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CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>God Help Us!—The Editor</i>	49
<i>"Have Faith in God."—J. T. Lloyd</i>	50
<i>Chartered Libertines.—Mimnermus</i>	51
<i>A Sceptical Scientist and Saint.—T. F. Palmer</i>	52
<i>The Avenues of Time.—Robert Moreland</i>	53
<i>Chorus of Life.—Andrew Millar</i>	54
<i>Acid Drops</i>	55
<i>To Correspondents</i>	57
<i>Sugar Plums</i>	57
<i>The French Revolution.—Robert Arch</i>	58
<i>Paulatim Retrorsum.—Mathematicus</i>	59
<i>Christian Susceptibilities.—Ignotus</i>	60
<i>The Right to Affirm</i>	61
<i>Letters to the Editor—The Competition of the Future, 61 ;</i> <i>Was Napoleon a Freethinker?</i>	61
<i>Notice of Meetings</i>	62
<i>Books and Pamphlets</i>	63

Views and Opinions.

God Help Us!

Two men were out in a small boat during a storm. They were only a little distance from the shore, but the chance of landing seemed small. It was, clearly, an occasion for prayer. "Oh, God," prayed one, "save our lives, and we promise"—"Hold on," suddenly cried the other, "don't promise anything, we're ashore." The story puts the philosophy of "God help us" in a nutshell. It expresses both the occasion and the nature of the exclamation. No one invokes God while there is a good prospect of help elsewhere. No one trusts in Providence who can get credit elsewhere. No one drags in the name of God until human knowledge has reached its limits. "God help us!" is a synonym of helplessness. "God only knows!" is a synonym of ignorance. The will of God, said Spinoza, in a fine phrase, is the asylum of ignorance. No one has ever bettered that phrase, and no one ever will. It is the philosophy of religion in a nutshell. A really scientific study of religion can be no more than a commentary upon that generalization. From the dawn of human philosophy until to-day "God" has never been more than the phrase with which hopeless ignorance or despairing helplessness seeks to narcotize the consciousness of its own impotence.

* * *

God and Right.

For two and a half years the world has been at war, and during that time thousands of parsons—to say nothing of laymen—have been trying to explain God's part in the conflict. What has been the use of it all? Has it helped us to understand the cause of the outburst? Has it helped us to bring it to a close? Will it help us to prevent its recurrence? God will see to it, says one of these men of God, that in this world-conflict right will not be trampled under foot. What guarantee have we of that? Is right never trampled under foot? God, if there be a God, seems remarkably impartial in the distribution of his favours. In 1870 he helped the

Germans to conquer the French. Later he helped the Agnostic Japanese to conquer the pious Russians. Then he helped the Mohammedan Turk to conquer the Christian Greek; and, by way of levelling up matters, he helped the Christian Balkan States to conquer the Turk. One cannot count with any certainty upon so variable a factor. And, surely, if there is one thing certain, it is that whoever wins the War, Right *will* have been trampled under foot. Every innocent man or woman or child who has suffered in this War is proof of that. If the Kaiser and his advisers, with everyone else responsible for the War—in every country, were all hung sky high, it would not alter that fact or diminish the force of that truth. Right is trampled under foot whenever and wherever wrong is done. We may prevent its recurrence, but we cannot undo it once it has occurred. And it is God's business—if there is a God—to see that it never does occur. A God who does not or cannot do this should abdicate, or hand over his functions to a more competent tribunal.

* * *

Why Should God Help?

Why should we, from even the Christian point of view, believe that God will help us? The troubles and difficulties of life—including the force of human passions—do not exist uncaused. Such as they are, such as the world is, they are God's creations; and why should we expect him to remove difficulties he has himself been at the trouble to provide? If God really intended helping us, he would have helped us much more effectively by doing so at the beginning. And to Deity this would have been such an easy task. A very slight difference in the make-up of the Kaiser—we select the Kaiser because he presents a clear case to British readers—just a little difference in the chemical constituents of his body and in the structure or quality of his nervous system, would have made him quite a different man—as great a lover of freedom and progress as, say, the Czar of Russia. And if God did not choose to so arrange things, why should we assume that he will now help us to alter them. If God does all things well, to ask him to alter them or to help us alter them is ridiculous. And if otherwise, the correction must come from man himself, even though he is magnanimous enough to give God credit for the change.

* * *

A Sham Belief.

Is there anyone who really believes that God does help? The clergy. *They* say so; but it is their business to say so. We may readily grant that God—or the belief in God—helps them; the comfortable positions secured by clerical mediocrities is evidence of that. But do even the clergy trust in God while help is to be obtained elsewhere? Looking at them generally, one quite fails to detect any difference between their behaviour and that of other people. If a parson is sick, he visits a doctor or a health resort. If he is in trouble, he appeals for sympathy or help as readily as other people. Strip him of his collar and coat, dress him in

ordinary clothes, and you cannot distinguish the parson from the layman. And the layman is equally contemptuous of God's help. The lesson of experience tells on him with even greater force than it does on the parson, because he has no obvious self-interest to serve in ignoring its lessons. During the course of the absurd National Mission of Repentance and Hope, the standing complaint has been that the nation has forgotten God. But a God who did anything useful would not be forgotten. A God who can be overlooked is a God who deserves to be overlooked. Man's forgetfulness is the measure of our appreciation of his services.

* * *

Facts versus Theory.

How glibly the phrase, "The protecting providence of God," rolls off the lips of the average preacher. And what a bitter satire life presents to such a phrase! While we write, the papers are full of the accounts of a horrible disaster in a munition factory in the East of London. The death roll is incomplete, but it is large, and, says one of the reports, "one of the saddest features in the terrible calamity is the number of little children who have been killed or injured." The clergy have told us that in this War we are fighting God's fight; and this is the way God looks after his own. Men and women, boys and girls, were toiling at the work of making munitions, and in a moment they were blasted out of existence. And around the factory itself rows of houses are shattered and little children killed or crippled. What was "Providence" doing there? Religious papers have told us how God miraculously preserved crucifixes on the wayside in France and Belgium. Why could he not have paid a little attention to East London? A Scotch elder once excused himself from attending a harvest thanksgiving after a bad harvest on the plea that he did not wish to approach the Lord in a spirit of sarcasm. To prate of "Providence" and "God's help" in the face of the horrors of the past two years is more than sarcasm; it is an insult to human intelligence, an outrage on human decency.

* * *

God or Man?

Of course, it will be said that God had nothing to do with this explosion, or with any of the other disasters. And that we quite believe. It is not, after all, the Atheist who charges God with the responsibility for these things. It is the believer in God who, by his belief, makes him responsible. We agree that if a man applies a match to a barrel of powder he must expect certain consequences. That is precisely the Atheistic position. And the moral of that position—not disputed, be it noted, by the believer—is that, if you are doing anything in this world, it doesn't matter the value of a brass farthing whether you believe in a God or not. Natural forces operate with absolute impartiality, and the question of the existence of God may be set on one side as of no practical importance whatever. If there is no protecting Providence, human safety and human welfare resolves itself into a question of understanding, controlling, and applying natural forces in a sensible and beneficial manner. And if that be granted, religion may be dismissed once and for all as a gigantic imposture. Years ago Carlyle said, "God does nothing." By sheer force of facts religious philosophy is being driven to the same conclusion. God does nothing; that is the real inference from the whole of human experience. Civilization is the work of man, not of God; and not a small part of our task is to relieve the human mind of the incubus of a belief that rests on no other and no better foundation than the fear-stricken fancies of primitive man.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Have Faith in God."

THAT is the *British Weekly's* motto for the New Year, and the leading article for January 4 is a sermonic exposition of it. To see the absurdity of such a motto we only need to set it in its original context:—

Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them (Mark xi. 22—25).

Everybody who thinks knows that those words are not true. No prayer addressed to a god has ever been answered by him. This is an obvious truism that cannot be too often repeated. As a matter of fact, nobody believes that the Gospel Jesus himself expected his words to be taken seriously, nor have they been so taken by any sensible people. And yet the editor of the *British Weekly* counsels his readers to take the clause, "Have faith in God," as their motto during the present year. Sir William Robertson Nicoll is simply mistaken when he says that what Britain needs more than anything else is God, and most certainly the British people, as such, do not feel their need of him. Sir William assures us that "he governs all things in heaven and in earth," and that he keeps his servants "as the apple of his eye," folding them "under the shadow of his wings," and guiding them "with his counsel," in which case he affords them no occasion to feel their need of him. The reverend knight pretends to "set forth the presence and the action of the living God, who is the master and not the slave of Nature," but the task is too difficult for him. He can do nothing but multiply assertions, not one of which is susceptible of demonstration. He does not know that Nature has a master who "governs, interferes, and answers prayer." When has Nature been interfered with, and what evidence is there that prayer has ever been answered? It is easy enough to assert that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father in heaven, that "not one dies in the shock of battle but God knows it and marks it," and that "the very hairs of our head are all numbered"; but such assertions are incapable of verification. All that can be proved is that sparrows fall, often most cruelly, and that men and women die, whether in the shock of battle or in quiet homes. Equally easy is it for any believer to assert that he can see the hand of God in the ordering of his life from day to day; but this assertion, also, lies beyond the sphere of substantiation. Seemingly, a religious man credits himself with nothing; all that is good in him being of God, and all that is bad, of the Devil—he being but a machine which they run in turns.

Sir William is also able to see the hand of God in history. It was by the hand of God that Napoleon was vanquished and American slavery abolished; but was it by the hand of Satan that Napoleon was raised and slavery established? But the editor of the *British Weekly* has already declared that God "governs all things in heaven and in earth," a statement which shuts the Devil out completely. He is aware, however, that all is not well with that declaration, and so he adds:—

And yet we do not walk by sight. We walk by faith, and are often unable to see why such things as happen should be. But the elemental convictions are more certain than the surface and transitory appearances of the world, and the heart is anchored deep in them.

Whether we succeed or fail for the time, still Jesus says to us, "Have faith in God."

We are profoundly convinced that if we study history impartially we shall be forced to the conclusion that faith in God entirely lacks justification. Even the history of the Church, the very temple of the Holy Ghost, reflects no credit on its Divine Head.

Yes, Sir Robertson Nicoll is fully conscious of the essential weakness of his argument; and it is marvellous with what *naivette* he gives his case away:—

Does the Providence of God make it certain that the right must always win? The answer is, Yes, if we hold fast to the truth of another life. We may be defeated in this world, and to all appearances utterly defeated. Even that must not shake our faith. "Have faith in God" is still the message for times when everything seems to go against us, and the cause of righteousness apparently grows weaker every hour. The Christian must never say less than this, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him."

It is admitted that in this world the right does not always win, and we ourselves may be utterly defeated. In this world the cause of righteousness is not always triumphant.

The annals of the world are full of darkness and confusion. There are crushing misfortunes that befall the righteous. Many a good cause has been overborne for a long season. Truth is on the scaffold and falsehood is on the throne.

Does Sir William really think that the world could be in such a woeful condition if an infinitely powerful and good God "governed all things in heaven and in earth"? All he says is that "the plan of our commander is not known to us." Surely, had there been a Commander, his plan would have been known to us long ago. The God in whom we are exhorted to have faith "gave Christ for the redemption of the world" two thousand years ago, and to-day the world is full of darkness and confusion and crushing misfortunes, and there is no certainty that the right shall ever be wholly victorious in it. Even a minister of the Gospel like Sir Robertson Nicoll can find no satisfaction, no light, no explanation except in the belief that there is another life. But even if there is another life, what is there to show that all things will be set right in it?

The curious thing is that, amid the welter and confusion so prevalent in the world, we are calmly told that even during the present brutal War in Europe "God has been working his own ends," and that "in his hands is the power of life and death." If this is true, he is directly responsible for the War and for all the unspeakable atrocities that have characterized it. Indeed, Sir William throws out the suggestion that to believers in God "it may be a privilege to live through a time like this," and an agony only to the unbeliever. "If we have faith in God it is well. It will be well with us even if we do not live to see the victory on earth." What the ends are at which God is working just now we are not informed, nor do we understand the prediction that "he will vindicate those who in a day of travail and blasphemy have taken him at his word." When has he spoken and what has he said? Thousands upon thousands in this land of ours have never heard his voice, neither have they ever had any ground on which to believe that he even exists at all; and to them the War only affords an additional evidence that the belief in him is one of the many illusions and delusions which have come down to us from the ignorance and stupidity of the past. All the words of which we have any knowledge are of human origin and character, and man is the highest living being of whom there is any trace.

The editor of the *British Weekly* is not ignorant of the fact that the conceptions of God are innumerable, and that scarcely any two of them are alike. In all ages his so-called servants have been disputing and wrangling concerning him, and putting one another to death because they could not agree in their descriptions of him. Having carefully considered the *British Weekly's* teaching on the subject, the only conclusion to which we can come is that its God is not deserving of our faith because of his utter silence and inactivity. Were it true that he "governed all things in heaven and in earth," to dethrone him would be the most benevolent act that could be performed. Such government would be a disgrace of the highest order to a super-human potentate.

J. T. LLOYD.

Chartered Libertines.

Hebrew mythology contains things which are both insulting and injurious.—*J. A. Froude.*

The "Zolaism" of the Bible is far more pernicious than the "Zolaism" of fiction.—*G. W. Foote.*

THE clergy are past masters at stifling or circumventing any movement likely to prove dangerous to them. The original Sunday-schools were initiated by laymen with the sole idea of imparting real education to children on the one day of the week on which, in the time prior to the passing of the Factory Acts, they were free to receive it. Nowadays, Sunday-schools are not concerned with other than purely theological instruction, and the average Sunday-school teacher cares as much for real education as a pigeon cares for hydrostatics.

Similarly, the clergy circumvented the great Public Library movement, which was intended to place knowledge within reach of the people. They have always had enormous influence on the local committees of the public libraries, and their one aim has been to render such institutions, from their point of view, entirely innocuous. So long as the shelves of these libraries were stocked with the books of Messrs. Charles Garvice and the Brothers Hocking, Miss Marie Corelli, and other purveyors of sentimental pap for intellectual infants, they were content. The instant any attempt was made to place before the reading public works which made for sanity or ordered thought, they at once displayed their hostility. The boycott was introduced, and the modern index expurgatories contains the name of practically every author who is worth reading from Bernard Shaw to Swinburne. Even popular novelists have not escaped, and Hall Caine has suffered in the company of H. G. Wells.

The latest clerical move is quite as astute as those already noted. Some clerical members of the recent Conference of Headmasters have issued a warning to the parents of schoolboys, in which they call attention to the danger of books, magazines, and plays, which verge upon indecency. "We venture to do so," say the headmasters, "because we have special opportunities of observing the actual effect upon boys and young men of suggestions so conveyed to which we feel bound to bear witness." And they add, "too little care is exercised to exclude them from the lives of the young."

To read such allusion to the books, magazines, and plays of the day, as if many of them were a noisome danger to society, is not pleasant. When such insults come from priests and their satellites, who thrust the open Bible into the hands of innocent childhood, one's sense of justice is outraged. For there are things in the sacred volume which are calculated to bring the blush of modesty on any face except that of a priest. Raw, naked filth, which cannot be read aloud to a

mixed congregation, is forced compulsorily into the hands of every child; but masters of literature, who would present their puppets as sentient beings, must emasculate and etherealize them until they are the merest shadows of men and women, swayed by motives and temptations that would be held blameless by the Rev. Mr. Stiggins and gain approval of Mr. Pecksniff himself. Clergymen attach such loose meanings to the words they fling about so recklessly, but how such men can read the account of Ezekiel's banquet, or the story of Onan, and the adventures of Lot, without remark, and point the finger of scorn at modern novelists and playwrights is inexplicable, except on the hypothesis that they are insincere.

If the novels, plays, and magazines of the day are likely to corrupt the morals of the rising generation, what, in the name of common sense, is the Old Testament calculated to do? There may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of rape, adultery, and unnatural vice, written with all the nasty particularity and love of detail, which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern writers. The florid, heated rhetoric of "The Song of Solomon" leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least lettered reader can appreciate the glowing periods. In fact, Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off.

The overt action of the clerical headmasters is unnecessary. If they had any real reason for safeguarding the interests of the young, they would see at once, that, if an ordinary novel or a play will corrupt a young boy, the Bible will corrupt a regiment. No novelist or playwright would dare to fill his pages with detailed accounts of incest, rape, and unmentionable crimes. He would be imprisoned, and his books destroyed. Yet the clergy force the Bible, which contains all these things, into the hands of every child. We do not believe in bowdlerizing books, but if ever there were any occasion for such drastic treatment it certainly should be directed against the Bible. Unfortunately, if all the objectionable passages were deleted, "God's Holy Word" would be so reduced as to be unrecognisable. Instead of prating of indecent literature, let the clergy set an example. Let them cease to force into the innocent hands of little children a volume which they dare no longer read aloud in its completeness to a mixed audience of adults. Until they consent to do this they merit the title of "Chartered Libertines."

MIMNERMUS.

A Sceptical Scientist and Saint.

III.

(Continued from p. 38.)

IN 1872 Lubbock began his researches on the mental endowments of insects. These inquiries initiated the studies which subsequently gave the reading public his fascinating volume on *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*. That a busy banker and successful legislator should interest himself in the activities of insects struck the general fancy, and doubtless assisted in the circulation of the book. In the autumn he travelled along the Danube, and visited Turkey and Greece; and during a visit to France he tamed a wasp, which he introduced to his scientific friends. In a leading article, the *Daily Telegraph* stated that:—

One of the most curious attendants this year at the gathering of the British Association in Brighton was a little gentleman in a brown overcoat, with black and yellow nether garments, wearing a sharp sword poisoned at the tip.....It was Sir John Lubbock's pet wasp; and

the respect which would naturally be paid to the benevolent savant, who has given London its new holidays, was really due to this insect on its own account.

Excited by envy, among other evil human weaknesses, a rumour was spread broadcast that Lubbock was regarded as "a great scientist among the bankers, a great banker among the scientists." But the high estimation in which he was held by the great masters of science in what was a Golden Age of natural knowledge, completely disproves one half of the rumour, while, as to the other, the evidence is conclusive that the bankers did not hold him lightly as an authority on their calling. They accepted his Clearing system, and they valued his Falsification of Accounts Bill, which was passed into law in 1874. The circumstances which led to this enactment were somewhat strange:—

A clerk at Stuckey's Bank had overpaid his account, and had deceived the auditors by falsifying the books, so that his frauds remained for a considerable time undetected. To everyone's surprise, it appeared that this was no offence in the eye of the law.

Lubbock's Act, for the first time, made this a criminal offence. This proved a very useful measure, as it had been no uncommon occurrence for clerks to rob the banks by means of false entries, and then escape punishment for their misdeeds.

Again, the Bankers' Association very heartily thanked Lubbock for the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, which he piloted through Parliament in 1876. Previous to this Act, bankers were bound on demand to produce their books in Court. "Many accounts being in the same ledger, it sometimes happened that a customer wished to consult his ledger, but could not do so as the ledger was in Court." Under the new Act, bankers were permitted to present a signed duplicate.

In the same year Lubbock went among the Wiltshire archæologists at Salisbury, and formed one of a party to Stonehenge that was conveyed there in some score or more carriages. A landowning agriculturist, busy with his harvest, was astonished when he noticed a procession of vehicles so imposing in an outlandish lane. He inquired of his bailiff as to its meaning. "I reckon, sir," said the man, who seems to have been uncertain as to the pronunciation of the word "archæologists," "it's them Archangels from Salisbury."

A curious slip of the pen occurs on page 165 of the first volume of Mr. Hutchinson's biography. Referring to Lubbock's Bill to amend the law relating to Companies, introduced into the House in 1879, Mr. Hutchinson mentions Lord Halsbury as Chancellor. Of course, the first Earl Cairns occupied the woolsack during Disraeli's lease of power from 1874 to 1880, while Halsbury was then Hardinge Giffard, afterwards Charles Bradlaugh's spiteful antagonist in the Courts of Law, and later still Lord Chancellor, or, as Labouchere preferred to term him, "Lord High Jobber."

This same year Sir John lost his first wife, to whom he was dearly attached, and her early decease was doubtless in large measure due to the effects of the railway accident previously spoken of.

When Gladstone swept the country at the General Election of 1880, Lubbock, although a Liberal, lost his seat for Maidstone, owing to his colleague, Sir Sidney Waterlow's, removal of slum property in the town. It was the old blunder of pulling down human dwellings before others were erected in their stead. Superior houses were subsequently built, which gave general satisfaction; but the election was fought while the houseless inhabitants were suffering considerable inconvenience. The angry people who were driven from their homes, and the tradesmen who relied on their custom, avenged themselves by voting for the Conservatives,

who won the seats. As a sequel, on the elevation of Robert Lowe, the Member for London University, to the peerage, Sir John succeeded him as Parliamentary representative. He was returned unopposed, and retained the seat for twenty years, until he in turn accepted a barony.

In 1888 Lubbock was President of the British Association, and his Address secured the hearty admiration of Darwin. This gathering—the Jubilee meeting—was held at York, and in the afternoon of the opening day Lubbock strolled into the Cathedral with Huxley:—

At the entrance they met Prof. H. J. Smith, who put up his hands with a look of mock surprise. "Ah," said Huxley, "you did not expect to see me here." "Well," said Smith, looking up, "if I had it would have been on a pinnacle."

Although a remarkably abstemious man, Lubbock suffered for the sins of his ancestors, and was afflicted with gout. This fiendish disease threatened at times to restrict his multifarious activities. But the busy man was busy still when, in 1882, the death of Darwin came. Sir John composed a memorial to the Dean of Westminster, suggesting the burial of the mighty naturalist in the Abbey. This was signed, among others, by Professor Fawcett, Thomas Burt, Sir Charles Dilke, and Sir George Trevelyan. Darwin was consequently laid to rest in what should be the National Mausoleum, and the pall-bearers included Huxley, Wallace, Hooker, J. R. Lowell, and Lubbock. Although Darwin had passed the allotted span of three score years and ten, his death was a sad blow to Lubbock. Their early friendship had deepened into affection, and the younger man looked up to the philosopher of Down as a second father. Darwin's influence in shaping Lubbock's scientific studies was enormous. And, as Mr. Hutchinson states:—

Nor is it on the intellectual side alone that the counsel and the example of the great Darwin counted for much with him. He was immensely indebted, too, to the example of his fine and serene character—cheerful, uncomplaining, courageous—in the midst of the attacks of ill-health, and of enemies who were unable to appreciate his work.

Relieved to some extent from personal attendance at the Bank, Lubbock became extremely active in science and politics. He conclusively proved that the Bank Holidays had not led to increased drunkenness, a charge constantly brought against them; he strove to secure the reduction of the National Debt, and was, if possible, more interested in archæology than ever. In August, 1883, *Punch* selected him as a subject for one of that entertaining organ's "Fancy Portraits." Sir John was cleverly portrayed as a big humble-bee, while below the drawing ran the lines:—

How doth the Busy Banking Bee
Improve the shining hours,
By studying on Bank Holidays
Strange insects and wild flowers.

Lubbock paid his first visit to Rushmore in 1883. This was the noble residence of General Pitt Rivers, the learned evolutionary anthropologist, who once offered that well-known heretic, Moncure Conway, the biographer of Thomas Paine, a nice living in the Church. There Lubbock met Alice Fox Pitt, who afterwards became his second wife.

The introduction of the measure to enfranchise the agricultural labourer gave an impetus to the cause of Proportional Representation, and Lubbock, who was a strong supporter of this system, took a prominent part in the formation of the Proportional Representation Society. This body was born in January, 1884, in Mr. Beaumont Lubbock's residence. And unquestionably,

were such a scheme capable of satisfactory application, it would constitute a great improvement on our present methods of election.

Apropos of long dinner courses and interminable orations, the following is not bad. At a Cambridge celebration there were innumerable speeches, and, after midnight, Sir Frederick Bramwell was on the list to return thanks for "Applied Science." Overwhelmed by the oratory of the many preceding speakers, Bramwell delivered a commendably brief address. This is the verbatim report:—

At an earlier hour there is much that I should have liked to have said about applied science; but as it is nearly one o'clock, the only application that strikes me as at all appropriate would be the application of a domestic lucifer to a bedroom candle.

With that he resumed his seat, when J. R. Lowell, who sat opposite, dashed off a verse, which he tossed over to Sir Frederick Bramwell:—

O wise Sir Frederick,
Who thy wit could catch,
Hold thee a candle
Or supply thy match?

As soon as Parliament reassembled in 1886, Lubbock toiled earnestly to persuade the House to accept his Shop Hours Regulation Bill, which limited the working hours of youths and maidens under eighteen years of age to seventy-four a week. The Bill survived its second reading, and was then hung up in Committee. Many opposed legislative interference in this matter in the name of liberty, and the Lord Mayor convened a general gathering in London, composed of tradespeople, which, it was supposed, would with practical unanimity condemn Lubbock's or any other similar Bill. Sir John made a point of being present at the demonstration, and asked the meeting to grant him a hearing. He then presented his case, and moved an amendment to the official resolution in favour of his own proposals. With wonderful success he brought home to the assembly the painfully long hours of shop assistants by quoting the old Norfolk epitaph:—

Here lies a poor woman, who always was tired,
For she lived in a world where too much was required.
Weep not for me, friends, she said, for I'm going
Where there'll neither be cooking nor washing nor sewing.
I go where the loud Hallelujahs are ringing,
But I shall not take any part in the singing.
Then weep not for me, friends, if death do us sever,
For I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever.

These lines made such an impression that Lubbock carried his amendment, much to the consternation of his critics. He was now more determined than before to secure the passage of his Bill, and laboured ceaselessly to achieve this object. And in a late note for the year 1887 he was able to write, "In Parliament I did not speak often, but succeeded at length in carrying the Shop Hours Bill, which limits the hours of young persons in shops to seventy-four hours a week."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

The Avenues of Time.

AVENUES have a strange charm. Meditation, the broad browed goddess of the silent, solitary places, seems to make them her home. To rush through an avenue is to be guilty of sacrilege. For the life of me, I could not say why this is so; but the peaceful seclusion, the quietude, the restfulness, seem to demand more consideration. Your steps, naturally, move more and more slowly. Your mind becomes more and more sombre. Everything within and without you quiets

into repose; and a mellow happiness seems to pervade you and your environment. An avenue tempts you leisurely to live. In the kindness of the shadows of the wings of Meditation you unconsciously become reflective; your mind becomes more quietly attuned to truth.

But it is a different kind of avenue of which I am thinking. I like the poetic phrase, the avenues of time. I like to wander down these serene retreats, where the perfumed dust of death is scattered, and the air is fragrant with an incense that belongs to the immortals. All the characteristics that make the real avenues delightful are here intensified. The remoteness from this queer old world is increased. Its absurd folly and insane incongruity are further away than ever. Its hopeless incompetence, its inability, its grotesque inaptitudes are lost in the dimness.

Strange that one should draw nearer to life the farther one departs from it. When time is taken to think, which is seldom in these days of the dominion of dark death, the strangeness becomes appallingly weird; and as you wander down these old, time-shadowed avenues the nearness of the friendly, quiet old trees is a joy in itself; the peacefulness always associated with wisdom enters into the soul of you; and the outside commotion becomes something too full of the obnoxious to be understood.

Hidden away from the turmoil are these avenues where the spirit of life dwells in immortality. The soft, restful voices that flood the air with divine melodies are unheard in the world's uproar. The serene familiar faces that shine in the semi-gloom are untroubled still. The eyes that smile upon us are as fearless and placid as of old. The hands that are stretched forth to bless and comfort us are as tenderly firm as ever; and we know that the hearts from which spring the flowers of deathless thought and counsel, and contain the elixir of truth, are as impregnable as of old, despite the countless specious fallacies men use to garment their solemn folly.

It is quiet down here where the great men of all the ages live, and speak; and, speaking, rebuke the present and the foolish children of to-day. It is quiet down here where wisdom dwells, and the fraternity of genius gathers together to show men their desperate stupidity. Quiet it is down here where the only war that is ever broached is that in which Reason assumes her rightful place—Reason robed in charity, in love, in pity, and in fellowship.

In the quietude of the avenues of time there are no crimes, no barbarities, no blood-red revelries with death, no blaring mockeries of justice, no blasphemous adulteries with truth, no hypocritical sanctimoniousness of honour, God, or other superstitions. All is peaceful and restful. A barrier of distance lies between the voiceful solitudes and the shrieking insanity of a world that has gone mad with a wolf-like blood-lust.

Here the violets might grow, and the larks might sing, and children might be merry, without fear of the cruelties of the brute man. Horror is unknown here, beneath the foliage of love. Passions, revenge, spite, remorselessness, reprisal, every emotion from which the soul flees in despair, are strangers here. Animalism that sinks its teeth ferociously into flesh comes not into the dim shadows of the avenues of time. Degradation of life and thought, slavery of mind and body, starvation of the soul, gluttony of the ignoble survivals of decay, poverty of principle, feasts of diseased faith; these are only to be found ravishing the teachings of wisdom in our world, with its clamour, its depravity, its rank, raw, ugly Materialism.

The master minds whose spirits move gently amongst the foliage and shades of the avenues of time are unanimous in their denunciation of brutality. Their hatred of unreason and its children of vice was no passing spasm of indignation. Their love of peace was no questionable opinion founded upon shoddy principles, easily ruined by the gusts of expediency: it was based upon the knowledge that all quarrelling was unwise and unprofitable. In the restful quietness not one voice, I think, can be heard advocating the resuscitation of the savage nature of humanity in our endeavours to rid the world of evil, even of deliberately defiant and offensive evil. Not yet have I listened to one of these melodious voices attuning itself to discord and dis-peace. Out from their wisdom steal suggestions of Reason, the great arbiter that weighs the differences of men's opinions, and in its conclusions mingles justice with consideration. Through the harmonies that flood the avenues with music runs a golden thread of melody embroidered with Reason's incomparable majesty.

Is it not true that the world has carelessly neglected the wisdom of the master minds? Is it not true that it has contemptuously ignored the teaching of its counsellors? Is it not true that, by its ignorance and its prejudice, it has brought to the doors of its people such a mass of misery, and sorrow, and suffering, that centuries may be needed to purge Humanity of the evil influences of its own crimes?

Throughout the avenues of time a deeper sadness seems to have fallen. A more sombre remoteness from the world seems to exist. Loneliness has become more consciously palpable. Humanity has departed from the saving companionship of the master minds. The shadows are heavier down here; the voices are quieter; the gleam on the faces have diminished somewhat; a gloaming has been wafted from the fields of folly, from the lines and pits of insensate stupidity, and has settled down upon the neglected pearl-strewn, star-studded avenues of time, the dwelling-places of minds that have given their all that Humanity might live lives happy, bright and free; and given that all in vain.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Chorus of Life.

EVER be daring,
Never despairing,
Storm beacons flaring
Still lead you on;
Life's battle sharing
And vict'ries won.

Spite of all badness,
Folly and madness,
Even in sadness,
Patient and brave;
Tasting its gladness,
Breasting the wave.

Up from the valley,
Urging the rally,
Leading the sally,
Onward you go;
Never a dally,
Fearing no foe.

Then when the day is done,
All the long journey won,
Turn like the setting sun
Toward thy West;
Work that is well begun
Earn thee thy rest.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Campbell Morgan complains of the "brutalities of our English translation of the Bible." As a sample he gives the "Damsel, I say unto you, arise," of Jesus, and thinks that a phrase such as "Wee bit lassie," would be nearer to the sense of the original. So it might be, but Dr. Morgan should be careful. If that part of the New Testament is rendered into the homely language of everyday life there is no reason why all should not be so rendered. And if that were done, while it would certainly induce a clearer comprehension of the Bible, the consequences might be very unfortunate for the Rev. Campbell Morgan and his class.

There is no reason save one why each new age should not have the Bible re-translated into the vernacular, as are other classics. But that one reason is very important, and it is vital to the interests of the Christian Churches. It would destroy the pseudo-sanctity and expose the solemn hocus-pocus on which religion lives. Certainly, a "wee bit lassie," or "bonnie girlie," is more homely and more human in its appeal to-day than the austere "damsel" of the New Testament. But the latter does the work it aims at doing, and either of the former expressions would fail. Remember, it is a *dead* girl that Jesus is bringing back to life—an incredible, an absurd thing, on the face of it. And if he were represented as saying, "My poor little girl, get up and run away home to your father and mother," readers would see no more in the story than the action of a good-natured lunatic who expected to bring the dead back to life, or a shrewd observer who knew the girl was shamming and brought her to her senses. In either case the supernatural aura would be destroyed. But try, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise!" and the archaic language removes the whole incident from the impact of critical thought, the unthinking man remains undisturbed, and the supernatural is preserved. Of course, gods and prophets must talk a human language if they are to be understood at all, but make them talk like the people around us talk, and their pretensions to superiority become subject to the same tests as do the claims of ordinary human beings.

That is the reason why in connection with religion there must be a special lingo, a special dress, a special frame of mind, everything so calculated as to lift the individual out of the corrective, and, comparatively, rationalistic environment of to-day, and to place him in the comparatively irrational environment of some centuries ago. The more archaic the language is the more it impresses the unthinking. Mystification is the mother of mysticism, as certainly as understanding is the beginning of wisdom and the end of religion.

The Governor of Greenland, who is over in London on legal business, admitted in Court that he had never heard of the hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." The Eskimos are far from being uncivilized, although they have no army, no navy, no police force, and no taxes to pay. The Governor said that the chief impression the European War makes upon them is the wickedness of such a waste of human life. Happy Eskimos!

"Commissioner Adelaide Cox will represent the Salvation Army on the Cinema Commission," says the *Daily News*. Does this mean that Bible stories are to be filmed?

Advertisements of Sunday services at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, S.E., show that the great American Preacher is assisted by a lady vocalist. When Spurgeon preached on hell-fire and its torments, he did not even have the assistance of a church organ.

"The way in which lamp-posts say 'Good evening' to you at night is very often more forcible than polite" says the

Vicar of Addelstone, Surrey. It looks as if the mothers' meeting had been unusually festive.

We expect there has been a mistake made, but we have received an invitation to attend a meeting to be held in the Church House, Westminster, to listen to some addresses on "The Position of the Lord's Supper in Divine Worship." As we don't care to the value of a politician's word of honour what position the Lord's Supper takes in divine worship, we shall not attend. It is of much greater moment just now to consider the position of an ordinary supper in an ordinary household. That seems to be the pressing question of the hour. But imagine the state of things when such things can be gravely discussed by men and women who will persist in calling themselves civilized?

The Kaiser is not the only intimate of the Deity. Said the Rev. Billy Sunday in a sermon at Boston, U.S.A., "God might have sent angels down here to preach, but he didn't. He said, 'Bill, go to Boston.'" The cultured Bostonians must feel honoured.

An advertisement for a pious publication is headed, "Man doth not live on Plum Pudding only." The allusion is, of course, to the well-known words, "Man doth not live by bread alone," but Christians believe the Bible so often without ever reading it.

A gospel-temperance speaker at Southend-on-Sea hanged himself in a shed near his house. As he was not a Secularist lecturer, there is no moral.

The dear *Daily News* states that pulpit supplies have become a serious problem in the country owing to the large number of the clergy who have gone on "war service." The expression "war service" is good, for the few score clergymen who are with the troops are usually in safe billets at the back of the Front. The great number of the clergy prefer to console the girls that the soldiers have left behind.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have invested £3,500,000 in the new War Loan. In all probability it never dawned upon these pious patriots that a genuine help to the country would be given if the money had been lent free of interest, or if it had been invested in Government stock at a normal rate of interest. Patriotism at 5 per cent. on a gilt-edged security is open to a little suspicion. The transaction reminds us of Harry Lauder's comment on his investment of £50,000. After consideration he decided that it was the soundest investment in the country. Mr. Bonar Law hit the nail right on the head when he said it required little patriotism to invest spare money at 5 per cent., with the security of the British Government behind it. The three P's—Piety, Patriotism, and Profit run well together. In common decency the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the pious Mr. Lauder, should have declined more than 2½ per cent. interest on a loan for such a purpose. In a world of cant none is more detestable than that of patriotic sacrifice at 5 per cent.

Speaking at Boston, U.S.A., the Rev. Billy Sunday described man as a "dirty, stinking, rotten old adulterer." Billy forgot that man was made in the image of God.

A new book bears the title, *Bible Stories for Children*, and the author is a maiden lady. We wonder if she blushed when she transcribed and shortened the purple Old Testament stories.

"Lying in the East is an art more than a vice," says Sir W. B. Richmond. The Bible yarns prove the truth of this remark.

Lord Sandhurst, the Lord Chamberlain, has sanctioned the opening of a London theatre for soldiers and sailors

on Sundays for free entertainments. The dear clergy will be in hysterics.

Another, of what the *Daily Telegraph* calls Germany's "blasphemous outbursts." The President of the Schleswig-Holstein Union of Agriculturists is reported as saying, "God has so ordered the world-harvest that it should be bad in order that England may be unable to feed herself." It would, of course, be inexcusably anti-British for God to do anything of the sort; and yet if there has been a bad harvest someone or something has been responsible for it. And if there is a divine ruler of the universe it is difficult to see what there is blasphemous as crediting him with a bad harvest. Man has done what *he* could to make it a good one, and we have no doubt that prayers have been offered to that end. If anybody puts forward a god for general acceptance, he ought to be shown to be doing something. And if he has nothing to do with such an important matter as the world's harvest, what is it that he does take an interest in? If the *Daily Telegraph* wishes to emphasize the fact that Herr Roescki is talking nonsense, we quite agree with it. Only we observe it is *religious* nonsense; and so surely as a man begins to mix religion with his thinking he is certain to talk nonsense sooner or later.

"The mass of British workers find their thinking in the ordinary halfpenny papers," says Mr. H. G. Wells. In this connection it is amusing to recall Lord Salisbury's description of the "halfpenny press" as "edited by office boys for errand boys."

The *New York Tribune*, a staid and sober newspaper, had some startling headlines recently, which ran: "Chauncey M. Depew, 82, takes issue with David of Bible fame. Life's allotment of Three-Score Years and Ten all wrong," he says. In the following interview, Mr. Depew describes David's remarks on "the days of our years" as "distressingly poor so far as facts were concerned." David's dictum is funny when one remembers that the Bible says that Adam, Methuselah, and Noah each lived nine centuries, and Lamech was cut off at 700.

At Waterbury Conn., U.S.A., the Rev. Michael Mockus, a Unitarian minister, has been prosecuted for blasphemy. His offence is denying the truth of the statements that Adam and the whale eat, respectively, an apple and Jonah. The *New York Sun* pours ridicule on the prosecution, and asks why "musty statutes originating in the days of the witch-baiters" should be revived.

"Peace hath her victories no less than war," says Milton. Last year the boats of the National Lifeboat Institution saved no less than 1,185 lives; and 2,800 persons have been rescued since August, 1914. In affecting these rescues 21 lifeboatmen lost their lives.

That the bitterness engendered by a difference in religious opinion is often more superficial than real, is well illustrated by the latest story about the new Premier. Discussing the subject of religious dogma with a friend one day, Mr. Lloyd George said, "For some time a fierce controversy has raged in the Church to which I belong. It is on the question as to whether Baptism is celebrated 'in the name' or 'through the name.' I feel very strongly on the matter," continued Mr. George, "and I would willingly lay down my life for the side to which I belong, but—I forget which it is!" A fairly accurate summary of much present-day religious "thought."

The publication of the Allies' reply to the note of President Wilson has enabled a lot of Christians, who are at present more than usually filled with Christian love and charity, to denounce the Turk with all their might, Turkey is unprogressive, barbarous, cruel, etc., etc. We have no wish to stand between the Mohammedan and any legitimate condemnation of his rule in Europe or elsewhere, but it is as well to remember that this War, with all its horrors and bru-

talization, was not brought on Europe by a Mohammedan power, but by Christians. It is Christians who commenced it, it is Christians who continue it, and if Christians could make up their minds to peace the War would cease at once. And the Turk has so far proved himself one of the cleanest fighters of the War. All accounts agree upon that.

And when we are told of the unprogressive nature of Turkey, accompanied as it is by Christian digs at Mohammedanism as a rival religion, we beg to observe that the most unprogressive period in the history of Western Europe was experienced under Christian domination. It was Christianity, not Mohammedanism, which gave us the Dark and Middle Ages. And it was Mohammedan countries which kept the torch of learning aflame while Christian Europe was plunged in barbarism, and also provided the starting point for the re-birth of human learning. Civilization has to thank Mohammedanism for more than it has to thank Christianity. And when it comes to massacre and persecution, we venture to say that Christianity can take lessons in these things from no other religion in the world, At the game of persecution Christianity is supreme.

The Rev. Canon Winter, of Elland, Yorkshire, died suddenly whilst preaching at the local parish church. Had he been a Secularist lecturer, it would have been described as a judgment of Providence.

"We have thousands of our heroes wounded beyond repair, sent back to a hard, hard world, fed and fatted up with cigarettes, sentimental novels, and stupid songs. What equipment for real life!" Thus writes "A Sad Chaplain to the Forces" to the *Church Times*. The clergy see to it that they are "fed and fatted up" with something more substantial than "cigarettes, novels, and songs." Thirty-nine bishops share £180,700 annually.

A speaker at a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon exhorted his hearers to remember Emerson's words and "hitch their wagons to a star." The speaker omitted to add that Christianity was a falling star.

"Prayers that cure Pneumonia," is a *Daily Sketch* heading to the report of a Christian Science case in which the victim died from double bronchial pneumonia. We beg to warn our contemporary that this is rank blasphemy. If prayer can cure anything it can cure pneumonia. And we believe the evidence for prayer having cured pneumonia is as good as prayer having cured other complaints, or having effected anything in any direction. It is nonsense to say at a time when prayer is asserted to overcome the power of high explosive shells, that it cannot handle such a little thing as pneumonia. The *Daily Sketch* should cultivate a more robust faith. Then anything would be possible.

The Vicar of St. John's, Stourbridge, writes in the parish magazine that he is quite sure good has resulted from the National Mission, "although the results are not very apparent." A good that is not very apparent is rather an indefinite thing to be thankful for, but if the vicar is content we won't complain.

FREE THE WOMAN.

Can man be free if woman be a slave?

Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air,
To the corruption of a closed grave!

Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear
Scorn heavier far than toil or anguish, dare

To trample their oppressors? In their home

Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear

The shape of woman—hoary crime would come

Behind, and fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

—Shelley, "Revolt of Islam."

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

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

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 11, Walsall; March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.
- FREETHINKER SUSTENTATION FUND.—C. S. Knight (Rhodesia), £2; Louis Levine, 5s. 6d.; J. Higgins, £1 10s. Per N. Courlander (East London, S.A.): A. Phillips, £1 1s.; T. A. Batten, £1 1s.; R. Alexander, £1 1s.; N. Courlander, £1 1s.; total, £4 4s.—The 10s. acknowledged as from F. W. S. (Portsmouth) should have read "F. W. L."
- F. W. L.—Write Miss Vance, N. S. S. Office, who will send you the required information.
- T. O'NEILL.—Thanks for citation from letter, which we shall be pleased to use next week.
- H. IRVING.—Peccavi! We were quoting from memory only, and are glad to find that we did no wrong to the meaning of the message. Please send along the suggested article if it ever materializes.
- W. SKEATS.—We quite willingly grant to the Bishop of London pre-eminence in the direction you indicate.
- E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.
- W. WILMER.—Received, and will appear next week. Thanks.
- J. DAVIES.—Mr. Lloyd has promised to call and see your friend.
- C. S. KNIGHT (Livingstone).—We note your correction of our paragraph on labour in the Transvaal. We published a letter, on the lines of your communication, from Mr. T. W. Key, of Eastern Pondoland. We appreciate your good wishes.
- J. HEWETT.—Pleased to hear from so old a Freethinker as yourself. If you have any difficulty in getting your paper, please let us have a postcard, and we will see that it is sent on from here.
- T. MAY.—If you can see God's place in the War, you have a much keener vision than we possess. His place is certainly not at the Front. Your appeal for "a larger view of deity" strikes us as enlarged nonsense.
- E. N.—Your parson friend deserved all he got. Whether he will appreciate it is quite another question.
- H. LOMAX.—We are obliged for all you are doing to push the *Freethinker* in your locality.
- CLIFFORD WESTON.—We quite appreciate your disgust after listening to the Bishop of Peterborough's sermon. If the War has been sent to bring us back to the Lord, the clergy should be the last ones to blame Germany. They ought, on the contrary, to thank the Kaiser as God's instrument and their best friend. As to the unity of Christendom, we expect to see that when Christians cease from troubling and the pious sink to rest. Ever since the Apostolic Age the Christians have provided the material for a fight, and we do not expect any change in this direction.
- H. G. FARMER.—Pleased to hear from you. We are keeping quite well—perhaps, because we have so much to do we have no time to be otherwise. The pamphlet on Children and Cinemas is effective. Picture shows have, in our opinion, as much to do with an increase in juvenile depravity as have the rings round Saturn. Most people will not want to go further than the War atmosphere, and the absence of parental control due to fathers being in the Army and mothers out at work, for an explanation. But there is no accounting for cranks.
- J. L.—We never set out to "please" readers. All we aimed at doing is to give a good Freethought journal week by week. And we hope that will please all worth bothering about.
- 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.*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.*
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., and not to the Editor.*
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.*

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (January 28) at Swansea. The meeting will be held in the Dockers' Hall, Elysium, High Street, at 6.30. Admission is by collection, but there are some reserved seats. Mr. B. Dupree, Siddall Buildings, 60 Alexandra Road, has the arrangements in hand, and he would be glad to hear from anyone who can lend him assistance in the conduct of the meeting.

Next Sunday (Feb. 4) Mr. Cohen lectures at Abertillery, afternoon and evening. Fuller information will be given next week.

Rev. P. Moss Weston, Naval Chaplain, Swansea Base, writes us from Swansea that he is opening a Reading and Rest Room for naval and military men, and wishes to provide the men with reading from all points of view. To that end he asks if we can supply him with a copy of the *Freethinker* weekly. Certainly we can, and we are pleased to meet with a clergyman who is desirous of placing all points of view before those for whom he is catering. We wish there were more of the same turn of mind.

Prose always tends to travel farther and farther away from poetry; but while it remains a living art, there is always an effort made by sincere and thoughtful writers to bring it nearer to divine poesy again. They are sick of the insipidity, the too easy music and emotion, of sugary verse; just as real orators break away from the commonplaces of politicians and preachers. Mr. Eden Phillpotts, one of the select few of modern writers who commands attention by his work, is a prose writer who has always imparted the virtues of poetic imagery to his writing. It is, indeed, highly interesting to find how, after long mastery over his art, he turns more and more to the higher forms of literary expression, and writes with all the energy and force as if he were a young genius with worlds yet to conquer.

In his latest book, *The Girl and the Faun*, Illustrated by Frank Brangwyn (Palmer & Hayward, 1916, 6s.) Mr. Phillpotts has written an allegory which deserves a wide recognition, not only for the beauty of its language but for the charm of its appearance. Printed on fine paper with broad margins, with handsome designs on each page, and enriched with full-page coloured plates by Mr. Frank Brangwyn, the allegory satisfies completely the æsthetic senses of the reader. The story of the everlasting lover is exquisitely told. It might have been told under the blue Ionian skies in the days of old Romance, except that the author cannot forget all the hopes and fears of humanity. He keeps that sense of keen sympathy, and his intense love for his kind has imparted a lyrical tone to his story, and the reader has every reason to be grateful to him for so doing. There is a faith in humanity embedded in the book, and an implied rebuke to the faithless, though Mr. Phillpotts does not put it into so many words.

The suggestions of scenery, when the seasons sit on their throne regally, slightly touched as they are, have the true vision. They are part of the genius of the great writer, of the many-sided character whose self-revelation gives such extreme value to the book. With them we put the watchful eye for colour, the delight in music, the intense occupation with the play of life, the delicacy of artistry, and, above all, the love of mankind which we are made to feel through the story that is its channel. The volume is full of rich suggestive thought, and will be accepted with grateful admiration. Its publication proves that, even in these dark days literature is a great living possession. It will arouse a living interest, not a dumb and dull assent.

Mr. T. F. Palmer lectures this evening (Jan. 28), on "Man's Place in Nature" at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, Kentish Town Road. The lecture commences at 7.30, and will be followed by a discussion. Many of our readers who only know Mr. Palmer as a contributor to the *Freethinker*, will doubtless be anxious to make his acquaintance as a lecturer. They will find the acquaintance worth cultivating.

The French Revolution.

I.—PRELIMINARY.

If one asked what event, more than any other, marked the division between the old and the modern world, the truest reply, in the opinion of the present writer, would be, "The discovery of America and of the sea route to India." The second place—some would say the first—must undoubtedly be assigned to the French Revolution. The former event transferred the centre of commerce and civilization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic sea-board, and the preponderance of wealth and social importance from the feudal baron to the capitalist adventurer. The latter event marks the emergence of democracy as a living force in society, and the transference of the "rights of man" from the study to the market-place. The main thing to remember about it is that it is an event, not in French history only, but in world history, and that it is not yet finished.

The characteristic doctrine of the French Revolution, that of "liberty and equality," has been endlessly travestied and misrepresented by hostile writers, especially in England. These criticize it as though it meant that all men are equal in character or ability, and as though liberty meant nothing but "doing as you like with your own." The fact is that both terms, "liberty" and "equality," are useful chiefly in a negative way, as canons of criticism rather than as canons of construction. That "liberty" is to be used in this sense appears quite plainly from the opening of chapter I. of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. These words, as relevant to-day as in the eighteenth century, may serve as a suitable prologue to the present study:—

Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Many a one believes himself the master of others, and yet he is a greater slave than they. How has this change come about? I do not know. What can render it legitimate? I believe I can settle this question.

What Rousseau (who, remember, was the intellectual father of the Revolution) here undertakes is nothing less than a criticism of all authority. It is evident (though not so evident to Rousseau, perhaps, as to us to-day) that every kind of subjection of one human being to the will of another is here summoned to the bar of reason, to give an account of itself. Instead of, as previously, the assumption being made that "whatever is, is right," and that the innovator and the rebel are, *prima facie*, wrong, we are told that it is for those in authority, those who claim to impose their will on others, to show reason why. Unless they can show that their exercise of authority creates more liberty than it takes away, their authority stands condemned.

Take, again, the much-abused concept of equality. Everybody understands what is meant when we are told that, in England, we are "all equal before the law." (In point of fact, we are not, but for the present that may be passed over.) This means that, although men may differ in worth and in wit, one man is just as much bound as another to obey the law, and just as much entitled as another to the benefits it secures. What is even more important, however, than that men should be equal before the law is that they should be equal before the legislator. Once an unjust law is on the statute book, the most impartial and even-handed administration of it will, and must, lead to injustice. What Rousseau and the Revolutionists, therefore, meant by "equality" was equality, not only before the law, but before the legislator—the absence of legal privileges in taxation, in the administration of justice, in commerce, in the suffrage, or in religion. Rousseau

thus expresses what he conceives to be the "social contract" implicit in a just society:—

Each of us puts in common his person and his whole possessions under the supreme direction of the general will; and in return we receive every member as an indivisible part of the whole.

That is, as all have to obey the law, all should, as far as possible, have an equal voice in its making.

It is easy to show that, when Rousseau ceases to be critical and becomes constructive, he frequently falls into sophistry and error, and indeed re-admits through the back door a great deal of the tyranny he has expelled through the front. He leaves, apparently, endless loopholes for the tyranny of majorities. This arises from the fundamental mistake he made, which was to use a critical weapon as an instrument of construction. Plainly, to us, man is equally "in chains," under despotic or under democratic government. The "social contract," considered as a fact justifying the powers that be in the exercise of authority, is an obvious illusion. We are not parties to any such contract. None of us chose to be born, or to be born in the particular national unit that claims our allegiance. We are compulsory, not voluntary, members of it. Clearly, the Parliament of the United Kingdom, nay, the Congress of the United States and the Swiss Confederation, must stand at Rousseau's bar to give an account of themselves as much as any autocratic court of the eighteenth century. And the final justification of any government at the bar of humanity must be, not the sophistical "social contract" of Rousseau, but a proof that every one subject to it gains, by its maintenance, more liberty, more happiness, a greater range of opportunity, than he would gain by its subversion. It follows that it is the duty of every government to secure those conditions for its people, and that only so can it have a reasonable claim on their support.

In the eighteenth century this duty was only beginning to be realized. The human mind is so constituted that the most obvious truths are consciously grasped by it only under the pressure of material facts. To force the "rights of man" into the common consciousness, it was necessary that arbitrary government armed with the doctrine of the "divine right of kings," should run riot until it became positively unbearable. That is what happened under the Bourbon monarchy in France, under the Stuart monarchy in England. The kings of these dynasties, supported by the self-interest of ministers and courtiers and the slavish teaching of Catholic and Anglican ecclesiastics, claimed to govern by divine right, to owe no account of their actions to any earthly authority, to tax their subjects without the consent of their representatives, to prescribe to them their religion, and to punish resistance by the block, the gallows, the quartering knife, and the wheel. In England these pretensions led the philosopher, John Locke, to formulate the theory that kings reigned, not by divine right, but by contract, which really meant that the king was the servant of the nation, and could be deposed if he did not give satisfaction. This theory found expression, to some extent, in the Whig Revolution of 1688, when James II. was replaced by William of Orange. It must be remembered, however, that hardly anyone at that date had any notion of democracy, and that the Parliament which deposed James II. represented only the land-owners and the merchant class, who were actuated by their own interests.

Locke's political philosophy was developed by the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, and especially by Rousseau. It found its second, and more pronounced, practical expression in the American Decla-

ration of Independence, when the colonists, in revolt against being taxed by the British Parliament, declare "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" to be the equal and inalienable rights of all men. The American Revolutionists, however, were more democratic in words than in deeds. Negro slaves were not included in the application of these "inalienable rights;" and to this day, despite Abraham Lincoln, the Declaration of Independence is a "scrap of paper" as far as the American negro is concerned.

This is merely one more illustration of the fact that men's consciousness of principles has generally been limited by their material interests. The English Revolutionists appealed to the "original contract between king and people" but took for granted that a Parliament elected by landowners and merchants represented the "people." The American Revolutionists affirmed that men were born "free and equal," and endowed with "inalienable rights" of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," but took care to apply these principles just as far as it suited them, and no further.

The French Revolution, in its inception, was hardly a more democratic movement than these. The members of the States-General, who were convoked by Louis XVI. in 1789 to get him out of his financial difficulties, had no intention (the overwhelming majority of them) of conferring political power upon the French people. As substantial middle-class men, they were annoyed at the exemption from taxation of the nobles and clergy, at their own exclusion from political power, and at the internal restrictions on trade and industry which survived as part of the dying feudal system. All that they wanted was to take over the reins of power into their own hands, make France a limited monarchy like England, and inaugurate the reign of *laissez faire*, according to then prevalent notions of political economy.

Accordingly, the first weeks of the French Revolution read like an ordinary bicker between an obstinate king and an obstinate Parliament. Even the "oath of the tennis court," by which the deputies, locked out of their hall by the king's orders, swore not to separate till they had given France a constitution; even Mirabeau's defiant challenge to the king to turn them out at the point of the bayonet, read more like a revised version of the dispute between Charles I. and the Long Parliament than like the birth of modern democracy. We feel that we are in the presence of a further stage in the old process, not the first stage in the new one. Had the Revolution taken place a century earlier, as the English Revolution did, there might have been little more in it than this.

But during the intervening century, the economic conditions of Western Europe had ripened. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing in England, and its results were beginning to be felt in France. In Paris, Lyons, and a few large towns, the old system of handicraft was giving place to wage-labour; to the old antagonism between the aristocracy and the middle class was added the new antagonism, as yet only fully felt, between employer and workman; and a large paper manufacturer, who had made some cynical remarks about the starvation of the poor, had his works sacked by the crowd. The working-class looked to the newly convoked assembly to do something for *them*. And when the king and court summoned troops to the neighbourhood of Versailles to coerce the Assembly, and dismissed the popular minister, Necker, from office, the populace of Paris came to the rescue, ransacked the shops and the military depot of the Invalides for weapons, and, joined by some of the soldiers in the city, stormed the fortress of the Bastille (July 14, 1789). The king at once capitulated. From

this moment absolutism was a lost cause; and many courtiers and nobles betook themselves in haste across the frontiers, to await the time when, as they hoped, the king should join them, and they should march on Paris at the head of an army to put down the Assembly and restore the old regime.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be continued.)

Paulatim Retrorsum.

A Rejoinder.

WE have not had the fortune to meet with any formal reply to the indictment of the Council of University College School formulated in the *Freethinker* of Sept. 10 last; but in the Christmas issue of the *Gower*—the school magazine—there occurs, incidentally, in an article on the late Head-Master, a veiled pro-reply of a very feeble character. There is no reference to the *Freethinker*, and no pretence of any attempt to meet the counts in the indictment seriatim; but, since the article concludes with the words—"Is it to be *Paulatim Retrorsum*? Never! *Paulatim* onward and forward, ever in the vanguard of the advance? Aye"—there can be no doubt whatever as to what is intended. The writer of this article says that—

realizing that true religion, *and that alone*, can supply the boy with a motive for being and doing right continuously, for working and living as a good citizen, they have adapted a tradition of U. C. S. to meet the *changed conditions* of time whilst maintaining our great principles. The peril here and now would appear to be not religious intolerance but irreligious apathy; not fanatical conviction but laxity of conviction. Hence the classes held on Saturday mornings; hence the prayers before morning-school.¹

Now, of course, the writer is entitled to hold, as a personal opinion, that true religion alone can supply motives for doing right and acting as a good citizen. Certainly, facts may be hopelessly against him. The English leaders of Freethought have been men of singularly noble lives, shaming hundreds and thousands of their Christian fellows: nearly all the crimes committed during fifteen ghastly centuries of blood and cruelty and oppression of every kind have admittedly been committed by Christians—and by very sincere and earnest Christians, too, in countless cases: and Germany, which has brought the present catastrophe on civilization, is a country wherein so much stress is laid upon religion that moral instruction, divorced from religion, may not be given in its State-schools. Still, our quarrel with the writer is not that he, in common with the vulgar herd, holds a doctrine to which history on every page, and every man's daily experience, gives the lie—*our* rule of Freethought concedes him the fullest liberty to hold and promulgate any views, however erroneous we may deem them—but that he defends the imposition of this sectarian doctrine upon the one public school in which there was formerly perfect fair play and impartiality between the sons of men of all creeds and of none. Perhaps it is because he feels the hopeless weakness of his case that he makes no attempt to rebut our charges. He does not deny the departure from the glorious old tradition of University College School; he uses the euphemism of "adapting" the tradition, when he should have spoken of subverting it; and he appears to consider that utter surrender is synonymous with "maintenance" of "our great principles." Our charges and objections were set forth very clearly and very distinctly; but, instead of attempting to convict us of any error or

¹ Italics ours.

misstatement, or any flaw in reasoning, he says, in effect, that, since boys cannot be good unless religious, the essential principles of a school, founded expressly to put Freethinkers and heretics and orthodox on a level, have been "maintained" by surrendering the chief distinctive trait of the school—which craven surrender he describes as an "adaptation" to "changed conditions." If a nunnery were turned into a brothel, or a temperance hotel into a gin-palace, the culprits responsible might assert with just equal accuracy and credit that they had "maintained the great principles" of their trust whilst "adapting its tradition" to "changed conditions." Moreover, in an avowed editorial on the first page of this *Gower*, smug satisfaction is expressed at the fact that the Bishop of Oxford visited the O.T.C. summer-camp to conduct a service; from which (and other indications) we must understand that, under the "changed conditions" and "adapted traditions," not only does true morality connote religion, but religion connotes the Established Church. Nonconformity and Unitarianism and Jewry contribute, we believe, a very large proportion of its alumni to University College School. We wish all these boys a series of very happy new years; and we congratulate their parents on the immense moral improvement that will doubtless be effected in their sons' characters and conduct as they are more and more put under the thumb of lord bishops, and more and more degraded to the position of boys in the old-fashioned unregenerate public schools.

To use the old figure of speech—it is all enough to make the great founders of University College School turn in their graves; but we fancy that they would writhe less uneasily if their treacherous successors had said boldly and honestly—"We have thrown the ancient principles and traditions overboard; and, having migrated from neutral and central Gower Street to a fashionable suburb, intend to propitiate Mammon by toadying to the Churches, and primarily to the most fashionable of them"—instead of proclaiming that, in permitting all this apostasy, they are "maintaining the principles" and "adapting the traditions"!

However, we attacked the Council of Governors, and the Council alone, for this great betrayal. The Council has, we believe, nothing to do with the *Gower*, which is managed by the boys, with some assistance from one or two masters; and our real quarrel is with the Council. Is there not in that Council even one man with enough courage to come out into the open, to answer our arguments and objections—if they can be answered—and to enter a really official apology and defence for perverting *Paulatim* into *Paulatim Retrorsum*? We feel sure that the *Freethinker* would hospitably open its columns to him, so that, where the Council was attacked, there too it might be defended. If such champion take his courage in both hands, and essay to defend himself and his colleagues, will he also explain why the *Gower*, in describing the Speech-day of last July, imitated the local paper quoted in our former article by omitting to record the striking fact that the proceedings ended with a hymn to "God, the strength of those that war"? The absolute silence maintained in print about this striking feature in the "adaptation of the tradition" to "changed conditions" seems too significant to be accidental. Frankly, we believe that a carefully engineered scheme for betraying and subverting the principles and traditions of University College School was worked out by someone years ago that it is being put into practice little by little; but that the conspirators are in wholesome dread of going too quickly and of angering part of the clientele of the school by too great a retrogression at one time; and we suspect that, having once got a hymn sung, and so set up a precedent, they wish nothing more to be said about

it until the next Speech-day. We fear, however, that the backsliding has by no means carried the school to the destined bottom of the *descensus Averni*; and we have a shrewd suspicion that, within a very few years, a Lord Bishop may be trotted out to give away the prizes and to bestow an episcopal benediction upon whatever may then remain of the mixed throng of sons of Catholics, Anglicans, Nonconformists, Unitarians, Jews, and Freethinkers, whom it has hitherto been the peculiar glory of University College School to gather together on neutral ground under its all-comprehensive roof. We have the assurance beforehand, however, that then we shall see the triumph, not of *Paulatim Retrorsum*, but of "*Paulatim* onward and forward, ever in the vanguard of the advance." *Veris dis aliter visum!* MATHEMATICUS.

Christian Susceptibilities.

IF every heterodox writer and speaker were to accede to the demands of Christian believers, the final result would be that neither would again wield his pen nor open his mouth. The Christian critic cannot afford to ignore the works of such eminent figures in the literary world as Thomas Hardy and George Moore. But with a fanatical gracelessness, so to speak, he in the end finds the former to be merely a "sort of village Atheist brooding over the village idiot"; and the latter, in his most recent book, *The Brook Kerith*, has, according to a Christian reviewer, put upon the believer in Christianity "an affront past excuse and forgiveness." Mr. Moore's "peculiar vandalism" is "bitterly resented." The forgiving spirit of the "Liberal" modern Christian does not attain to the standard set up in the teaching of Jesus. This by the way.

What would be the logical result of considering every Christian's susceptibilities before any secular reform was embarked upon? We have only to look at history to find the answer. The reform would never be started at all. "Mimnermus" recently gave us an instructive indictment of the English Bishops, containing a list of reforms which the majority of them opposed. Let us particularize a little. If we gave way to the demands of one large section of Christians, we should totally suppress public-houses. If we gave way to the demands of another, we should repeal the Married Women's Property Acts, re-establish marriage wholly as a sacrament of the Established Church, and deprive it wholly of the character of a social or civil contract. If we obeyed the dictates of another section of believers, we should reimpose the taxes upon knowledge and close the doors of the seats of learning against all who could not comply with religious tests. Pandering to the susceptibilities of Christians means retrogression, not progress. It is the clear teaching of history that the vast majority of social reformers and social regenerators in all ages have been infidels.

The claim of the Christian believer to be protected against "affronts" is based upon the narrowest and most insolent form of bigotry. The Freethinker definitely declines to limit the operations of his mental faculties. He is not to be turned back by the warning-post inscribed, "Thus far, and no farther." He denies no man the right to believe what he likes, and to propagate his belief, whatever susceptibilities may be offended; but he demands, and insists on having, no less right for himself. Where the Christian believer profoundly errs is in associating Truth with Custom, Tradition, Authority, and Dogma. The Freethinker's position is that Truth's only suitable concomitant and best ally is Freedom of Thought and Speech, and of action which is not anti-social in character. "The Truth shall make

you free!" And Truth to him is far greater and more precious than any creed. The search for and the pursuit after Truth demands all the diligence of man; but it also demands that, in that search and pursuit, man shall not be trammelled or shackled by any preconceptions, however sanctified, however antiquated, however revered by majorities. Majorities may not always bewrong; they are not always right.

But, again, the Christian believer is not obliged to read the naughty pages of the books written by unbelieving authors. Why should he risk disturbing the placid equanimity of his faith or arousing his temper? Publicans do not compel men by physical force to enter their premises, and consume ardent liquors. But the Christian seems to long for a chance to throw mud at big Atheists whom he cannot boycott. He looks for "trouble," and is a "bhoy" for cutting up rough when he finds it. He "asks for it," and when he gets the worst of it, like a petted, spoiled child, he passionately kicks out at the unbeliever. Does Mr. Moore realize what pain he has caused by his wicked "affront" and by his "peculiar vandalism"?

Christian believers conveniently ignore the sufferings, physical and mental, inflicted by outstanding figures in the Church upon heretics in all ages, far outweighing in cruelty the effect of criticisms upon the piling, whining, childish type of mind evolved by Christian teaching. The Christian believer can as easily stay the present revolution of *thought* which is in progress as Mrs. Par-
 ington could keep back the Atlantic with her mop.

IGNOTUS.

The Right to Affirm.

By the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 affirmation may take the place of an oath in courts of law and in all other places where the taking of an oath is necessary.

Affirmation may be claimed on one of two grounds. (1) On the ground of having no religious belief, (2) on the ground of an oath being contrary to one's religious belief.

A judge or other official may ask on what ground affirmation is claimed, but no further question is warranted, and all such additional questions should be respectfully and firmly declined.

In all cases where any trouble or difficulty occurs it would be well to inform us of the circumstances at once.

Correspondence.

THE COMPETITION OF THE FUTURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your interesting reference to the book *Eclipse or Empire*, in the *Freethinker* for December 17, you suggest that its authors do not realize that an empire may flourish economically as against other empires, and yet have a large population living in anything but prosperous conditions; and, secondly, that the attempt to develop our industries to the fullest extent must eventually lead to war with rival nations.

The first of these propositions is, I think, a misunderstanding of our meaning; the second, I hope and believe, is altogether ill-founded.

It is, of course, true that empires have existed in the past which have combined great commercial and industrial prosperity with slavery, with serfdom, with all the miseries of the cheap labour system. Personally, I doubt whether this form of State can survive in the future. But, in any case, it is not the ideal suggested in *Eclipse or Empire*,

We have urged our countrymen to brace themselves to recover their position as the first industrial nation of the world by the adoption of high production. The benefits

claimed for the high production system, to summarize them very shortly, are (1) for the employer, high profits; (2) for the employee, high wages and shorter hours; (3) for the community generally, the incalculable advantages of efficient industries. This system has been tried in America, and the results are on record. "The American working man," says Mr. E. W. Scripps, an American business man who knows this country well, "is not only far better nurtured and nourished, but he is better housed and clothed, and his children are far more generally, and perhaps far better, educated than those of the English working class." But it is not necessary to go so far afield. High production is on trial in England at this moment. Germany is forcing us to move industrially along the path urged in *Eclipse or Empire*. With every allowance for the exceptional factors in the situation, can it be said honestly that the effort to increase our production has increased our poor? Is not the reverse, or the contrary, obviously and even startlingly true?

But, you say, our too great prosperity will excite the jealousy and hatred of foreign nations. Why should it do this? Why should it do anything but stimulate to a generous and wholly beneficial emulation? We are not asking our people to steal their neighbours' trade; we are asking them merely to develop their own resources, convinced, as you justly say, that "in our Empire there are almost unlimited sources of materials for development." Of course, so long as there are States like Germany, clinging to the old militarist ideas of the past, the sight of commercial prosperity will no doubt continue to excite their cupidity.

But is it certain that these States and these ideas will continue? Is it not fairly certain, on the other hand, that this War marks the beginning of the end of them, and that the competition of the future will be commercial, and not military? Competition, of course, there must be. It is an absolute condition of evolutionary life as we know it; but I think myself that the mass of evidence, broadly regarded, points to the gradual elimination of the more brutal and savage features of the struggle. There may be occasional "throw-backs," but they do not defeat the ultimate tendency. Not to believe this is, it seems to me, to despair of humanity; and it is because I do believe it, and because I think that high production, intelligently directed, will be a very important factor in the process, that I am concerned for its recognition and adoption in this country.

S. TURNER, Jun.

WAS NAPOLEON A FREETHINKER?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hope you will not think I flatter you if I say that there is not one of your writers whom I read with more profit and pleasure than "Mimnermus." In my pious, or semi-pious, girlhood I used to admire, from afar off, the literary splendour of "Claudius Clear." Now, although I disagree with that writer in religious matters, I am still inclined to agree with one of his admirers, who tells us that in literary criticism "Claudius" is the compeer of Hazlitt and Lamb. It is therefore a compliment to "Mimnermus" when I say that he reminds me of "Claudius Clear." They have both the same gifts of splendid rhetoric and emotional unction; their tastes in literature are much the same, "Mimnermus" admiring, let me say, the unsophisticated and tuneful muse of George Bedborough, and "Claudius" the divine lyrics of the American laureate Ella Whilcox. If I had the space I could work out this parallel more closely.

My point, however, in writing you is not to indicate the good qualities of "Mimnermus," which are obvious enough, but to put my finger on the weak spot. The foible of my Christian master in letters was an amusing one of claiming an intimate acquaintance with great men. He is probably the Scots journalist of whom an eminent literary man wrote: "I did not know him half so well as he knew me." The foible of my Freethought master is a more violent one; he acts on the Christian injunction, "Compel them to come in." Every man of eminence is pitched neck and crop into the fold of Freethought. In his pleasant article on Mr. J. M. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers* he tells us that Napoleon ("The Little Corsican," of course) has his place in Mr.

Wheeler's book. If he has—and I don't doubt for a moment that "Minnermus" is right—he must be in the wrong place, for I cannot find his name where it ought to be.

Now, if Mr. Wheeler has left him to the Christians, he probably did it for a good reason. Napoleon was always pious—conventionally pious, I mean. We are told that he despised Atheists and women who did not pray. M. Anatole France says somewhere that when Napoleon talks of God and the soul, he seems like a good little schoolboy of fourteen. He tells us that Napoleon never grew; that he had no inner life; that concerning life in society he held about the same opinions as one of his Grenadiers; that in his writings and speeches there is not a single trace of any speculative genius. In fine, that it was not a Freethinker who kicked Volney in the stomach.

MINNIE SPENCER.

IN CASE OF NEED.

The man who had his coffin painted a fiery red, and kept it for two whole years at his front door, had evidently a very clear idea of where he was going when he had departed from this world. He is not the only man, however, who kept Hades in view so continually. It is related of the late Marquess of Anglesey that when he married and settled down in life, the many sins of his past youth troubled him not a little. There was a slight fire at the castle one night, and orders were afterwards given that hand grenades should be placed in every room, which were faithfully carried out. Some dozens of these fire-extinguishers were left over, however, there being no place for them, and the butler approached his master as to their destination. "You'd better put them in my coffin," replied his lordship gravely.

THE CLERGY AND LITERATURE.

Shortly before the final dissolution of the Roman Empire, the literature of Europe fell into the hands of the clergy, who, taken as a body, have always looked on it as their duty to enforce belief, rather than encourage inquiry.—*Buckle*, "History of Civilization in England."

RELIGION AND ART.

For eighteen hundred years religion, when it has been strong enough, has persecuted or starved the arts. At times, when it has grown shallow, it has allowed a thin, subservient art to flourish beneath it; an art that, ostensibly educating men to be in some way useful for this life or the next, couldn't help treating them, for a stolen moment, as ends.....But, in general, the arts have been kept pretty well under, especially the arts of the theatre creeping slowly out when religion has slept, as in the eighteenth century, or sometimes liberated by such splendid bursts of irreligion as produced the Elizabethan drama in England.—*Rupert Brooke*, "John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama."

ITALY AND THE PAPACY,

It was not the Papacy which made Italy great; the Papacy has always stood for division; it has consistently been Italy's internal foe. Those who caused Italy to flourish, to be respected, admired, loved; who enabled Italian civilization to exercise its genial influence in all parts of the world were her artists, who also were thinkers, and may well rank as heroes—heroes who embodied her true ideals; artists, thinkers, heroes, all of whom had this in common, that they elected to gather the forbidden fruit of knowledge. These it is who made Italy great.—*Jacob Molescott*.

THE POWER OF THOUGHT.

Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority..... Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. It sees man, a feeble speck, surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence; yet it bears itself proudly, as unmoved as if it were lord of the universe. Thought is great, and swift, and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man.—*Bertrand Russell*, "Principles of Social Reconstruction."

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, "Man's Place in Nature." Introduced by T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, F. A. Davies, "The Religion of Shakespeare."

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 65 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Feb. 1, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Kells; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Beale, "Omnipresence"; 6.30, Messrs. Saphin and Dales.

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INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Concert.

SWANSEA (Dockers' Hall, "Elysium," High Street): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Can We Have Morality Without Religion?"

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