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## Views and Opinions.

### The Massacre of the Innocents.

On June 20 eighteen little children, their ages ranging from four to eleven years, were buried in a cemetery in the East of London. They were the victims, from one school, of the recent air-raid, killed—murdered is, perhaps, the better term—in the course of a War in which the name of God has been freely used by the chief nations engaged therein. It was certainly one of the saddest, if not one of the most impressive incidents of the War. They had done nothing, they could do nothing to gain the ill-will of anyone. It was not even true, as was said by the Mayor of Poplar, that “they died for England.” That was pure cant. How could they be said to die for anyone or anything? They were the innocent unresisting victims of man’s lust for slaughter, of a militarism which so many, to their shame, have done so much by pen and voice to cover with a fictitious greatness and glory, and so hide its inherent and inescapable brutality from the gaze of men. Of all the cowardly—we use the word advisedly—games in which man engages, war, modern war, is the worst. The deaths of these eighteen little children prove it as such.

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### Real Blasphemy.

Naturally a religious service was held over the dead children. That, in itself, would not call for notice. The parents, doubtless, desired it, and no Freethinker would deny it them much as he might disapprove. But common sense, even common decency, certainly ordinary intelligence, might have selected a little different service to the one arranged. I do not know how many hymns were sung, but the *Times* report mentions some that are startling in their allusiveness. Here are three of them:—

- “There’s a Friend for Little Children.”
- “Loving Shepherd of thy Sheep.”
- “O God, Our Help in Ages Past.”

Is it possible to conceive titles better calculated to make the scornful smile, the flippant jeer, or to even make

stricken parents curse at the mockery of a child’s friend, or a loving shepherd, who could stand idly by while this massacre of the innocents was proceeding? If there is such an offence as blasphemy then this is a genuine case. If the feelings of believers are not outraged at the terrible irony of hymns such as those sung over the graves of those dead children, they ought for ever to give up the pretence that they are hurt by anything that could be said by a Freethinker.

\* \* \*

### Sheep or Jackass?

The two first-named hymns are, we are told, favourites with children. I do not know whether this is the case or not, but if it is so, it does not lessen the irony of the situation. Think of hundreds of children singing of their “Friend” above, of the “Loving Shepherd” who guards them, and in a moment a number of them lying mangled corpses because of the ineffectiveness or carelessness of their friend and shepherd! A friend who cannot befriend, a shepherd who cannot guard his sheep, a God who does nothing, or who can do nothing, a Deity as ineffective as the paint-besmeared wooden idol of a South Sea savage, and his worshippers without the justification of the savage for believing in him. No wonder the clergy struggle to keep religion in the schools; no wonder they realize that if religion is not forced upon the mind in its immaturity it is hopeless to make the attempt later. One marvels at the insensitiveness of the clergy in selecting these hymns for such an occasion. One wonders at the type of mind that could listen to them without open resentment. Only one expression is at all appropriate to the situation. The believers in the heavenly friend are likened to sheep. That is apt, although even here an animal with longer ears and a louder voice spontaneously offers itself to the mind.

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### An Idle God.

Directly after the air-raid, thousands of people were asking, “What were the authorities doing not to have prevented such a disaster?” If that question is pertinent, asked of men who suffer under all the limitations of human nature, is it not infinitely more pertinent to ask, “What was God doing that *he* did not prevent it?” There are few men or women who would not cheerfully have given their lives to have saved those children. And the man who could have saved them and did not would certainly have been lynched. What, then, was God doing? We have had many stories of God’s activities since the War commenced. He has “miraculously” preserved wooden wayside crosses in France and Belgium. He has “providentially” protected certain churches in England from air-raids. He has been asked publicly to promote the growth of potatoes on allotments. Why did he not exert the same protective influence over schools? It would have been so easy to Omnipotence, so congenial to genuine fatherly love for children. Perhaps the explanation lies in the third hymn—“O God, Our Help in Ages Past.” His help was in the past; it is idle to expect it in the present. He helped in the past; and the God who could work miracles for half-mad prophets



and unwashed saints can do nothing to protect the lives of little children to-day. Very well, then; God's activity belongs to the past; he is a relic of the past, and it is often the wisest policy to bury the past and have done with it. It is certainly so in this case.

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#### An Impeachment of Deity.

Those eighteen dead bodies form an unanswerable indictment of German ruthlessness. But they are equally an indictment of the indifference, or the callousness, or the impotence of Deity. And why should anyone be surprised at that? Is it not of a piece with what we see elsewhere? In this country, with its churches and chapels, and thousands of parsons and millions of Bibles, there are many thousands of cases of ill-treatment of children every year. God does nothing to stop that. It is a human organization which does all the work. And if man be blamed for these cases, well, there are hundreds of thousands of children born into the world cursed with the legacy of physical and mental disease, and God does nothing to remedy that. The "Friend for Little Children" is as impotent here as elsewhere. The "Loving Shepherd" does as little for his sheep here as elsewhere. The disaster at that East End school does not, after all, stand apart from the rest of life; it is in harmony with it. God does nothing. That is the lesson of the disaster. God is as invisible to sense as he is to sight. These eighteen dead bodies are a proof. These are the irrefutable evidence of the almost criminal stupidity of a religion which can set children singing of the loving care and protection of a Heavenly Father, and in the presence of their dead bodies has the supreme audacity to sing hymns which are an outrage on human decency and intelligence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Reformation in England.

It is universally admitted that "under the name of Christianity and the Christian Church, human weakness and perversity have created repulsive systems of self-torture, of tyranny, and injurious repression," and that "every kind of insanity and imposture, the most sordid ambition and the vilest cruelty and lust, have made use of this as of many other religions." Some apologists, however, are convinced that "it is a mistake to regard the offences of those who have thus abused the power of a religious organization as an index to the character of the essential teaching upon which the organization was founded." That is an eminently specious argument, and many are misled by it; but it is vitiated by an underlying fallacy. Christianity, as many divines declare, is neither cultus, creed, nor conduct, but fellowship with God in Christ; not a system of morality, but a scheme for establishing and maintaining right relations with the Unseen. In other words, Christianity is Christ, and Christ is the Saviour of the world. To become a Christian is to accept Christ as Redeemer and Lord, or to allow one's self to be delivered from the bondage and power of sin by an act of complete self-surrender resulting in a God-given and God-directed life. Paul calls the Gospel the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe it; and after he became a Christian the great Apostle was able to testify thus: "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." A Christian is a person who has been born again from above, and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells as infallible guide even unto death, concerning whom all the redeemed joyfully sing—

And every virtue we possess,  
And every conquest won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are his alone.

Christians, then, are not merely people who hold a certain creed and observe certain rites, but rather people who, being in Christ, are led by his Spirit in all they think and do.

In theory, that is what Christ does for all who accept him by faith. They are new creatures in him and walk in newness of life. Renewed in the spirit of their mind they have "put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." In practice, however, the new birth, the indwelling Spirit, the gracious, willing Guest, checking each fault, calming each fear, and speaking of heaven, and the all-conquering Christ, do not count at all, professing Christians being not one whit better than their neighbours, and in many instances a great deal worse. This has been true of them in all ages and countries. Proudly claiming to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, they have, on the average, always opposed intellectual progress and social reform, and indulged in gloomy, pessimistic views of life on earth. There have been good and noble characters among them, of course; but everybody knows that goodness and nobility have nothing distinctively Christian about them. Paul told the Corinthian converts that they would judge the world and the angels; but he also charged them with drunkenness, licentiousness, litigiousness, and other faults. He assured the Philippians that, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, they were "seen as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life"; but there is nothing in his Epistle to them to indicate that they were morally superior to the Pagans around them. Indeed, what they seem to have excelled in most was generous remembrance of the Apostle's want. But even in the New Testament, as well as in the history of the Church, we find that Christianity's first, if not chief, tendency is to divide its professors into hostile parties. In the little Corinthian Church there were four irreconcilable factions, which spent most of their time in noisy quarrels and bitter wrangles on subjects about which they had no knowledge. It may be exceedingly pleasant for emotional Bethelites to sing—

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above;

but it is common knowledge that our religious conventicles are practically innumerable, and that they usually hate and denounce one another in great bitterness of heart and extravagance of language.

Let us take the so-called Reformation in England in the sixteenth century as a notable illustration of the truth of that statement. Leo X. conferred on Henry VIII. the title of Defender of the Faith; and it is undeniable that the king was a profoundly pious man. That the English Church stood sadly in need of a radical reformation is utterly beyond dispute. In the year 1512 Dean Colet preached a remarkable sermon before Convocation in which he called special attention to its corruptions, saying:—

We are troubled in these days by heretics—men mad with strange folly, but no heresy of theirs is so fatal to us and to the people at large as the vicious and depraved lives of the clergy. That is the worst heresy of all..... Would that for once you would remember your name and profession and take thought for the reformation of the Church. Never was it more necessary, and never did the state of the Church need more vigorous endeavours (Green's *Short History of the English People*, p. 310).



Sir Thomas More was more violent still in his vituperation of the men of God of his day. He ridiculed the bishops as a class; and his famous Latin Epigrams in denunciation of priestly vices and ascetic observances are distinguished for their "foul-mouthed polemics." Then came Henry VIII. to sweep away all corruptions with the besom of his piety. Wolsey, his Chancellor, loved England dearly, but he loved Rome better, as Froude puts it; and Henry ordered him to be charged with treason. We must bear in mind that the king was of a deeply religious nature. He loved God with all his mind, and the Church occupied a warm place in his heart. His one fear was to do anything in opposition to the will of God. On ascending the throne in 1509, he married his brother Arthur's widow, Catherine of Arragon, with whom he lived in tolerable happiness for nearly twenty years. But her children did not live, and he lacked an heir to his throne. Then he began to wonder whether a marriage with a brother's widow was in harmony with the will of God. The Pope refused to pronounce it a sin. Wolsey did his utmost to procure a divorce between him and Catherine, but all his endeavours were without avail. In dismissing and degrading him, Henry ignored this fact altogether. He appealed to the Universities of Europe, and to insure a favourable response the learned professors were either bribed or bullied, which proves that the appeal was a sham. The Pope delayed his final decision until Henry's patience had been exhausted. He now resolved to break with Rome, unless it fell in with his wishes, and constitute himself the head of the English Church. He demanded that the title of the Supreme Headship be conceded by the clergy, which was done in 1531. Even after the submission of the clergy he still hoped Clement VII. would grant the divorce, and in order to induce his holiness to come to his side, he obtained from Parliament the first Act of Annates, according to which the first year's income of bishops and their clergy should in future be paid to him and not to the Vatican. In the hope that his holiness would yield rather than sacrifice so large a portion of his revenue, he refused to ratify the Act for some time. Realizing that there was absolutely no chance of winning Clement's favour, he and Anne Boleyn were secretly married in January, 1533. In his *Student's History of England* Gardiner says:—

Now that he had reluctantly given up hope of obtaining a favourable decision from the Pope, he resolved to put an end to the Papal jurisdiction in England. Otherwise if he obtained a sentence in an English ecclesiastical court declaring his marriage with Catherine to be null from the beginning, his injured wife might appeal to the superior court of the Pope. He accordingly obtained from Parliament the Act of Appeals, declaring that the king held the supreme authority in England, and that as under him all temporal matters were to be decided by temporal judges, and all spiritual matters by spiritual judges, no appeals should hereafter be suffered to any authority outside the realm. Henry was capable of any meanness to serve his ends, but he also knew how to gain more than his immediate ends by connecting them with a large national policy. He almost made men forget the low design which prompted the Act of Appeals by fixing their eyes on the great object of national independence (p. 389).

It was thus that the English Church ceased to belong to Rome and became Protestant; or, in other words, such was the Protestant Reformation in England. In belief Henry remained a Catholic as long as he lived, the only difference being that now he assumed the office and functions of Pope for England. How did he manage to do it? By the exercise of sheer tyranny in the guise of piety. He was a shrewd, clever, far seeing, strong man, whose will was law to all alike. Those who opposed

him were burned alive, hanged, or beheaded without a moment's hesitation. Even gentle and tender-spirited More was thrown into the Tower and executed. Any disagreement, however slight, with the king deserved capital punishment, and there was positively no escape. "The cause of his Majesty," the Lords were made to say, "is the cause of each of ourselves." Former monarchs had called Parliament together as seldom as possible, but Henry caused it to meet as frequently as he could, because, under him, "Parliament assembled only to sanction acts of unscrupulous tyranny, or to build up by its own statutes the great fabric of absolute rule. All the constitutional safeguards of English freedom were swept away. Arbitrary taxation, arbitrary legislation, arbitrary imprisonment were powers claimed without dispute and unsparingly exercised by the Crown" (Green's *Short History*, p. 332).

Yet, Henry VIII., according to the testimony of the Venetian ambassador, Giustiniani, "is very religious, hears three masses daily when he hunts, and sometimes five on other days." When his death drew near, he talked incessantly of the love of God and of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Christian duty of loving all men everywhere for Christ's sake. The English people were also extremely religious; and yet they had no convictions to which to adhere at any cost, but were all, clergy and laity alike, sufficiently craven-hearted to submit without an audible murmur to the orders of the Crown, no matter how unjust, tyrannical, and wicked they were. Is the conclusion not absolutely inevitable, therefore, that Christianity was a colossal failure in England? The God in whom the nation believed and the Saviour whom it professed to love and obey, were but empty names, productive of no good effect whatever upon the national character.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Cockney Christianity.

Of all the dull, stagnant, unedifying *entourages*, that of middle-class Dissent seems to me the stupidest.

—Matthew Arnold.

The only true conquests—those which awaken no regret—are those obtained over ignorance. The most honourable, as the most useful pursuit of nations, is that which contributes to the extension of intellect.

—Napoleon.

To the superficial observer, not skilled to penetrate beneath the surface of things, there is probably but one thing in the world more solemn than a funeral; and that is the Christian religion. Short of death itself, nothing seems more awful than the Christian scheme of salvation. Only think of it! To Mr. John Smith, Nonconformist and tradesman, simply the most stupendous thought that can engage the attention of the watery custard which he is pleased to consider as representing the human mind. For it is not alone the weal or woe of all living human beings, including Mrs. Smith and the children, but also of generations of Smiths unborn, that will be involved in the awful and tremendous issue.

The very perpetuity of the scheme, in a vanishing world, where all things are passing away even as a dream, seems to impart a quality of awe to the dwarfed perception of the average believer. To a mere outsider all this must seem most solemn and impressive. But appearances are deceptive, and it is foolish to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of birds. The unfeathered biped, man, should know better. A more philosophic view of the matter would lead to another conclusion. So far from religion being a serious affair, it is simply a human comedy. An expensive and elaborate jest it may be, but none the less



a joke. You cannot tell what the religious circus is like by looking at the highly coloured posters on the walls. For in all nations it has been customary from time immemorial to invest religion with an air of gloom. So it was in the twilight of history, is now, and must be, even in the byways and burrows of the great metropolis.

The mere circumstance of that respectable ratepayer and tradesman, Mr. John Smith, "finding Jesus" in his fiftieth year is enough to set his numerous friends and acquaintances on the alert. They know that when his conversion becomes a certainty his countenance will exhibit the expression of a tired funeral horse, and that his every word, look, and action will eclipse the gaiety of the spectators.

Mr. John Smith, junior, is compelled to check the tide of his youthful laughter with a sigh. Miss Henrietta Smith, his sister, finds her father's condition clouds the delight of sweethearting, and overshadows the glories of her summer dress. Like Banquo's ghost at the feast, the pious picture of melancholy inebecility overawes the flow of domestic happiness. But if "finding Jesus" is a serious matter, how dire are the after effects of the conversion. Resplendant in his best suit of funereal black, Mr. Smith conveys his family to the nearest jerry-built chapel or tin tabernacle. If he has the disease badly this will become the rule every Sunday. He is under the spell of religiosity, and as proud of it as a corpse with two tombstones. Master Johnny can hardly contain himself for speechless transport as he finds that his Sunday fishing excursions are no longer to be tolerated. He turns green with envy as he passes the splendid pageant of the greengrocer's boy and the postman's son with rods and bait-cans on their way to the still waters of the nearest river. Miss Henrietta, who is neither so blind as a bat, nor so deaf as an adder, may easily envy 'Arry and 'Arriet treading the primrose path of dalliance. What would she not give for the chance of starting the stitching in 'Arry's heart herself? As for Mrs. Smith, she is firmly and secretly convinced that all this piety springs from the idea of her lord and master to be considered "respectable," and, incidentally, to extend his business. In one of her confidential chats over the tea-table with her bosom-friend, Mrs. Jones, she expresses her private opinion with a powerful metaphor: "Find Jesus, my dear. I had as soon go to sea in a ship on fire."

What does Mr. John Smith himself gain by his conversion? The Bible? He reads it daily, and his verbal knowledge is nearly perfect; but what he apprehends is limited by an imperfect education. The literature of Israel is intensely local. There are passages where the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the atmosphere of the hills about Jerusalem, the beauty of the fair daughters of Judæa, are so caught and rendered that in a distant age, an alien speech, a remote land, they affect the reader. But Mr. Smith is hampered by his limited vocabulary and dwarfed perceptions. To him the word "publican" invariably suggests a licensed victualler; and the expression "divers diseases" conjures up ideas of water on the brain. Thus he is forced to rely on a purblind parson's conception of what is written. Mr. Smith cannot usefully adopt New Testament ethics with his ordinary business avocation, and keep out of the workhouse. He cannot, with any success, apply Christian principles to his everyday life, if he is to escape Earlswood or Colney Hatch. Hence his admiration for the sleek parson who shepherds the flock at his chapel, and shears them well into the bargain.

The minister instructs poor Mr. Smith as if the Bible were written yesterday, and the legends but the facts of fifth-edition journalism. The minister tells him that

the Bible is true from cover to cover. That the Almighty maker of all things put the first man and woman in a garden, and for a crime of petty larceny punished them with death, and visited their small crime on all mankind, whose everlasting fate will be determined at the Judgment Day. Mr. Smith is further instructed that mankind became so wicked that the Almighty drowned them all, except eight persons, like kittens in a pail. Afterwards the Almighty became the War Lord of the Jews, who were his chosen people, although he could not always help them to victory. And so on, through the Newgate Calendar record of the Bible, until the climax when the Almighty is put to death to appease himself. At no stage of the instruction does the minister point out what a level of barbarism must the people have who could thus conceive of their Deity. Hence the delight of the minister and the limitations of poor Mr. Smith, who rapidly becomes the perfect expression of the self-opiniated Christian, a figure at which educated people raise their eyebrows, politely smile, and pass on.

MIMNERMUS.

## Science and Spiritualism.

### XVI.

(Concluded from p. 390.)

There can be no doubt, then, that the history of spiritualism is saturated with fraud, and that the vast majority of the phenomena obtained through mediums are fraudulent in character.....The net result of the investigations conducted by the English Society for Psychical Research was to produce the conviction that no results obtained through *professional* mediums were to be trusted, so long as the conditions rendered fraud *possible*; and, further, that practically all *professional* mediums are frauds! "There does not exist, and there never has existed, a professional medium of any note who has not been convicted of trickery or fraud," says J. N. Maskelyne (*The Supernatural*, p. 183). And, in case Mr. Maskelyne may be considered a prejudiced witness in such matters, it may be stated that the American Society for Psychical Research was unable to find any medium who could produce satisfactory phenomena under test conditions, and stated that "it is, in their opinion, inadvisable to undertake further investigation in regard to professional mediums, inasmuch as all the materializing seances yet attended by them have been held under conditions which rendered any scientific investigation impossible.".....It may almost be said that the S.P.R. has never succeeded in obtaining evidence for a single genuine physical phenomenon in its whole career, while the number of fraudulent mediums it has unearthed is amazing! They have been no more successful in their day than the Seybert Commission was in its—and it is certainly a suspicious fact that, so soon as strict and reliable "tests" are insisted upon, and no opportunity given the medium to produce the phenomena by fraudulent means, the phenomena altogether cease.—*Hereward Carrington, "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism," pp. 9-10.*

THE Committee of the Institut General Psychologique of Paris also tested Eusapia's alleged power of moving a balance without touching it. A small machine like a letter-weigher was employed, says Podmore. "It was surrounded with a wooden frame, so as to prevent the use of a hair or other fraudulent device. Eusapia tried it with the wooden covering and failed; tried it with the linen covering and failed. All the protecting apparatus was then removed. Eusapia put her hands on either side of the scale and it went down, and the onlookers could not find out how it was done."<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately it was discovered that the trick was done by means of a hair attached to Eusapia's little fingers, so that when she placed her hands on each side of the scale, she only had to depress her two little fingers to bring the hair down on the scale. The experiments were conducted in such a dim light that the hair was invisible.

<sup>1</sup> Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 108.



The conclusion arrived at by the Institut Committee was that Eusapia undoubtedly resorted to fraud when it was possible to do so, but that some of the phenomena—the movement of the table and stool, for instance—they could not explain. They do not attribute these phenomena to any spiritual force, but to some physical force of the nature of electricity, emanating from the body of Eusapia. As Mr. Podmore remarks: "The great defect of their report is that whilst they cannot explain some of the things seen and done, they have not given us a chance of explaining them. They do not publish the shorthand notes of the seances.....We see that on this particular occasion the Committee believe that the control was adequate; but then we know that it is Eusapia's to induce this belief, and we know or suspect that in many previous cases the belief has been ill-founded. On the positive side this report does not advance the matter at all. Such a condensed description is of just so much value as the ordinary observer's account of a conjurer's trick. It tells us only that the witnesses didn't see through the trick; but it doesn't tell us how it was done."<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that the Society for Psychical Research had declined to undertake any further investigation of Eusapia's powers after the Cambridge exposure, yet so successfully did she impose on numerous foreign investigators—many of them eminent men of science—during the next twelve years, that in the autumn of 1908 they appointed a committee of three to again test her claims to supernatural powers. Of their qualifications, Mr. Podmore remarks: "Mr. Hereward Carrington is an amateur conjurer, who has for several years made a special study of the tricks of American mediums. His book, *The Psychical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, is the standard authority on these fraudulent performances. The Hon. Everard Fielding and Mr. Baggally have also to their credit years of practical experience in the same field. Mr. Baggally, again, is a practical conjurer, and Mr. Fielding's humorous exposures of the tricks of British and foreign mediums are familiar to all members of the Society for Psychical Research. On the ground of personal qualifications and practical experience a more competent Committee could, since the death of Dr. Hodgson, scarcely have been selected."<sup>2</sup>

The sittings, eleven in all, were held in Naples during November and December, 1908; and it is no small tribute to the genius of Eusapia that she succeeded in duping all three of these well-qualified and able gentlemen, and obtaining their testimony to her supernormal powers. Mr. Carrington, in particular, was so impressed by Eusapia's performance that he actually acted as her manager when she left Italy for America. But a year later (December, 1909) she was to experience utter and irretrievable defeat at the hands of Professor Munsterberg, in New York.

To properly understand what happened, it should be explained that, before giving a seance, a corner of the room was partitioned off by a pair of black curtains, so as to form a sort of triangular cabinet. Inside this cabinet was placed a stool, one or two musical instruments, and any other articles the spirits required to announce their presence and perform their antics. In front of this alcove was placed a table, thirty-three inches long by twenty inches wide, endways to the curtains. At this end Eusapia sat, with her back to the curtains, the investigators sitting round the table, linking hands, those on either side of the medium undertaking the control of her hands and feet. These were invariably the arrangements made by Eusapia before giving a seance.

Upon this occasion Professor Munsterberg sat at her left side and Mr. Carrington at her right. The "John" referred to in the following description is the name of the spirit supposed to have been invoked by Eusapia, "her wonders to perform." Probably he is the "John King," the spirit of a deceased pirate, who has laboured so assiduously for the mediums for the last fifty years. Professor Munsterberg describes what happened as follows:—

We had her under strictest supervision. Her left hand grasped my left hand, her right hand was held by her right neighbour, her left foot rested on my foot while her right was pressing the foot of her other neighbour. For an hour the regulation performance had gone on. But now we sat in the darkened room in the highest expectancy while Mr. Carrington begged John to touch my arm and then to lift the table in the cabinet behind her; and John really came. He touched me distinctly on my hip and then on my arm, and at last he pulled my sleeve at the elbow. I plainly felt the thumb and fingers. It was most uncanny.

And finally, John was to lift the table in the cabinet. We held both her hands, we felt both her feet, and yet the table three feet behind her began to scratch the floor and we expected it to be lifted. But instead there suddenly came a wild yelling scream. It was such a scream as I have never heard before in my life, not even in Sarah Bernhardt's most thrilling scenes.

What had happened? Neither the medium nor Mr. Carrington had the slightest idea that a man was lying flat on the floor and had succeeded in slipping noiselessly like a snail below the curtain into the cabinet. I had told him that I expected wires stretched out from her body, and he looked out for them. What a surprise when he saw that she had simply freed her foot from her shoe and with an athletic backward movement of the leg was reaching out and fishing with her toes for the guitar and the table in the cabinet! And then, lying on the floor, he grasped her foot and caught her heel with a firm hand, and she responded with that wild scream which indicated that she knew that at last she was trapped and her glory shattered. Her achievement had been splendid; she had lifted her unshod foot to the height of my arm when she touched me under cover of the curtain, without changing in the least the position of her body. When her foot played thumb and finger, the game was also neat throughout. To be sure, I remember, before she was to reach out for the table behind her, she suddenly felt the need of touching my left hand too, and for that purpose she leaned heavily over the table at which we were sitting. She said that she must do it because her spiritual fluid had become too strong and the touch would relieve her. As a matter of course, in leaning forward with the upper half of her body she was able to push her foot further backward and thus to reach the light table, which probably stood a few inches too far away.

After this scream, at least let us not repeat the ridiculous excuse that she sometimes uses tricks when by chance genuine phenomena do not arise, but that she can perform the same acts at other times by mere spiritual powers. No. We had here the perfectly typical performance. Everything occurred in exactly the same style as in previous seances, and the conditions of supervision were the best which she allows at all. To put your foot on hers is never allowed, as the poor woman has a nervous "weakness" in her instep. Thus the only allowed supervision of her feet is in being sure all the time that her foot is on yours. I did indeed feel her shoe all the time. When the scream occurred and her foot was caught, I distinctly felt that her shoe was pressing my foot. A hook on the right shoe probably pressed down the empty left shoe. If her foot had not been caught that performance would have been the best in the whole seance, and the cabinet mysteries worked in our presence would never have been under stricter conditions. Moreover, this foot performance without any motion of the upper half of the body evidently pre-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 114.



supposes a continued and perfect training. Here she was trapped for the first time in an act which cannot possibly be explained as an accidental occurrence; such marvellous athletics must be explained as a regular life-work. Her greatest wonders are absolutely nothing but fraud and humbug; this is no longer a theory but a proven fact.<sup>1</sup>

If the man had not been concealed in the cabinet, Professor Munsterberg would never have been able to detect, nor even suspect, the manner in which the tricks were performed. He himself frankly admits: "I do not refer to any philosophical or theoretical conviction, but to a practical one, that I myself am entirely unfit for such an investigation. There the public is usually under the influence of a curious illusion. Most people think that a scientist is especially adapted to carrying on such an inquiry, and if a great scholar becomes convinced of the genuineness of the performance, the public looks on that as a strong argument. I am inclined to think that scholars are especially poor witnesses in such a case." And, as he further points out, the scientist in his laboratory has not the slightest fear that Nature will play tricks or resort to fraud, and places the same trust in the honesty of his students. "If he weighs his chemical substances, he is not accustomed to watch whether one of the boys has a scheme to pull down the lever of the scale.....And now he, with his bland *naivete* and his training in blind confidence, is again and again called to make inquiries which would demand a detective and a prestidigitator. Moreover, the best scientific work in one field is not the slightest guarantee for good observation in another field. It is often remarkable to what a degree a man who is a great scholar in one division may be not only ignorant, but uneducated in his attitude, silly in his judgment and foolish in his conclusions in fields which lie outside of his interests"<sup>2</sup>—a fact we have amply demonstrated in the course of these articles. The greatest of all philosophers, Herbert Spencer, "thought he would be an easy dupe at a spiritualist seance."<sup>3</sup> Probably he would have been; but it is another proof of his clear good sense and honesty in admitting it.

I am convinced that if something entirely new and mysterious in phenomena were to-day launched in London, the public would flop down and the great and glorious newspapers would again rave about there being more in heaven and earth than we dream of in our philosophy. And this will continue all the while the child is inoculated with the virus of religion, which predisposes it to give easy credence to such tales of miracle and superstition in after-life. We shall deal next with the psychical phenomena.

W. MANN.

## Correspondence.

HEBERT AND MR. UNDERWOOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I had no idea when I parried the first thrust made by Mr. Underwood, as he placed his foil between Mr. Arch's and my own, that I had a swashbuckler to deal with, who not only attempts the usual braggart's dodge in trying to frighten his adversary by noise, but even scorns the honourable rules of the sword. Yet, since he considers my criticisms "as ignorant as they are foolish"; since he doubts whether I wish to get at the truth or not; since he sneers that an *ipse dixit* even from me "is not above suspicion"; and finally, since he begs the question by wanting me to confess that I

have made a "bad blunder" (as though I could possibly make a "good blunder"), we can truly see Mr. Underwood in his true colours.

My first letter anent Hebert and the *Pere Duchene* was, to my mind, tempered criticism. My second was, perhaps, a little playful, yet directly critical withal. Mr. Arch's replies were equally tempered and critical. A review of this correspondence will show that there has not been the slightest hint (as Mr. Underwood suggests) of an *ipse dixit* from myself. The only person who has adopted this attitude is Mr. Underwood.

I politely asked him, in my last letter, if he would give the readers of the *Freethinker* (not myself) some of the *worst of one number of the Pere Duchene* in French. His reply is, that he "cannot waste his time in transcribing a dozen or so pages"! I ask him if he thought it "waste of time" when he took the trouble to specially look up the *Pere Duchene* so as to reply to my first criticism? But he accuses his adversary of cowardice, when it is he himself who "runs away" at my *parer seconde et porter en meme temps!*

And then, he is so solicitous lest the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be prosecuted for obscenity! One feels inclined to emulate Hebert, and say, "Damn his impertinence!" It is the readers of the *Freethinker* who would be the best judges of that, and not the police. And I have no doubt that the Editor knows, or ought to know, the mental gauge of his readers without any reference to Mr. Underwood. Mr. Underwood may be an excellent authority upon "inebriated racing touts," and as to what would make them blush. I beg to say that I am not, and I have no desire to be. But I do know, or at least I hope so, something of the mental equipment of the readers of the *Freethinker*, a journal which I have read every week, and occasionally contributed to, for seventeen years.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

[We do not think that this controversy can be carried further with profit to readers; none of whom, we think, will be greatly interested in the opinions of Mr. Underwood and Mr. Farmer of each other.—ED.]

## MIMNERMUS AND RABELAIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You may, or what is more likely, you may not remember, that some time ago I tried to express my admiration for the fervid rhetoric of your contributor "Mimnermus," whose delightful articles give an air of literary ripeness to a paper the dominant note of which, if I may say so, is too often one of dry and angular disputatiousness.

You will think, perhaps, that I am inclined to attach too much importance to the way in which facts are presented, to the mere outward garb, and too little to the facts themselves. Now, that is exactly the point to which I am coming in my feminine and roundabout way.

You were once courteous enough to give me the opportunity of pointing out that I had found a noticeable resemblance between the style of "Mimnermus" and that of my erstwhile master in literature the great "Claudius Clear." They both have an unlimited affection for the completely rounded sentence, the glowing and coloured phrase. I now find that "Mimnermus" has something else in common with the editor of the *British Weekly*—a truly high-handed way with mere fact. Let me ask you to look for a moment at his article on Rabelais which he calls with his characteristic felicity of expression "Under a Fool's Cap." In the first place he accepts the impossible traditional date of Rabelais' birth, 1483—instead of 1495, the date fixed by Rathery, Lacroix, and Mr. J. M. Wheeler. The earlier date is chosen because it gives point to an eloquent passage about Rabelais not writing "until an age when the passion of youth had consumed itself to ashes," and also to the assertion that his cynicism with regard to women was the result of his long monastic training. But a cynical attitude to women was not peculiar to the Middle Ages; it is everywhere in the Greek and Latin poets; it was handed down from antiquity to the early Christian fathers; and so became a tradition. It seems to me questionable if the position of women was any worse in mediæval France than in sentimentalizing Germany or platonizing

<sup>1</sup> Professor Hugo Munsterberg, *Problems of To-Day* (1910), pp. 142-3-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Problems of To-Day*, pp. 121-3.

<sup>3</sup> Duncan's *Life of Spencer*. Cited in *Athenæum*, July, 1908.



Italy. If "Mimnermus" has ever visited a music-hall he will remember the old and ever popular joke about the lodger. Yet I fancy he would not be so foolish as to make this poor joke the basis of a generalization on the sexual ethics of the lower Middle Class.

In another passage he says that Rabelais' love for his mother was killed. How does he know this? So far as I am aware there is no mention anywhere of Rabelais' mother. May not the simple explanation be that she died before the filial sentiment was developed in him?

Now, any one of us may go astray, but we cannot hope to do it so boldly as "Mimnermus." Had the Hebrew wise man been privileged to contemplate the way of "Mimnermus" with facts he would have added a fifth to the four things which were too wonderful for him. Rabelais, he tells us impressively, did not relish the idea of martyrdom for had he not seen his contemporaries burnt at the stake? Was not "Giordano Bruno whom he had met at Rome done to death in the usual Roman (Catholic) fashion?" It is quite possible that "Mimnermus" may have access to facts unknown to me, yet in the absence of proof upsetting the accepted dates, I am still inclined to think that Rabelais (1495-1553) was not a contemporary of Bruno (1548-1600).

MINNIE SPENCER.

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## Acid Drops.

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Poor Paul! By 385 votes to 55 the House of Commons accepted the principle of "Votes for Women"—provided they are not under thirty years of age. What would Paul have said? He suffered not a woman to teach; he ordered them to remain in silence, and subjection, and obey their husbands. And now a House of Commons, the majority being Christians—of a sort—endow her with the vote! The world moves, although Christian bigotry has prevented it moving in *that* direction for many centuries.

The proprietors of "White Horse" whisky have just received intimation from a soldier on service that one of their pocket diaries had been the means of saving his life. A piece of shrapnel passed through the diary and just reached his flesh immediately in front of his heart. What would our religious friends have said if only this had been a Bible instead of an advertisement for Scotch whisky.

The Bishop of London says "no self-respecting citizen would demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." This suggests that "self-respecting" citizens had better ignore Old Testament teaching.

Another gem of the Bishop's is that he has studied the Bible far more than have the conscientious objectors. Just so! And his studies have been more profitable.

In an article on the loss of children's lives in the recent air-raid, the *Star* says, "Herod must surely be jealous of the Kaiser." This is unjust to Herod, for the story of the massacre of the innocents, narrated in the New Testament, is pure fiction.

What excellent conceit pious folk possess. The Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, the President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, says "Take out of the national life the moral and spiritual influence of the Church, and nothing can save it from sinking back into barbarism." This is delightful nonsense. If every Primitive Methodist Chapel closed its doors, there would scarcely be a ripple upon the surface of contemporary society.

The Rev. J. Tolefree Parr also speaks of the "withering blight of vices" which the War revealed, and said that drink had almost "throttled the Commonwealth." If this be so, it is a reflection on the clergy, who are absolved from military service and are at full liberty to attend to their own duties.

Providence has small respect for churches. The bell-turret at Christ Church, Harrow Road, Paddington, was struck by lightning, and a large piece of masonry, weighing seven hundredweights, fell to the pavement. A Methodist place of worship at Roegreen, Worsley, near Manchester, was also struck during a service.

We can't be expected to often find ourselves in agreement with the Archbishop of Canterbury, but we quite agree with him in his protest against the policy of "reprisals." Nothing could be more terrible than the slaughter of little children by airmen such as took place in the recent raid on London, and one can quite understand the lust of passion which calls for similar action against Germany. But between that understanding and a deliberate justification of the cry there is a world of difference. In times of stress the benefit of leadership and of the press would be that they served to keep the public mind steady and sane. But when we have a section of the press and a number of public men—either from lack of level-headedness or from a desire to exploit a natural and even justifiable outburst of feeling—deliberately asking that our own airmen shall slaughter German women and children, as German airmen have slaughtered ours, there is an indication of a deplorably low level of public life.

Reprisals mean, as we have already said, nothing less than a competition in brutality, and we do not think that any English man or woman will, on reflection, be anxious to demonstrate to the world that, however brutal Germans may be, we can be still more brutal. Nor is it complimentary to our own airmen to assume that they would undertake the work of slaughtering women and children without a feeling of repugnance and degradation. Nor do we follow those who argue that while the bombing of schools and civilians generally stiffens *our* backs and makes us determined to get on with the War, similar treatment of Germans will compel them to adopt other methods. It will rather play into the hands of the German military authorities, and help to strengthen the war-spirit there as their conduct strengthens the war-spirit here. And it is surely the height of absurdity to argue that while the German Governments are ready to sacrifice millions of their people in the pursuit of the War, and while the German people support the Governments in their doing so, both will be brought to their knees by outrages on mere handfuls of civilians. Similar outrages made Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, etc., more determined than ever to carry on the War. It is only the cheap psychology of an uninstructed mind that can look for any different effect of the same policy on Germany.

It is said that we adopted the policy of reprisals when we used gas and boiling oil in reply to the German gas and liquid flame. That is so; but the distinction is that in this case it was a necessity of war pure and simple. Soldiers were implicated, not civilians, or women and children. If we went one better than Germany, as we were entitled to do, that fact is a melancholy illustration of the truth that war is a progressively brutalizing occupation, and an apt comment upon the utter drivel talked about the ennobling influence of war upon a people. And note that the next war will certainly commence at the point of brutality where this one left off, and will go on developing along the same lines. Boiling oil, and gas, and liquid flame, and the rest will be part of the regular outfit of the armies of the future. Even air raids will have their recognized place. And they are best serving the cause of universal peace who recognize the truth, drive the lesson home to the minds of their fellows, and so make the recurrence of war more and more improbable.

Mr. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, says he has met Oxford men who were ignorant of the elements of spelling, who had never heard of the principal characters of history, and who could not trace the European capitals on the map. We are not surprised, for Oxford University expelled the poet Shelley, and conferred an honorary degree on the first "General" Booth.

The piety of editors is not always very deep. A Sunday



paper, in a leading article states: "Nature knows nothing of sin; cause and effect are her only concern." Freethinkers have said the same thing for generations.

A schoolmaster, who possesses a London University degree, writes to the *Daily News* to complain that he was offered a teacher's post at twenty-five shillings weekly. This shows the value put upon education in a Christian country, which permits the bachelor Bishop of London to enjoy a salary of £200 weekly.

The Bishop of Chelmsford predicts a lengthy War. Let us hope that he is as mistaken as the Bible prophets.

Unconscious humour is not the worst. Under a paragraph headed "Showing Off," an evening paper printed a paragraph stating that organ recitals are to be given at the City Temple, London, weekly, until the end of July.

The late organist at Hereford Cathedral left estate to the value of £6,618. There are not many church organists who get the chance, for ecclesiastics are not innocent of sweating their employees.

At a City bookshop where "remainders" are sold, a notice was displayed, "Theodore Roosevelt reduced to twopence." This is twopence too much for the man who libelled Thomas Paine.

From the *Daily Telegraph* we take the following:—

Under the Defence of India Act the Government of Madras has prohibited Mrs. Annie Besant, Mr. George S. Acundale, and Mr. B. B. Wadia, who are both also connected with the paper *New India* and the Indian Home Rule propaganda, from attending or taking part in any meeting, from lecturing or making speeches, and from publishing or writing any speech composed by them. The Governor has also placed their correspondence under censorship, and has directed that after expiry of a brief period they shall cease to reside in Madras city and shall reside in any one of six specified areas.

In a War for the freedom of the world liberty appears to be faring rather badly.

Lady Courtney says, "Centuries ago the wisdom of the sages and statesmen of Rome may have been written on tablets of gold or silver, and honoured by all men, while the message of a few Galilean fishermen was only spoken to the hearts of a few simple men and women like themselves." Her ladyship forgets that the beautiful message "spoken to the hearts" of simple men and women was "Believe, or be damned!"

A large display advertisement of the Young Men's Christian Association states that the organization has given away, among other things, "many thousands of cigarettes." As Christ was crucified to prevent people smoking in the next world, we presume the Y.M.C.A. is giving them a chance of smoking in this one.

The scandal of the ever-increasing prices of bread and the ordinary necessities of life is an ironical comment on the prayer of millions, "Give us this day our daily bread." The food profiteers do not care how people pray so long as they themselves are free to prey.

As we have not enough pantomime Orders in the country, the King has been graciously pleased to create two new ones—an Order of Knighthood to be styled the Order of the British Empire, and the Order of the Companions of Honour, with all the paraphernalia of decorations, an Usher of the Purple Rod, etc., etc. The badge of the Order is to be a silver gilt cross with the motto "For God and the Empire." We marvel the King was not advised that there are millions of people in the Empire who do not believe in God at all. And if some of these are offered the decoration, we wonder what they will do with it? Will they go round wearing an Order given for service to *God* and the Empire? Really, it is time this sort of thing was dropped altogether. But we

have no doubt that the King is wise in his generation. Every new title is a help to existing institutions. It creates a new vested interest, and that is something.

The clergy are not only claiming exemption from military service for themselves, but some of them seem determined to claim it for those who minister to their comforts. Thus, exemption was asked for the gardener of the Vicar of Walford, Ross. Before the tribunal it was stated that the vicar had three other men-servants beside this one. And, presumably, there would be maid-servants as well. Things have improved since the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.

The Rev. James Orpen, 32, was charged yesterday at Stratford Police Court with attempting to procure two boys to commit an act of gross indecency, and, further, with committing an act of indecency with a boy. Mr. Freke Palmer, for the accused, pleaded guilty. The prisoner was bound over to be of good behaviour for twelve months.—*Times*, June 21.

The Rev. J. H. Locke, a Congregational minister of Epping, is assisting in a grocer's shop, and a newspaper states that "he astonishes the customers with his skill in cutting cheese and bacon." The question is whether the gentleman is running a grocer's or a gospel shop, for grocers are not exempted from National Service.

In a column notice in a daily paper of the Salvation Army flag day, the headline bore the words, "Home Fires." The word "fire" embroidered on the jerseys of the Salvationists refers to an eternal fire in an everlasting home.

*Punch* makes excellent play with what it calls "the financial success of Mr. H. G. Wells' punctuality and enterprise in looking into the vexed question of the Deity," in a series of burlesque interviews. Mr. Arnold Bennett is made to say that he quite agrees the book of the other Essex fictionist is a meritorious and ingenious work, but the idea of God still needs handling in a capable and meritorious way. Mr. R. J. Campbell refused to be interviewed, but locked himself in his church, and looked through the keyhole "with his beautiful, troubled, wistful orbs." Mr. G. K. Chesterton quotes: "An honest god is the noblest work of man," and Sir Robertson Nicoll said that "for many years his paper had supported Providence to their mutual advantage." Meanwhile, sums up *Punch*, things go on as usual. That, we believe, hits the mark. By the time people have finished replying to Mr. Wells, his new God will have been quite forgotten. Even Mr. Wells may have some difficulty in remembering what he was like.

### War Bread.

The Rev. Martin Jones, Vicar of Wymondham, Norfolk, says that War Bread is unsuitable for the Communion. It produces too many crumbs.—*Daily Mail*.

"THIS War Bread," says a Vicar bland,  
"Makes too much crumb for Holy Rite;  
It falls to pieces in my hand,  
Before I take a tiny bite."

He cannot have good bread and strife;  
He cannot praise the "God" who rides  
Triumphant o'er "His" product—Life,  
And in each gaping gun abides.

He cannot have both Bread and Stones;  
The "Bread of Life" and War's abuse;  
He cannot raise to life the bones  
Of Creeds outworn in futile use.

But he will plead with reverence,  
Providing topics for the Press;  
And moan with pious innocence,  
That War Bread makes an awful mess!

ARTHUR F. THORN.



## To Correspondents.

H. A.—It would be foolish to prophesy, as the result will be public property before the issue of the *Freethinker* is published.

E. B.—Many thanks for useful batch of cuttings.

WE have so many calls upon our space this week that we are compelled to hold over a number of replies until our next issue.

F. RUDDY (Liverpool).—You are confusing Rabelais with Boccaccio.

J. FITZPATRICK.—We are unable to deal with it this week. Absence from London and other calls have left us with little time on hand.

*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. 4 by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*

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

*Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.*

*Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*

*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.

The summonses issued by the L.C.C. against Mr. Neate for selling the *Freethinker* in Victoria Park came on for hearing before Mr. Clarke Hall at the Old Street Police Court on Wednesday last, June 20. Mr. Haedicke represented the Council, and Mr. W. H. Eldridge, appeared on behalf of Mr. Neate, at the instance of the Protest Committee. Owing to the quite amazing incompleteness of the case as presented by the Council's solicitor, the proceedings looked as though they would collapse entirely, but an adjournment was asked for by Mr. Haedicke, which Mr. Clarke Hall was compelled to grant. By the time this is in the hands of our readers the affair will be over, but as we are writing a day before the hearing, we will only say that we feel quite easy as to the outcome of *this* case. The important thing is that we are evidently in the initial stages of a fight which promises some interesting developments, and which is of first-rate public importance.

In summing up the consequences of the judgment in the Bowman case, we pointed out that it went much further than the case itself. It not only legalized a bequest to an incorporated secular society, it legalized bequests to *all* secular societies, whether incorporated or not. And we expressed the belief that a bequest left to a society such as the N.S.S. was perfectly valid. Recent events have quite justified that view. An old friend of the movement, Capt. E. Raggett, left the National Secular Society a bequest of £10. A solicitor wrote to the Secretary, Miss Vance, asking for a copy of the principles and objects of the N.S.S. in order that he might advise his client as to the advisability of payment. These were duly supplied, and the legacy has been paid over without comment or delay. Of course, the bequest was not due to the Bowman case, but we are fairly certain the prompt payment marks a great advance.

We are doubtful whether Mr. Wells' *God the Invisible King* is worth a whole book by way of reply to its nebulous theology and equally vague sociology; but if it is, *God and Mr. Wells*, by Mr. William Archer (Watts & Co.; 1s. 9d. net) will give those interested what they require. The book is lively reading, and Mr. Wells gets the good-humoured castigation he asked for when he came forward as the prophet of a new religion. We should like to see Mr. Archer himself a little more definite in his attitude towards "God" than he is (there really is justification for a definite attitude if one can divest one's self of the tyranny of tradition), but we must take each man as we find him, and make the best of him.

We like best in the book the chapter on "Personification," and we fully endorse what Mr. Archer has to say about the use of the word "God." He asks:—

Is it possible to deodorize a word which comes to us redolent of "good, thick, stupefying incense smoke" mingled with the reek of the auto-da-fe? Can we beat into a ploughshare the sword of St. Bartholomew, and a thousand other deeds of horror? God has been by far the most tragic word in the whole vocabulary of the race—a spell to conjure up all the worst fiends of human nature; arrogance, abjectness, fanaticism, hatred, and ferocity.....If a word is at best a confusion and at worst a war-whoop, should we not try to dispense with it, to avoid it, to find a substitute which should more accurately, if less truculently, express our idea?

That is good counsel. You can no more relieve such words as "God" and "religion" from their confusing and sinister associations than you can relieve the typhoid germ of its poisonous quality. And there is no sound reason why anyone should try.

Another handy little volume published by Messrs Watts and Co. is *Old Testament Legends for Young Readers*, by Mr. F. J. Gould (1s. 6d. net). These "legends" appeared originally in the columns of the *Freethinker*, and very many of our readers will no doubt welcome them in their more permanent form. They form a striking lesson in the art of making use of even the Bible in a way that will preserve all that is worth having for youthful readers, while divesting it of its character as an aid to superstition. The volume should be specially helpful to teachers and to all engaged in the training of children. It really teaches without preaching, whereas so many miscalled educational works preach without teaching. We are pleased to add that we have another series in hand by Mr. Gould, on *New Testament Legends*, which we hope to commence in a week or two.

We think the following letter will be of interest to others beside ourselves. It is one of many we receive, and our regret is that we can so seldom spare space for publication. But they are appreciated none the less on that account:—

DEAR MR. COHEN,—I sincerely hope that your many duties will not prevent you from perusing these few lines of heartfelt thanks which I tender to you and your co-workers on the *Freethinker* staff. During the past few years I have been a frequent reader of your "Super Periodical," and I assure you the benefits I have derived from its perusal are manifold. You and your colleagues are responsible for the development of my critical faculties, for which I specially thank you. For they enable me to-day, amidst all our political, industrial, and religious convolutions, to look along the line of demarcation more clearly.

Through your splendid *Freethinker* I came to know Darwin, and if I could only express my thoughts to you, you would then, perhaps, be able to gauge the extent of my delight, when after leaving behind me for a few hours the baneful and stultifying machine-labour, I forget the anomalies of our transient social order in the company of the great naturalist. You introduced me to the treasure-house of "Ingersoll," which I assert must be visited many times when you have once entered the domains thereof. You have greatly assisted me in developing the "cosmic sense," and from the development of that sense I have come to know my position in relation to the "universe."

We have a free library in Stafford, and I often go to peruse the *Literary Guide* and the *Positivist Review*. And, of course, being a reader of your splendid paper, and knowing its intrinsic worth, I approached the librarian with a view to placing the *Freethinker* on the table each week. He informed me that I could do so with pleasure. So I shall order a *Freethinker* from my newsagent each week, and thereby enable the citizens of Stafford to have an opportunity of reading the most interesting and intellectual periodical in the country at the present time.—H. W. C.

A correspondent suggests that in view of the activity of the Churches with regard to religion in the schools, a copy of Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on *Religion and the Child* should be sent "broadcast" to teachers and public men. We should be glad to fall in with the suggestion, but if done on a proper scale it would involve a considerable outlay, and we have no means available for such a purpose. We do send out a fair



amount of free literature now, but as we are at our wits end almost to "carry on," we cannot add to expenses. But we suggest that what cannot be done by one, could be done by all. We are prepared to quote special terms to such as wish to purchase large or small quantities for the purpose of free distribution. \_\_\_\_\_

As an illustration of what we have said above, we may mention that last week we bought a small quantity of *Freethinker* paper at a considerable advance on even last year's price. This week we decided to purchase a little more. On sending in the order we were informed that the price of the paper had advanced two pence per pound. So we decided to wait. But if things proceed at their present rate we can picture the *Freethinker* being sent from house to house on a gramophone record.

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### Special.

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LAST week I mentioned that in addition to the fight with the L.C.C. there was another matter in connection with the law on which something might have to be said. That something is connected with a charge of blasphemy brought against Mr. J. W. Gott.

On June 13 Mr. Gott wrote me that he had been arrested on a charge of blasphemy and asking whether the N.S.S. would undertake his defence. Naturally, I could not undertake to pledge the Society to any such course before consulting the Executive, nor had I any information as to the charge. But I told Mr. Gott that in order to see that he got fair play in the police court, he might engage the services of a solicitor, for the expense of which I would make myself responsible.

This was done, and at a special meeting of the Executive, my action in the matter was fully endorsed. I was also requested to go to Birmingham, if necessary, and watch the case in the interests of the N.S.S. Accordingly I went to Birmingham on Sunday evening last in order to be at the court on the Monday. All that could be said on behalf of Mr. Gott was then said by the solicitor engaged, but it was clear that the stipendiary had no alternative but to send the case for trial at the Assizes, which opens, I believe, on July 10.

Another Executive meeting has been called for this week, and it would not be right to foreshadow or forestall its decision by expressing an opinion now as to the course to be followed. The case is a difficult one, as many will guess.

One thing I am very sorry for. Mr. Gott sent out an appeal for funds, for what he calls his propaganda, in connection with which he announced that I had made myself responsible for the costs of the police court proceedings. I regret that this was done. I had no knowledge of the circular until a copy of it came accidentally into my hands, and the use of my name was quite unauthorized. To most readers it would identify me either with the appeal for money or with Mr. Gott's propaganda, or with both. And neither view expresses the truth.

I refrain from saying more now for many reasons. It may even be advisable not to say more until the case is concluded.

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President N.S.S.*

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### The Sense Organs of Man.

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CERTAIN mystical theologians and strictly introspective metaphysicians delight in dwelling on the presumably solemn circumstance that mental processes cannot be translated into terms of matter. Even by some semi-Rationalists psychical phenomena are vaguely regarded as modes of existence which elude the methods of the purely scientific investigator. Needless to state, the highest, and consequently most involved manifestations

of mental phenomena are invariably chosen to prove the impassable barrier which is alleged to sunder physical from psychical things. No attention is paid to the self-evident verity that to grasp the various problems concerning the senses and the intellect, the emotions and the will, requires a fair amount of patient scientific labour, and that it is imperative to carefully study, and strive to understand, a few of the simpler processes of sensation in order to obtain anything remotely resembling a clear appreciation of the real difficulties to be overcome.

The famous Dr. Henry Maudsley has always insisted that some acquaintance with the brain and nervous system is indispensable to the true student of psychology. But this plain fact is persistently ignored by the "paper" psychologists who find metaphysical speculation much more easy than the solid work essential to those who grapple with the problems involved. Metaphysical discussions in large measure owe their popularity to the pleasant circumstance that no real information is necessary to enable one to express an opinion. Other things equal, one metaphysical assertion is as good as another, for nothing can be stated as a mere matter of fact by either disputant. Moreover, the debaters are privileged to run before they have learnt to walk; and, in that respect, possess a decided advantage over those who approach unsettled problems by that stonier path in which they are compelled to compare their theories with ascertained facts. It is true that scientific theories display one element of superiority, inasmuch as they have been derived, and, in many cases, demanded by the observed sequences of organic Nature.

When assertions are made in the name of science, they are verified or invalidated by an appeal to the demonstrated discoveries in the department of knowledge involved. But in barren speculation each assertor is a law unto himself. In these hazy realms they meander along "a limitless, lampless labyrinth," and many a man who might have helped in the world's advance has unwisely devoted his days to speculating about the unspeakable, and has even bequeathed to an ungrateful posterity various volumes still spoken of, although seldom or never perused.

The aim of the present series of articles is to state to the best of the writer's ability a few of the reasons which induce philosophical scientists to regard mind as the product of experience. Brain is the organ of mind, and it is significant that all our higher sense structures are confined to the cranium. But the general tactile sense from which the superior senses of taste, smell, sight, and hearing, have been derived, is not restricted to any special area of the body. Almost any part of the skin will respond to the impact of outside influences. Different sensations are produced on the body surfaces by heat or cold, or through contact with solid or liquid substances. But only a few specialized areas of the animal framework are capable of being affected in such a way as to give rise to the complex sensations of the higher senses of vision, hearing, smell, and taste. And these sensory organs are so constructed that they are appropriately stimulated by a few special vibrations or particular substances only.

Changes known as reflex actions are constantly occurring in the body without occasioning consciousness. But we soon become conscious when the sensory or afferent nerves are stimulated by some external influence. Such states of consciousness are classed as feelings or sensations, volitions, thoughts, and emotions. These various forms of consciousness are all the outcome, directly or indirectly, of the stimulation or irritation of nervous tissue.



Sensations vary within wide limits. Some internal sensations, notably the fancies of ill-health, arise un-called for and depart unbidden. These subjective feelings assume many forms, and frequently arise from such derangements as indigestion and other ailments of the vegetative system. But however much such morbid sensations may detract from the pleasures of life, they convey no knowledge of the external world.

The senses which enable us to hold converse with surrounding things are so constructed that each sensation to which they give rise is generated by stimuli applied to them, and of which they are the special mechanism. Taste and smell are confined to certain regions of the mouth and nasal cavities. Eye and ear are the respective organs of sight and sound, while the more generalized sense of touch, although spread much more extensively than the other senses, is, however, restricted to the skin, and to parts of the membranes coating the internal cavities of our bodies.

The sensation of touch is a simple feeling of contact that is associated with information concerning the particular region affected. If the tip of the finger touches a hot metal or a cold, rough surface there emerges a double consciousness. We are not only aware of the existence of these external substances, but we are conscious that they are in contact with the finger tip. The sensation seems to be located in the finger, and we attribute this to the material causing it. But it is different with the higher senses, for when we perceive the perfume of a rose we instinctively look for the flower. Unpleasant smells occasioned by bad drains and other causes outside ourselves are similarly regarded, and even those evil odours which accompany certain diseases of the nose itself—we refer to external agencies. In reality we see and hear in the brain, but we are constrained to attribute these sensations to the objects causing them. And with taste likewise, for as Huxley said:—

When a lump of sugar is taken into the mouth, we are simply aware of a sensation of sweetness and do not associate that sensation of sweetness with any particular part of the mouth, though, by the sense of touch, which the inside of the mouth also possesses, we can tell pretty exactly whereabouts in the mouth the melting lump is lying.

In the course of evolution the special sense areas have been differentiated through the physiological division of labour to minister to peculiar modes of motion. From a primitive lens in the integument of simple organisms the complex organs of vision as they exist in birds, mammals, and others have been progressively developed. The vibrations of the luminiferous ether act on the eye in such a manner that the light rays generate the sensation of sight. The waves which produce such marvellous results when falling upon their appropriate organ evolve no appreciable effect when they come into contact with other areas of the body. In all instances where sensations of a higher order arise each results from the application of a special form of stimulus to its appropriate sense organ, and the arrangement of each organ is so contrived as to render that organ acutely sensitive to its appropriate stimulus.

The sensation of pressure generated when the body is brought into contact with solid substances varies greatly. This pressure sense reaches its maximum on the back of the hand and the skin of the forehead. The finger tip, so sensitive in other respects, is much less responsive to pressure than these bodily areas. And just as there exist "pressure spots," so there are skin regions highly sensitive to heat and cold. Even

in one small section of the thigh, as Goldscheider has proved, there lie many localized areas some of which respond to heat only, while the remainder manifest marked responsiveness to cold. Our cheeks are far more sensitive to warmth than our lips, while the palms of the hands possess a greater sensitiveness to heat than their backs.

Tactile sensibility varies very considerably. Weber's experiments with the tactual sense demonstrate wide differences of discrimination and sensibility. The two points of a pair of compasses, if placed only one-tenth or one-twelfth of an inch apart, will be plainly felt as two when they touch the finger tips. If the same experiment is made with the back of the hand one impression only will be felt. The points may be parted for a quarter of an inch on the arm and still only one impression is felt. But the tongue proves extremely sensitive, for that organ will distinctly distinguish the two points when separated by a mere twenty-fourth of an inch. The cheeks and forehead, however, prove dull percipients when tested in this way, while the compass ends may be placed as far apart as three inches on the back and a single sensation is all we obtain.

Then there is the muscular sense which shows itself amenable to education and improvement. For instance, travellers who carry bags, in course of time more or less unconsciously, learn to carry them with the least possible effort. Many traders know without lifting the approximate weight of the goods before them. As a matter of fact the muscles possess nerve fibres which carry messages to the seat of sensation. As Dr. Barcroft states: "And there is but little doubt that we must look to the impulses generated in these nerves, more especially in the nerves of the tendons, as providing the sensations which form the basis of the muscular sense."

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

## The Twilight of the Gods.

### II.

(Concluded from p. 395).

WE must dismiss the idea that Christianity triumphed over an enlightened and freethinking world. Ancient Freethought, as a matter of fact, flickered out with Lucian in the second century A.D. The weakness of Epicureanism was that it remained a philosophy for the easy and comfortable. Modern Freethought has the advantage of finding a natural, even if unconscious, ally in the democratic movement, which equally has to face the opposition of privileged ecclesiasticism. In the Roman Empire there was no democratic movement, because the basis of industry was slavery, and the slaves were a miscellaneous class drawn from all quarters of the Roman world, without education or the possibility of organization. Epicureanism, therefore, remained the property of those who had hope in this life. After Lucian, the last representative of a dwindling and unpopular school, we meet it no more.

The reason is to be found in the disappearance or enfeeblement of the social class that cherished this philosophy; and this, again, was due to the material decline of ancient civilization. A society whose economic foundation was slave-production, required for its maintenance a continual supply of fresh human chattels, and also an inexhaustible fund of surplus wealth in order to maintain in idleness the destitute freemen for whom there was no work. So long as Rome continued to conquer fresh provinces, both slaves and surplus wealth were virtually inexhaustible. This process, however, reached its inevitable limit in the second century A.D. The time came



when the inflow of slaves began to dwindle, slave-labour became more expensive, and its inefficiency exhausted the soil. At the same time, the cost of defending the Empire increased. The old Roman armies, drawn from the Italian peasantry, and imbued with a genuine public spirit, ceased to exist when that peasantry itself ceased to exist. The legions, from the first century A.D., were drawn more and more from the provincial populations of Gaul, Pannonia, Syria, etc., who naturally felt no loyalty to Rome, and fought only for plunder and rewards. Discipline slackened, efficiency decreased, and the legions had to be continually placated by largesses of money. After the extinction of the Antonine dynasty, the Empire fell into an ever-increasing welter of military anarchy, in which popular generals, usually not even of Roman blood, were proclaimed emperors by their troops, and rode roughshod over the Senate at Rome. Under this system taxation increased, while wealth diminished, and the old land-owning and slave-owning class were steadily impoverished.

It is an empirical law, which we may legitimately infer from a study of history, that classes and communities which live in prosperity and security, or in a lively hope of reaching it, tend to Freethought and Materialism in their beliefs; while those whose security is seriously threatened, or who in any case have no prospect of it, tend to superstition and supernaturalism. Ancient Freethought, accordingly, died out when ancient society began to be faced with impoverishment and ruin. The contrast between the dominant spirit towards the middle of the second century, when Roman prosperity was at its height, and that towards the middle of the third, when the decline was well under way, is very striking. The former age is still, on the whole, one of education and enlightenment. The Emperor Hadrian, in a letter written from Egypt, ridicules the agglomeration of Oriental superstitions which he finds there, the worship of Serapis, Judaism, Christianity, etc., as on one and the same level of absurdity. A century later, we find the Emperor Alexander Severus, himself not a Roman but a Syrian, placing the images of Abraham and Christ in his private chapel, and the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus on the way.

In the third century, therefore, Christianity had not to contend with a dominant Rationalism, but with mystical and theosophical systems on the same plane as itself. Platonism had ceased to be the more or less logical system that Plato had left it, and had become a supernatural religion, appealing to intuition and "ecstasy" instead of to reason. The Greek myths were interpreted as religious allegories, very much as modern Christians try to get over Old Testament absurdities in the same way. The association with an admittedly immoral mythology was, doubtless, an element of weakness to the Pagan religions in their struggle against Christianity. The latter had the advantage of having taken over its own mythology from the Jews, who had already subjected it to a refining process, in the interests of Monotheism, such as the Pagans had not applied to theirs. The Christians were able to use some of the old Epicurean arguments against the Pagan religions, without the Pagans being able to retort with the same amount of effect. The immoralities of the Greek myths were notorious to all; the Hebrew myths, on the other hand, were little studied by the Pagans, and were, in any case, less outrageous to the prevalent Monotheist feeling than the Greek myths were.

However, as we know, it was not the efficacy of propaganda, but the political sequence of events, which eventually turned the scale in favour of Christianity. Once in the ascendant after the "conversion" of Constantine, the Christians were able to turn against their

rivals every weapon of official repression and mob-passion which they had once had to face themselves, with the added incentives of loot—for the Pagan temples were very wealthy—and economy—for animal sacrifices were expensive in an age of increasing penury. The triumph of Christianity was in a sense, as Nietzsche held, the victory of slave-morality, inasmuch as a society which had sought to found civilization on slavery was reduced, by its own consequent enfeeblement, economic, political, and intellectual, to adopt the superstitions and standard of culture of its own slaves. It was very far, however, from being the advent of freedom.

Such was the "twilight of the gods" of the ancient world. In the present age, with important differences, we are passing through a similar transition. Once again the established religion has become for the majority an empty form, to which they adhere out of habit alone. Once again Governments continue to support that religion, merely because the "lower classes" must be kept in order by teaching them myths which the educated discard. Once again the genteel, who in the nineteenth century smiled at scepticism, rally to the support of religion when they feel their security threatened by the workers thinking and acting for themselves. But religion is now challenged, not by a newer religion founded on despair of the world, but by a secular movement based on the possibility of making the world better. We indict no longer this or that myth as immoral, but the whole alleged "plan of salvation." We seek to save, not the individual "soul," but the world's future, not by denying the natural man, but by creating an environment which will unite his interests with those of his fellows and his higher self. As with the old gods, so with the new one:—

Thought made him and breaks him,  
Truth slays and forgives;  
But to you, as time takes him,  
This new thing it gives,  
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom  
and lives.....

One birth of my bosom;  
One beam of mine eye;  
One topmost blossom  
That scales the sky;  
Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me,  
man that is I.

ROBERT ARCH.

### Notes from Scotland.

THE Scottish Reformation Society has sent a petition to the Home Secretary and the Secretary for Scotland protesting against the Roman Catholics in Scotland holding processions in connection with the "Feast of the Sacred Heart." The Society protests against all such public processions as not only contrary to the laws of this Protestant realm, but most repugnant to the feelings of her Protestant population. This is only another sample of the narrow-minded bigotry of religious bodies towards each other. For my part, either the Roman Catholics or the Protestants can "process" till they are black in the face. I hope the Catholics will now object to the open-air meetings held annually at Queen's Park and Bothwell Brig to commemorate the doings of the pig-headed Covenanters and, likewise, to the uproarious processions of the Salvation Army, who certainly do a great deal to disturb the peace of any community they frequent.

Why all this fuss over "Highland Mary's" grave? I am sure Burns would have been the last man, were he alive to-day, to protest against the removal of an old graveyard, to be superseded by a large addition to works where thousands of workmen will earn their daily bread. Surely, our duty now is to look after the living and allow the dead to look after themselves.



Rothsay is distressed over the allegation that Sunday boating and fishing are carried on on Loch Fad.

Hamilton Town Council has decided to have Band Performances in the Public Park on Sundays, the music to be provided by the Military Bands in the district. When will the Glasgow Corporation follow suit?

Some amusing subjects are now announced to draw people into church. Last Sunday noticed one in the Gallowgate, Glasgow, which I thought was rather fetching: "Come in, ye thirsty." No doubt quite a number of the thirsty did not go in.

The Glasgow ministers have not yet devised a scheme to take the place of the Tramway Prize Draw. Last week only £50 was drawn instead of the usual £500. However, the ministers now have the satisfaction of knowing what the public think of their interference.

Has the Lord Advocate got his attention drawn to the prize drawing in aid of the Scottish Churches Huts in France, to take place at the end of the month? If not, why not?

Life in Glasgow this week is just similar to what it was before last Tuesday, although the whole of that day was devoted to prayer by a representative from each of the Christian organizations in the city, including the Salvation Army.

A combatant cleric, writing home from the Front, says the fact that at the present moment in Scotland there are more ministers than are necessary for the spiritual needs of the people was in the days of peace a scandal, but in these bloody days of war it is a crime. Is it absolutely necessary that we should have any, either in peace or war? Any way, why don't the young ones go and fight? It is quite evident they can be done without at home.

Now that the country requires all the taxes she can get, how is it that she does not insist on the Churches paying their fair share? Surely it is an absurdity that Churches get off scot free while hospitals, infirmaries, and all charitable institutions are taxed. Only a few weeks ago the Glasgow W. F. Presbytery were discussing the question of taxation on their manse, which they considered was inequitable while the manse of the Established Churches were entirely free. Churches, as well as manse, of all denominations should be taxed, as they get all the protection and privileges given to other buildings which are taxed. The less the Christians pay, the more Freethinkers have to pay.

In handing over a young man to the Military Authorities at Edinburgh, who claimed to be a regular minister of a religious denomination as he was discharging the duties of an evangelist preacher under the Faith Mission, Sheriff Orr said the position of the missionaries was simply that of itinerant preachers who went from place to place, but left no definite organization behind them. What will our religious cranks not do to evade their clear duties as citizens of the State? It is all very well when they can get other people to fight for them and leave them in safety at home, even though they proclaim that this is a righteous war.

CALEDON.

### L. C. C. Prosecution.

#### THE SALE OF LITERATURE IN PARKS.

At Old Street Police Court yesterday, before Mr. Clarke Hall, there were three summonses issued at the instance of the London County Council against James Neate, of Bethnal Green Road, for unlawfully selling the *Freethinker* without having first obtained in writing the consent of the clerk to the authority.

The defendant was defended by Mr. W. H. Eldridge (instructed by Mr. Charlton Hubbard).

Mr. Haedicke, solicitor, acting for the London County Council, said they did not press for a heavy fine, although the defendant was liable to a penalty of £5 for each offence proved. The proceedings were brought under No. 27 of the Council's by-laws, which provided that no person should sell articles or distribute handbills in the public parks without having consent in writing.

James Joseph Bradley, park-keeper, stated there was a meeting in Victoria Park on May 13, and he saw the defendant selling copies of the *Freethinker*. He told defendant he would be reported, and the reply was, "Very well." Witness bought a copy, and also copies on the other two dates. Defendant had no permit to sell on those dates.

Cross-examined.—There had been no complaint as to the conduct of the persons selling the paper. About twelve months ago witness received notification from the L.C.C. offices that permits to sell any literature had been withdrawn.

Mr. Eldridge.—And it was in consequence of that notification that these summonses have been issued?

Witness.—Yes. That is all I know about it. The defendant had been selling for years, and had permits for the *Freethinker*, among other things.

Mr. Eldridge submitted there was no case. It was admitted, he said, that the defendant had permits to sell literature in the parks, including the *Freethinker*, but now it was said that the park-keeper received notification that the permit had been withdrawn. The point he (counsel) made was that the alleged withdrawal by notice to the officer was not sufficient withdrawal to create an offence unless the defendant also received notice from the L.C.C. He held in his hand letters from that body that the permit was all right, and that he could continue to get a renewal.

A copy of the permit was handed to the magistrate, who remarked, "There is nothing in this permit to limit the time."

The L.C.C. Solicitor.—The park-keeper told him that the permit was revoked, and defendant said, "I know."

Mr. Clarke Hall.—This document is issued, but without any limit as to time.

The Solicitor.—I am afraid I cannot prove that at the moment.

The magistrate said they would go on with the broader issue.

Mr. Eldridge said there was a by-law on the Council's book regulating the question of the sale of literature, and permits were granted, but according to the park-keeper the Council had since thought fit to pass a resolution. He did not know what form it took, but it was sought to show that it had the effect of preventing the sale of literature.

The magistrate asked for a copy of this resolution.

Mr. Haedicke said he had not got it with him.

Mr. Eldridge went on to say that the defendant had had no notice of that resolution having been passed. His other point was that the Council had no right to make such a resolution, as there was a by-law which provided that the Council must deal with applications for permits that came before them. What the Council now said was that, though they had given a permit, they would, by resolution, prevent the sale of literature. It was not suggested there was anything against the character of the literature sold, because it all came before the proper officer, who then decided whether a permit should be granted. So far as he (the learned counsel) knew, there had been no objection to the defendant, who had sold the paper for years. The by-law had been made in pursuance of the London General Powers Acts, and, therefore, the Council must act upon it judicially.

The magistrate pointed out that the by-law was not designed specially against the sale of improper literature. It had to do, among other things, with selling or hiring any article, and was a question as to the parks. Could it not be said that to suit the convenience of the public the Council were entitled to resolve that any article could not be sold there?

Mr. Eldridge replied that what the Council had done was to say this was not proper literature to be sold.

The Magistrate.—I have not seen the resolution. If it was considered undesirable that certain literature shall not be sold they might have the right to say so for all I know.

Mr. Haedicke.—I say that under the by-law the Council have a right to say it shall not be sold.



The Magistrate.—That is true, but it must be done judicially. I think that at the proper time the Council's resolution should be produced. So far, I have no evidence of it.

Mr. Eldridge.—In fact, there is on the Council's agenda a resolution waiting to be considered in order to deal with the whole matter.

The Magistrate.—Why is this particular Society singled out for prosecution?

No answer was given.

Mr. Haedicke said he had not with him the Council's resolution withdrawing permission to sell literature in the parks. He, therefore, asked that the summonses should be adjourned.

After further discussion, it was arranged that the summonses should be adjourned for a week.—*Morning Advertiser*, June 21, 1917.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 21.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Bowman, Brandes, Gorniot, Leate, Palmer, Roger, Samuels, Shore, Thurlow, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes read and confirmed.

The following officers for the ensuing year were elected: General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance; Monthly Auditors, Messrs. Leat and Samuels; Benevolent Fund Committee, Messrs. Leat, Samuels, Roger, Wood, and Miss Kough.

New members were elected for the Sheffield and Swansea Branches and the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported that a cheque for £10, bequeathed to the Society by the late Captain Elvenstone Raggett, had been received.

It was also reported that the London County Council had issued summonses against Mr. Jas. Neate, Secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch, for selling literature in Victoria Park without a permit.

The Protest Committee had engaged a solicitor and counsel for his defence, and the case had been adjourned until June 27 for the L.C.C. to produce further evidence. An appeal for funds from this Committee was discussed, and it was resolved that the N.S.S. contribute £5.

Mr. Cohen reported correspondence between himself and Mr. J. W. Gott, in which the latter informed him of his arrest at Birmingham on a probable charge of blasphemy. The offence was contained in printed matter sold by Mr. Gott. The exact charge was not yet to hand. Mr. Cohen had made himself personally responsible for the engagement of a solicitor to attend the hearing of the case in the police court, and a resolution was carried unanimously endorsing this action. A long discussion followed in which it was pointed out that Mr. Gott was not a member of the N.S.S. and that the Society had no responsibility for the class of literature sold by him, which, apparently, constituted the offence. Mr. Cohen was asked to be present at the hearing of the case, and to report to the Executive, but no unanimous opinion was expressed as to future action.

A somewhat surprising circular on this matter, issued by Mr. Gott, which had not reached the Society officially, was reported, and general disapproval was expressed.

Some matters on the Conference Agenda remitted to the Executive were dealt with, and the remainder adjourned till next meeting.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

### A FUNERAL AT SEA.

They'd run out of fire-bars, or shot, to sink the corpse with, and were rather puzzled what to do until some genius suggested a sack of coal. All went splendidly, but the commander noticed an A.B. laughing in what he considered a most irreverent manner. The culprit was brought before him and asked what he meant by such behaviour. "Well, sir," replied the offender, "I seen a lot o' fellers agoin' to 'E'll before this 'ere. But strike me! 'E's the very first one I see what took 'is fuel along wiv 'im."—*Sea Salt*, "Pearson's Magazine," June, 1917.

### 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.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, July 5, at 7.30.

##### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, R. Miller, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7. E. Burke, "What is Insanity?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Collette Jones, "Secularism: Its Aims and Destiny"

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Miss Kough, "The Old Order Changeth."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Yates and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Hyatt and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Kells, Saphin and Beale.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll; 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 9d. per hundred, post free 1s. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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