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Views and Opinions.

The Decay of Faith.

In dealing with Professor Leuba's *The Belief in God and Immortality*, we were concerned last week with the statistical aspect of the work only. The statistics were, it is true, striking enough. So far as America is concerned—and in this respect there is no reason whatever for assuming that America is different from other countries—the figures showed that Christianity is following the course of other religions. It is dying from the top. The brain is leaving the creed. When half the most educated portion of a community deliberately reject the belief in God and personal immortality it shows, as Professor Leuba says, "the futility of the efforts of those who would meet the present religious crisis by devising a more efficient organization and co-operation of the Churches or by more attractive social features." When the educated intelligence of a country reject such fundamental religious ideas as the belief in a God and a soul, it is idle to think that the situation can be retrieved by mere organization or by disquisitions on social subjects. Save for the degree to which they may arrest the rate of rejection by distracting attention from the main issues, such efforts are, in themselves, evidence of the extent to which first rate mental ability has already departed from the old faith. The rejection of religious belief is, in short, an inevitable accompaniment of civilization. It is "a rejection apparently destined to extend parallel with the diffusion of knowledge and the moral qualities that make for eminence in scholarly pursuits."

* * *

The Utility of Religion.

The eventual disappearance of supernaturalism from civilized society may be taken as a fact. There is no other intelligible explanation to be given of the advance of naturalism on the one hand, and of the modification of supernaturalism on the other. It is not here a question of what is desirable or undesirable, but simply one of observation and inference. True, the process of disappearance bids fair to be a lengthy one, and yet if we

contrast the advance made by rationalistic thought during the very brief period which it can claim to have been an ordered force, with the many centuries during which supernaturalism held control, the advance has been astonishingly rapid. The question, therefore, remaining is the supposed utility of the belief in God and a future life, and to this question Professor Leuba devotes the concluding portion of his book. "Is humanity better off with than without this belief?" he asks, and his answer is that to-day the belief costs more than it is worth. Even in earlier days the same answer might have been given. In nearly every age the indifference of the majority of people to religious influences has been a commonplace of preachers. In moments of stress or of passion earlier generations may have turned to religion, but the occasion over, the non-religious forces of life began to re-exert their influence. To-day the spontaneous resort to religion is no longer observable. In that fateful August of 1914, a people to whom religion was something vital would have flocked to the Churches. What we did see was a complete ignoring of religious forms and formulæ. A nation that had never heard of a God or a future life could hardly have ignored both more completely. Only the professional fussiness of the clergy managed to keep religion in the field of vision.

* * *

Some Home Truths.

On the lack of value of religious beliefs, and also on the social origin of moral ideas and feelings, Professor Leuba is commendably clear and outspoken. The following, for example, is well said:—

Our alleged essential dependence upon transcendental beliefs is belied by the most common experiences of daily life. Who does not feel the absurdity of the opinion that the lavish care for a sick child by a mother is given because of a belief in God and immortality? Are love of father and mother on the part of children, affection and serviceableness between brothers and sisters, straightforwardness and truthfulness between business men, essentially dependent upon these beliefs? What sort of person would be the father who would announce divine punishment or reward in order to obtain the love and respect of his children? And if there are business men preserved from unrighteousness by the fear of future punishment, they are far more numerous who are deterred by the threat of human law. Most of them would take their chances with heaven a hundred times before they would once with society, or perchance with the imperative voice of humanity heard in the conscience.

And here is another deliverance worth citing:—

The heroism of religious martyrs is often flaunted as marvellous instances of the unique sustaining strength derived from the belief in a personal God and the anticipation of heaven. And yet, for every martyr of this sort, there has been one or more heroes who has risked his life for a noble cause, without the comfort which transcendental beliefs may bring. The very present offers almost countless instances of martyrs to the cause of humanity, who are strangers to the idea of God and immortality. How many men and women have in the

past decade gladly offered and not infrequently lost their lives in the cause of freedom, or justice, or science? In the monstrous war we are now witnessing, is there a less heroic defence of home and nation, and less conscious self-renunciation for the sake of others among the non-believers than among the professed Christians? Have modern Christian nations shown a more intense or a purer patriotism than ancient Greece or Rome, where men did not pretend to derive inspiration for their deeds of devotion in the thought of their gods..... The fruitful deeds of heroism are at bottom inspired not by the thought of God or a future life, but by innate tendencies or promptings that have reference to humanity. Self-sacrifice, generosity, is rooted in nothing less superficial and accidental than social instincts older than the human race, for they are already present in a rudimentary form in the higher animals.

These are familiar truths to Freethinkers. To thoughtful Christians they may come with all the force of a new revelation.

* * *

Two Things Needful.

Neither the belief in God nor the belief in immortality are necessary to the wellbeing of mankind. Both these beliefs are rejected by a very large number of educated people, and are with other classes losing their influence. These are the two conclusions driven home by Professor Leuba; and, one may add, the need for his work is a reflection upon the character of our civilization. The battlefields of Europe are showing to day how easily man relapses into the life of the savage on the material plane, and the Churches of Europe demonstrate with equal clarity that we have not proceeded far above the savage in the world of intellect. Nor are the two things so unconnected as a superficial survey might lead one to suppose. In justification of the savage, it might be urged that he knew no better, and could know no better. His gods were the expression of his undeveloped intellect. The retention of "gods" by civilized man admits of no justification. The possibilities of knowing better are here. Two things only are required to realize this possibility and to express its result in life: the desire to know and the courage to speak. And of these, the courage to speak is most needed. For it is idle to pretend that nowadays the profession of religious belief is with a very large number other than pure hypocrisy. And many assist by their silence, even when they do not aid in other directions. Professor Leuba's *Questionnaire* elicited the fact that amongst the scientists of America, fifty-eight out of every hundred have given up all religious belief. If that fifty-eight per cent. could be induced to make their opinions well known, and if their example were to be followed by the scientists of this country, we should find the social status of religion reduced to its legitimate proportions, and, with the destruction of its social status, the final disappearance of supernaturalism would not be very long delayed.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sanctified Piffle.

EVER since the War broke out the divines have been talking and writing nonsense on a scale to which even they had previously been unaccustomed. To a Free-thinker supernaturalism is a subject upon which it is utterly impossible to make any sensible statement because no knowledge about it is obtainable on any terms whatever. When told that a most powerful discourse on the love of God in Christ was delivered the other day by a certain popular preacher, we simply laugh in our sleeve, being well aware that nothing is easier than to wax movingly eloquent on a theme con-

cerning which one is totally ignorant. But the present War has enormously accentuated the nonsensical character of most theological utterances, particularly of those which bear upon the supposed relation of God to the brutal carnage. Generally, we neither use nor admire slang, but "piffle" expresses in so apt and piquant a fashion the true quality of much of what we hear and read about God and the War that we make no excuse for employing it. "The Correspondence of Rev. Prof. David Smith, D.D.," in the *British Weekly* for July 5, is devoted to a discussion of the following series of questions asked by "Rifleman":—

Did God ordain that Abraham Lincoln should die when assassinated by Booth? Is it within our Father's power to frustrate a murderer? Can we trust our lives to him in all dangers? What is the meaning of this sentence (Matt. x. 29): "Even a sparrow does not fall without the Father"? Would it be correct if I added "leave" or "permission"—"without the Father's leave"?

"Rifleman" has been severely wounded in Flanders, and he has formed a resolution to lead henceforth a good life, and try to be a faithful and useful member of the Congregational Church to which he belongs. Dr. Smith congratulates him on the good resolution which he has taken, and hopes he may have courage to carry it out. Then he begins to piffle in the usual pulpit style of the day. He tells this wounded soldier that if he has courage to carry out his resolution he will make the following strange discovery:—

You will then see ever more clearly that your cruel experience has been a gracious visitation of God, and discover that, though it was the wickedness of man that wounded you, the Father's purpose was behind it. It is thus—not by blind argumentation, but by hard experience sanctified by patient faith—that the problems of life are solved; and you will be wise if you concentrate on the indubitable certainties, and meanwhile refuse to be bewildered by riddles which experience alone can answer, and which will never receive their final elucidation in this dimly lighted world, but only in the Eternal Glory.

It is perfectly true that experience is the greatest of all teachers, and that there are problems which experience alone can solve. Man is a being who learns the art of living only by actually living. But the idea that a God of justice and love sends a young man to Flanders and allows him to be severely wounded in "this game of beasts" in order to induce him to form good resolutions is monstrous to the last degree. Do all wounded soldiers make up their minds to turn over a new leaf for the future? If not, what becomes of the Father's purpose behind the grievous event? And what about the millions who have been killed—blown to unrecognizable atoms many of them? Does Dr. Smith believe that their cruel murder is "a gracious visitation of God"? The reverend gentleman admits the existence of riddles which cannot be fully elucidated in this world; but as we have absolutely no knowledge of any other world, it is sheer mockery to predict a final solution in a wholly imaginary "Eternal Glory." The story which Dr. Smith tells of the Free-thinking and free-living Major who took to posing the regimental Chaplain with sceptical conundrums at an officers' mess in India is ridiculously irrelevant. The major said: "That old yarn now, about Jonah and the whale—what do you make of that?" The chaplain replied: "Well, no doubt there are puzzling things in the Bible; but then there are other things which are quite plain. For instance, there is the Seventh Commandment, what do you make of that?" Granting that the incident occurred as related, and that the chaplain scored over his opponent, it has no bearing whatsoever

upon any of the problems raised by "Rifleman." And yet on the basis of that irrelevant tale Dr. Smith says to his correspondent: "So, if you are wise, you will not fret over the ancient antimony of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom." One would like to know what on earth or in heaven Jonah's whale or the Seventh Commandment has to do with God's foreknowledge in its relation to man's freedom? But the article throws no manner of light upon the point.

Now, on the assumption that the Christian God exists and that he made man in his own image, how are we to account for the so-called fact of sin? Dr. Smith sneers at the contention that the Creator "should have so ordered it that man would never have encountered temptation," or that he should have hedged up his path and made it impossible for him to err, and declares that "man was originally created in God's image, his Son, intelligent and free," and that "that necessarily involved the power of self-determination and the possibility of sinning." Then comes the following extraordinary passage:—

No doubt God could have interposed to stay the assassin's hand, but that would have been to make the assassin an automaton, and not a man. So long as man is man, his will is free; and the possibility of sin could have been precluded only by the elimination of man and the reduction of the world to a pile of stocks and stones. Here the question arises whether it would not be better so—whether, in view of all the anguish and woe of sin, the creation of man was not a ghastly blunder.

Ignoring for the moment the testimony of science as to the evolutionary origin of the human race, let us critically examine Professor Smith's theory, which, by the way, is the accepted theological theory of the day. What the Professor maintains is that had Adam been incapable of sinning, "he would not have been man at all, but a machine." Is God, then, a machine? Theologians are all agreed that infallibility and impeccability are two of the attributes of the Supreme Being, in which case, according to Dr. Smith, he is not a moral agent at all, but a machine. Now, the Bible affirms that man was created in God's image and after his likeness; and yet Dr. Smith agrees with Milton in holding that had he been so created, "he would have been 'a mere artificial Adam,' like a figure in the motions (that is, a puppy show), moved not by his own volition, but by an unseen hand pulling the wires." That is to say, had man, like his Maker, been incapable of thinking and doing wrong, he would have been, not a thinking creature, but a machine. Does the reverend gentleman not realize how infinitely absurd such a theory is? Is he not aware that the existence of power and inclination to love and do evil would have been a flaw or defect in man's constitution, or that the slightest impulse to deviate from the path of right and duty would have been a sign of serious imperfection, for which the Creator alone would have been responsible? But the most curious thing of all is that the theory of human freedom has been resorted to by modern theologians in the attempt to relieve the Creator of that moral responsibility. Knowing full well what man is and what his life has always been, they argue that God must have had a high and noble purpose to serve by making him capable of such a life, and knowing also that such an explanation gives rise to problems which they are powerless to solve, they fall back upon another stupid theory, namely, that we must wait for the final elucidation until we reach "the Eternal Glory."

Of course, Professor Smith does not even attempt to answer the wounded soldier's puzzling questions, but says to him, "Refuse to be bewildered by riddles which

experience alone can answer." But experience cannot answer the riddles which disturb "Rifleman's" peace of mind, and the Professor himself admits it. The reverend gentleman admits further that God could have prevented the assassination of President Lincoln had he not set a much higher value upon the freedom of action of John Wilkes Booth, the wicked conspirator, than upon the preservation of the greatest and best man America has ever seen. Would it not have been immeasurably better for the United States and for the world had Booth been an automaton rather than a madman and murderer? Moreover, according to Dr. Smith's teaching, he was God's creature, and he became what he was and performed his dark deed under God's omnipotent and all-wise government of the world. More amazing still, "God created the world with clear foreknowledge of the ensuing tragedy"; indeed, the tragedy was even foreordained, because without it the ultimate issue of richer life and fuller glory in a future life would have been impossible.

The only sensible answers to "Rifleman's" questions are of necessity in the negative. God and his Providence are theological inventions with nothing to support them beyond the bare assertion of the inventors. No Heavenly Father has ever frustrated a single murderer, and experience affords abundant evidence that if we neglect to order our own lives along right lines we shall certainly be overtaken by disaster and ruin. The creation story is a myth. Man has slowly risen in the scale of existence, and moods of tiger and of ape are still strong within him, and are alone responsible for the present deplorable situation in Christendom. What man stands in superlative need of just now is not trust in God and his Providence, but in himself and the glorious potentialities lying latent within him.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Kid-Glove Secularist.

The most efficient, the surest-footed poet of our time.

—Swinburne on Matthew Arnold.

The times are ripening for his poetry, which is full of foretastes for the morrow.

—Augustine Birrell on Matthew Arnold.

The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away.

—Matthew Arnold.

WHEN Matthew Arnold returned from a visit to the United States full of delight at the unbounded hospitality with which he had been received, he told with glee a story of Barnum. The great showman, he said, had invited him to his house in the following terms: "You, sir, are a celebrity. I am a notoriety. We ought to be acquainted." Matthew Arnold was, indeed, a celebrity. From the outset of his literary career he managed to get talked of. Report spoke highly of his Newdigate prize poem on Cromwell, whose memory was then execrated at Oxford. The lines formed a very striking contrast to the Oxford prize poems of his time, which were almost invariably feeble imitations of Pope and Heber, beginning with a sunset or an invocation, and ending with an imaginary millennium and the conversion of the Jews.

Although Arnold's work always attracted the attention of cultured people, he never was a popular poet. With the exception of *The Forsaken Merchant* and *Desire*, which are met with frequently in anthologies, he cannot be said to have gained really extensive notice. The bulk of his verse, outside intellectual articles, is little known; but his work stands, in a remarkable way, the wear and tear of the years, gaining rather than losing as time passes. Its admirers, while they avoided invidious comparisons with Browning and Tennyson, whose work appealed

more powerfully to the average reader, yet thought that in Arnold's intellectuality they found something which attracted them.

Arnold possessed an exquisite tact, a self-restraint in details, which is only paralleled by the great writers. He is so free from the straining after perpetual metaphor. This perfection of style is a very much higher merit than is usually acknowledged. So many poets not only show the lily trembling like a bridal veil, and the wild flower shaking to the music of the waterfall; but they tumble the roses upon the unfortunate readers until, like the guests of Heliogabalus, they are in danger of being smothered. Arnold's use of epithets is masterly:—

His eyes be like the starry lights—
His voice like sounds of summer nights—
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe.

Once more:—

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze;
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.

In Arnold's verse there is an ever-present sense of the largeness and of the austerity of Nature:—

The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars and the cold lunar beams,
Alone the sun arises, and alone
Spring the great streams.

It is said to be a wise child which knows its own father, and so it was with Matthew Arnold. Brought up in a strictly evangelical family, he broke completely and finally with his father's orthodoxy, but retained his admiration for his parent's character. Matthew Arnold had too great a love for the great classical writers to have been long enamoured of the Christian religion. The world in which his favourite classical writers lived, their views of life and death and necessity, met his instincts better than the popular superstition. It must always be borne in mind that he belonged to a very orthodox family, and in religious matters his foes were those of his own household. Yet he held his own way manfully. Writing to his mother in 1863, he said:—

One cannot change English ideas so much as, if I live,
I hope to change them, without saying imperturbably
what one thinks and making a good many people uncom-
fortable. The great thing is to speak without a particle
of vice, malice, or rancour.

In a letter to his sister in 1874, he said:

The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the
reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away.
This I say not to pain you, but to make my position clear
to you.

Nobody can doubt that the writer meant every word that he wrote, and the irresistible inference is that in all his theological works — if, indeed, such playful works can be so called — he intended to work to that end.

In the highest and noblest sense of the word, Matthew Arnold was a Secularist. How essentially his imagination had become secularized is seen in his language about death. Thus, in his monody on his friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, he sings:—

Bear it from thy loved, sweet Arno vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
Their morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale).

In *Geist's Grave*, his fine poem on the death of a favourite dog, he strikes the same iconoclastic note:—

Stern law of every mortal lot,
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where,
But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood, despondent by,

A meek last glance of love did throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die,
Thy memory lasts by here and there,
And thou shalt love as long as we.
And after that thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee.

In his magnificent lines on *Dover Beach* he is explicit enough:—

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear,
And naked shingles of the world.

His language concerning man's relations to Nature is equally striking:—

Streams will not curb their pride,
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings go aside
To give his virtues room;
Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good
man's barge.
Nature, with equal mind,
Sees all her sons at play;
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweeps man away;
Allows the proudly riding and the foundering bark.

His poetry is not wanting in moral profundity:—

Tears are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.

This is an example of his didactic verse:—

The sophist sneers: Fool, take
Thy pleasure, right or wrong.
The pious wail: Forsake
A world these sophists throng,
Be neither saint nor sophist led, but be a man!

The Oxford manner has been described wittily as that of a deity addressing a bug. Arnold added the blessed gift of urbanity. Although no one understood better the value of reticence in literature, he knew the worth of ridicule as a weapon. He realized, as well as Voltaire, that there are delusions for which laughter is the proper cure. Arnold poked fun at the Trinity, and he never showed weariness of the pleasant pastime of bishop baiting. Even the divinity which hedges an archbishop had no terrors for him. He was all his life girding at the Nonconformists, and used to quote his own front name with humorous resignation as an instance of the sort of thing one had to put up with.

Beside his poetry, Arnold wrote much on literature and religion. His theological opinions were not original, for they were adapted from the works of other Rationalists. He also wrote on education, embodying much practical knowledge. In his literary work he admired rather than imitated Sainte-Beuve, the prince of critics. In his prose, no less than in his verse, he cuts out his thought as if in marble. With a strong, haughty, careless grace, he has expressed himself freely. He tells us that Addison's attic elegance "gilds commonplace." Jeremy Taylor is "a provincial Bossuet." Burke is "Asiatic," and Macaulay "a rhetorician." John Stuart Mill is logical, but knows nothing of style; and the Christian Trinity resembles three Lord Shaftesburys.

Arnold was inimitable. He combined, with great poetic gifts, the mental and imaginative resources of a scholar, a philosopher, and a man of the world. His literary work was done in the scant leisure of a busy life, for he was an inspector under the Education Department; but he found time to write prose and verse of enduring value. The muddy streets of men's traffickings chafed him. "O, back to the fields with the dew on them, back to the birds with their singing," his heart cried. And he voiced his regrets in verse of calm pathos and wave-like melody. There are pages redolent

of the breath of sweet English meadows, or the scent from the pines of Switzerland. And rarely has Liberty found a tenderer interpreter or a sweeter singer.

He has the style of the great masters. In the still cool atmosphere of the future, his voice will be clearer, stronger, than it sounds to us amid the alarms of war. We who read him will pass away, but his message of Secularism will remain, a source of strength and joy.

The majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing.

MIMNERMUS.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

Where the miraculous is concerned neither considerable intellectual ability, nor undoubted honesty, nor knowledge of the world, nor proved faithfulness as civil historians, nor profound piety, on the part of eye-witnesses and contemporaries, affords any guarantee of the objective truth of their statements, when we know that a firm belief in the miraculous was ingrained in their minds, and was the pre-supposition of their observations and reasonings.—*Professor Huxley, "Science and Christian Tradition,"* p. 329.

You urge, in vain, that science has given us all the knowledge of the universe which we now possess, while spiritualism has added nothing to that knowledge. The drugged soul is beyond the reach of reason. It is in vain that impostors are exposed, and the special demon cast out. He has but slightly to change his shape, return to his house, and find it "empty, swept, and garnished."—*Professor Tyndall, "Fragments of Science,"* p. 322.

THE contest between science and the mediums—resembling that between the art expert and the faker of antiquities, or the safe-maker and the burglar—has been decided in favour of science; that is, for all reasonable people with an adequate knowledge of the facts. With the fall of Eusapia, the last of the great wonder-workers disappears from public view; even her one-time faithful defender, Sir Oliver Lodge, has not a word to say for her, does not even mention her name, in the whole 400 pages of his latest spiritualistic book, *Raymond*.

The defenders of Spiritualism have, for the most part, retreated from their old positions, leaving the false beards, dirty muslin, rag dolls, phosphorized oil, etc., in the hands of the enemy. They have retreated to what they consider stronger and more easily defended positions. It will be our task to show that the new defences are no more impregnable than the old.

The latest form of Spiritualism relies on Telepathy, or the power claimed for certain people of being able to communicate with other people at a distance by means of the mind. Starting with this belief, they go a step further. They say: "If mind can communicate with mind, irrespective of distance, why should not the mind survive the death of the body, and continue to communicate with the living?" And they further claim, not only that it may be possible, but that it is so; that they do receive messages, and know that they come from spirits of the dead.

Sir Oliver himself came to believe in Spiritualism by way of Telepathy. In an article contributed to last month's *Strand Magazine*, entitled "How I Became Convinced of the Survival of the Dead," Sir Oliver says: "I gradually became convinced of the reality of experimental telepathy between persons in each other's proximity, though not necessarily in contact with each other.....Concerning the immortality of the soul, I was at that time agnostic, and probably quite sceptical. Nor did the question arouse any emotional feeling in my mind. I did not think that we could know, and I felt

satisfied with the fact, whatever it was."¹ After becoming convinced "of the reality of thought-transference," he proceeds, Sir Oliver joined the Society for Psychological Research, where he became the close friend of F. W. H. Myers, the author of *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, that enormous compilation of superstition dealing with hypnotism, mediumship, trances, death-warnings, hallucinations, telepathy, etc. "Under Myers' guidance," says Sir Oliver, "I perceived that telepathy itself, in so far as it demonstrated mental action outside the ordinary channels and organs of sense, implied some promise and constituted some indication of the persistent existence of mind and memory after the bodily vehicle or instrument had been sloughed off." Although not absolutely convinced, says Sir Oliver, "my mind became open to the evidence if it should be forthcoming." The evidence, in Sir Oliver's opinion, was provided by the famous American medium, Mrs. Piper, who crossed the Atlantic on a visit to this country in 1889, at the invitation of Mr. Myers, and with whom Sir Oliver held several sittings. "It now began to appear to me," he proceeds, "that although a brain and nerve mechanism and a muscular organism were as needful as ever for effective and demonstrable communication between mind and mind, yet that it was possible to use such an organism vicariously, and that identity of instrument was not absolutely essential so long as some physiological instrument was available. In other words, that the brain and organism of a living person might be utilized by deceased personalities whose own body had ceased to work. Mrs. Piper went into a trance, and seemed, as it were, to vacate her body for a time. In this condition it appeared temporarily revived, not by her own personality but by another; and this secondary personality, or whatever it ought to be called, was able to manage what they call 'the machine,' so that through her bodily mechanism communications were received from persons deceased but still apparently mentally active and retaining their personal memory and affection, though now able to display them only in a fragmentary and imperfect manner" (pp. 565-6).

It is quite intelligible, in theory at least, that the brain might be capable of sending out waves of energy comparable with those used in wireless telegraphy, although there is no evidence that will stand scientific examination that one brain has ever communicated with another at a distance by this means. But how on earth is one brain going to communicate with another, when one of them is dead and turned to ashes? One could as easily believe that two wireless stations could continue to communicate after their destruction. And as for the medium "vacating her body for a time" and allowing it to be possessed by spirits of the dead, why, this is going back to the Middle Ages, when the Church exorcized evil spirits from the possessed; or the first century, when devils were cast out of men into pigs!

We have, then, to consider the evidence for Telepathy, and then the evidence for communication with the dead. It will be admitted that Telepathy is not a fact of everyday experience. The diplomatist has not the slightest fear that anyone will read his secret thoughts, and the criminal makes his plans in similar security. Millions are invested in telegraph cables and wireless telegraphy, which would be rendered useless if mind could communicate with mind regardless of distance. Many have claimed to possess the power, but there is not a single living person to day claiming this power who will consent to be tested by a competent scientific committee.

The last public exponents of thought-reading were the Zancigs, who excited a great deal of interest with their performance in London, at the Alhambra Music

¹ *Strand Magazine* (June, 1917), p. 564-5.

Hall, in December, 1906. Mr. and Mrs. Zancig came over from America, like the Davenport Brothers, Slade, Home, Mrs. Piper, and many others. The English climate does not appear suitable for rearing really great mediums; we import them. Eusapia Palladino was an Italian, and Madame Blavatsky a Russian; and if we are to have Tariff Reform, the Government might do worse than put a heavy tax on these imports.

The Zancigs claimed to be able to read each other's thoughts. Mr. Zancig claimed that what he saw, Mrs. Zancig saw; that, in fact, they were two minds with one single thought. They had previously toured the United States with their performance without exciting more than ordinary attention, but in London they caught on. This was due to the late Mr. Stead, who wrote in his *Review of Reviews* (December, 1906): "I can say without hesitation that the Zancigs at the Alhambra Music Hall gave a more conclusive demonstration of the power of telepathy than is to be found in all the literature of the subject. On each of the two occasions on which I experimented with them in private, the results were the same as those witnessed by anybody at the Alhambra. The only difference was that at the experiments in private I had ample opportunity to impose conditions which rendered fraud or trickery impossible."

Mr. Sinnett also testified to their powers, and Mr. Harold Begbie recorded his conviction that the Zancigs obtained their results by the aid of hypnotism; but it is doubtful if he knew what he was talking about, for how being hypnotised would enable one to read another's thoughts is past all understanding. But the usual nemesis waited upon the Zancigs' initial success. Mr. Stuart Cumberland, the cleverest exponent of thought-reading, wrote to the *Daily Chronicle* (December 31, 1906), declaring that the Zancigs used a code of words and signs, and that if they wished to demonstrate their power of thought-transmission, they must submit to test conditions under which they would be unable to use a code either verbal or by sign. Upon this the *Chronicle* sent to arrange for a test meeting with Mr. Zancig. They were met with an absolute refusal; no test meeting could be arranged for love or money. When Mr. Stead wished to test their powers, they received him with open arms; but then Mr. Stead did not require any proof of Telepathy—he was a firm believer already. But when Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who disbelieves in Telepathy—and, what is more, knows all the tricks of the so-called thought-readers—asked for a test, he was indignantly refused.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

The Altar Boy Alters.

ABOUT eighty years ago, my maternal grandmother, then a young Scottish woman of the Protestant faith, had a Catholic girl companion. Through attending Catholic services, reading Catholic literature, and talking with her companion, my grandmother changed her religion. She married a Protestant who "turned" with her, and they had a large family, each one of whom married in the Church, so from that first "conversion" a full hundred Catholics have been reared.

I, however, am the one black sheep who has dared—as did my grannie of sainted memory—to question and reject inherited opinions. When I was sixteen, some quarter of a century ago, I first saw the *Freethinker*. It was on one of the tables of our local reading-room (doubtless it took a struggle to get it placed there). I picked it up just out of curiosity, for I did not then know what a Freethinker was. I opened it at a "Comic Bible" type of article, and was horrified to see in cold

print allusions to J. Christ, Esq., Mr. H. Ghost, and "blasphemies" of a like nature. Being a Catholic lad, an altar boy, and thoroughly well "pithed" from birth, I was profoundly shocked. Yet I went back again to read the "*Freethinker*," and soon became a convinced Atheist.

I have taken care to mention exactly what fascinated me, for I have frequently heard good Freethinkers disapproving of ridicule as a propagandist weapon. It is no use registering our impressions unless we do so without the faintest deviation from verity. At first I thought of the infidel scribes as low, immoral scoundrels who ought to be boiled in oil; and yet, had the number of the paper which I first saw contained nothing but scientific and philosophical essays, I would have disregarded it. Nowadays, I am not much tickled by jokes about Jonah and the whale, Joshua and the sun, etc.; yet, I think, I have demonstrated of what value that type of criticism is with young minds. Once knock on the head the "reverence" for the ridiculous, and you have gone a long way towards sanity.

The *Freethinker* became a great educational influence to me. Practically everything I have read in the Rationalist way, I owe to the brave little paper. Although never a public man, I have had many a great fight for my principles, but I have never capitulated; "my head has been bloody but unbowed."

After twenty years' fairly strenuous fighting for "advanced" ideas, I have been driven to the conclusion that it is no earthly good trying to do anything with those who, while hankering after freedom, wish to retain the shackles of superstition. My political creed is that all authority has to be questioned, and God is the first dogmatist from whom all authority comes; therefore, let us begin with clearing men's minds of childish opinions and speculations. We can have no real progress without a rational people.

I have a pretty good list of "converts" (I always insist on them becoming subscribers), and I have a small Secular Society at home, where I have four "howling Atheists" who have had a great deal of instruction in religion—from their mother and myself. Reversing the Jesuit principle that if a child is trained under them until it is seven years old, it is safe against irreligion, we have never allowed our children to go to school. My oldest is nine, and his views on God and Creation are extremely diverting. There are many Freethinkers to whom I should say, Start your propaganda first at home. See what my grandmother did for the Church. Think what I may have done for Freethought.

J. EFTEL.

MATTER AND THOUGHT.

That "blind, unconscious matter could not think" was held as a victorious argument, in spite of the assumption implied in the epithets (for the aphorism amounts to this—blind matter cannot see, unconscious matter cannot be conscious). To anyone who looks steadily at the question, however, it may be shown that, as a matter of fact, the nervous tissue, and that only, being sensitive, the biological proposition simply is: "Sensitive matter can be sensitive." To claim for this nervous tissue any superadded entity called Thought is to desert the plain path of observation for capricious conjecture. As well call Strength an immaterial principle superadded to muscular tissue. The muscular action and the nervous action are two special phenomena belonging to special tissues. Science can tell you no more. If your mind is dissatisfied therewith, and demands more recondite explanation, invent one to please yourself, and then invent one for heat, for attraction, for every phenomenon you conceive; the field is open; imagination has wide-sweeping wings; but do not palm off your imagination as science!—*George Henry Lewes, "Comtes Philosophy," p. 201.*

Acid Drops.

We heartily congratulate the Sheffield shopkeepers on their victory over the bigotry of the Watch Committee. A little while back an attempt was made under the Lord's Day Observance Act to prohibit Sunday trading. An association was formed for the purpose of fighting the authorities, and, for the time being at least, the Watch Committee has surrendered. Ninety-two shopkeepers were summoned for trading on Sunday. On behalf of the shopkeepers, Mr. Clement Edwards started by applying for summonses against the following people for following their usual vocation on Sunday, or for "aiding and abetting" :—

The publishers of the two local papers for printing them on Sunday last for sale on Monday.

The Lord Mayor and leading members of the Watch Committee for aiding and abetting by purchasing the paper on Monday.

The lodge-keeper at the Botanical Gardens for following his usual occupation on Sunday.

The town trustees, including Sir Samuel Roberts, M.P., Sir William Clegg, J.P., Sir Joseph Jonas, Sir William Mappin, for aiding and abetting by providing the lodge-keeper with his wages.

The Rev. E. R. Everson, as editor of a local church magazine, for offering the magazine for sale on Sunday.

His warden, Mr. C. Birks, for selling a copy on Sunday for rd.

A city park keeper for following his usual vocation on Sunday, and the Lord Mayor for aiding and abetting by providing funds for his wages.

As a result of this move, the Watch Committee withdrew all the summonses against the shopkeepers, and there for the moment the matter rests. We hope that other towns will follow the example set by Sheffield.

We understand that the Watch Committee propose approaching Parliament for further legislation on the matter. We hope this is so, as an expression of opinion, *pro* or *con*, would be helpful. We expect that it would mean the clearing away of a piece of legislation that ought to have been abolished long since. There is no genuine public demand for these restrictions. They are purely police prosecutions, engineered by some local bigots and busybodies who have influence with the leading officials. The maintenance of these Sunday laws, and the vexatious prosecutions to which they lead, is an example of the evil done by maintaining on the Statute Books laws which belong to another age altogether. They serve no purpose save that of giving bigotry and malevolence an opportunity to express themselves.

Even newspaper editors sometimes let the cat out of the bag. The *Evening Standard* says: "We could never get a decent education system because of the fight of bigoted Churchmen and Dissenters, representing a mere fraction of the general population and but a small part of their own body." We have said the same thing for many years; but it will bear repetition.

Miss Rebecca West, whose delightful articles illuminate the sober pages of the *Daily News*, has some very pertinent remarks on the clerical statement that the ordeal of war is for the moral uplifting of the nation. Miss West retorts crushingly that this "suggests the appalling conception of a Providence who is capable of deluging Europe with the blood of the innocent and the gifted in order to bring a man home from a night-club."

That some of the clergy are not overworked is shown by a newspaper paragraph which states that two parishes in the Oxford diocese contain four houses and thirteen houses respectively. The two parishes are combined in one living.

In some interesting reminiscences of the late Sir Herbert Tree, Mr. Harold Begbie states that the great actor remarked, "All the harm in the world has come from taking God too seriously." There is much truth in the statement.

Logic is not usually a strong point with pious folk, but one seldom finds so flagrant a contradiction as appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. Harold Begbie, writing of the London air-raid, said: "The Englishman does not rave, and does not call upon Jehovah." In another column of the same issue, Mr. Hall Caine, describing the raid, said: "It was an awful spectacle of unbridled wrath. The women shrieked at the police and almost spat in their faces. 'Christ, let us pay those German devils for killing our children. If the Government won't do it, by God, we will.'"

Two churches were damaged in the London air-raid. As one was Catholic, and the other Church of England, it shows the impartiality and indifference of Providence.

A writer in the *Paris Revue Bleue* pens an appreciation of the English Universities, and remarks on the "atmosphere of leisure and slow development" of Oxford and Cambridge. The writer has hit the nail on the head, for Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* was a text-book in those seats of learning for nearly a century; several generations after the work was hopelessly out of date.

The Government has agreed to a watering down of the beer. Not to be behindhand, the House of Convocation has agreed to a wholesale watering down of the Church Service, deleting a number of Biblical references that are offensive to modern ears and modern intelligence. Light beer and easy doctrine seems now the order of the day.

Mr. Sidney Low writes in the *Contemporary Review* on the probable revival of Arabian culture. He only does them justice in pointing out the high civilization the Mohammedan Arabs developed in both Europe and Asia in the Middle Ages. Here is a passage that Christian readers would do well to ponder :—

Where they conquered they knew how to establish a settled administration which did not rest entirely upon military power; they fostered agriculture, trade, manufactures, irrigation; they had good laws and good judges; they showed a high respect for art, learning, literature, science, and philosophy. They were the inheritors of that ancient Semitic civilization, older than Christianity or Mohammedanism, older even than Rome and Greece, which, with its Hellenic and Iranian tincture, seemed at one time destined to prevail all round the Mediterranean lands and far beyond them.

To complete the picture, it only needs to point out the period above named coincided with the most uncivilized period of European history. But the uncivilized portion of Europe was Christian. That's all.

The exemption from military service of the clergy and their satellites is still going on. At Lambeth Police Court a Church of England lay-assistant was exempted, and a similar course was taken with regard to his brother. Yet conscientious objectors are penalized, and even threatened with loss of the vote in Parliamentary elections.

Thirty-five religious societies, including representatives of the Church of England, Free Churches, the Salvation Army, the Roman Catholics, and others, waited on the Home Secretary in order to press forward the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which deals with the social evil. What a commentary on the pathological religious mind! At a time when the nation is struggling for its very existence these pious folk are interesting themselves in the question of prostitution. "An ounce of civet, good apothecary."

The Rev. Dr. Charles Brown, minister of Ferme Park Baptist Church, London, devoted his morning sermon on Sunday, the 8th inst., to a discussion of the air raid of the previous day, in the course of which he delivered himself of the following "wonderfully uplifting" message: "You may be quite sure that it is not God's will that bombs should fall on innocent people. I think there is a call in it to us to provide such means that the invader shall be driven back into the sea, and not to whine about God permitting it." From such a statement the inevitable inference is that there is

nothing so "wonderfully uplifting" to a Christian congregation as a public insult offered by its minister to the God they both pretend to believe in and worship as the Supreme Ruler of the world. The sermon was clearly a tacit denial of the absolute and invincible Divine Sovereignty in which preachers used to glory so loudly not so long ago. Dr. Brown's one lesson from the recent disastrous raid is, not that we should trust in God's care and protection, but, rather, that we ourselves should devise the means as shall render such raids impossible in the future. We fully agree with him; but where does God come in at all?

One part of the Christian teaching is that God can change the hearts of men, and that being so, it is possible for him to affect the hearts of the Germans so as to cause them to abandon the practice. Apparently, all he does is to move the Allies to drop bombs on German women and children, so that when enough have been killed, both sides will agree to "drop it" in another and healthier sense.

Having explained why God does nothing, Dr. Brown next declares that God has done something. He has prevented the realization of the German plans. But how has he prevented that? And if he could prevent that, why not have prevented the other? Dr. Brown should make up his mind which position he is upholding, and what kind of a God it is that he believes in. All that we gather is that his God can interfere when he has a large army to help him, but he cannot interfere when it is a matter of looking after women and children with no army to help. Blasphemy is, legally, holding up the Christian God to ridicule or contempt. All we can say is, that Dr. Brown's God is ridiculous, and if he escapes contempt, it can only be because he fails to rise to its level. That may be blasphemy, but it is also common-sense.

The War, with all its attending horrors, is either an expression of God's will or a wicked violation of it. If the former, who can believe in such an Almighty Fiend? If the latter, then God is discredited for ever as the embodiment of the most contemptible impotence. In either case, the Christian God is an utterly impossible being, and believers in him can be but the most pitiable gulls of superstition. When Dr. Brown practically ignores his superstitious creed, he is eminently sensible; but he is not sensible enough to wholly disavow such a creed.

The *Daily Sketch* states that in the porch of a Young Men's Christian Association hut a poster of a theatrical garden party was displayed. Why not? The Y.M.C.A. huts are places of entertainment.

The Bishop of Hereford, who is eighty-three years of age, has announced his intention of resigning next year. The position is worth £4,200 yearly, which is more than Judas obtained for the Founder of the Christian religion.

"Many war memorials are in questionable taste," says the Dean of Worcester. Was he thinking of the twopenny war-shrines?

The Bishop of Southwark wants the paltry sum of £3,000 "at once" for spiritual work in munition areas in his diocese. The revival of religion appears to be a costly matter.

In the ages of faith the laying-on of hands was supposed to confer spiritual benefit; but the process is now more simple. In Billy Sunday's New York crusade, he persuaded 60,000 people to shake hands with him. After pump-handling such a vast number, Billy must have been tempted to tell the rest of the crowd to go to the place he preaches of.

Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Junior, offered a prayer at one of Billy Sunday's meetings, and thanked the Almighty that so many people were not interested in "money-making." It is only natural that he should feel grateful, for it gives himself and his father so much more chance of securing the dollars.

Everybody agrees that it is a good thing to diminish the present rate of infant mortality. Having brought babies into the world, it seems a sheer waste of human endeavour to hurry so large a number out again. All the same, the sooner the movement is relieved of cranks, faddists, pious old ladies, district visitors, and professional philanthropists, the better. These people threaten to worry the life out of the poor, and it is only the poor on whom they bestow their attentions. Suburbia is safe, and the upper world is safe. No one would have the impertinence to offer advice there. It is the poor who are badgered, and we can picture some exasperated mothers battering the heads of some of the visitors with the very babies on whose welfare they are being advised.

After all, poor mothers are not less affectionate towards their children than wealthy ones. And if the difference in the death-rate of the two classes is largely due to a change in home and income, the line of improvement is at once given. To perpetuate miserable homes and hand out tracts or establish nursing societies to counteract the ills the miserable homes produce, is obviously futile. It is the policy of a society not sufficiently strong in its brutality to ignore an evil, not wise enough to see the way out, and not unselfish enough to act on it even if it did. Charitable effort is a poor apology for perpetuated evil, although it is often the principal condition of its continuance.

The objection of the Convocation of Canterbury to the "cursing" psalm is that it is unchristian; but is there anything worse in the Old Testament than the Gospel text: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels"?

The Church Army is asking for "several hundred new clergy and laity as volunteers for hut work." It would be better if the Church Army advertised for waiters, and paid them proper wages.

A Y.M.C.A. official, responsible for book distribution among the troops, is making a special appeal for the works of modern essayists. Apparently the Bibles which are so plentifully supplied to the soldiers are not much to their taste.

A memorial service to the memory of Sir Herbert Tree was held at the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on July 11. The Bishop of Birmingham delivered an address, and remarked that he would not enter into the eminent actor's religious opinions, which we must take as a tactful admission that Sir Herbert's belief in Christianity was a *minus* quantity. We may rest assured that had it been otherwise, the fact would have been dwelt on. Sir Herbert Tree's last words were, according to the Bishop, "Will you open the window?" We do not think very much religion can be extracted from that.

At Rossyth some pious folk desired a new church. But permission to employ the necessary labour had to be obtained from the Ministry of Munitions, and a letter was received in reply stating that the Admiralty had been communicated with to obtain their opinion as to whether the increased output expected at Rossyth as a result of the extra spiritual facilities provided would compensate for the demand on labour to erect the church. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who narrated the incident in the House of Lords, said he could not make out whether the letter was sarcastic or silly. But as permission was given, we assume the letter was simply silly.

The *Times* laments the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. Its Dublin correspondent writes that Unionists are "alarmed," and that "The authority of the Churches, hitherto accepted as a sure bulwark of conservatism, seems to be crumbling in many parts of the country." And, of course, if the Churches cannot keep the people "in order," those who find the money for their support may wonder what they are paying for.

To Correspondents.

- A. L. M.—We really do not know what was the bishop's line of argument, hence our reply to your question. Thanks for congratulations concerning the *Freethinker*.
- D. NICHOLLS.—(1) The Secretary of the N. S. S. will send anyone a badge who writes for it. It is intended primarily for members of the N. S. S., but there is no objection to unattached Freethinkers wearing it. (2) We are pleased to think that we have many friends like yourself who would not forgo the *Freethinker* even if it were a shilling a copy. Sorry to hear of your loss.
- We regret that owing to a printer's error, the signature to the letter on "Socialism and Religion," in our last issue, should have been N. Streimer, not "M. Streimer" as printed.
- G. GROVE.—Pleased to know that your newsagent sold all his copies of the *Freethinker*. We hope all newsagents will have a similar experience.
- W. PANCOTT.—We are always ready to publish a criticism of any article which appears in this journal, but a letter which merely expresses dissent does not carry the matter any further.
- BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: II. Spence, 5s.; H. Reeve, 2s. 6d.
- W. MATHER.—Thanks. We hope one day to avail ourselves of your kindness.
- E. E. STAFFORD.—We hope to publish in the course of two or three weeks. Pamphlet sent.
- W. C. DODD.—We cannot say if we have subscribers in Rhyl. May probably order through newsagents. All that can be said of the Duke of Argyll is that he is a good Christian. Many will think that enough.
- W. DENTITH thanks those friends who have been good to send him parcels of the *Freethinker* for distribution among the troops.
- A. T. (Birmingham).—Have sent on your letter to Mr. Mann. We intend reprinting as soon as possible.
- J. T. W. (Forest Gate).—Next week. Crowded out of this issue.
- W. DODD.—Address 107, Morley Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. There will be an opportunity to help the *Freethinker* presently.
- The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- 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 Pioneer Press is now offering for sale two books of great interest to Freethinkers. The first of these works, *Darwinism To-day*, by Prof. V. L. Kellogg, is a careful discussion of the present position of Darwinism in relation to recent theories of the formation of species. The book contains exactly what those interested on the subject require, and presents the present day position of Darwinism in a clear light. Originally published at 7s. 6d. net, the book is a handsome volume of 400 pages, and is offered at 3s., postage 5d. Only a limited number of copies are available.

Dr. E. G. Hardy's *Studies in Roman History* is a work in 2 vols., and while appealing to a more limited circle than Professor Kellogg's book, is of considerable importance. The first volume is confined almost wholly to a study of the posi-

tion of Christianity in the Roman Empire, with special reference to the persecutions. The second volume is concerned with a study of Roman military affairs and kindred topics. *Studies in Roman History* is a careful and scholarly work, and was published in 1910 at 12s. net. The two volumes are for sale at 3s. 9d., postage 6d.

We learn from a South Wales correspondent that great interest is being shown in the *Freethinker* and its message by the men employed on the railway at Swansea. Some of the officials are doing what they can to arrest the loss of faith which is apparently imminent by circulating some startling literature in the shape of tracts bristling with threats of hell, and if these efforts were intended to cause merriment, one would have to compliment these zealous Christians on their success. Meanwhile, we suggest to all interested that they should get into touch with the Local Branch of the N. S. S. with as little delay as possible.

Mr. Noah Bailey writes that our paragraph in the *Freethinker* for July 8, respecting his appearance before the magistrate at Marlborough Street Police Court, does him an injustice. He says he was not fined £10, but only bound over to be of good behaviour for six months. Mr. Bailey also says that he was not charged with using "scurrilous language," and that the paragraph, therefore, misrepresents him. We have not the slightest desire to misrepresent Mr. Bailey or anyone else, and we regret our error in saying he was fined £10. We presume the fact is that he was bound over in his own recognisance to that amount. And if Mr. Bailey will re-read the paragraph he will see, perhaps, that "scurrilous and offensive speech" is applied to Christian Evidence speakers as a whole. Moreover, as Mr. Bailey points out that he was bound over to keep the peace for six months, we must assume that our description of his language as being calculated to promote a breach of the peace is an accurate one.

"One who does not know" writes in the *Daily Mail* of July 11 protesting against men entering the Army having to write themselves down as professing some sort of religion. He says:—

We are supposed to be a "free" people, fighting the greatest fight ever known for the purpose of freedom, and yet we (alone, I believe, of all the nations engaged in this tremendous conflict) are ourselves in fetters in the matter of "religion."

We quite sympathize with the spirit of the letter, but "One who knows" is not quite correct in thinking that a soldier must write himself as a member of some religious sect. He can insist upon being entered as Freethinker, Agnostic, or Atheist, if he prefers one of these terms. Unfortunately, all men, and all officers, are not aware of this. But it is certainly time that Britain followed the example of France and left religion out altogether. There is nothing the matter with the French Army without God, and it will hardly be maintained that the British Army needs this extra stimulus.

The *Musical Standard* for July 8 reprints from these columns Mr. Farmer's article on "The Musical Scale in Primitive Culture." The source of the article is duly acknowledged.

At the last meeting of the Camberwell Borough Council a proposal to accept the offer of the Carnegie Trust to clear off a debt of about £5,000, providing the Council appointed a chief librarian, and brought the library up to date by the purchase of a number of new books, was passed unanimously. Councillor A. B. Moss pointed out the danger of accepting such a proposal until they knew something of the person who was likely to be appointed as chief librarian, and whether he was likely to be a person who was up to date in his knowledge of books, and of an independent type of mind, who would not fear to purchase books of an advanced character, no matter how much they might offend certain members of the libraries' committee. He could not forget the fact that certain professional and amateur theologians—members of the committee—removed the *Freethinker* from the tables of our libraries, notwithstanding the fact that that paper was the best informed journal before the public dealing with the

latest deductions of modern science on philosophy and religion. He also remembered the hostility of many members of the committee towards some of the publications of "The Rationalist Press Association." He reminded them that a man who was not up to date in his knowledge of the evolution of religious beliefs must also be out of date on sociology and other subjects, because there was a unity of evolution relating to all forms of belief.

Special.

THERE were two trials for "Blasphemy" at Birmingham last week. J. W. Gott was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment for publishing a pamphlet called *Rib-Ticklers*, and J. Riley was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment for using "blasphemous" language in the Bull Ring. In Mr. Gott's case there were two trials. The first, on July 11, resulted in the jury disagreeing, and a new trial was ordered. This took place on the 14th, and a verdict of guilty was secured.

Now that these cases are disposed of, it is possible for me to write more fully on the matter than when I referred to it in the *Freethinker* for July 1. What I have to say now cannot prejudice Mr. Gott in the eyes of anyone who cared to help, and if I could not advise that the Freethought Party should support, I was desirous of doing nothing that should injure him.

When Mr. Gott first wrote me, on June 13, I had not seen the pamphlet which was the subject of the prosecution, but I undertook the responsibility for the expenses of the Police Court proceedings, so that he might, as I said, have fair play. I also went down to Birmingham for the hearing, had a lengthy consultation with the solicitor, and discussed the question of what could be said in defence. But it should be understood that what was done was in response to an appeal for advice and help, and did not in any way commit the N.S.S. That opens up a very different situation.

Let me say at once, and I desire to say it as lightly as possible, but quite plainly, that in my judgment Mr. Gott's pamphlet was indefensible from any point of view. It was coarse and offensive; it was devoid of argument; and I cannot conceive any cause being advanced by its publication. As I said this quite plainly to Mr. Gott himself, I have not waited for his imprisonment to express this opinion.

But it seemed to me that the time had arrived when a clear policy should be adopted by the N. S. S. in this class of case. They nearly always—if not always—crop up in connection with unauthorized speakers and propagandists; and either the Society must commit itself to defending an indefinite number of people charged with "blasphemy," and, so to speak, follow them about the country with an open cheque-book, or we must make up our minds what we will defend and what we will leave alone. It is a decision the responsibility of which I fully appreciate, and I should have been glad had it fallen upon other shoulders. But one cannot be President of the N. S. S. without shouldering responsibilities; and while I can do without them, I hope I shall never run away from them.

So after carefully thinking the matter over, I decided that I could not advise the Society to undertake the defence of this case, or these cases. And I suggested to the Executive two principles that should govern its decisions, and which met with its approval.

First, where the language complained of by the prosecution as offensive would not be considered offensive if applied to a subject other than Christianity, the prosecution should be resisted as a discrimination in favour of religion and against Freethought. We neither desire nor

do we encourage offensive speech. It is discrimination in favour of religion to which we object.

Second, where the language complained of forms part of a reasoned attack on Christianity we may resist a prosecution on the ground that it is aimed at the opinion which is the subject of the argument rather than the particular words singled out for complaint. This need not involve a justification of the particular words on which the indictment is based, but it does enable us to say clearly that the offensive language is only an excuse for attacking Freethought opinions.

Unfortunately, the Birmingham case admitted of no such defence. Had the language of Mr. Gott's publication been connected with any other subject than that of Christianity it would have been highly reprehensible. Being what it was, I could advise no other course than the one pursued. The Executive of the N.S.S. fully endorsed this view, so have all who have written me on the subject, and I think I may say that every responsible person would who was cognizant of the language used in the publication.

It is a pity that it should be necessary to make this statement, but it is better to say a thing publicly when it must be said. There can then be no misunderstanding. Mr. Gott, too, would be well advised to modify the nature of his propaganda in the future. He is not wanting in courage, and I believe he is earnest enough in the cause. But both qualities need to be yoked with judgment and tact if they are to be productive of good.

Finally, it must not be taken that what has been said—and I am saying this as much on behalf of the N.S.S. Executive as on my own—is in any sense an endorsement of the maintenance of the Blasphemy Law. This is an iniquity and a disgrace to a country that calls itself civilized. While it exists it is a menace to freedom of thought, and it ought to be swept out of existence. What has been said only amounts to saying that the cases which are taken up by the N.S.S. must be such as can be defended with credit to itself and the Freethought cause. But we cannot and will not place ourselves at the mercy of any person whose temper, or lack of taste, leads them to use language in attacking religion that would not be tolerated by people in connection with other subjects. And I, for one, hope that this plain indication of the Society's position will have a restraining influence where it is most needed.

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

"The Fool Hath Said."

"THERE is no God," the fool hath said,
In wrath and misery;

"For lo, the heavens are as brass,
And none doth answer me."

"There is no God," the scientist saith
"But only natural laws,
Without beginning or an end,
And red are Nature's claws."

"There is a God," the bishop said,
"Lord of the human mart;
His throne is built on flesh and blood
Give unto him your heart."

"I don't know," the Agnostic said,
"If God exists or not,
I cannot worship in blind faith
The God of Cain and Lot."

"But this I know, the world might be
A paradise indeed,
If man would love his brother-man,
And not a priest-made creed."

The Sense Organs of Man.

IV.

(Concluded from p. 443).

As already intimated, all the senses contribute in the building up of mind; but, perhaps, the sense most essential to the complete acquirement of mental power is the sense of sight. Physically considered, a disturbance is set up in the brain when we become conscious of the presence of surrounding objects. In a condition of coma or deep sleep, in which dreams are wholly absent, the brain enjoys perfect repose. And after the restoration of consciousness we possess not the slightest remembrance of anything having occurred during the interval embraced by the period of profound slumber. All the knowledge, then, that mortals possess has been obtained during their waking hours.

All modes of sentiency, save in their dimmest states, consist in perceptions of differences and agreements. The active human brain, however busy, is the constant recipient of new messages from the outer world which require and normally receive attention. The areas of the brain, which respond to visual impressions when they receive a stimulus from the eye that denotes the presence of danger, proceed to send a message to the muscles which directs them to move into a position of safety.

A large amount of mystery is still in many minds associated with the circumstance that after a limb has been amputated, a pain may be seemingly felt in hands or feet that have been severed from the body. But during our own individual existence, and throughout the lives of our countless ancestors, whenever the nerves of the upper or lower extremities have been irritated a sensation has been sent to the brain. Now, even when a limb has been separated from the body the nerves above the amputated part remain, and, as a result, whenever these are subjected to a stimulus a message is despatched to the sensorium along the nerves which reproduces the impression that originally arose when sensitive toes and fingers formed part of the body. Both individually and ancestrally the brain has been trained to associate certain sensations set up along given channels with pains in fingers and toes, so that one may still seem to suffer pain in organs no longer present.

The stimulus and the ensuing sensation are linked together as cause and consequence. As a matter of fact it is utterly unthinkable that any state of consciousness, whether in the form of thought, emotion, or any other sensation, can arise apart from some external influence. When a hungry boy sees an appetizing apple a desire to devour it appears immediately in his mind. He seizes the apple and greedily eats it, and the entire performance seems quite simple while it is really very complicated. First, there exists the condition of consciousness termed hunger, then arises the added sensation supplied by the sight of the apple, and later, when the pippin reaches the mouth, a highly involved message is sent from the tongue and mouth muscles to the brain which then directs the movements of the tongue and teeth in masticating and swallowing the fruit. But these instinctive movements do not occur when no craving for food exists. The brain must inform us of our hunger before these instinctive processes can be carried out.

Many parts of the body participate in informing the brain that the stomach needs replenishing. So that in addition to the messages sent to the sensorium by the superior sensory organs there are the messages forwarded from the internal body—the stomachic sensations, as G. H. Lewes called them.

With reference to impressions derived from the external world, some initiate instinctive actions, while others occasion thought. When impressions from outside travel to the lower part of the brain instinctive acts result; but when they reach the higher brain centres a consciousness of choice arises, and we deliberately perform a given act. A message is communicated to one part of the brain—the optic thalamus for instance—which conveys it along nerves to the upper region of the cerebral hemisphere which returns it to another section of the brain's gray substance—the streaked body (*Corpus striatum*) which transfers the message to the muscles that are to be moved. In this case an appreciable interval has been occupied in the process, and we feel that we have deliberated before the performance of the act and then performed it. Thus arises the subjective illusion of the freedom of the will simply because we are unaware of the complex causes which have constrained us to choose in a certain manner.

In our illustration we considered the sense of hunger in the sight of food. The stomach sends information to the brain of its anxiety for food, and we are made conscious of the feeling of hunger. The brain forwards its received intelligence to the muscles which, in the absence of food, cannot function, although they are rendered more completely conscious of a state of hunger. Hence animals are driven to search for food in order to satisfy the demands of the stomach. The feeling of hunger being a very disagreeable one, its sensations are so irritating that creatures craving sustenance are not only anxious to secure it but are prepared, if necessary, to fight for it. Here other phenomena come into play, and the unpleasant emotions generated by hunger transform themselves into action.

All our rational activities are based directly or indirectly upon our experiences of the external world. Memory, as Bain said, is the sole basis of intellect, and, doubtless, Loeb is correct in his contention that "the most important problem in the physiology of the central nervous system is the analysis of the mechanisms which give rise to the so called psychic phenomena." Mental states always arise in close association with memories of past experiences. These mental phenomena form conditions of consciousness known by the term associative memory. In the central nervous system past sensations so impress themselves that they become capable of reproduction even when the circumstances under which they originally arose are quite different. A further important feature is that two processes which occur simultaneously, or in rapid succession, produce impressions which fuse into one another so that when subsequently one of the processes is repeated the other is also reproduced.

In remembering one event we are apt to recall other happenings associated with it. To annex Professor Loeb's illustration: "The odour of the rose will at the same time reproduce its visual image in our memory, or, even more than that, it will reproduce the recollection of scenes or persons who were present when the same odour made its first strong impression on us."

Now, memories of past sensations lead to the formation of mental propositions. That is to say, experiences of the external environment are registered in the brain through the medium of our sense organs and the general sense of touch. Word images probably play a larger part than picture images in the mental activities of the more cultured races of mankind. Out of simple signs complicated concepts have gradually been evolved. When a thing is given a name that name denotes not only the individual thing, but all the various sensations associated with that thing, as

well as all other things or bodies resembling it. All sensations bound up with any particular object appear as part of it. There is, therefore, the object itself, combined with all the sensations linked with it, and these become grouped into a general concept. As Professor Clifford put it:—

The whole process of the evolution of reason is an attempt to pack into an exceedingly small box, the human brain, a picture of the enormous universe that is outside of it. Every step which was made in packing things closer together was a step in making a correspondence between our actions and the knowledge we get from outside.

The possession of language has proved of priceless value in enabling man to employ signs to signify a great host of separate facts. The word tree embraces all the trees on our planet. But just endeavour to imagine the state of a man who requires a separate sign for all the world's trees, or even for each of the arboreal growths in the New Forest. Language signs would, then, be too numerous for serviceable use. But the general term "tree" not only represents all the tree's attributes, numerous as these are, but it calls up a host of other images associated with the tree. The earth in which it is rooted, the air around it, the sky above it; the tree's stationary state in calm weather, its swaying in the wind, its leafless winter sleep, the sweet beauty of its spring, summer, and autumn foliage, its blossoms, fruits, and seeds, or even its ever green appearance, all these, with countless other concepts, arise in the human mind when we think about a tree.

Our intellectual lives, then, are composed of a simultaneous and successive procession of compound sensations to which all our senses have contributed. And man's acquisition of these complex impressions is immensely facilitated by the fact that he is a social creature. All the knowledge he possesses he may be permitted to impart through his language faculty to all who understand his speech. Through the use of tongue or pen, by example or precept, he may convey to others his personal or social impressions, and thus influence their actions for weal or woe. Born into an environment he did not create, and which the mightiest of the race can little more than shape in some small measure only, man not merely partakes of his social heritage, but inherits multitudinous impressions treasured from the past. But whatever the form of his mental capital, whether he possess an aptitude for the successful pursuit of astronomy, for a distinguished career in medicine or surgery, for eminence as a poet, artist, philosopher, or social and religious reformer, all his qualities and desires are built up out of ancestral and individual converse with surrounding nature.

We have every reason for our belief that mental phenomena must be regarded as a subtle mode of energy contrived and conditioned by the properties of protoplasm, the physical basis both of life and mind. Psychological manifestations, particularly in their higher aspects, are exceedingly complicated, and many remain very obscure. But no single fact has emerged during the advancing course of modern scientific investigation which countenances the curious theory that mind as it exists in the animal kingdom is the outcome of supernormal mind. Rather we should contend that, built up as it is, and has been through the ages, through the action and reaction of organism and environment, it must be regarded as the resultant of living matter's capacity to store up impressions received from the external world, combined with its ability to transmit in terms of heredity an increased aptitude to cultivate and harvest the ripened products of experience.

T. F. PALMER.

The Lord's Advertisement.

THE following are extracts from an advertisement that appeared in the *Times* on June 30:—

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO THE NATION.

VICTORY AWAITS PRAYER.

Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.—*Psalm 107.*

Remember God's deliverances in the days of old.

How He brought up the Israelites from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.—*Psalm 78.*

The great deliverance He wrought by Gideon.—*Judges 7.*

How He delivered King Hezekiah when he prayed from the boastful Sennacherib.—*2 Chronicles 32.*

How when the Spanish Armada threatened our country "He sent out His arrows, and scattered them: and He shot out His lightnings, and discomfited them."

LET THE LEADERS OF THE NATION CALL THE PEOPLE TO PRAYER.

The Author of this advertisement may be addressed—"Messenger," c/o Mr. ———, Advertisement Agent, — Paternoster Row, E.C.

It is rather a shock to find the Lord so up-to-date as to make use of the services of an advertising agent, and I have been wondering what that excellent man of business would say if his letter-box became loaded with communications for "the Lord"?

I have thought it worth while to look up the passages of Scripture to which attention is called, with a view to discovering whether they have any, and if so what, bearing upon the War.

(a) The deliverance of the Israelites was managed by dividing the waters so that they might march through them, and flooding the division again when the Egyptians (who had learned nothing for all their experiences of the tricky ways of the God of Israel) essayed to follow them. This is a simple device, and the suggestion apparently is that the Lord is quite prepared to take sides in some such treacherous manner on behalf of the Allies if they do but put their trust in him. The Lord knocks the Germans into a cocked hat when it comes to a disregard of the laws of war.

(b) The deliverance wrought by Gideon is an even less complicated method of getting victory. For Gideon, who was out against the Midianites, was told that he had too many soldiers. Conscription would never have been necessary if only England had thought of the Lord. Gideon had thirty and ten thousand men, and of these twenty and two thousand were discharged. The Lord wanted to show what he could do without their aid; but, with that curious inconsistency which characterized him, he didn't manage without some of them. Of the ten thousand that remained, he selected three hundred men. And this was the method of selection:—

The Lord said unto Gideon: The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there.....So he brought down the people unto the water. And the Lord said unto Gideon: Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

There turned out to be three hundred lappers; and the Lord said:—

By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.

The Midianites, it may be mentioned, "lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude." It must not be supposed that the three hundred lappers licked the Midianites. No. "The Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host." Only the Lord knows what he wanted with the three hundred

lappers at all; for, you see, he did the job himself in the end. Here the suggestion seems to be that the Lord is not unwilling to repeat his performance in our interest. But as we have asserted that we are not fighting the German people, we might have some scruples in availing ourselves of his aid in order that the German Army might turn their swords every man upon his neighbour.

(c) The third example of the War Lord's work is the case of the deliverance of King Hezekiah. In this case three things happened, and as they are intimately connected, I will set them out thus:—

1. Hezekiah "prayed and cried to heaven."
2. The Lord sent an angel who "cut off all the mighty men of valour and the leaders and captains" on the other side.
3. The enemy "returned with shame of face to his own land," and "thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

Presumably the angel may be forthcoming against Hindenberg, even as he was against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, if only the Allies will call upon the Lord for assistance!

This is the twentieth century. And these are the stories to which Englishmen are directed by an advertisement in the *Times* as to how to overcome the enemy. It is possible that if only some readers of that erstwhile solemn journal will look up the passages referred to, they will see the joke—and the pity of it all.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

The Relations of the Sexes.

THERE is no question that has been more stupidly treated by the Churches than the question of sex. Public opinion about it has for too long been formed by neurotic novelists, howling Christian dervishes, and prurient prudes in broadcloth and bombazine. The War has again brought matters of sex very prominently before us; and it is to be hoped that such matters in the immediate future will be wrested from the hands of inefficient theorists and sentimentalists, and be dealt with by rational, dispassionate, and competent minds—the psychologist, the economist, the sociologist, and the medical specialist.

It is true the statement that man is a polygamous animal is too sweeping, just as the statement that woman is a polyandrous animal would be too sweeping. But that there are *some* men who are polygamous animals and *some* women who are polyandrous animals are facts well known to observant sociologists. There are people in whom appetite is stronger than in others of their kind. Undue pandering to appetite is bad; but unnatural suppression is worse. The excitation produced by artificial stimuli in normal persons will usually pass quickly, and, except in the case of very gross and bestial natures, its effects—unless it is repeated frequently—will not remain long. But the denial of appetite, and the suppression of nature and natural functions, is a constant torment, producing physical disorders, and very often mental perversion. Human appetites *must* have gratification—if not natural, then unnatural. If natural gratification be impossible, then the tormented being will find outlets for his passions that utterly revolt all sane and thinking people. And the longer the suppression, the further back will be the swing of the pendulum. The long fast will be succeeded by the riot of an intemperate and devitalizing orgy.

We rejoice to think that there are many happy unions under a monogamous system. But we cannot ignore the evidence of the Divorce Courts, and we are entitled to examine closely the causes which usually produce what is conveniently described as "incompatibility of

temper." But no matter how repugnant the spouses may have become to one another after two or three years of wedded life (or even less), Mother Church condemns them to the misery of a future unrelieved by hope till death takes one or the other. Can we be surprised that the spouse with the stronger appetite should surreptitiously seek pastures new?

We must get the Bible out of the marriage ceremony, just as we must get it out of the national schools. The latter operation will doubtless have to precede the former. We must have all marriages placed on the basis of social and civil contract. And it must be a contract that is not necessarily interminable except by death. A proviso or provisos for making the contract terminable in the lifetime of the parties can have no applicability to or effect upon unions in which there is a continuance of mutual affections. But *desire*, if strong enough, snaps its fingers at all legal restrictions. And this is true of every being, male and female, of every vocation and of every nationality under the sun. When one gets down to the primordial, all distinctions are swept away.

Probably one of the most irritatingly ludicrous spectacles of the present day is to see a Bachelor Bishop with £10,000 a year exhorting working couples with 25s. a week to increase and multiply! The natural rejoinder of the latter is: Who will maintain our offspring if we do? So far as can be seen, the wealthy classes in this country do not increase and multiply so fast as the poor. Could there be a stronger argument for the conscription of wealth? If an increased birth-rate is a national necessity (as so many of the clergy say it is), the nation is justified in finding money to subsidize the biggest families. We know that when marriages take place between members of the aristocratic and wealthy classes, marriage settlements are the rule, under which capital sums are settled on trustees by the parents of the respective spouses, the income being applied for the support of the contracting parties and the children of the marriage. It seems equally appropriate that in the case of the poor the Government should appoint trustees in all marriages, and make suitable provision for the maintenance of the families. There would then be some real incentive to increase and multiply. But how, in the name of all that is sacred and secular, parsons expect people to maintain a family of a dozen on 25s. a week at current prices, is beyond the average mind. It is typical of the processes of the clerical mind. Of course, we have frequently heard clergymen modestly professing that they had no "head for figures." Some of them undoubtedly have an *eye* for them, however.

There is scarcely a saint or patriarch of the Old Testament who was not a polygamist. And some of them were even that and more; that is to say, if they took a fancy to a particular handmaiden of one of their wives, they did not hesitate to make her a concubine; and even if the concubine had a brat, and they tired of her, they turned her and her brat out of doors without so much as a basket of food, and without incurring any public reprobation. The Jewish sultans of "Holy Writ" had but to point the finger, and any man's daughter they chose became a member of the harem. When King David, the sweet singer of Israel, "annexed" the wife of Uriah the Hittite, we suspect (and his subsequent conduct justifies the suspicion) that he was more afraid of the sword of Uriah than he was of God; and it is interesting to observe that when he was reproached by the messenger of God, it was not for his greedy lasciviousness, but for stealing the poor man's one ewe lamb. No word here in condemnation of degrading and licentious commerce in women.

No wonder that the Churches are of no help in dealing with questions of sex and its cognate problems. Pauline authority (which for long was reverentially observed and respected) having fallen into disrepute with the advance of women, there is no authority to which the Churches can appeal. We must therefore, as we suggested at the outset, pin our faith to the rational, the dispassionate, and the competent—the psychologist, the economist, the sociologist, and the medical specialist. In these are our hope.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

SOCIALIST SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am instructed by the E. C. of Glasgow and District Union of Socialist Sunday-schools to comment, through your columns, upon your editorial remarks regarding the *Glasgow Herald* article on our Movement, and the discussion in the Scottish Assembly, and later in the Correspondence Column of the said newspaper. I am requested to say that we frankly accept the statement in the *Herald*, that while the Movement "is not anti-Christian, the Christian faith is frankly ignored."

We believe you have been misinformed to the effect that any of our schools or adult members have taken part in the correspondence. To our knowledge, the only parties who have taken part are the Churchman who commented on the *Herald* article at the Assembly, and a brother co-religionist who wrote chiding him for forming an opinion upon a newspaper article, and not upon personal experience.

The latter is a clergyman, and quite unknown to our Movement.

ANDREW FLEMING.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to the friendly criticism of "A. G. B.," I cannot admit that he has proved his point, viz., that Mr. Maskelyne was the exposé of the Davenport Brothers. He quotes Mr. Maskelyne as saying that, at a performance at Cheltenham, "I got a key to the knotty problem, which I have ever since used with such effect to reproduce all the tricks of the Brothers....."

But this public reproduction only took place several months later, when the Brothers were already discredited. The first public exposure took place at Liverpool, and Mr. Maskelyne had nothing to do with it.

"A. G. B." does not give the date of the Cheltenham performance—whether it was before or after the Liverpool exposure. But, in any case, Mr. Maskelyne did not expose the trick *then*, although he may have detected it; and it is the people who make the *first* exposure who should have the credit, for after that it is everyone's property.

However, I wish to thank "A. G. B." for his letter. If I have made any errors, I would like to have them pointed out before the articles go into pamphlet form.

W. MANN.

Sunday-school teacher: "What was Adam's punishment for eating the forbidden fruit, Johnnie?"

Johnnie (confidently): "He had to marry Eve."

The park orator raised a menacing arm and screeched out his warnings—"The road to hell," he cried, "is paved with motor cars, with chorus girls, and with drink."

He paused to let the words sink in; but the effect was rather spoilt by a voice from the fringe of the crowd observing audibly: "Oh, death, where is thy sting?"—*Pearson's Magazine*.

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): Wednesday, July 25, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, E. Burke, a Lecture.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Marshall, "For a good work we stone thee not."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 6.15, a Lecture.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, R. Millar, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Miss Kough, "He Can't Do Anything."

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Yeates and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Saphin, and Kells.

GOD AND THE AIR-RAID.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

A Propagandist Leaflet.

By C. COHEN.

Price 9d. per 100; 6s. per 1,000.

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(Post free.)

COMFORTABLE APARTMENTS, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Leicester.—Widow, without family, would be pleased to hear from Freethinkers wishing to spend their holidays in the Midlands.—MRS. W. PALMER, King Street, Enderby, near Leicester.

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