. Between these rulers of the various peoples relations are created which have no organic connection with the vital life of the present. It would be a wise plan, therefore, to raise the age limit in one direction, and lower it in another. Make it lower for the direction of the world's affairs, make it higher for military service, if we must have war. Let it be the work of the old to advise, but let it be the work of the young to direct. They at least belong to the present, and are far more likely to feel its needs and pay regard to its real demands.

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#### An Experiment Worth Trying.

What a world this might be if only it would take for its motto "an end to lying," and acted upon it. And not only an end to the small and petty lying of everyday life, but to the lies that are embodied in institutions and elaborated in codes. Education should be a preparation for *life*, real life; but only too often it is little more than a preparation for carrying over to the next generation ideas that have outworn their utility, even if they ever possessed any. The aim of the statesman should be to adapt existing institutions to new needs, and to guide public thought along progressive channels. Instead of that, he is often little more than one who seeks to stem development, and preserve the power of the few by directing the energies of the many into unproductive channels. And was ever there a phrase more finely descriptive of established religion than the "vested interests of tradition"? That is almost the sole function of our numerous priesthoods—Jewish and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, established or disestablished. One and all of these are little better than organized falsehoods. The ideas upon which they are based are false, the teachings they exist to disseminate are discredited. Every educated man is more or less aware of these things. A large proportion of the clergy are equally alive to the truth. By all means let us adopt Romain Rolland's motto, "an end to lying," and let us also bear in mind that when the lie of religion goes, other lies will find it exceedingly difficult to maintain their existence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Religion in West Wales.

It has been the boast of Wales for many generations that she is the most religious country under the sun, and there is a sense in which the boast is perfectly justified. It must be borne in mind, however, that only two hundred years ago the Welsh people had scarcely any religion at all, and were intellectually at an extremely low level. Dr. Erasmus Saunders, writing in 1721, states that the Church in Wales was in a deplorable condition, both materially and spiritually, many places of worship serving

only as "the solitary habitations of owls and jackdaws." Some years later, Wesley says that "the people were as ignorant as the Creek or Cherokee Indians." Indeed, "it is probable that the Welsh farmers and their families had hardly progressed intellectually as a class from the time of the Conquest. Every indication that we possess shows that hardly any of them could read or write, and it is clear that the provision for education was of the scantiest possible description" (*The Welsh People*, by John Rhys and D. Brynmor-Jones, pp. 470-1). But about the middle of the eighteenth century the Methodist revival occurred and, in a wonderfully short time, transformed the whole country. As the authors of *The Welsh People* (p. 472) put it: "In 1730 the Welsh-speaking people were probably as a whole the least religious and most intellectually backward in England and Wales. By 1830 they had become the most earnest and religious people in the whole kingdom." In connection with that revival are closely associated the names of Griffith Jones, of Llandowror, Howell Harries, and Rowlands, of Llangeitho, by whose instrumentality religion became a tremendous power in the land. Whether this mighty wave of religious interest was of any real service to the nation or not is a problem differently solved by different people. It is noteworthy that in *The Welsh People* (p. 475) the result of the movement is summed up thus:—

First, it was the chief agent in the preservation of the Welsh language. It is probable that but for the immense impetus given to the study and use of the Welsh language by reading the Welsh Bible and by listening to pulpit oratory it would have tended more and more to die out as the habitual language of the majority of the inhabitants of the whole of Wales. Secondly, it led to general and greater literary activity. This is shown by the increase, gradual but certain, of the number of books, in the early days chiefly of a religious character, published from time to time, and by the rise of Welsh periodical literature and Welsh journalism. Thirdly, it stimulated a demand for education.....Fourthly, it operated continually in the direction of improved morality.

Now, of those four results of the Methodist revival, two are of an exceedingly doubtful value. There are those who believe that the preservation of the Welsh vernacular and the increased literary activity have not contributed to the welfare of the people, and others are equally confident that religious revivals do not "operate continually in the direction of improved morality."

Let it be clearly understood, then, that for a hundred and fifty years Wales has been by far the most religious country in the world. Religion has been her one subject of absorbing interest, her solace in sorrow, and her strength in weakness. Whenever two Welshmen meet on the road, some debatable point in theology monopolizes their attention. At the smithy, the mill, the chapel house, and even the tavern, the relative merits of different preachers, the soundness or heterodoxy of certain recent sermons, or the quality of the last article or book on the Atonement,—to some such topic the conversation always turns. In the agricultural districts, specially, numerous meetings are held for the study of the Bible or of some recent work dealing with God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. The religious life consists almost exclusively of Sabbath observance, abstention from all forms of carnal pleasure, and participation in religious exercises of all sorts. The Welsh people have been more puritanical than the Puritans, and greater lovers of rites and ceremonies than the Pharisees. Their Puritanism is, perhaps, their most prominent characteristic. Unfortunately, the most religious country under the sun is by no means the most moral. In Wales Christianity is not a system of morality, but a scheme of reconciliation between God and man, or a way of



escape from the wrath to come, and a guarantee to believers of endless felicity in the world to come. Consequently, the contemplation of it is an emotional luxury in which the redeemed love to indulge.

Recently two books of extraordinary vividness and power have appeared, dealing with the religious life among the peasantry of West Wales. They are *My People* and *Capel Sion*, by Caradoc Evans, containing fifteen stories each. Caradoc Evans describes what he has experienced and seen among his own people, and the description is so truthful that it has made his countrymen furiously angry with him. A well-known Welsh bard once said to a friend, "If you wish to know the meaning of the word 'repentance,' publish a volume of Welsh poetry." The publication of these two volumes on Welsh religion has taught the author the true significance of the term "persecution." The Welsh people can never forgive a man for holding their religion up to ridicule. It matters not that he is pronounced "a very fine artist" by no less an authority than H. G. Wells, and that in literary circles his books have been hailed as works of genius, the accuracy of his narratives has driven his countrymen mad with indignation. They curse and swear at him, denouncing him as an Atheist and a liar. Dozens of sermons have been preached in which the volumes were fiercely attacked, and the Cardiff police went to the absurd length of forbidding the sale of *My People*. The result of such foolish opposition is that the book is now in its fourth edition. Most of the people described are farmers in Cardiganshire and members of Capel Sion (Sion Chapel). They call God "The Big Man," heaven "The Palace of White Shirts," and hell "The Fiery Pool," and these figure largely in almost every story. Sadrach of Danyrefail was a father in Sion, "whose thoughts were continually employed upon sacred subjects," and who "began the day and ended the day with the words of a chapter" from the Book and a prayer on his lips. The Sabbath he observed from first to last; he neither laboured himself nor allowed any in his household to labour. He married a woman ten years his senior, and "six months after the wedding Sadrach the Small was born and tongues wagged that the boy was a child of sin." Poor Achsah lost her reason, and was confined in a loft. Three months later Sadrach went to Aberystwith and returned with "a strange woman beside him in the horse car; and the coming of this strange woman made life different in Danyrefail." People whispered evil things, predicted his dismissal from "among the First Men of the Big Seat," but he justified himself by saying, "Martha is a gift from the Big Man. She has been sent to comfort me in my tribulation, and to mother you, my children." His daughter Rachel "knew that Martha was more than a servant," and rebuked her father for his sinful conduct. The truth is that Sadrach was a bad man, devoid of conjugal and parental affection, and capable of most cruel deeds under the cloak of religion.

The first story in *Capel Sion* is entitled "Redemption," and opens thus:—

There was a young man whose piety was an adage, for his heart was filled with the glory of Sion. His manner was humble; on the Sabbath his face was habited in a religious smile and his lips framed the words "Big Man," or "White Jesus bach." Once in the Seiet the Ruler of the Pulpit said to him: "Eevan Rhos, man, mouth your experience." He answered: "Not saintly enough is my voice to be raised." Of him this was spoken; "He breathes to the Big Man."

This exceptionally pious young man, being a rich farmer, engaged a domestic servant named Hannah Harelip, who was from the workhouse at Castellybryn. Hannah was ambitious and covetous, aspiring to be mistress over

all that Evan had; but the "Big Man" freed Evan and joined him and Jane Pant in marriage. Hannah Harelip was jealous of Jane Pant, "and she set her affection to Evan." She resolved to ensnare him, with the result that he said to her, "Come you, small wench, and I will fondle you."

Hannah, who knew a little of the ways of man, ran from Evan as one alarmed, and as she moved her petticoats fell upon the ground, and she pretended to be greatly ashamed. "O Mishter bach," she cried, "here's dishonour. Bare as a bald pate am I." While she bent to settle her garments, Evan seized her, and whispered: "Wench, very all right you are."

"Eevan Rhos," said Hannah, "frisky you feel, man."

After many days were passed, Hannah spoke to her master: "Well, well—mishtress of Rhos I shall be, for sure."

Her saying did not please Evan because she was become odious in his eyes. "What iobishness you speech, you bad boar! Go you about your business in a great haste, you adder."

But Hannah neither departed nor remained silent "Have I not served you as a woman?"

"Iss, indeed, laboured very well you have on my land. Don't you blobber old things, good maid. Off you, then."

"Lively are things in me, Mishter bach. Better now that I sit in your pew in Sion."

"Go away, female," Evan rebuked Hannah. "An hireling you are. Born you were in sin. Has not the Big Man put a heated poker on your lips? Dirty smell of a mule, pray for forgiveness for your awful act. High Father, an innocent boy bach was the male o Rhos until I was provoked by Satan's daughter."

Poor Hannah was with child by her master, and her master knew it; but this is what he said to her:—

Listen you, now, wench: if persons inquire of you by whom you are big, say you by a boy of a weaver from Drefach. A religious sampler am I in Sion. Do you act then as I say.

This God-fearing young farmer attempted to get rid of pregnant Hannah in various ways. "Am I not of great regard in Sion?" he said, and tried to turn the wretched girl to her death by making her walk over a concealed well. This was the man of whom people said, "Too religious was poor Evan to know what to do; he breathes to the Big Man."

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be concluded.)

## Christian Cacophony.

Talk about it as we like, a man's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion.—O. W. Holmes.

WE are told by a distinguished metaphysician that literature is but a branch of social science, that he is greatest among authors who appeals to the widest circle of readers. If this were true, then were the hymn-writers the princes of poets. Is there a church or chapel where their effusions are not sung? Is there a tin-tabernacle from John o' Groats to Land's End but derives morality and intelligence from the lilt of the hymns? We trow not! Recognizing that all who run can read, the Christian Churches have circulated a poetic literature, and provided nothing to read which is beyond the understanding of the stupidest of their congregations. We raise our hats to the clergy as astute men of business; but our admiration is diluted by the thought that, after all, they have "collared" their congregations because they have never been able to rise above their level of intelligence. Clerical culture is largely taken for granted, whereas the truth is that the people in the pews are often better informed than the men in the



pulpits. *Punch*, some years ago, hit this off in an excellent picture, which depicted the Rev. Robert Elsmere on his knees before the sceptical squire, saying, "Pray, pray, don't mention the name of another foreign author, or I shall have to resign my living."

It is very doubtful if the average hymn of to-day has any more claim to be considered as real literature than the usual music-hall song, about which the clergy are so indignant. This may well appear a grave indictment, but the hymns which are regarded as being eminently suited for public worship are far too frequently antiquated, unrhymical, and nonsensical. Under the soporific influence of religion, the public has been far too ready to accept bombast and bleat as the fine gold of poetry, and has hailed hysteria in adjectives as the quintessence of reverence.

The hymns used by Churchmen and Nonconformists alike are not really much better than those painfully familiar and disgraceful compositions which are used by Salvationists, Revivalists, and other howling Dervishes of our streets and open spaces, and which make educated people almost ashamed of their own species. The charge of sentimentalism is not the only one that can be brought. Some hymns are brutal in tone and language, written in the worst possible taste, and are full of sanguinary details and a glowing satisfaction which is repulsive. Here are some samples:—

There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emanuel's veins.

Come, let us stand beneath Thy cross;  
So may the blood from out His side  
Fall gently on us drop by drop;  
Jesus, our Lord is crucified.

Here I rest, for ever viewing  
Mercy poured in streams of blood.  
By thy red wounds streaming  
With thy life-blood gleaming.

Lift up Thy bleeding hand, O Lord,  
Unseal that cleansing tide.

O those limbs, how gaunt their leanness,  
Tortured, torn from our uncleanness,  
On these stiff branches weltering.

If we turn to the purely literary aspect of those hymns, we find some of them bad enough to break a critic's heart. For sheer, downright bathos this triplet is worth noting:—

Upon the Crucified One look  
And thou shalt read, as in a book,  
What well is worth thy learning.

The solitary attempt at rhyme in the following is sufficient to disqualify an amateur in a limerick competition:—

Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,  
This is the total sum;  
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,  
Then let Thy mercy come.

The author's reason must have been tottering on its throne when he penned this pious outburst:—

Faithful Cross, above all other  
One and only Noble Tree,  
None in foliage, none in blossom,  
None in fruit thy peer may be:  
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron,  
Sweetest weight is hung on Thee.

But the most nonsensical couplet of all occurs in the following:—

May all these our spirits sate,  
And with love inebriate.

"These," as a reference to the preceding lines in the masterpiece show, refer to nails, wounds, vinegar, thorns, and other articles associated with the crucifixion. Toplady's "Rock of Ages" is a perfect medley of irrational images and misapplied metaphors. "Cleft rock," "riven side," "to Thy cross I cling," and "to the fountain fly"

are examples. The confused imagery drowns the sense in the veriest verbiage.

Another popular favourite, "Hark! Hark! my Soul," has upset even the Christians. Bishop Alexander, who knew something of literature, has said of this gem that "it combines every conceivable violation of every conceivable rule with every conceivable beauty." "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" which is more popular than "Keep the Home Fires Burning," is by no means above criticism. The last line of the chorus is commonplace in expression, and atrocious in rhyme.

There is a frankness of Materialism in some of these so-called "spiritual" hymns, which is sufficient to make an undertaker smile.

Lord, I believe, Thou hast prepared,  
Unworthy though I be,  
For me a blood-bought free reward,  
A golden harp for me.

And, again:—

Oh! for the pearly gates of heaven,  
Oh! for the golden floor.

Plummet cannot sound the depths of feeble-mindedness revealed in some of these effusions. The bewildered reader feels that he has glanced at an album of an asylum of idiots, so painful and so obvious is the comparison.

These quotations, be it remembered, are from the most distinguished Christian collections, and they are by no means the worst of their class. If any reader wishes his raven hair turned white, let him turn to the pages of the *War Cry*, where he will find the work of bold versifiers, weak in their mother-tongue, and yet unaffrighted by the awful spectacle of their first "General" in the robes of Oxford University.

As miracles do not happen, a literary standard in hymns is more than we hope for. The Church is notoriously weak among the upper and working-classes, and especially among men. Hence we are not surprised at the inclusion of some appeals to the British working-man. Listen to the dulcet tones of the clerical syren:—

Sons of Labour think of Jesus  
As you rest your homes within,  
Think of that sweet Babe of Mary  
In the stable of the inn.  
Think, now, in the sacred story  
Jesus took a humble grade.  
And the Lord of Life and Glory  
Worked with Joseph at his trade.

The enormous popularity of certain hymns is due to the music.

As long as the tune has a right good swing,  
It doesn't much matter what trash you sing.

And Lewis Carroll's advice to speakers, "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves," is commonly inverted when applied to hymn-writing. Such hymns as have a slight claim to literary merit are little esteemed by the public mind compared with "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," "The Glory Song," "Tell Mother I'll be There," and "The Bells of Hell go Ting-a-ling."

To an outsider, hymns would suggest restraint, sobriety, the dignity of reverence; but the Torrey and Alexander Mission, like the Moody and Sankey crusade, and the Billy Sunday revivals, amply prove the association of Christianity with hysteria and theatricality. What is worse, these evangelists gauged their public to a nicety. Their audiences were, perhaps, better dressed and better schooled than those who listen spell-bound to the trombones and tambourines of the Church and Salvation Armies, yet they sing hymns of the most rank and fulsome sentimentality. Christian congregations seem unable to distinguish between poetry and doggerel, pathos and bathos. Singing their delirious rhymes, they are intellectually on a level with bar-



barians. Savages do this one way, and the countrymen of Gipsy Smith and the Bishop of London another, but the nature of the act, and the results, are much the same.

MIMNERMUS.

## Thomas Paine's International Influence.

THAT very much overrated monarchist, Edmund Burke, did a great service by his pamphlet against the French Revolution. For if it had not been for Burke's pamphlet, we should not have Paine's *Rights of Man*. It is safe to predict that when Burke the sentimentalist is quite forgotten, the name of Thomas Paine, the world citizen, will be remembered and enshrined in the hearts of grateful millions. As yet we are too near Paine in point of time. The great apostle of Reason will not come fully into his own until superstition is dead.

But we do get on—however small the advance rational thinkers may help us to make. At last, for example, Great Britain has adopted in principle Paine's scheme of Old Age Pensions. People of ignorance (and you meet them every day in every street—particularly people who are ignorant of history) generally imagine that Joseph Chamberlain was the first to advocate Old Age Pensions. Even more educated people think that Ruskin was the first to suggest them.

And the profound ignorance of some prominent men is amazing. Thus Roosevelt—that violent jingoistic swashbuckler—once described Paine as a “dirty little Atheist.” Three lies in three words. Paine was not dirty—either in body or mind. He was nearly six feet high. And he was not an Atheist, but a Theist. Suffice it to say that he did not get his God from the Bible. He saw him reflected in the wonders of Nature.

Roosevelt's ignorance is all the more incomprehensible and unpardonable when one reads the cordial letters exchanged between George Washington and Paine. In a letter dated September 10, 1783, Washington, inviting Paine to Rocky Hill, wrote:—

Your presence may remind Congress of your past services to this country, and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom, as they will be rendered cheerfully by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who with much pleasure subscribes himself your sincere friend.—G. WASHINGTON.

Paine, dedicating *The Rights of Man* to Washington, wrote: “I present you with a small treatise in defence of those principles of freedom which your exemplary virtue hath so eminently contributed to establish.” The Americans of a century ago had some of the enthusiasm for liberty. It is a big drop from Washington to Roosevelt. Paine is far more highly esteemed in France than he is in America or England even yet. France did him honour. We threw mud at him, and canonized the conventional Burke with his stupid reverence for the divine right of kings. John Stuart Mill got his first posthumous public honour not in his own country, but in France. We are grateful people—we and our Yankee cousins—to our deliverers. France has ever honoured hers—and other people's too.

Paine helped very materially in the Republican Movement in France and in directing the enthusiasm of the rebel colonists in America, whose cause Lord Chatham championed in the House of Lords. As to France, there would not have been such long fruitless and profitless enmity between her and England had it not been for the swallowing of the teaching of false prophets like Burke. A careful study of history shows that rationalistic France has ever been in the van of Freedom

and Progress. By her sufferings and self-sacrifice the rest of mankind have benefited.

Burke was not consistent in his adhesion to the constitution of his own country. He bitterly attacked the French Revolutionists, and did more than anyone else to stir up bad blood between France and ourselves. Yet he was with the American Revolutionists. And what is more remarkable historically is the fact that the French pioneers were fighting a battle for the whole civilized world. They were supplanting an old monarchy—buttressed by an ancient and wealthy Church—with its roots deep in the past. The American colonists, in a sense, could only be said to be fighting their own battle. They were new settlers in a new land. They were not in close proximity to the clashing and divisive political and ecclesiastical intrigues of Europe. Still, they are deserving of honourable recognition. They had their own difficulties in all conscience, not least of which was the stupid brutality of British “Statesmen.” They, too, stood for the ideal of liberty.

Paine gets in some home-thrusts in his *Rights of Man* by means of which he—as the Scot would say—“flypes,” that is, turns inside out, the egregious Burke as one would skin a rabbit. Of the idol of “Divine Right,” he says this: “The key of St. Peter and the key of the Treasury became quartered on one another, and the wondering cheated multitude worshipped the invention.” As to the making of governments, he writes:—

The fact therefore must be that the *individuals themselves*, each in his own personal and sovereign right, entered into a compact with each other to produce a Government; and this is the only mode in which governments have a right to arise, and the only principle on which they have a right to exist.

But he is probably at his best in his comments upon the ludicrous vanity attaching to titles and artificial dignities. He says:—

Titles are but nicknames, and every nickname is a title. The thing is perfectly harmless in itself, but it makes a sort of foppery in the human character which degrades it. It reduces man into the diminutive of man in things which are great; and the counterfeit of woman in things which are little. It talks about its fine *blue ribbon* like a girl, and shows its new *garter* like a child. A certain writer of some antiquity says: “When I was a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

France, he says, has not levelled, it has exalted.

It has put down the dwarf to set up the man. The punyism of a senseless word like Duke, Count, or Earl has ceased to please. Even those who possessed them have disowned the gibberish, and as they outgrew the rickets have despised the rattle.

Writing of hereditary aristocrats as legislators, he asks:—

With what ideas of justice or honour can that man enter a house of legislation who absorbs in his own person the inheritance of a whole family of children, or doles out to them some pitiful portion with the insolence of a gift?

It is this idea of patriarchal autocracy which the pioneer of Freedom has to fight most against. *Not Charity, but Justice*, is the demand of the social regenerator. We boast of our British Constitution; but, as Paine points out, “The House of Commons did not originate as a matter of right *in the people* to delegate or elect, but as a grant or boon.” He also later on says, “The President of the National Assembly of France does not ask the King to grant to the Assembly liberty of speech, as is the case with the English House of Commons.”

But to what purpose should I proceed farther when *The Rights of Man* is happily now procurable for the



modest sum of sixpence, and there may be perused within its covers the noble "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens, by the National Assembly of France," with Paine's observations thereon? What I have written may send others to that notable book—a fitting companion to Paine's other great work, *The Age of Reason*.

IGNOTUS.

## The Picnic.

Of these am I, Coila my name.

—Burns, "The Vision"

1796.—JANUARY 25, 1917.—1759.

IN winter, too, amidst the bare trees in the glen, the wind sounding aloft, silence below, save for the babble of the stream, the prattle of the weans; music, peace, happiness, freedom—freedom of the rough blast, breathing its robust philosophy; something to remember, something being written on the plastic mind; and even the mind, set and matured with the monotony of repetition, loosening its crust of winter, betraying leaf and bud of latent spring. Such is the spell of the woodland. Here and there a late campion; here and there, flattened on the green moss, the rough green under-leaves of the primrose past, cradle of those to come, and everywhere the ivy—lusty, lustrous, evergreen, beautiful parasite. Here, in winter, we dream of spring, or the winter of our discontent is made glorious summer by the flowers of Freethought. Here, in the cold, the heart is warm, and the mind basks in fecund rays of truth, wisdom, joy, hope, memory, and anticipation. Call this religion if you will; to us it is mere humanism, and is no relation of your upstart "skies."

The father and his four boys, all eager, interested, content with simple joy and frugal fare, or in their proper selves the very epitomes of happiness. Our worst of griefs, our greatest fears, are largely artificial and avoidable; we need bow only to essential facts, and let childhood cherish each wholesome and inevitable illusion, the moths and butterflies of fancy. Do not break the spell. Nature, life, experience, reason, the logic of events, these in due season will do it in their own way—as trees bud, as leaves decay, beautiful through all, tranquil to the end.

The grandfather was there with his daughter's child, another boy, no "blood" relation of the rest, but kin enough in the universal consanguinity of man. The tinker's and the gypsy's boy might have—

Claimed kindred there, and had their claims allowed.

Such kinship as denies and disdains "divine right" and "royal blood," and proves one pedigree for prince and peasant. Remembering this, a man, when he knows he is a man, and that a monarch is no more, can stand unabashed before kings. Only knowledge is power, and love casteth out fear.

The old man was the "youngest" of the party. His smile was beautiful, habitual, and serene; his voice like the sound of the waters amongst the pebbles, or now strident and growling like boulder-impeded flood, as, with clouded brow, contracted lip, and stabbing fingers, he declaimed against the evils of society. Amused at but admiring his vehemence, and not forgetful in momentary superiority of outbursts of his own, the other waited till the sky was clear again and the music returned; for, why, it was the hour of joy, not the Day of Judgment; and the trees, the children, and the brook were non-offenders. And, indeed, the *better* must ever be the criterion of the *worse*; and that there is a better no student of comparative psychology will deny, and emulation, however mistaken in its objective, is always towards the best. The waves of thought cannot for ever beat upon

even dull craniums in vain. Experience is destructive and creative. Like the slow glacier or the sudden avalanche, it rends its way, leaving faint but unequivocal and lasting traces on the rocks of the actual and eternal; it is substance and consequence, cause and effect, force and matter, not the impalpable and traceless passage of a dream. Thus morality may ultimately take care of itself.

The alfresco feed, the concrete gastronomic fact, may be taken as read; it passed merrily enough, and was gone like the reek of our great fire among the wintry trees. There was the green and spongy moss, the wet litter of leaves—copper and gold and common brown—the noisy waterfall, and the still and solemn further reaches of the stream stealing away under the chequered glade, tarrying dreamily, reluctant to depart, muttering its wayward fancies, the pilgrim of eternity.....The ideal, the abstract, survives. The picnic never happened, and it never will; but in the subtle alchemy of thought and feeling, in shadows and dreams of memory and anticipation, it is "told o'er a thousand times." The real can never attain to the ideal; the latter, like the rainbow, flits with each remove, or is shattered and broken, to be remoulded in the heart's desire; or we have outpaced it, and it is behind us in the mist of years, in the moonlight of memory chaste and still. It is all around, and mundane and temporal; not "an heavenly," but of the dear old earth. For the true native of earth sighs not for mansions in the skies. Whatever heaven exists is made up of just such half-fact, half-fancy of human life. Do not deceive yourself, says the wise man, with the hope of perfect happiness; there is no such thing in the world. For why? Perfection is a mere paradox, a poetical superlative, as when, in the ear of Robert Burns,—

Perfection whispered, passing by,  
Behold the Lass o' Ballochmyle!

Such song and the subject of it is Nature's, and the nearest we may come to perfection. With that immortal apostrophe of those memorable words on this famous anniversary we may fitly close. The feast is ended, and the fragments remaining are much more than two basketsful; and yet it is no miracle.

COILA.

## Apprehension.

Circumstances are like clouds, continually gathering and bursting; while we are laughing, the seed of trouble is put into the wide arable land of events.—*Keats*.

STAY thy hand, Avenger, stay,  
We would live our little day,  
And as ripely fall as those  
Leaves autumnal at the close.

What Avenger? wherefore wreak  
On those ignorant and weak  
Death untimely, senseless, dire?  
Whence the sin, and what the ire?

"Sin" of man, and "wrath" of God,  
But qualities of earthly clod;  
Glib, we call it accident,  
But each hap is consequent.

Certain cause, if hid the cure,  
For each ill man may endure.  
Stay thy hand, Avenger, stay!  
Hush thy clamour; *watch*, not pray.

But, oh, list! I pray thee, list!  
Though I am no fatalist,  
Still I dread the unforeseen,  
That may be that once has been.

A. M.



## Acid Drops.

A telling *Punch* cartoon—telling, that is for *Punch*, which has for some considerable time been chiefly noticeable for the lack of courage and “bite” in its drawings—represents the Kaiser dressed *a la* Chadband, singing a “Hymn to Humanity,” and saying to the angry women and children around him “Stop that screaming! I can’t hear myself sing.” The cartoon, as we have said, is a good one, but a really striking thing about it is the commentary it forms to the claims of Christianity as a moralizing force. Quite naturally the satirist when he writes to depict a thorough going hypocrisy, dresses his character in a Christian garb. And this could not be unless long experience had habituated the public mind to the combination of the two. And when the combination is effected, as in the cartoon before us, everyone—Christian and non-Christian alike—recognizes its appropriateness. The unconscious testimony of so instinctive a delineation far outweighs the elaborate apologies of the pulpit. The logic of fact is greater than the theory of religion.

The late Mr. Harry Marks, M.P. for Thanet, was very popular with his constituents, and on one occasion he gave a handsome donation towards a church, and it was suggested that the new building should bear the title of “St. Mark’s.” Doubtless, the subscribers thought that as the Christian religion was founded by a Jew, there was little harm in naming a church after another.

Although Mr. H. G. Wells, like Mr. Bottomley and the late-lamented “Spring” Onions, is credited with having found “God,” his conversion is not so complete as pious folk would wish. Writing of Christian Conscientious Objectors, he remarks that these people “do not hold any life sacred but their own.”

A correspondent of the *Record* writes suggesting that doctors might give a hint to clergymen of the sick people in their care whom they (the clergy) might visit. We cannot imagine any self-respecting medical man doing anything of the kind. Probably a hint has been taken from the Defence of the Realm Act which converts every employer into a kind of military policeman over those whom he employs, but a doctor in a house is a confidential adviser, and they have a higher sense of professional honour than this pious person seems to cultivate.

The editor of the *British Weekly* says that many are now passing through a period of doubt in religion, but they will not be able to abide in it. We quite agree. They must either go backward or forward. If they go backward, they will revert to their earlier Christianity. If they go forward, they will throw off Christianity altogether. And for one who goes back there will be two go forward.

Railway officials declare that the number of people attempting to travel free on pretence of holding a season ticket has greatly increased during the past twelve months. It is evident that the “moral uplift,” consequent on the War, has not been so thorough as the clergy would have us believe.

The *Daily Chronicle* describes “Saint Thomas” as the “first Agnostic.” Our contemporary had better read the Gospel stories again. We fancy “Saint Joseph” was earlier with his scepticism, and on a more vital question.

How tenderly the journalists treat the Christian superstition. A Sunday paper, in a Christmas editorial, says the present world-conflict “has torn Christendom asunder and seems to mock the message of the Nativity.” The spectacle of thirty millions of Christians trying to murder one another ought to leave very little room for doubt.

The Rev. F. J. Miles, a chaplain with the Australian Force, writing in a Sunday paper, says he distributed “a

consignment of Bibles and tracts. The former were very welcome the latter had a cool reception.” Cans, containing confectionery and useful gifts, were also given to each man. It seems to us that with such bribes the chaplain could have induced the men to take almost any number of Bibles and tracts.

“A sad Chaplain to the Forces” voices his sorrow in the *Church Times*. His sadness is due to the fact that while in charge of a military hospital he “did not give Holy Communion to ten women in four months, and amongst the ‘boys,’ there is no need to say, very few.” Which, being interpreted, means that unless religion is forced on soldiers and nurses, they care very little about it. And that casts a bright light on the stories still being circulated about the demand for religion in the Army.

Very frankly this “sad chaplain” says that this neglect of religion by the nurses and sisters “has caused me to sever my interest in the woman’s cause.” That interest, it is quite clear, was only a professional *quid pro quo*. If the nurses would help him to force religion on the soldiers—and in this connection a wounded soldier would not reject religious ministrations unless he had a very strong objection to it—the chaplain would in turn help the “woman’s cause.” If not they must get along without his help. But help given in such a spirit would not be worth much.

Dr. Aked explains in the *Christian Commonwealth* that his statement that he was “a fugitive on the face of the earth” does not imply that he was a pauper. On the contrary, the real danger for the minister of the Gospel is that he will become “wickedly rich.” Curiously, so many parsons seem quite willing to risk their “immortal souls” in amassing wealth.

Canon Carnegie, preaching at St Margaret’s Westminster, said that Pacifism was inconsistent. It certainly is within the Churches, for the clergy worship the Prince of Peace and christen battleships.

A Trafalgar Square demonstration, at which prayers were to have been offered on behalf of peace, was broken up on a recent Sunday by a hostile crowd, who sang “God Save the King.”

A new publication bears the happy title, *A Glimmering of Goddesses*. It should attract pious folk, for the gods are played out.

The Dean of Rochester is going to Egypt in connection with the National Mission. Many people wish that all the clergy would go to Jericho.

In a list of Sunday services in a London paper, appeared the following notice: “Druid Temple. At 7 p.m. Cavendish Road, Clapham. Chief Druid on Christ-Mass, Its Meaning. All welcome.” This suggests an unexpected revival of religion.

Mr. Bottomley assures the readers of a Sunday newspaper that “the Star of Bethlehem still shines in the sky.” In the primers of astronomy this star is conspicuous by its absence.

Dr. Saleeby describes Christmas as the celebration of “a helpless infant in its mother’s arms as the hope of the world.” He might have added that the child was two thousand years old.

A daily paper had a Christmas article entitled, “New Ghosts for Old.” Are Christians getting weary of the Jerusalem Ghost?

The Press is devoting much space to the discussion of the question of “Work For All.” This should interest the clergy, so many of whom only work one day weekly.

There is only one religion, but there are many forms. In the same way there is only one priesthood, but there are



many varieties. Catholic or Protestant, Christian or Jew, they are alike in their attitude towards, and in their reasoning on behalf, of religion. Thus, the *Daily Telegraph* reproduced the other day the report of a sermon by a Jewish Rabbi which might as well have been preached by a Christian parson. It said the old things in the same way, and if it had been intended to show that the synagogue can cherish the same fallacies as the Church, everyone would have to compliment the preacher upon its success.

This Jewish Rabbi notes "the wonderful and unprecedented way.....in which Jews and Christians are learning to know one another (in the trenches) as they never did before." This may be quite true; but what was it that prevented Jews and Christians knowing each other before the War? Quite clearly, nothing but religion. The gulf between these people was created and sustained by religion. Abolish this, and the cause of the division disappears. It has been to some extent abolished by life at the Front, because the conditions there drive men from the unessential to the essential, and in such circumstances Christianity gets left behind. And it is worth noting that even war can do more than religion has ever been able to accomplish. It can teach men to appreciate one another upon purely moral or human grounds; that religion never has and never will do.

Curiously enough, Mr. Simmons, the Rabbi in question, illustrates what has been said in his immediately following remarks. People of different religious views will mingle more freely after the War than before. And, therefore, the problem will be how to admit this "without encouraging the tendency to assimilation." There is the whole problem in a nutshell. If people are to be kept religious, they must be kept separate. If they mingle freely together, the tendency is to weaken religion. This is a question that faces Judaism with peculiar force, but it also confronts Catholicism, Protestantism, and all forms of religious belief. How can a Catholic keep alive a fitting hatred of Protestantism if he mixes with Protestants and sees that in all the business of life they are as good as he is? How can a Christian regard a Freethinker with the proper degree of Christian hatred if he makes a similar discovery? The vitality of religion depends upon isolation. It is kept vigorous by the maintenance of artificial boundaries which serve to keep people of different beliefs from knowing and appreciating one another. And when the realities of life drive people of different religious views into association, then there occurs what both Christian priest and Jewish Rabbi dread—association. A good result for humanity, a bad one for religion.

We are told that Jesus declared "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Of course it isn't true, and nobody believes it, least of all professing Christians; but the Rev. E. J. R. Briggs, formerly curate of Christ Church, Crouch End, has been killed at the Front. Against the advice and command of the ecclesiastical authorities he gave up his position and joined the Army as a combatant. This is one of the exceptions to the rule followed by the clergy, and shames the body to which he previously belonged. That is from a patriotic point of view, but of course his original professions may have been only "make-believe."

A Sunday paper asks "Why is the Church throughout England not that effective force and moral witness that she is meant to be?" Well, without cavilling as to what she was, or was not, "meant to be," and which is open to much doubt, the answer is plain to all who have found out the Church professions. The question can best be answered by a quotation from their own and special book; "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?"

Rev. Professor Cooper, during the delivery of the Croal Lecture, said that the doctrine of the Trinity was a possession of the Christian Church all over the world before any of the four Gospels were in existence. He might have added

that the doctrine of the Trinity was as widely spread before anyone heard of the Christian Church. But that would have let people into a little of the truth, and that was not the purpose of the Croal Lecture.

One of the contributors to the *Tatler*, Richard King, writes as follows:—

From the average sermon—good Lord deliver us! When I listen to the dreary "bosh" which comes from the pulpit—"bosh" which no modern or even human appeal, "bosh" which, were it delivered in the market-place, would not collect a handful of mental weaklings to listen to it—when I listen to those preachers who know neither what life is nor what are the needs of humanity struggling blindly towards Beauty and Peace, I feel inclined to stand up and say, "Good heavens, man! Have you never read the works of the great thinkers, the great poets, the writers who have influenced and are influencing men's thoughts? And if you *have*—in the name of heaven read them to us in the place of these blind-alley dissertations, which have long since ceased to have any human, and never had any divine, appeal."

The pious myth-makers are at it again. At the beginning of the War they fabricated in this country the absurd story of "The Angels of Mons," which has been pretty well laid to rest now, no doubt. In Germany the mythologists are now at work, with Hindenburg as the hero of their attentions. In the *Sunday Times* of December 30 the following particulars, under a column of News from Germany, appeared. They are worth putting on record in the *Freethinker* in case someone should be looking for material to bring the story of superstition down to date.

During a certain battle Hindenburg said to the Kaiser: "Your Majesty, at ten o'clock the victory is ours." When ten o'clock came, the Emperor pulled his watch out of his pocket and said: "Hindenburg, it is two minutes past ten!" In the same moment a staff officer rode up with the report that the Russians were giving way on all sides. Whereupon Hindenburg: "Your Majesty, I crave leave to withdraw myself from your presence for a few minutes." To which the Kaiser replied: "Hindenburg, I know what you wish to do—you are going to pray. That is also my desire. Come, we will go and pray together." And that is what actually happened.

The story, which is said to have spread a "sweet religious feeling" throughout Germany, is now categorically denied by several papers, apparently inspired. It is pointed out that the Kaiser has never been with Hindenburg during the progress of a battle; that the Marshal, if he is a religious man, has never been known to make any reference to the subject at any time; that the story of a staff officer riding up with the report of the enemy giving way everywhere belongs to war of the past, and is absurd under present conditions.

This is a pretty good denial, anyhow; but if the German will-to-believe is as strong as the British, the story will take some killing.

Canon Carnegie says that "fealty to Christ" forced English Christians into the War. We believe German Christians make the same claim. We prefer the attitude of the French, who find honour and love of country enough.

### From Darkness Into Light.

AWAY with superstition, let the light  
Of clear-eyed reason shine, and chase away  
The night of useless myths. To keep at bay  
Whatever fetters human thought, to fight  
Untruthful creeds which blind the sight,  
Are duties nobly done. Soon will the day  
Of mental freedom dawn, if all essay  
To strike the stubborn foe with power and might.  
Can we forget the strife of bygone days,  
The martyrdom of those who for us won  
The liberty of thought? For them, the ways  
Were trackless and unmade, yet pressed they on  
To make a level pathway through the maze  
Of doubt and error, truest work, well done.



C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 14, Nottingham; January 28, Swansea; February 4, Abertillery; February 11, Liverpool; February 25, Brixton; March 11 Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 14, Leicester.  
OUR warmest appreciations to all of our readers who have sent us so many seasonable good wishes. They will, we are sure, excuse us answering each one individually.
- H. ROBERTS (Christchurch, N.Z.).—Glad to have your appreciation of what you call "the high standard of excellence" maintained by the *Freethinker*.
- W. G. BRUCE.—The English translations of Eugene Brieux's plays are published by Fifield at 5s., and by Jenkins at 6s.
- J. G. FINLAY.—We are pleased to see the lines from Lucretius. There is a very powerful rendering by Dryden of the part dealing with death—if you are not already acquainted with it, which has often made us regret that he did not translate the whole of the poem.
- F. S. K.—The *Freethinker* is taken in a number of public libraries, and fresh efforts are constantly being made to introduce it into new ones. We are always ready to supply it free for such a purpose.
- R. OGDEN.—Far from being "bored," your letter has been most interesting. But you set us a hard problem, and we can only say here, and now, that you appear to have acted with the utmost consideration. Had as much consideration been shown for your opinions, it would have raised one's opinion of the influence of religious belief on character. And we do not see how anyone can blame you for withdrawing support which was being used in the way you indicate. Thanks for printed matter.
- TURPENTINE.—There are a number of translations of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, ranging from the seventeenth century onward. A very handy one is issued in Dent's "Everyman" series. There is also one in Routledge's "People's Library" (1s.), by George Long.
- J. B. MIDDLETON.—We do not think the curate who tried to induce your newsagent to cease displaying the *Freethinker* will relish a talk with an avowed "infidel." If this reverend person's blood boils whenever he sees the *Freethinker*, the only remedy we can suggest is that he should look the other way. But it is like his impudence, anyway. Thanks for your interest in the paper.
- S. G. HARRIS.—Isn't it a bit of a trick to ask for a detailed application of Secularism to "everyday domestic, business, and recreative life"? Naturally, every complete philosophy and every religion is meant to apply to all these things; but their particular application must always be determined by existing circumstances. When Secularism says that the happiness of human society is the supreme test of morality, it is laying down a general rule, and it is intended to apply it to "domestic, business, and recreative life." But its application must depend upon the amount of common sense available with those who put the rule into practice. And this last circumstance is as true of Christianity as it is of Secularism.
- G. BEDBOROUGH.—Thanks for New Year's booklet and inscription. The thoughts are indeed subtly simple. Their subtlety lies in their simplicity, and many a reader will find himself embarked on a voyage of philosophy before he is aware of it.
- J. BLACKHALL.—Your letter is receiving attention.
- M. R.—We can only hope we deserve something of the praise you give. Anyway, you make us feel prouder than ever of our women readers.
- L. L. BROOME (U.S.A.).—You quite convince us of your own sincerity—that is all.
- CASUAL READER.—"How can a man get along without God?" you ask. Well, we manage fairly well, and so do millions of others.
- T. GAUNT.—Pleased to hear that *War and Civilization* is doing its intended work so effectively.
- F. WYKES.—Thanks for very pretty Omar Calendar, and for New Year good wishes. The latter we cordially reciprocate.
- O. EVANS.—The statement referring to the salaries of Welsh Baptist ministers was based upon information given in one of the religious papers, but we cannot now say which.
- J. DE B. (South Africa).—Received with thanks. We are always pleased to send copies of the paper, and will see that it is done in this case. Pleased to have your tribute to the "sustained excellence" of the *Freethinker*.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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.

Our Sustentation Fund.

THE object of this Fund is to make good the loss on the *Freethinker*—entirely due to increased cost of materials, etc.—from October, 1915, to October, 1916, and to provide against the inevitable further losses during the continuation of the War. This Fund will close on January 14.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £228 5s. 9d.—Joshua Ratcliff, £1; W. L. and J. S. W., 10s.; Postman, 2s. 6d.; F. S. Keeble, 2s; Rosa Ogden, 2s. 6d.; Dr. R. T. Nichols, 10s.; E. Simpson, 2s. 6d.; J. F. Aust, 5s.; M. Beale, 5s.; W. Wright, 2s. 6d.; D. Wright, 5s.; F. Wykes, 2s. 6d.; G. Gee, 2s. 6d.; C. D. Weston, £1 1s.; J. W. Hill, 1s. 6d.; R. Ogden (second sub.), 2s. 6d.; John Robinson, 2s.; D. S., £2; J. De B. and Wife, £2. Per Miss Vance: Walter Stewart, 1s.; E. A. Reynolds, 5s.; Miss Harriet Baker, 5s.

Sugar Plums.

A Happy New Year to all our readers. And as the best gift that 1917 can bestow is Peace, let us hope that this year will see the end of a war which, while it lasts, is a constant menace to the security of Western civilization.

Although 1916 has not presented the most favourable of conditions for Freethought propaganda, the work has been more vigorously pursued than has been the case for some years past. Thanks to the Special Propaganda Fund, which was raised in the earlier part of the year, courses of lectures have been arranged in London, and provincial places visited in which Freethought has been long quiescent. Provincial Societies have also been financially assisted, and the Executive of the Society helped in the same manner. That Fund, as we said at the time, came at a very opportune moment, and those who subscribed will, we think, feel satisfied when they reflect upon the general activity that has been maintained. The Fund is being expended in the most economical manner, and no opportunity of breaking new ground, or of helping old centres, is being neglected. As one result of the year's activity, we can say with the utmost sincerity that a new feeling of confidence and endeavour has been revived in the ranks of fighting Freethought.

The great difficulty, as we said a week or two back, lies in securing halls for meetings. Many of these are now taken for military purposes, and will remain out of the market until the end of the War. But there *must* be others available, and our readers would be giving a very real help if they would make it their business to inquire and inform either ourselves or the General Secretary of the N. S. S., Miss Vance, of the result. We had hoped to have seen work recommenced at Manchester, for example, but inability to secure a suitable hall



has prevented it. That difficulty we hope to overcome in the near future. And there are other places to which the same remark applies. So we shall be pleased to see local friends giving what aid they can in this matter. There are, of course, other difficulties in the way of propaganda—increased railway fares, for example. But as we did not stop work on account of the European War, we have no intention of suspending propaganda because of dearer railway travelling. That we must manage as we best can.

We feel quite convinced that the present is the "psychological moment" for vigorous Freethought work. Many thousands have been awakened by the War to a sense of their mental attitude towards religion, with the result that they have become more pronounced in their hostility to Christianity, and more alive to the necessity of some active help on their part. Our correspondence from all parts of the world is quite enough to prove this, and there has been, in addition, a larger number of applications for membership to the N. S. S. than for a number of years. That influx we should like to see more than maintained in 1917. And if we are to utilize this awakened and liberated thought *after* the War, we must lay our plans now. It will be too late to start *then*. All the Churches are laying plans for the time when peace is declared, and it will not be well for Freethinkers to be "too late."

With regard to the *Freethinker*. Those who wrote us so anxiously, directly after Mr. Foote's death, concerning the future of the paper, will by now have realized that we were not speaking wildly when we assured them that the *Freethinker* would continue. We had the situation well in hand, although we must confess that the financial difficulties turned out to be more serious than we had anticipated. Had we realized these at the time, we might have been a little less confident in our prediction. But no one could have foreseen the very expensive price of paper; and there is now another dark time ahead. Still, we have taken all reasonable precautions, and we are as hopeful as ever of pulling through all right.

Our success would have been impossible but for the hearty and loyal support of friends all over the country. And for that we thank them most cordially. The response to the Sustentation Fund was prompt and generous. The deficit of last year has been cleared, and something done towards meeting the weekly deficit which one must take as settled until normal conditions again exist. We believe there are still a large number of readers who intend to subscribe, and we would remind them that this is the last opportunity we shall have of formally bringing the matter before them. The Fund closes on January 14, and we should like to see a really good rally for the last week. If *all* interested subscribed, there would be quite enough forthcoming to remove every anxiety. And every week's deficit that is met makes the task so much easier.

Last January we asked the help of our readers in securing a thousand new readers. We can assure them that their help was most effective. Some helped by personally getting new readers. Others induced their newsagents to display copies of the paper, making themselves personally responsible for the sales, and also persuaded shopkeepers to display *Freethinker* posters. As a result of this, we more than made good the loss of readers from enlistments in the Army and Navy, and actually improved our circulation. May we, therefore, repeat last year's request, and ask for the continued help of all our readers in getting new readers? A new reader often means a new worker, and the Cause benefits all round. And as we have often said, once we get readers, we keep them. The only trouble is bringing the paper before their notice.

Two other matters may be mentioned before we close these New Year Notes. We have been asked many times lately concerning the Bowman Bequest litigation. There is really nothing to be said about it further than has been said. The appeal is still down for hearing in the House of Lords, and may come on any day. The Board of the Secular Society,

Limited, has done what could be done; solicitors have been instructed and counsel engaged. And the battle will be fought along the right lines. Apart from this, the matter is really out of the hands of the Board. It can only await the pleasure of the law—and that is never noted for its lightning-like speed.

The quarrel with the London County Council also looks like coming to a head shortly. It is probable that summonses will shortly be issued against those who have sold literature in the Parks; but a most curious letter has been received from the Council's solicitor, and on that we prefer to say nothing for the moment. In a war of wits, the N. S. S. is not likely to be left behind. But the unprovoked attack on the sale of literature has called forth a very widespread protest, and if the case does come before the Courts there is all the material prepared for an effective fight. A long-standing liberty, which some members of the Council hoped to extinguish while public opinion was diverted elsewhere, has met with—to these gentlemen—unexpected opposition, and, thanks to the initiative of the N. S. S., a large number of organizations are ready to assist in maintaining for the people of London a privilege which existed long before the County Council came into existence. At any rate, one way and another, 1917 will not be lacking in interest for the Freethought Party.

Next Sunday (January 14) Mr. Cohen lectures twice at Nottingham. In the afternoon he will speak before the Cosmopolitan Debating Society on "Determinism," and in the evening will lecture on "Christianity and the Logic of Life." It is many years since Freethought lectures were delivered at Nottingham, and it is hoped that Mr. Cohen's visit will pave the way for more work in the future.

The North London Branch will resume operations at the St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, off the Kentish Town Road, N.W., on Sunday evening, January 7. The subject for discussion will be "Is Science Superior to Revelation?" Our contributor, Mr. T. F. Palmer, will take the affirmative, while that excellent Catholic speaker and debater, Mr. Stephen Fry, will strenuously uphold the negative. A general discussion will follow. Chair taken at 7.30.

Miss E. M. Vance, the General Secretary of the National Secular Society, asks us to remind the members that by a resolution passed at the Annual Conference in June, 1916, all future subscriptions become due on January 1. Subscriptions of members who have joined since September, 1916, date as from January 1, 1917. Members who accept this as a polite reminder, and send on their subscriptions to Miss Vance without further notice, will help her to economize materially in both printing and postage.

Too late for insertion last week, we were asked to inform those interested that the Discussion Class directed by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith resumes its meetings at 62 Farringdon Street on Thursday, January 4 at 7.30 p.m. This notice may be still in time to catch the eye of some of our London readers. We are glad to learn that these meetings are well appreciated by all who take part therein.

We are pleased to learn that, in spite of bad weather, Mr. Lloyd had two excellent meetings at Abertillery on Sunday last. Freethought is making good headway in this part of Monmouthshire, and we should like to see similar activity over the whole of South Wales. The field is quite ripe.

Robespierre had the typical sacerdotal temperament, its sense of personal importance, its thin unction, its private leanings to the stake and the cord; and he had one of those deplorable natures that seem as if they had never in their lives known the careless joys of a springtime. By and by, from mere priest he developed into the deadlier carnivora, the Inquisitor.—*Lord Morley*.



## For the New Year.

If all calendars were destroyed, the first day of the new year would arrive as usual. We apologize for this statement; but Christianity is not the only form of superstition that prevents man from becoming like a god. Clocks, trains, moving staircases, and newspapers are the minor devils lurking behind the bushes on the wayside of human life, and we must beware of becoming mechanical.

Pope, one of Nature's artistic Christians, said all there was to be said about hope in one line:—

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

It is with the same feelings that we see the first faint flushes of the new year; to take any other view would be to say "Nay" to life; and, although we are reminded by musical Jeremiahs that brief life is here our portion, our song about it shall not be pitched in a minor key. Therefore, with this aspiration, we stand on the threshold of 1917, the songs of peace and goodwill having dwindled to a calm. Shall we mock the singers of those songs? We cannot; rather let us pity them, for pity is akin to contempt. They, in their strength, were not content to play the fool in their own house; a mightier force than dogmatism has crowned their stupendous folly. Three anniversaries of the birth of the Prince of Peace have come and gone to the sound of the clang of battle, and although his votaries say one thing with their lips, hideous facts thrust forward their ugly faces and say another. This, we fear, will not prevent a repetition of the cant of Christian brotherhood. Let that pass; turn we now to matters more attractive.

The Book of Job was the first great drama. It is significant that the first signs of Freethought are to be found in a drama. Matter so dynamic as emphatic questioning could not emerge from any other source, least of all from the light comedy which is now once-a-week piety. Scepticism is a quality as positive as belief, and those responsible for the creation of the factors which make for the latter could easily prevent the birth of the former. In bodily form are we here, dissatisfied with the paltry rubbish hidden beneath such words as transubstantiation, ultramontanism, and many other high-sounding names which the reader will readily call to mind. In a dead language, most fitting for practices of an anthropomorphic character, do these retrogressive high priests couch their terms; and man, with his faculty for being deceived, falls a victim. We count it as nothing to rejoice about, this deception of the ignorant.

As we look forward into the future, what can we see? Black as the outlook may be, we can surely discern a few rays of light. If we read these signs aright, we interpret them as a terrible judgment on the pretensions of Christian religion. They pronounce a final doom to the claim of Christianity as a religion of love. With what words shall the heathen greet the missionary? With what scales will all sensible people weigh this Christian claim against international chaos. Chaos and Hatred, Love and Unity, this pair of opposites, as simple to understand as the antagonism between fire and water is beyond and above the ethical grasp of a religion not yet out of its swaddling clothes. Love—yes, say they, as far as our parish extends; as wide as the young curate's, whose vine being affected with the blight, devoutly reasoned that God must be angry with the world. Unity—yes, as embracing as twenty sects in one small area will permit. If we exaggerate, then we shall be pleased to be proved in error; if we underestimate the aims and endeavours of the truly enlightened, then our only answer is Europe. Like a bent tin sword in their hands do we

see the Atheism of the enemy; the first flash of reality revealed the failure of *that* as a weapon. Nor must we forget the efforts of one whom we should like to esteem—we mean Mr. G. K. Chesterton—in his desire to be on the side of the angels. Not even this master of paradox can prove the enemy to be irreligious.

With these considerations in view, it may be well to look round our own armoury. Reason, as opposed to faith, has not failed us; common sense against superstition is our best weapon; and toleration of all plain and fancy religions which are *not aggressive* is thoroughly consonant with our ideas. Logically, with good precedent too, we are entitled to persecute believing unbelievers, thus proving that imitation is not the sincerest form of flattery. With this form of retaliation we have no concern; let us rather turn our thoughts towards the betterment of society, each in the best manner possible under individual circumstances. The world of thought is in a state of flux. Time will finish the drama at present being enacted, and official religion has nearly run its course. Such a gigantic imposture as organized religion cannot withstand the battering by facts which cannot be avoided, and, above all, a terrific reaction is bound to follow on the cessation of hostilities. To this, Freethinkers may calmly look, with the assurance that, if they had no heaven to attract and no hell to frighten, they remained steadfast in their opinions, which have never been enforced by fire or the sword. If that was our history, then the world would be a still greater menagerie, and it would rather tend to complicate the problem of the Prince of Peace; this, of course, would be absurd.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## The Passing of Helen.

HELEN LINDSAY lay on the edge of Eternity. Beaten, exhausted, weary, and careless, she waited the end; gazing with dull eyes at vacancy; only vaguely conscious of a hand slipping into and fondling hers.

Her husband sat at the bedside, dumbly watching his wife's eyes. A half-suppressed moan occasionally escaped him—suggesting some wounded dog suffering agonies in the darkness of night. Steeped to the lips in sorrow, John Lindsay was oblivious of everything but the twitching of his wife's features. And his two little ones—who were twittering with excitement over the discovery of a nest of kittens in the kitchen dresser—unable to engage their father's attention, and still more unable to account for his strange neglect of them, gave up all attempts to attract his notice, and returned to the field of their discovery.

From the dim recesses of the kitchen dresser weird and wonderful sounds soon arose. Alarums and excursions! Feline feelings were violated. Blind and sleepy kittens protested bitterly against midnight attacks and foreign invasions. And the joyous prattle of children chimed merrily. Helen's eyes turned towards the kitchen door; and John's senses stirred. Thoughts slowly shaped themselves in his stupefied mind and fluttered lazily through the corridors of his brain, beating their soft wings in aimless flight until the rising of the Morning Star of Memory. John looked down the past.

How happy he had been with her those eight years! How sweet and thoughtful she was always! How shy in the early days of their wedded life, but how confident in their future! When the young came into being, and the future loomed in view, what plans they had laid, what schemes they had made together! The bairns had ever been in her thoughts. As she dreamed and talked, in the long evenings by the fire, of her ideals and ambitions,



how her grey eyes, filled with happiness and beaming with hope, could inspire a man! She was the best and bravest chum in the world. One could always reach out without fear to touch the future in Helen's company. And now the end had come. So soon! Oh, how blank life would be when she was gone! Dull, colourless, trailing years dragging their empty days and lonely nights from gloom to gloom. It was hard. And John could catch hold of no comforting thought. Philosophy? Poor broken-backed philosophy—a plaything for fools sporting in the sun. Religion? Religion mocked at human suffering; and the professional prating of its ministers was worse than an insult. He was glad no clergyman had called to repeat his cheap chatter at Helen's bedside, as if the empty twaddle uttered at every death-bed were fitting comment on his separation from *her*. Oh, if he could have but one more smile of recognition! If she could but know him for a little longer!

A few yards from the house seven-year-old Johnnie was discussing the situation with Andy Broom. The friends were gathering dandelions for Johnnie's rabbits.

"An' will ye nae greet when she dees, Johnnie?" asked Andy.

"No," said Johnnie, with a confident shake of the head. "My father hasna grutten yet; nor yet 'll I. The lassies 'll greet I suppose," he added; "but, of course, they're just lassies, an' canna help it."

"Man, what did she say when she gied ye chairge o' them?" questioned Andy; the light of his admiring eyes caressing the sober face of his companion. He had heard the story three times already, but could not get enough of such a rare experience, even if it were only by proxy. He envied Johnnie his coming responsibilities, and was almost prepared to sacrifice his own mother if she would but leave to him the care of the family when she died. "What did she say, Johnnie, man?"

"Oh, she didna say awfu' muckle," said Johnnie, placing his gathered dandelions in a heap. "Ye see, it was i' the deid o' the nicht on Thursday last, an' I was sleepin' soun' when my father waukened me. He was awfu' queer an' quate, an' glum, an' I couldna stop lookin' at him as he lifted the lassies in his arms an' cairried them ben the hoose——"

"But what did *she* say?" Andy never had had "a death i' the hoose," and he wanted to hear of the "dein' woman," and smacked his lips over the anticipated "last words" like any hired mourner. "What did *she* say, man?"

"She said terrible little to the bairns." (Johnnie was three years older than his twin-sisters.) "She just took them in her arms, an' kissed them, an' cuddled them, an' grat ower them a whilie, an' lookit at them as gin she'd never seen them afore, until my father took them frae her an' bedded them again. Syne she held oot her arms to me an' said, 'Johnnie!'" And the little prig paused for effect.

"Ay?" encouraged Andy.

"Johnnie," says she——

"An' did ye think she was dein' at the time?" interrupted Andy.

"Weel, I wadna say. She was sair awa' wi't that nicht, but we thocht she wad maybe see the mornin'," replied the mannikin, with the air of having had a world's experience in such matters. "It was hersel' that believed she was slippin' awa'; an' that's what garred her want to speak to me an' the bairns."

"An' ye didna greet ava?"

"The never a greet," assured the young stoic. And he proceeded again to relate what had passed in the night, enlarging on every point that would add to his own importance in the eyes of his friend.

But as he described how his mother had "spoken till him an' lippen't till him as gin he'd been a man," how she had charged him to look after his two little sisters all his life, always to be gentle and helpful to them, keeping ever in his mind how she would like him to act towards them—as Johnnie described this, the scene took shape in the mind's eye of the little chap; his father standing in the light of the shaded lamp, with that doomed expression which had settled on his face; himself lying on the breast of his mother, hugged closer and closer to her bosom, white and soft as sun-kissed snow, and now almost as cold; her hands pushing back his shaggy hair from his forehead, and her eyes glaring at him—gorging themselves with the sight of her boy before they closed in eternal darkness. Johnnie imagined he felt himself cuddling in her arms again, and the poor little fellow's stoicism gave way. His eyes filled. A fact Andy Broom was not slow to observe.

"Man, ye're greetin'!" he exclaimed in disgust.

"I'm nae!" Johnnie protested, winking hard.

"Ye are, man. Ye canna deny 't. Yer e'en's watterin' like onything." And he shouted in derision.

"I am *not*, Andra Broom," reiterated Johnnie, as the tears began to trickle. "I'm nae greetin'.....an'—an'—an' ye needna m-mind gatherin' ony m-mair meat for my rabbits. I can feed them mysel'."

"Ye shouldna pretend ye're a man, then. Ye're nae-thing but a littlin, aifter a'!" mocked Andy, as Johnnie marched down the road. Sluggishly ebbed the crimson element of life in Helen's veins, but Johnnie's tears flowed fast and free as the rabbits were fed that afternoon.....

Mrs. Brown offered to "sit up" that night with John Lindsay, and Johnnie slept with Andy—their quarrel of the afternoon forgotten.

Next morning, as the boys were inspecting Andy's doe's, Rob Smith, the carpenter's son, hailed them from the road. "Hullo, Johnnie, yer mither's deid!"

"Ye're a leear, Rob Smith," exclaimed Johnnie. "She couldna dee without me kennin'."

"She *is* deid. My father's makin' the coffin for her. Man, I was haudin' the nails mysel'."

"She's nae. She canna be. She wasna deid yesterday," insisted Johnnie. And turning with an appealing look to his friend, he said, "You dinna believe 't, Andy. Dae ye, Andy?"

"No, I dinna," replied Andy, stoutly. "Rob Smith was aye kent for a big leear."

"I tell ye my father's workin' at her coffin the noo. Wad he be makin' a coffin for a woman that wasna deid, think ye?" observed the joiner's son.

Johnnie's lips were trembling. He stared wildly at Rob.

"Fecht him for 't, Johnnie," suggested Andy, in hot anger at the pain Rob was causing his chum. "Fecht the devil for 't. That'll settle 't."

"I will!" howled Johnnie, throwing off his jacket, his teeth set hard. "Come on to the mill-course wi' ye, Rob Smith. Na!" He paused as a sudden thought struck him. "Na, nae there. They can see the mill-course frae oor windows, Andy, an' I wadna like them to see me fechtin' an' *her* lyin' there."

"Roond i' the corn-yaird, then," proposed Andy. "Will the corn-yaird suit ye, Rob?"

"Onywe ye like," assented Bob, sullenly. He felt himself hardly used for no reason. "It doesna mak' whaur we hae 't. His mither's deid whatever."

"Shut up, Rob Smith!" shouted Johnnie, his eyes smarting with the effort of keeping back those tears which would come in spite of him. "Shut up, man! That's nae settled yet, my mannie. There's the coordie-



lick. Gin ye beat me she's deid, an' gin I beat you she's nae deid."

"Ay, an' gin ye gie him his licks, Johnnie," added Andy, "I'll gie him anither hidin' for sayin' she was deid. An' that'll maybe ser' him for a while."

The combatants faced each other.

"Johnnie Lindsay," cried Mrs. Brown, appearing on the scene at this moment, "what in the world are ye daein'?"

"He's fechtin' for 's mither," explained Andy.

Mrs. Brown turned aside. "Ye'd better rin awa' hame, Johnnie, lad. Ye'll need to fecht for yer sisters in a whilie."

"My sisters?" faltered Johnnie. Then he understood.

"I telled ye," said Rob. F. L. B. G.

### Skeleton Sermons.

#### "Shindikits!"

JUST now the air is full of rings and corners and monopolies, notwithstanding the great War. Syndicates are being formed to annex the South Pole, while the British Government intends establishing on a colossal scale a State beer monopoly, and people seem to think they are a novelty evolved out of the teeming brain of the twentieth century speculator. No such thing! Monopolies have existed from the creation of the world. Didn't Adam have a monopoly in garden produce? Yes, and he was able to monopolize the cider business, having a corner in apples. Noah had a monopoly in the carrying trade during at least forty days and forty nights, enabling him to plant a vineyard with the proceeds and embark in the native wine business, monopolizing that for a time. Job worked up a corner in boils very successfully, and Lot's wife put everything she had into chloride of sodium. Goliath carried everything with a high hand until David introduced him to a sling, of which he had the monopoly, that went to his head and floored him. Methuselah had a monopoly in the oldest inhabitant business, and Samson monopolized the hair trade, until a woman named Delilah cut him out. He was the first to go into the stencil business, stamping foxes tails with brands of fire.

Solomon monopolized nearly all the wisdom and a good proportion of the women in his time, though he could not have done it had Brigham Young been alive. Pharaoh's daughter may not have had a monopoly in the milk business, though it is on record that she got a great "prophet" out of water. St. Paul had a monopoly in many things, until Minneapolis started up—and so it goes.

It will be seen that the monopolist is by no means of modern origin, but I hope the above samples will be enough to swear by or swear at. There is scarcely a commodity that can be mentioned but what is run by some "corner" or other. Take politicians for example. My advice is to avoid, as far as possible, breeding politicians. Strive only for patriots. Keep on trying, and also set higher standards and ideals before them. A few stuffed specimens of our present-day politicians might be kept in the museums, and their portraits in the National Gallery, their statues in the parks and public places, all labelled, "Stumbling-blocks to human progress in the dark ages of the twentieth century."

As to millionaires, if Carnegie, Rockefeller, Jay Gould, and a few others want the earth, they have one distinguished character—a prototype—in the New Testament, who, being on a high mountain, thought he owned it, but he found out his mistake; and those who try to get up "corners" ought to be put in that place of infantile punishment themselves.

THE OWL.

### Correspondence.

#### FOOD PRODUCTION AND THE BIRTH-RATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I should like to thank Mr. E. Egerton Stafford for his article maintaining that war, owing to excessive birth-rates, has often been a biologic and economic necessity. His conclusion, however, that "when nations realize that the true way to solve all economic problems is to exploit the earth for the benefit of all, and to colonize unoccupied parts of the earth on international lines, then war will cease to be a biologic and economic necessity," will make some of his readers feel that even more European wars are inevitable as the nations will not agree on the foregoing. Therefore I greatly regret the implication in his conclusion that the birth-rate factor, which he rightly contends has been so important in the past, can now be ignored.

But can this factor now be ignored? The world's birth-rate before the War was at least 35 per thousand per annum; so if everyone had sufficient food the death-rate would at most be 10, as in New Zealand, and the population would increase by at least 25 per thousand per annum. It was, however, only increasing at a fifth of that rate! Is it conceivable that even if the whole world were voluntarily to come under one ideal Socialist government, the rate of increase of the earth's food supply could be accelerated five-fold? Or consider Russia and the Balkan States. Before the War they still had birth-rates of over 40 per thousand, and death-rates of about 30. Is it conceivable that anything but a big reduction of their savage birth-rates could eliminate their dangerous pressure of population? Or take the United Kingdom. Thanks to Bradlaugh, her birth-rate had fallen from 34 per thousand per annum in 1876 to 24 in 1913, and her death-rate from about 20 to 14. But had everyone been adequately fed, her death-rate would not have been more than 10. Thus even a birth-rate of only 24 ought to give us a rate of natural increase of population of 14 per thousand per annum. Is it likely that any social reform, especially after this terribly impoverishing War, could enable our population to increase by about half again of her pre-War rapid rate?

But in addition to communal exploiting of the earth for the benefit of all, Mr. Stafford mentions colonization. This suggests keeping the population stationary by emigrating each year's increase. Emigration, however, practically means emigration of able-bodied childless adults, which means diminishing the food-growing and food-buying powers of the Mother Country and aggravating any poverty existing here. Naturally, the colonies specially want adults, and not children, just as we should prefer to emigrate children and retain the far more useful men whom we have also had the burden of bringing up and training. Thus emigration would increase poverty, and would prove to be no safety-valve for the high birth-rates that tend to produce wars.

So on both counts I most earnestly beg Mr. Stafford to make his conclusion the freethinking one which his article was so well leading up to, namely, that when the nations realize that the quickest way to solve all economic problems is to encourage the poor to have only two children per family, then war will cease to be a biologic and economic necessity.

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

#### Miscarried.

HUMANITY'S a letter  
 Addressed to heaven by God;  
 But the postman knew no better,  
 A different path he trod.  
 He could not read the writing,  
 'Twas fearful scrawl, he said;  
 His comments were most biting,  
 So it went to hell instead.

A. F. T.



### Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

#### London.

- E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate, M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking. Messrs. Duncumb & Sons, 287 High Street, Stratford.
- E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6, Byward Street. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Road. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch Street. J. J. Joques, 191 Old Street. Mr. Henderson, 66 Charing Cross Road.
- N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Road, Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Road (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Road, Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore Street, Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Road. E. S. Smith, 7 Turnpike Lane, Hornsey.
- N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 316 Kentish Town Road. W. Lloyd, 5 Falkland Road, Kentish Town.
- S.E.—J. H. Killick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham. B. Dean, Southwark Bridge.
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- W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King Street, Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82, Seaford Road, West Ealing.
- W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

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- Aberdeenshire.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.
- Barrow-in-Furness.—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.
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- Birkenhead.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.
- Birmingham.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook Street. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Worcester Street. F. Holder, 42 Hurst Street. Mr. Benton, High Street, Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Road Post Office, Saltley. W. H. Smith & Son, 34 Union Street. Messrs. Stanford & Mann, New Street.
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- Falkirk.—James Wilson, 76 Graham's Road.
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- Yarmouth.—C. H. Knights, 87 & 88 Northgate Street. H. Bird, 19 Howard Street South. J. M. Headley, North Howard Street.

### 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.

##### INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Is Science Superior to Revelation?" Opener, Mr. T. F. Palmer; Opposer, Mr. Stephen Fry—Thursday, Jan. 11, at N. S. S. Offices, at 7.30, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class.

##### OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kells, "The Why and the Wherefore"; 6.30, Messrs. Kells, Saphin, and Yates.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street); 7. J. Hammond, "Sir Oliver Lodge and the Spirits."

### Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE.

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