

The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XXXVII.—No. 49

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1917

PRICE TWOPENCE

CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Viscount Morley's Recollections.—The Editor</i> - - -	769
<i>Palpable Fallacies.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - -	770
<i>A Pious Profiteer.—Mimnermus</i> - - -	772
<i>The Bible and Immortality.—Abracadabra</i> - - -	772
<i>In the Shades.—A. Millar</i> - - -	774
<i>Acid Drops</i> - - -	775
<i>To Correspondents</i> - - -	777
<i>Sugar Plums</i> - - -	777
<i>Another Victory.—Chapman Cohen</i> - - -	778
<i>The Everlasting Hills.—T. F. Palmer</i> - - -	778
<i>Booth to Scotland's Rescue!—Ignotus</i> - - -	780
<i>Letter to the Editor—Men, Money, and the War</i> - - -	780
<i>N. S. S. Executive Report</i> - - -	781
<i>Society News</i> - - -	781
<i>Joint Committee of Protest Against Prohibition of Sale of Literature in County Council Parks and Open Spaces</i> - - -	781
<i>Obituary</i> - - -	782

Views and Opinions.

Viscount Morley's Recollections.¹

Viscount Morley's life covers one of the most interesting periods of English intellectual history. When he was born, 1838, the old order still presented an apparently unbroken front to the world. Not till nineteen years later did Darwin publish his *Origin of Species*, one of the most revolutionary books ever issued. Spencer had at the date of Lord Morley's birth written nothing, and Lyell's epoch-marking *Principles of Geology* had appeared five or six years earlier. In his own lifetime, therefore, Lord Morley saw the inception and witnessed the conquering career of a reasoned philosophy of evolution. He was a contemporary—in many cases an acquaintance—of Mill, George Eliot, Lewes, Swinburne, Meredith, Huxley, Hardy, and numerous others who made the latter half of the nineteenth century what it was. He saw the rise to popularity, if not to power, of the Socialist movement. He was a witness of the whole career of Charles Bradlaugh—a career which has left a larger impress on English history than is generally recognized. And in the latter part of his life his immersion in politics made him acquainted with all, or nearly all, of the leading figures in our political history. Added to this, he was himself a writer of eminence, and a thinker, even when through some constitutional flaw lacking the courage to carry his thinking into action. Consequently, the life of such a man is one that thousands will turn to as a work that cannot be missed without loss. And yet one lays down the work feeling not only that more *might* have been said, but that more *ought* to have been said. On the appearance of Mr. Holyoake's *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, a *Chronicle* reviewer said that the author remembered everything that had occurred, and many things that hadn't. One might say of the present work that Viscount Morley recalls much, but, apparently forgets a great deal.

¹ *Recollections*. By John Viscount Morley. (Macmillan). 2 vols. 25s. net.

And what is omitted would interest many of his readers more than much that is included.

* * *

The Test of the Future.

Three-fourths of Lord Morley's work is taken up with political reminiscences. The remainder is concerned with writers of various sorts, and one would have wished the proportions reversed. It is true the politician looms larger at the moment than the poet, the scientist, or the philosopher; but time, which, as Carlyle says, has "a strange contracting influence on many a wide-spread fame," often buries the politician with the circumstances that gave him reputation. Palmerstone, Chamberlain, Gladstone, and a score of others fill the stage for awhile, and then pass into a comparative oblivion. The writer lives on in virtue of the ideas of which he was the mouth-piece. Theirs is often the hardest lot, but they are destined to a more lasting fame. We may even be excused the regret that John Morley, the writer, the author of that fine series of works on the French Encyclopedists, ever allowed himself to become immersed in politics. For politicians are plenty, and thinkers are few; nor can one combine with equal benefit to both the functions of teacher and legislator. One is essentially a game of compromise, and in the realm of ideas compromise should have no place. * * *

Some Striking Omissions.

We have mentioned some curious omissions in Lord Morley's *Recollections*. We are not the only ones that have drawn attention to this feature of the work, as we see the Rev. Alexander Whyte says, in the *British Weekly*, that he put down the volumes "with a great chill in my heart," because he had not found therein a single mention of Jesus Christ. To that the reply might be made that the work is called *Recollections*, and in not remembering Jesus, Lord Morley was repeating the omission of other writers who lived about the date of the alleged founder of Christianity. The omissions we wish to note are more curious. Viscount Morley gives us a noble gallery of brilliant Freethinkers. There is Arthur Morison, the author of *The Service of Man* (we fail to see what is meant by calling it a "miscarriage," both of thought and composition), and who, he says, exerted an influence at Oxford beyond that of "any tutor or professor." George Meredith, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Lewes, Carlyle, Ruskin, Swinburne, Bagehot, Leslie Stephen, and other well-known names; and full homage is paid to some—Mill, Meredith, and Spencer, for example. But their heresy is never thrust on the reader. Stranger still, the names of two such publicists as Holyoake and Bradlaugh are never once mentioned. This would not have been remarkable had he never have come into contact with either. But he knew both by correspondence, if not personally, and, we believe, attended Charles Bradlaugh's funeral. To Holyoake he once wrote how much he "valued his good opinion," and it was to Morley himself that Meredith wrote after hearing Bradlaugh:—

Did I tell you that Fred and I went to sit under

Bradlaugh one evening? The man is neither to be laughed nor sneered down nor trampled. He will be a powerful speaker. I did my best to make Greenwood understand that. It was really pleasant to hear those things spoken which the parsonry provoke.

Meredith evidently knew a man when he saw one, and his admiration for the *Freethinker* and its late Editor is well known to all readers of this paper.

* * *

An Appreciation.

Now, we do not say that Viscount Morley was bound to mention either Bradlaugh or Holyoake, or even Bradlaugh's constitutional struggle, which must have appealed to a mind of his calibre. The former certainly played an important part in the life of the century, and Bradlaugh's fight for a free press and his constitutional struggle were of even greater importance. We note these omissions because they seem to have a bearing upon our impression of the writer's mental make-up. His is a good, clear, logical intellect; but some trick of temperament seems to keep him this side of great mental courage. He is no leader of forlorn hopes, and one can scarcely picture him going into a fight knowing and feeling that all one can count on is the pleasure of the contest, and enjoying the strength that comes from a knowledge of impregnable truth. And one has a suspicion that much of the strength he displayed was, so to speak, environmental. Association with men like Mill, of whom he speaks with a tone of genuine reverence; of Meredith, of whom he speaks with great affection; of Lewes, and of Spencer, must have had a fine tonic effect upon a character which we fancy was always healthily impressionable. But the mental chivalry which led Mill to pay a public compliment to Bradlaugh in his harassed days seems lacking. Otherwise, because Freethought is tabooed by the general run of writers, and great Freethinkers so systematically ignored, that their work is unknown to succeeding generations, there would have been adequate ground for even straining a point to see that full justice was done them. A marked feature of Mr. Edward Clodd's *Memories*—a feature which upset some of his reviewers—was that he made the freethinking of famous men and women very apparent. Viscount Morley's work will not incur the same blame.

* * *

Weighing the Past.

And having had our grumble—a well-merited one, we believe—let us say that *Recollections* is an intensely interesting work. It could hardly have been otherwise. It is not a life of the author, neither is it packed with "revelations" that will agitate the prurient nostrils of journalistic busybodies. It is, indeed, in its way, a veiled confession of faith. The man-of-letters, the philosophic thinker, cannot be suppressed even when dealing with politics. And in the midst of his political reminiscences there is inserted a chapter on Lucretius which comes like a breath of flower-laden evening after a sultry day. And to his credit, it should be said, that his only criticism of Mill, "My chief master," and whose appearance is drawn with a singularly loving touch, is in connection with an essay on Theism which he justifiably condemns as weak in logic and defective in its historical perspective. And, in another passage, replying to the charge that his criticism of Christianity was "sub-silently" sapping faith without reconstruction, he quotes from one of his own books in defence:—

We will not attack you as Voltaire did; we shall not exterminate you; we shall explain you. History will place your dogmas in its class, above or below a hundred competing dogmas, exactly as the naturalist classifies his species. From being a guide to millions of lives, it

will become a chapter in a book. The mental climate will gradually deprive your symbols of their nourishment, and men will turn away from your system, not because they have confuted it, but because like witchcraft or astrology it has ceased to affect or hold them.

That is finely said, and it depicts a true developmental process. One would have liked more of that sort of diet and less of politics. Not, as we have said, that the philosopher is buried, even there. Sixty years ago George Henry Lewes wrote a little book on physiology, which, although naturally now out of date, is, because of the philosophic quality which distinguished all Lewes wrote, better worth reading than many a work written by a mere cataloguer of scientific facts. And Morley the philosopher is always hard at the heels of Morley the politician. It is, indeed, upon the philosophic note that the work ends. At the end of the *Recollections*, and of a long and busy life, he says:—

A painful interrogatory, I must confess, emerges. Has not your school—the Darwins, Spencers, Renans, and the rest—held the civilized world, both old and new alike, European and transatlantic, in the hollow of their hands, for two long generations past? Is it quite clear that their influence has been so much more potent than the gospel of the various churches? *Circumspice*. Is not diplomacy, unkindly called by Voltaire the field of lies, as able as it ever was to dupe governments and governed by grand abstract catchwords veiling obscure and inexplicable purposes, and turning the whole world over with blood and tears to a strange Witches' Sabbath? These were queries of pith and moment indeed, but for something better weighed and more deliberative than an autumn reverie.

A natural query. And yet the Darwins, and Spencers, and others, have an apt reply. They might answer:—

True, we have exerted a great influence over the world for two generations. But behind these two lies the thousands of generations, during which the world has been bound in ignorance, and held in subjection to tyranny and superstition. We have the whole weight of the past against us, and the marvel is not that we have done so little, but that we have done so much. Give us but a tithe of the time during which the world has been so ruled, and but a fraction of the power, and the result will be worth the having. We have already excited the desire for a better human society, we are building up the knowledge that will give that desire force and direction. And though the dawn breaks slowly, still the darkness is less dense than it was.

Recollections is a book to be read, and we have been able to do it but scant justice in the space at our disposal. But we hope to return to other aspects of the work on another occasion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Palpable Fallacies.

THE well-known writer, Mr. Arthur Machen, has favoured the readers of the *Evening News* with a series of articles entitled "God and the War." On most subjects Mr. Machen writes exceedingly well; but it must be confessed that we have read the articles on "God and the War" with great disappointment. This is specially true of numbers iv. and v., in the issues for November 23 and 26. In the former he irrelevantly tells us that "the chief aim of prayer is to raise us to the condition and state of the beasts," his silly contention being "that it was we, not the beasts, who were driven out of paradise." This revelation came to him seven years ago, and he has been assiduously pondering it ever since, regarding it as the most profound and precious truth which man has had the good fortune to receive. As a matter of fact, neither we nor the beasts were

driven out of paradise. If the beasts could but speak, they would inform us that they too have their sufferings and sorrows as well as we. When Mr. Machen proceeds to affirm that we are distracted and miserable "because we do not realize, because we cannot keep on realizing, that we have only one business: and that is God; God immanent and transcendent, in all and above all," he is guilty of darkening counsel by words without knowledge. Neither God nor his eternal will is a perceptible object, Nature alone being discernible by us. The saying that "our true order and true life is the Divine will" is a mere religious cant to which no intelligible meaning can be attached. Of course, Mr. Machen is fully aware that millions of people do not believe in an immanent and transcendent Deity whose will is the rule of life; but their inability to share his beliefs is put down to a constitutional defect for which they are not to blame. Allusion is made to people who are tone-deaf, colour-blind, unable to distinguish one flavour from another, and to people "who are born without the sense of literature, who are utterly incapable of relishing the exquisite savours of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, or of that great chapter which is intitled 'How they Chirruped over their Cups'"; and then comes the following caustic comment:—

Very well; it is a great pity, and we are sorry for them. We know that they miss a great deal of the pleasures of life—which are none too many. We will not, perhaps, go all the way with Shakespeare and declare them fit for murders, treasons, stratagems, and spoils, though, by the way, Shakespeare usually knew what he was talking about. But we, not having the title to use the high wrath of Shakespeare, are sorry for those poor people who say they "see nothing" in this masterpiece, and can't understand "why people make such a fuss" over that, and are "bored to tears" by the other. We are sorry for them; but if they called their state of mind Freethought, I believe we should feel somewhat cross with them.

That is a hoary fallacy, and as obvious as it is ancient; and one is amazed to find a man of Mr. Machen's intelligence condescending to utilize it. He who so cleverly created and afterwards so completely annihilated the angels of Mons ought not to have allowed himself to be led astray by an argument so fundamentally false as the one just quoted. And yet, assuming an air of superiority, this is how he reasons:—

The Freethought I have in view is the Freethought of the tone-deaf man who insists on becoming a musical critic, so that he may prove to the world that there is no such thing as music, and that the people who say they enjoy music are fools or knaves or both. We could pity him for his lack of one of the most exquisite—and irrational—of pleasures, if he would but hold his tongue. But the Freethinker will not hold his tongue. He is not content to keep silence and shrug his shoulders, wondering internally "what on earth these people see in it all." He is not even content to say out loud, "Well, I see nothing in it all, and that's an end of it." He will invent reasons, which are not real reasons, to justify his own incapacity. He is not able to relish a good dinner; so he finds out all kinds of "reasons" to prove that dinner is nonsense, and poisonous nonsense at that.

Such is Mr. Machen's argument against Freethought; and a more fallacious argument was never elaborated against any cause. The first thing to be borne in mind is that tone-deafness and colour-blindness are not *acquired* defects. A great musician never loses his faith in music as the result of a long and exhaustive examination of the subject, and then systematically attacks the art as a thoroughly unreal one. Tone-deafness is a fault of Nature, for which the victim is not in the least responsible. But in the overwhelming majority of cases Freethought is the outcome of a critical investigation of

the religious question in all its aspects. In many cases, an exceptionally ardent believer becomes a thorough-going unbeliever, and advocates Freethought from a deep sense of duty. By a severe process of reasoning, the capacity to believe in the supernatural is converted into a necessity to disbelieve in it. We know a man who, for upwards of twenty-five years, not only fervently cherished the belief in God, but enthusiastically preached him as the loving Father and Saviour of mankind. Twenty years ago, as a consequence of facing the facts of life, he lost his faith and became an Atheist. And the worst of it is, according to Mr. Machen, that he will not hold his tongue, but insists upon his right and duty to express and defend his present views. Simply because he has the courage of his convictions, Mr. Machen feels somewhat cross with him. But most assuredly his Freethought is by no means the Freethought of the tone-deaf man who condemns music merely because he lacks the faculty to appreciate music.

Mr. Machen deals in word-jugglery without a qualm. For example, he states that music is at once, "one of the most exquisite and irrational of pleasures," and then he adds:—

If you come to think of it, you will find that all the exquisite things of life, even the exquisite things of material life, are irrational.

We have no hesitation whatever in giving that assertion an emphatic denial. Indeed, most of the truly exquisite things of life are in a high degree rational, though some of them may not be directly enjoined by the reason. There is absolutely nothing against reason in music, or even in dancing. Music means harmonic sounds, scientifically combined, which please and inspire the mind; and to dance is to trip or leap rhythmically, or to move with measured steps, or to a musical accompaniment, which is conducive at once to pleasure and health; but there is no irrational element in either music or dancing. Having thus trifled with the terms "rational" and "irrational," Mr. Machen says:—

Very good; but the most frequent of the sham arguments of the Freethinker is that the Faith is irrational. Of course, it is irrational; like all the things of life which are worth anything or worth talking about.

By "irrational" we understand contrary to reason; does Mr. Machen intend to convey the impression that the Faith is irrational in that sense? When we declare that the belief in the Supernatural is irrational, all we mean is that it contradicts all the facts of life as we know them. It is quite true that our knowledge of Nature is, as yet, woefully inadequate; but we have not a single scrap of knowledge of the Supernatural, nor any means of acquiring it. Mr. Machen admits this, and seems to be proud of it. His idea is that if the Faith were either proved or provable it would no longer be faith. We are entirely ignorant of the distinguished journalist's religious associations, if he has any; but there is much in his language which reminds us of the teaching of the Catholic Church, according to which faith, to be meritorious, must be blind. Many of our readers remember the famous Papal Encyclical on "Modernism," which committed the Church definitely and explicitly to the absolute rejection of all modern modes of thought, and of the results of scientific and historical research, and in which belief on the sole authority of the Papacy was solemnly insisted upon. Mr. Machen asks: "Is it reasonable to spend time reading about Mr. Pickwick, who never existed?" and we answer in the affirmative, on the score that time so spent contributes to the enjoyments of life. The truth is that readers of the history of Mr. Pickwick are in no danger of falling into the habit of regarding him as a real person, whereas Christians who read about God and Christ in the Bible do regard

and treat them as objective realities, to whom they pray, and have been praying for upwards of three years, for a speedy victory for their side in the War. Mr. Machen admits that their existence is unprovable; and, surely, he must also admit that the fact of their hearing and answering prayer is equally unprovable. What, then, can be the use of believing in and praying to them?

In attempting to discredit Freethought, Mr. Machen has only succeeded in making the Christian Faith look uncommonly ridiculous. He might have lived in the Dark Ages, in utter ignorance of modern science, for he entirely ignores natural knowledge in all its forms. The articles under consideration will not render the slightest service to religion, nor do the least injury to Freethought.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Pious Profiteer.

What gasconading rascals those saints must have been, if they first boasted these exploits or invented these miracles! These legends, however, were no more than monkish extravagances, over which one laughed inwardly.

—Charlotte Brontë.

PROTESTANTS are supposed to be averse to saints. But, like so many other things connected with Protestantism, this is far more accurate in theory than in fact. For there is one saint—Saint George—who is treated with great respect in this Protestant country. The saint's portrait is on the gold coinage and on some of the banknotes. Or, rather, there is a design of a man on horseback, apparently killing a militant cockroach with a carving-knife. This is meant to portray Saint George and the Dragon, and the man is supposed to be the patron saint of our "tight little island."

The inclusion, during recent years, of the harmless, necessary Union Jack among the symbols of the most holy religion of the Prince of Peace has led to a renewed interest in the personality of Saint George. It was, indeed, fondly hoped that, by the help of the Almighty and Lord Northcliffe, many otherwise decent citizens might be persuaded to observe Saint George's Day by wearing roses. The suggestion, unhappily, fell flat; but it may prove of interest to many to be informed who Saint George was, his connection with English history, and his association with the national flower.

It is with regret that we find the saint's biography is unpleasant reading, and quite unsuited for the perusal of young persons, and he still more youthful "buds" of the Primrose League. Historians agree in disclosing a pitiable story of a misspent life. From the highest to the lowest, from the great Edward Gibbon to the popular Professor William Smith, they describe the saint as an unadulterated scoundrel. Even Emerson can find no redeeming traits in the saintly sinner's character. Hear what the cultured American critic has to say:—

George, of Cappodocia, born at Epephania, in Cilicia, was a low parasite, who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon.

This is a bad start; but for the moment we refrain from levelling the guns of our criticism at the pious profiteer.

A rogue and informer, he got rich, and was forced to run from justice.

This seems to suggest that Saint George sold pigs which had died natural deaths, was a swindler, and had learned to efface himself at the psychological moment.

He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria.

Like the Army contractors who did business in the South African and other wars, Saint George had his

saintly head screwed on the right way. As for his collecting a library, his previous commercial reputation was sufficiently bad to prevent the booksellers allowing the saint credit. We may be equally certain that his ordination as a right reverend father-in-God was also against public interest.

When Julian came, A.D. 361, George was dragged to prison. The prison was burst open by the mob, and George was lynched as he deserved.

There is something very distressing in the idea of a dear bishop being "jerked to Jesus." If the saint had died of *delirium tremens* we might still have remembered, prayerfully, that even ecclesiastics are but human beings. This lynching, however, is a dreadful business, and we read through a mist of tears Emerson's peroration:—

And this precious knave became in good time Saint George, of England, patron of chivalry, emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world.

A lemon-hearted cynic might liken the history of the patron saint of England to a purple page from the earlier books of the Bible, or the Newgate Calendar. Some modern historians, realizing the ethical drawbacks of the saint's career, have made desperate attempts to whitewash the life of the holy man. They have succeeded, after silent meditation among the tombs, in deceiving themselves that George was not George, but another man of the same name. Criticism, sharp as Shylock's knife, cuts their nonsense to pieces. The tutelary saint of England, like so many Biblical heroes, was a blackguard, and there is an end of it.

Saint George is not an English saint, and he never did anything for England. The chief exploit that we connect him with, the slaying of the dragon, is the one incident that is confessed, even by his warmest supporters, to be a mere solar myth—just another version of Apollo and the Python, Bellerophon and the Chimera, Perseus and the Sea-monster. Even the alternative and more respectable George, who is said to have suffered martyrdom under Diocetian, was a ludicrous personage. This Saint George was, we are told, killed three times, coming to life again on two of the occasions. Among the trifling things that happened to him were that he was roasted, beaten with iron rods, decapitated, and then exposed to wild animals. Coming to life again, he was set on a wooden horse, and a fire kindled under him. Sixty nails were driven into his head, and he was sawn in four pieces. These were thrown into boiling pitch. Again he came to life, and he was finally despatched on a wheel spiked with swords.

All this, of course, is very edifying, but of what value is this imaginative nonsense to-day? So far from recommending any citizen to honour such a saint, we suggest that it would be a kindness to strew the poppy of oblivion over the grave of such a saintly sinner. Saint George is a disappointment, and one of the most pathetic shams from which ever a great nation sought to extract exalting sentiment. So far as the saint is concerned, there is nothing to celebrate.

MIMNEMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

WE come now to the period in the first century at which the Christian religion took its rise. This period is placed by the Gospels at A.D. 28-30; but there are good reasons for believing that it was several decades later. In any case there were no written Gospels until after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Soon after the latter date we have the following statements by Josephus

respecting the three sects among the Jews in his day—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes:—

Wars ii. viii. 14, 11, 13.—The Pharisees say that all souls are incorruptible; but that the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies, but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment.....The Sadducees do not believe in the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades.The doctrine of the Essenes is this: that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever.....but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then rejoice and mount upward.....that good souls have habitations beyond the ocean, in a region neither oppressive with severe cold nor intense heat; while they allot to bad souls a dark and tempestuous den full of never-ceasing punishments. And indeed the Greeks seem to have followed the same notion, when they allot the islands of the blessed to their brave men whom they call heroes and demigods.....and to the souls of the wicked, the region of the ungodly in Hades, where certain wicked persons are punished.....There is another order of Essenes, who agree with the rest.....but differ from them in the point of marriage.

Some years later Josephus wrote his *Antiquities*, in which he says of the Pharisees and Sadducees:—

Antiq. xviii. i. 3, 4.—The Pharisees believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and that the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again. But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: that souls die with the bodies.

In the latter paragraph, it should be noticed, there is no torment for the wicked in Hades, only eternal imprisonment, as in the Old Testament Sheol. The Greeks, however, imagined a place of punishment in a part of Hades which they called Tartaros: the latter place is named in 2 Peter ii. 4, where it is translated "hell."

The first Christians were Jews who belonged to the second order of Essenes mentioned by Josephus. These called themselves Nazarenes, a name mentioned as a sect only once in the New Testament (Acts xxiv. 5); but we find it again in the title given to Jesus in the Gospels and the Acts—"Jesus the Nazarene"—which is everywhere mistranslated "Jesus of Nazareth." This Jesus was not the founder of the sect, but merely a prominent member belonging to it, who was regarded by the other members as a prophet: it was Paul and his Gentile converts who exalted him to the position of a god and worshipped him. In the second century the Nazarenes were ranked as heretics because they still maintained that Jesus was only a man. The Nazarenes existed as a Christian sect until the fourth century, and then we hear of them no more. We will now look at some passages in the New Testament in which Hades is mentioned.

Matt. xi. 23.—And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto Heaven? thou shalt go down into Hades.

Matt. xvi. 18.—Thou art Peter (*Petros*), and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Luke xvi. 23.—And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.

Acts ii., 27, 31.—Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.....He foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

Rev. i. 18.—Christ says: I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

In the second passage there is a play upon the name *Petros*, which means a stone or rock. In the quotation from Luke, the rich man in Hades was "in torments,"

and "in anguish in this flame." This appears to have been a mistake on the part of the writer, unless he meant Tartaros; for Hades was not the Christian place of punishment. In the passage in the Acts, verse 27 is a quotation from Psalm xvi. 10, which the writer represents as a prediction referring to Jesus Christ—which, of course, it is not.

In the following passages Hades or Sheol is plainly referred to, though not expressly named:—

1 Peter iii. 18-20.—Because Christ also suffered for sinsbeing put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.

1 Peter iv. 6.—For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

The two foregoing passages are the only Scripture foundation for the following italicized words in the Apostle's Creed—"He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead." The word "hell" here refers to Sheol or Hades, "the abode of the spirits of the dead"—not to a place of punishment. We are to understand that during the time the body of Christ lay in the tomb, his spirit left the body and descended to the underworld to preach the gospel to the spirits there imprisoned. Amongst the New Testament apocryphal writings, now extant, is one entitled the "Gospel of Nicodemus" or the "Acts of Pilate." This work, as it has come down to us, is in two parts—the *Acts of Pilate*, properly so called, and the *Descent of Christ into Hades*. The first part narrates the trial, condemnation, and crucifixion of Christ in a different manner to that of the Four Gospels. The second part gives a somewhat confused account of Jesus going down into Hades, where he finds Adam, David, Jeremiah, and a host of other Bible characters. His first act is to bind Satan and plunge him into an abyss, there to await his second coming. This done, he preaches to the spirits assembled there, and invites them to believe his gospel and gain admission into heaven. "For behold," he says, "I again raise you up through the power of the cross." It was from this fraudulent Gospel that the author of the "First Epistle of Peter" drew his information respecting the visit of Jesus to Hades—a fact which proves the great credulity of the early Christians, and the pious frauds perpetrated by some of the most zealous among them.

We come next to the place of eternal punishment—the so-called "Gehenna of fire." The name "Gehenna" is derived from the "Valley of Hinnom" (Ge-hinnom), a vale south of Jerusalem, where, in the later Old Testament times, sacrifices were offered to the local gods of Canaan, and where also young children were burnt alive; or, as it was styled, were made "to pass through the fire" to Molech, or some other local deity. Speaking in the name of the Lord God, Jeremiah says:—

Jer. xxxii. 35.—They built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination (also Jer. vii. 31).

In this valley Abaz, king of Judah, "burnt his children in the fire," as did also Manasseh king of Judah (2 Chron. xxviii. 3; xxxiii. 6). At a subsequent period, when only the god Yahweh was worshipped, all kinds of insanitary matter and refuse were carried from Jerusalem into this vale to be burnt, and there fires were kept constantly burning. These never-dying fires

suggested to Esdras and others a name for the place of torment—which name was borrowed by the early Christians from 2 Esdras. We will now see what the Gospels have to say on this subject:—

Matt. v. 22.—And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire.

Matt. xviii. 9.—It is good for thee to enter into [eternal] life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire (also Matt. v. 29).

Matt. x. 28.—And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

Matt. xxiii. 33.—Ye serpents, ye off-spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?

Matt. xxv. 41.—Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

Matt. xiii. 41, 42.—The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.—(See also Matt. xiii. 49, 50).

In the foregoing passages we find "the *Gehenna* of fire" and "the *furnace* of fire." Both were taken from 2 Esdras, whose writer says: "And the pit of torment shall appear, and over against it shall be the place of rest: and the *furnace* of *Gehenna* shall be shewed, and over against it the paradise of delight." In the parable of the "Rich man and Lazarus" (Luke xvi. 19-31) the furnace of *Gehenna* and the paradise of delight are described as "over against" each other, so that the rich man in one place could see Lazarus in the other. In "Enoch" (chap. xxii.) it is stated that the two places are separated "by a chasm, by water, and by light above it." In the parable in Luke (xvi. 26) it is said that between the two places "there is a great gulf fixed.....that none may cross over." This is how the writer of the parable understood "Enoch."

ABRACADABRA.

In the Shades.

It was night in Hell, or Hades, or the Shades—the temperature, etc., of the place not being a mathematical conception; but it is, nevertheless, an august region, and a delectable one, for no one who goes there is ever troubled with a wish to return. Some say it is always night in Hell; but no, it has its sun-kissed Olympian heights, and its valleys flooded with the strange, still, wistful moonlight of memory. Far and near have no meaning, here or there. What is now the one is now the other. There the long perspective lies in the shadow of the hills. The middle distance is often dim and obscure, with only mellow-radiant patches here and there. Now the apex is the base, the past the present; the ancient mingles with the modern. As on our mundane and mathematical sphere objects on the terrestrial horizon fade and disappear, but the sun and moon keep pace with us, and all the starry host, and are there before us—and after us. It was night in Hell—beautiful, blissful, brooding, meditative night.

Socrates was sitting by a rude bench, but one shaped to artistry by the touch of time and the atmosphere of antique association. He was scantily but picturesquely clad, and rubbed his bare shins as though the irons had just been removed from them, and kept sipping happily and harmlessly from certain urn-like cups with the word *hemlock* curiously scrawled upon them. He was also

talking to his disciples in that strain of very human, imperturbable, and absolute philosophy.

Shakespeare was playing with Ariel—the spirit and the poet now twin spirits. Sing, sir, sing! commanded the Master, and all Hell smiled to hear:—

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange;
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell;
Hark! now I hear them,
Ding, dong, bell.

The voice died away, and innumerable melodious liquid bells took up the strain, clamouring from roof to floor, near and clear, and faint and far, and gradually dropping to slow and solemn single beats, with now and then a quick reviving cadence clang of solitary startling and intense but exquisite sound, passing at length in a dying fall, when all was still again.

A deaf, disappointed-looking man in black, named Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was preoccupied with the bellows of an extinct hearth, poking the dead ashes and stoking it with the faggots of fanaticism that would no longer burn. If the fire was quenched, the fireman's faith in it was unquenchable, and so he was happy and hopeful in a way, and the great spirits about him were fain to tolerate his now harmless hobby.

Burns and Milton—the two poets who had done so much on earth to rehabilitate the Devil—were holding converse with that once potent Personage. Milton still addressed him royally and respectfully, as thus: Oh, Prince, oh, Chief, of many throned powers! Burns was still sceptical and satirical, reminding him—in the past tense,—

Ah, Nick, ah, Nick, it wasna fair
To show us first the temptin' ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lassies rare,
To put us daft,
Syne weave unseen your spider's snare,
O' Hell's damned waft.

The Devil, in Doric, answered and said: Man, Burns, ye havna fared sae ill after a'; and, lo, as he spoke, Tam o' Shanter came galloping through Hell with a troupe of hizzies after him in scantiest attire, some leaping, some running, some flying, one perched acroup behind him clasping his waist, scattering the embers and raising the stoure of Spurgeon's smithy fire, and disappearing all in one whisk of the grey mare's tail. Upon my soul, said Rabbie, a heavenly sight to be seen in Hell, whereat he roared in contagious explosions of laughter.

The grotesque had passed as a cloud obscures the moon, and the Shades were classic again. Voltaire and Paine were seated on a bank in silent telepathic communion. Ingersoll and Henry Ward Beecher were walking together. Byron and Shelley were boating in a mountain lake, and the moonbeams steeped the oars in liquid gold. Keats, "that Greek who knew no Greek," was sitting astern with a book. All these, with their peers, an innumerable company, appear in those Shades again, in their habit as they lived.

The figure of a Freethinker, familiar to latter day "Saints," was seen half-sitting, half-reclining, on a grassy bank, by a grey wall, reflected in an amber stream. His index-finger was inserted between the leaves of an otherwise closed book. He looked beyond it into the bosom of the stream, and into the clear deeps of his inner thought. The marble Wilberforce in Westminster Abbey, but living, breathing force and feeling, reason, justice, humanity, with flitting gleams of scorn, amusement, satire, and contempt, and intervals of deep recreative repose; and resting on the sward beside him, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, closely regarding his friend and chief, G. W. Foote, and reading his thoughts. The

latter lays down his book, and leans upon the old, grey wall, and over his profile, in this relief, steals a seeming deeper, more indifferent, monchalant abstraction, but the permanent lines of mutable expression remain, the "channels," as it were, of emotion, character, and resolution; the firm set mouth in particular conveying and preserving the record of many a battle fought and won, betraying always rather than disguising the ever alert and active mind; grim a little, wistful and trustful, but always strong; the flags of battle furled; the lines of care erased; a benevolent, genial, incipient smile, like sunshine in the cloud.

Walt Whitman was disporting in the stream, waving his hand to the Pioneers of all time and eternity; anon wading ashore, dripping diamond drops, to climb a tree, and rock himself in the azure, as the touch of Mother Nature thrilled his every fibre. It was night, but it was also noon.

Two Titans had met in the grove, and the forms of Bradlaugh and James Thomson, B.V., were seen amongst the trees.

It was dawn in Hell, a silvery, golden glow was illumining the crests of the sun-smitten mountains of memory. Francisco Ferrer was seen wending his way in the morning dews from his prison, now his castle, of Montjuich. A breeze stirred the Shades. A terrestrial wind. A door had opened. Someone had been admitted. Thousands came every day, but mostly in at the more popular gate. A blood-stained, khaki-clad figure approached. G. W. Foote saluted. The soldier spirit had just come from the hell of the battlefield to this Eden of rest, so long misnamed and misunderstood. The soldier stood at attention, and said:

"I have a message for you, Mr. Foote."

"Ah! From the battlefield?"

"No. From London, from the Law Courts, from the House of Lords."

"Ah!"

"The Bowman Bequest Case....."

"What of it?"

"Is settled in our (your) favour."

"Then indeed is my life's work complete; and these valleys of eternal rest will be more restful still. We have both been soldiers; you a soldier of the King, I a soldier of progress. Come with me!" The sages were gathering round. There was great rejoicing in the quiet Shades. But at this moment the sun in splendour appeared above the hills, the valleys were flooded with light, the vision faded, to reappear again and again in the moonlight of memory.

A. MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

The latest Christian apologist is the well-known writer, Mr. Arthur Machen, and he is also the most unique. In Article VI. on "God and the War," which appeared in the *Evening News* for November 30, he informs us that "The plain man in the street, the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle type of man, demands of religion, in the first place, that it shall be entirely incredible." Will Christianity successfully and completely supply that demand? This has always been the contention of Freethinkers, to which believers, generally, vigorously give the lie direct. Indeed, the divines boldly assert that Christianity is entirely credible.

Curiously enough, Mr. Machen declares that the office of religion is to "remove the veils of enigmas which are about these Holy Mysteries that they may become gloriously manifest"; but how on earth can a religion which is "utterly irrational" and "entirely incredible" unravel any mystery whatsoever? Surely the distinguished *litteratus* cannot be in

earnest, but is skilfully pulling the legs of the pious readers of the *Evening News*.

Once upon a time Mr. Machen used to try to argue with bishops, endeavouring to convince them that "religion was not primarily concerned with attendance at four-ale bars, or with the state of Piccadilly Circus between eleven and twelve-thirty p.m."; but he has discontinued that task as wholly hopeless, and now devotes himself to the pleasanter and easier labour of showing that religion is "entirely incredible."

The Archbishop of York has reminded Convocation that the only source of supply for future candidates for the ministry is the Army. He says a "considerable number" of Nonconformist ministers have applied for ordination, but the colleges are empty. We do not say that many young men coming from the Army will not enter the Church, but we are quite sure—knowing what we do of the feeling in the Army, and the shock the War has given to religious beliefs—that the mental calibre of those who take "Holy Orders" will be lower than ever. After the War, "the fool of the family for the pulpit" will be truer than ever.

Billy Sunday says: "If I were God, I would keep the gravediggers busy for a month." Don't be in a hurry, Sunday; God is doing his best in that direction.

The Yellow Press is advocating no votes for the Conscientious Objector. One journal declares: "All he wants to do is to go on living in comparative comfort, thanks to the fact that other men are fighting and toiling and dying for him. He also demands a voice in the affairs of the country. This is too much for most of us." This description applies equally well to the 50,000 parsons who are exempted from military service.

The following delightful paragraph appeared recently in the newspapers: "In Jaffa the Church Army is hoping to establish a centre in the house supposed to be that of Simon the Tanner." It looks like an attempt to find "tanners" in England.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury, declares that "the Bible is being displaced by the Yellow Press." It is not surprising to find that readers of the Bible are supporters of the sensational papers.

Our readers will remember that some months ago the Rev. F. E. Powell, then Vicar of Bromyard, but now of Ladbrooke, contributed to this journal several exceedingly able articles, in which he evinced a progressiveness of thought not usually displayed by a clergyman. Preaching recently at the Priory Church, Leominster, he is reported, in the *Leominster News* for November 16, to have given expression to eminently broad views, which are too seldom heard from the pulpit. He enlarged upon the methods of Nature and the necessity of paying even greater heed to science in all departments of life, especially in education. Towards the end of the discourse he boldly said:—

After the War there would be insistence upon intellectual sincerity. They would not be afraid of the truth. They would no longer bolster up things that were obsolete. The dead past must bury its dead. He asked them to beware of leaving that reconstruction and reformation to ecclesiastical bodies.

On the evening of the same day there was a Patriotic Demonstration in the Corn Exchange Hall, at which several addresses were delivered, one of which was by Mr. Powell. The reverend gentleman's speech was exceptionally courageous, hitting the nail on the head each time. One of the points was that, while he was a patriot, "he was a humanitarian first." He condemned, in scathing terms, the spirit of hatred and revenge so common in this country at the present time, and eloquently advocated the fostering of the forgiving, brotherly disposition. He was cheered to the echo when he declared that "for the life of him he could not understand why there should not be, while the fighting was going on, a meeting of the representatives of the belligerents in order to

see what terms of peace might be arrived at." We heartily congratulate the reverend gentleman upon his wise, timely, and heroic utterances.

A "Food Economy" service was held at St. Paul's, the Bishop of London preaching the sermon. Of course, economy is necessary and advisable. But we recall an incident when thousands of people were fed on a handful of fishes and a few loaves. Why cannot a similar miracle be worked nowadays? Why can't God do something in the War? We wonder whether it would be considered "blasphemy" if a poster were exhibited depicting a crowd of starved and murdered men, women, and children standing before God Almighty, and asking him, "What did you do in the great War?" We are quite sure many are thinking that question now.

Says the Bishop of Oxford:—

The Christian religion is totally without obscurantism, and loves light for its own sake, coming from whatsoever quarter. You can hardly exaggerate the disaster it has been to the education of children that they have been taught to associate with religion things about the Creation, the Flood, and the beginnings of our race which it was infallibly certain when they grew up to read the literature of their time, they would find false and would reject as alien to the whole trend of the philosophy, science, and history of their time. If we are to maintain the great tradition of the Word of God, we must purge it from everything that gives the germinating intellect of man the excuse for saying, "This is a ridiculous and old wives' fable."

But the Bishop knows as well as we do that all the things he denounces as "old wives' fables" are really part of the Christian religion. The story of Jesus Christ is based on the garden of Eden, and there is no reason whatever in rejecting the former and accepting the latter. Besides, is the story of the resurrection less ridiculous than that of the creation of man? Or the belief in heaven and hell less absurd than that of the garden of Eden? All it comes to is this. The Bishop will reject all generally admitted falsities and absurdities as not part of Christianity, and will keep all those not generally rejected. And to that sensible people reply: "Thank you, for nothing."

We note that among the sums disbursed for advertising "National Service" the *Times* received £1,050, *Daily Mail*, £2,680, *Daily News*, £1,434, *Daily Chronicle*, £1,082, *Daily Telegraph*, £1,007, *Morning Post*, £737, *Yorkshire Post*, £655, etc. The *Freethinker* is in the habit of giving its advertising space to a movement with which it sympathizes. But, then, we are only poor benighted Freethinkers, and cannot pretend to exhibit the lofty unselfishness possessed by these Christian-owned journals.

Referring to the living of St. James's, Piccadilly, London, the *Daily Sketch* says: "the most attractive part of the job of rectoring at St. James's is the rectory. I have often cast covetous eyes at this large, square, comfortable-looking house in the very heart of fashionable London. What the site must be worth, and the rent it could command, the imagination boggles at."

The suggestion that no one may write a leaflet on war or peace without leave of the Press Bureau has aroused the ire of the *Daily News*, which remarks tartly: "The next step will be to submit the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer to the censorship." There is something in the objection, for the Bible contains the passage, "Blessed are the peacemakers," and the Prayer Book has the aspiration, "Give peace in our time, O Lord."

Mr. Bottomley returns to the question of his miracle of the leaning Virgin, and says:—

The *Freethinker* still protests that we have not told the truth about that figure of the Madonna and Child hanging from the tower of Albert Cathedral, and gives us "an opportunity of stating the facts." That is just what we have done. We are not easily fooled in such matters.

We protest once more. We did not say that Mr. Bottomley was fooled in this matter. Quite the contrary. We protested against Mr. Bottomley presenting the position of the

statue as being due to an interposition of Providence. And we suggested that if Mr. Bottomley had been to Albert, he must know the facts, and must know that the explanation of the position of the statue is a simple and a prosaic one. It was these facts on which we invited the truth. And if, by some strange chance, Mr. Bottomley does not know the facts, we suggest that he inquires of the Royal Engineers. They might cast light on the matter.

God having failed to bring peace back to the world in response to one section of his followers, Cardinal Logue advises prayers to Mary, so as to "enlist the powerful aid of this Queen of Peace in moving Almighty God to mercifully grant our petition." Well, it wouldn't be the first time affairs of State have been brought to a head through feminine influence.

A daily paper objects to Grimm, the German writer, as an author of "sanguinary fairy tales." The Bible also contains "sanguinary fairy tales."

How these Christians love one another! A Catholic War-shrine erected at Ramsgate has been wrecked by rival religionists.

A case was before the Probate Court the other day in which a son asked that his father's will should be set aside on the ground of religious insanity. The deceased had left his son £20, and to the Hull City Mission £700 a year. Many people will agree that the son made out a strong *prima facie* case.

The *East Anglian Daily Times* reports the case of a young woman charged with stealing jewellery from a visitor staying at Frinton-on-Sea. The defendant said she had been tempted by the "evil one," and a police sergeant told the magistrate that the girl had hitherto borne a good character, but she had "met some bad companions at the Young Women's Christian Association." Now, if she had met them at a Secularist meeting-place, no one would have been surprised—at least, no Christian would.

Rev. Dr. R. J. Fletcher asks in the *Church Family Newspaper* "Is Prayer of Use?" To that we reply, certainly. It is of considerable use to every parson in existence. The question is like asking "Is an unfastened window of use to a burglar?" Mr. Fletcher thinks he can prove prayer is useful to anyone but the "dogmatic Agnostic." But these are the very people who need the proof most. All that Mr. Fletcher means, apparently, is that he can prove prayer is useful to anyone who already believes in it. In that case proof is unnecessary. Those who want proof can't get it, and those who don't need it can have it in bushels. And yet man is called a rational being!

"Spook Shows Pay" was a headline in a Sunday paper. Don't the Spiritualists know that?

Nonconformists are very stolid and serious people. A writer in the *Daily News* recently quoted Voltaire's famous jest that the prophet Habakkuk was "capable of anything." A number of readers immediately reproached the writer for defaming the prophet.

One of the activities of the late Mr. Jesse Collins, M.P., was in connection with the Sunday opening of museums and art galleries. Indeed, in this matter, Birmingham was one of the pioneer towns.

At a meeting of the United Free Church Presbytery it was proposed to mark the Luther Centenary, but the Presbytery decided not to celebrate the occasion. Poor old Martin Luther! It was his misfortune not to have been born a Scotsman.

Lord Sydenham has upset the clergy over his marriage law reforms, and the two archbishops and many of the bishops are up in arms. Sir William Robertson is one of the clerical supporters, but it is an old story that generals are very orthodox,

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Colonel Stuart Graham, £1 1s.; Miss M. Rogerson, 10s.; W. Hopper, £1 1s.

H. J. BAYLE.—Thanks for cutting. Sorry we cannot find space at present.

R. PECKOVER.—We note you write from hospital, and hope your wound is not serious. Pleased you found your *Freethinker* so acceptable on your return. We are not surprised your fellow-patients—who had been in the Arras district—were amused at Mr. Bottomley's "miracle." Naturally your friends were able to tell you how the statue is retained in its present position.

J. O. HARDING.—Pleased to have your appreciation of "Abracadabra's" articles. We note your observation of A. G. G., in the *Daily News*, having referred to Paine as one of the great men America produced. It is good to see Paine getting the recognition he richly deserved; but it is hardly correct to put it in that way. Paine was an Englishman—much as the official and "respectable" England of the day showed itself unworthy of such a man.

V. H. SMITH.—Obliged for reference. May be useful.

F. C. HOLDEN forwards us some specimens of clerical wisdom from the United States, and claims that the American clergy can compete with the Bishop of London and other English divines in imbecility. We admit, on the evidence produced, that a good case is made out.

J. E. C.—The copyright edition of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* is published by Macmillans in a number of forms. Perhaps the handiest is the "Golden Treasury" edition, which is cheap, and handy in size.

G. I. writes: "With reference to 'Abracadabra's' article on the Book of Enoch, some of your readers might care to consult the work of G. Schiaparelli, *Astronomy in the Old Testament* (Oxford; 1905). On page 38, this author shows a most interesting diagram of the world as it was conceived, including the solid arch of the firmament, the roof, which we call the sky, that was supported at the horizon, and which contained the stores of water and hail and snow, as well as the caves where the winds were kept."

J. B. MIDDLETON.—Very gratifying indeed, as we said. All our contributors will rejoice in the many warm friends they make through their writings. That is one of the compensations given to fighters in a good cause.

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.

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.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen pays a visit to-day to Glasgow, and will lecture twice in the City Hall (Saloon) at 12 noon on "Do the Dead Live"; 6.30, "Why Men Believe in God." We have no doubt there will be good attendances, and he will be pleased to once more face a keen and critical Scotch audience. He will then cease lecturing until January 6, and with so much travelling, and so many other things demanding attention, he will be heartily glad for a couple of Sundays in his own home.

We publish this week a new pamphlet by our late leader, G. W. Foote. It was left all but finished, and is now issued for the first time, with a preface by Mr. Cohen. We feel sure that every *Freethinker* reader will wish to have a copy, and we have printed a large edition, bearing this in mind. There is no need to say anything about the quality of the pamphlet; to say it is by G. W. Foote is enough. The title of the pamphlet is *The Mother of God*, and it deals with one of the most fundamental of Christian superstitions. The pamphlet is in a neat cover, and published at the low price of twopence. Postage one halfpenny.

Early in the new year we intend—if our paper supply doesn't break down—publishing a number of pamphlets, some of which, we feel sure, will arouse considerable attention among all sections of Freethinkers. Reprints of pamphlets that have long been out of print will also follow. The present is, in our opinion, a good time for pushing home the Freethought attack, and we intend to either break a big hole in the Christian defences or to break ourselves in the attempt.

Mr. Cohen had two very successful meetings in the Victoria Hall, South Shields, on Sunday last. Many of the old and familiar faces were absent, death having been only too busy in their ranks during the past few years, and one missed the presence of Mr. S. M. Peacock, without whom no meeting seemed complete. But the pain of separation is the price one has to pay for friendship, and one must be always prepared to settle the reckoning. Mr. Chapman, the local N. S. S. Secretary, was as active and as enthusiastic as ever, and the success of the day has encouraged the Branch to invite a visit from Mr. Lloyd early in the new year.

Visitors were present from, among other places, Newcastle; and as there seems some probability of overcoming the difficulty about a hall, Mr. Cohen hopes to pay that city a visit early in February. This should mean the recommencement of active work there once more.

The *Christian World*, in a notice of the Secular Education League's pamphlet *German Crime and Secular Education*, says:—

Propagandists of denominational education, far too eager to seize any argument to support their cause, have been loudly—but very rashly—pointing to German character and conduct as exemplified in the war as an awful instance of the results of educating children without giving a "definite" religious teaching a prominent place. Leading Anglicans, clerical and lay, have loudly and publicly enunciated this view. Unfortunately most people have not the knowledge to correct their errors, and the Secular Education League has done really good service in publishing a leaflet to show how absolutely false these statements are. Anglican publications—even a "Catholic" Mirfield handbook; Professor Sadler and prominent educationists and educational journals; the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and other unimpeachable authorities, are all quoted, chapter and verse, to show that not only has religious teaching a deliberately prominent place in the German scheme of education and in the training of teachers, but that also this teaching is always and everywhere denominational. Therefore if any party in the religious education controversy is entitled to draw a moral from the facts, it is those who are opposed to denominational and dogmatic teaching. All Germans, high and low, have passed through a rigorous course of such teaching."

We welcome praise of the pamphlet from this quarter, and hope that our readers will act on the advice we gave last week. We are sure they will be doing a useful piece of work by giving this tract a wide circulation.

It should be said that the pamphlet is being sold at cost price. No one was paid anything for writing it, and no one is getting any profit by selling it. The *Freethinker* is giving its advertising space free, and is selling it without any profit on the sale, or any charge for labour, etc., in sending out the pamphlet. Not being a wealthy concern, we can afford—and are even pleased—to give all we can to such a cause as that of Secular Education.

The difficulty of obtaining halls—so many are being used by the military—is the chief obstacle at present to increased propaganda. Wherever they can be obtained, the work goes on. We take this opportunity of inviting the co-operation in this matter of groups of Freethinkers all over the country—whether there is a Branch of the N. S. S. in their locality or not. If a hall is obtainable, and they are willing to look after local arrangements, let them write to the General Secretary at once, and the work will be proceeded with.

Another Victory:

With a Special Appeal to Londoners.

A FEW months ago I was able to record a great Freethought victory with the House of Lords' decision in the Bowman Case. It is now possible to announce another striking triumph in connection with the attempt of the London County Council to suppress the sale of literature in the public parks. This does not, of course, rank in importance with the decision in the Bowman litigation, but it is important to all who value freedom of thought, speech, and propaganda.

The battle opened with my article in the *Freethinker* for June 11, 1916. It was there made public that the L.C.C. intended suppressing altogether the sale of literature at public meetings. And it was quite plain that this was only the first step towards a suppression of the meetings themselves. The sale of literature is as much a part of these meetings as the delivery of lectures, and there is no reason why if the one be prohibited the other should be allowed. Sooner or later we should have to fight, and it is always best to resist first encroachments.

The next step was the formation of a committee of London organizations. This was done with great success, and about forty organizations were banded together to resist a quite unwarranted attack on one of the oldest and most valuable privileges in connection with public propaganda.

A deliberate campaign was at once organized. Literature was sold, in defiance of the Council's regulation.

The Council, after some delay, issued a number of summonses. The Committee replied by taking the matter into the High Court, with the result that the regulation prohibiting the sale of literature was set aside. After some delay the Council, on November 27, surrendered by formally rescinding the resolution it ought never to have passed.

The work of the Protest Committee has thus ended in a victory, and, but for one circumstance, it might now meet and formerly declare itself at an end. But the fight, although carried on without a continuous flourish of trumpets, has involved constant watchfulness and considerable expense. All the Police Court cases had to be defended, and when it is said that counsel and solicitor made two appearances before the High Court, and that there were numerous consultations besides, no one will be surprised to learn that the cost of the fight has been over £200. But for the extreme moderation of the Committee's legal representatives the sum would have been larger. Over half the expense has been already met. There remains nearly £100 to be raised. And, at the request of the Committee, I am inviting subscriptions from *Freethinker* readers to wipe off this liability.

I am making this appeal primarily to Londoners, because the issue is one which concerns Londoners first of all. Of course sympathetic contributions from the Provinces are not barred, but I feel there should be enough people in London itself interested to provide the sum needed. A hundred might easily do it

between them. It has been a great fight, and it has ended in a complete win so far.

On p. 781 of this issue will be found a full statement of the case in an appeal issued by the Committee. I have written the above merely to enforce that appeal—which was written, it should be said, before the last meeting of the L.C.C.

I am loth to close this appeal without saying how much the Committee is indebted to the Rev. Stewart Headlam, who so manfully and so ably upheld our cause on the Council itself. And also to Mr. F. Verinder, who has acted as Chairman and Treasurer to the Committee. He has spared neither time nor energy in the matter, and more is owing to him than I can now say. As a Freethinker I feel bound and pleased to place on record my personal appreciation of the work of these two Churchmen, in which their sole motive was their devotion to principle.

At its last meeting the Executive of the N. S. S., which had already voted £5 to the Committee, voted a second and similar amount. I am adding my own mite in order to be "in it."

I feel apologetic having to again ask readers of this paper to contribute, but it is unavoidable. And I feel sure they will be with me in thinking the fight worthy of the expenditure.

Subscriptions had better be sent direct to me at 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., 4, and the total will be handed over to the Treasurer when the list is closed, which should be this side of Christmas.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

National Secular Society, £5; C. Cohen, £1 1s.; P. N., 5s. W. Hopper, 10s.

The Everlasting Hills.

IV.

(Continued from p. 764.)

THE giant forces of Nature are not only endlessly engaged in elevating the earth's mighty battlements, but are also occupied in their unwearying labour of reducing them to ruin. The furious storms of wind and rain that rage, the burning sun, the merciless frosts, and the roaring torrents all co-operate in the ceaseless work of destruction. Peak, glen, and valley have all been sculptured out of an originally dreary and monotonous rocky mass.

Although our native scenery is so splendid, Great Britain possesses no great mountain ranges. But what our hills lack in height they make up in age. That eminent geologist, the late Dr. Geikie, the famous brother of the illustrious Archibald Geikie, championed the opinion that the Scottish Highlands have "remained more or less continuously in the condition of land" ever since the beginning of Old Red Sandstone times. It is an established truth that the Highlands, the Welsh mountains, and the Lake eminences, are immensely ancient. In comparison with these the Alps and Himalayas are quite modern. It is highly probable that the British hills were the sites of majestic mountains millions of years before the chalk beds were deposited on the ocean floor. Yet, although the Alps are so youthful when compared with the immemorial mountains of Britain, they were in the prime of their mountainhood nearly twice their present height:—

The delta of the Rhone, the plain of Lombardy, Belgium, Holland, and the Dobrudscha are all built

up in part of materials from the tops of the Alps, which, if no fresh elevation take place, will be gradually lowered until nothing but the stumps remain."

Now, owing to their far greater antiquity, the amount of denudation in the Welsh, and Westmoreland, and Cumberland mountains have been far greater, and our island's elevations are insignificant because their age is so extreme. A careful study of the deposits around Snowdon reveals the fact that from 15,000 to 20,000 feet of solid rocks have been swept away, while in the Lake District the denudation suffered by that beauty spot totals 26,000 feet.

The highest mountain in South Britain is Snowdon, 3,571 feet in height, while our lowest hill of any importance, Crowborough Beacon, reaches a mere 803 feet. Among the most ancient of English hills are the Malverns, Charnwood Forest, the Wrekin, the granites of Cornwall and Devon, and the mountains of the Lake Country and Wales. In Shropshire there is a group of hills called the Wrekin, some twenty-nine miles in length, or if the uplands west of Kington in Herefordshire and Radnorshire are included, they extend for fifty miles. Dr. Callaway regards the Wrekin as the remains of an island surrounded in remote ages by a deep sea. In any case, this region is one of the oldest in our Isles. A well preserved worm-burrow from these rocks is, perhaps, the earliest British fossil so far discovered.

The magnificent Malvern Hills rising to a height of 1,400 feet when viewed from the Severn Valley, form one of the grandest examples of English scenery. To Raggedstone Hill in the Malverns superstition has attached itself. According to local tradition, this hill's shadow casts the curse of ruin on those upon whom it falls. Cardinal Wolsey's downfall was long attributed to the circumstance that as a youthful chaplain at Morton Court he once slumbered in the garden, and the baleful shadow rested over him.

Caer Caradoc, near Wenlock, was named, it is said, after Caractacus, and is alleged to have been the scene of the British chief's final struggle with the conquering Romans. Charnwood Forest is an English upland which is quite unlike the adjacent country, and bears a distinct resemblance to Welsh scenery. It is, indeed, an outlier of Welsh strata which has been thrust through environing rocks of later origin. Avebury describes it as "a tract of high ground enthroned in the midst of plains, a solitude in the midst of a thickly peopled district, a wilderness in the middle of mines and manufactures." The rocks which compose it date back to the period when the earliest fossils lived. In truth the western areas of Britain form the most venerable parts of the island, while the eastern and south-eastern regions are, geologically speaking, modern.

Snowdon, the monarch of English mountains, with its encircling summits, forms the loftiest and wildest part of Northern Wales. As their fossils show, the mountain rocks are of Silurian age. During the Silurian Period vast rivers of lava flowed from the volcanoes which then occupied what is now the Lake District, and North and South Wales. When these volcanoes were active, enormous quantities of volcanic ash were discharged into the sea, thus depositing strata in the ocean in which the extinct marine organisms whose shells are found in the rocks were buried. Snowdon and other mountains are extensively composed of such ancient volcanic substances. From beds of fine volcanic ash at their summits fossil shell fish may be gathered.

There are in the world to-day about 350 active volcanoes, while if the mountains that were once eruptive are included about 1,000 are known. Many British hills were formerly living volcanoes, such as Arthur's Seat, the famous eminence near Edinburgh,

the Bass Rock, and others. Volcanoes were long regarded as "burning mountains," and legion are the superstitions which have clustered round them. Etna, as Virgil informs us, was to the pagan Romans the spot where the incensed divinities buried Enceladus, one of the turbulent giants. Another eruptive mountain in the Lipa Islands—Volcano—was viewed as the forge of Vulcan or Volcan, the god of fire. Hence the name volcano arises from the ancient title of a celebrated smoking mountain in the Mediterranean Sea.

Volcanoes consist of alternating layers of ashes and lava, which all descend from the centre. In the volcano's centre itself is a chimney, which expands towards the top, so as to look like a funnel or cup. This is the crater. The form and inclination of a volcano depend upon the nature of the substances ejected. Every known volcano has been erected on a foundation of stratified rocks, and invariably *after* these rocks, which were originally laid down under the ocean, had been elevated high above sea level. Volcanoes are built usually through successive eruptions, and during several centuries. The earth shocks which herald the first eruption probably dislocate and fracture the sedimentary strata, thus opening a passage for the ascending lava.

Volcanoes, therefore, are quite unlike the more stable mountains previously described, inasmuch as they are never evolved by upheaval. As Hutchinson intimates, volcanic masses have not been fashioned by the upheaval of strata,—

but have been gradually piled up, something like rubbish heaps that accumulate in the Thames barges as the dustmen empty their carts into them, only in the case of volcanoes the "rubbish" comes from below. It is not necessary to suppose that the reservoir down below from which the molten rock is supplied exists at any very great depth below the original land surface on which the volcano grows up.

The hypothesis which assumed that volcanoes were developed by upheaval has been abandoned. The current theory was necessitated by careful investigation, and is strongly supported by observation. For instance, Monte Nuovo (the New Mountain), a small volcano near Vesuvius, about 430 feet high, arose during a single night in the year 1538. Two eye-witnesses have left on record their observations of the eruption to which Monte Nuovo owes its existence. These sixteenth century narratives have been amply corroborated by more recent inquiries. Various other volcanoes, such as Jorulla, the huge Mexican fire-mountain, present unmistakable evidences that they were formed in similar fashion.

A volcanic eruption is preceded by earth movements which shake the mountain and the surrounding country. Subterranean explosions set up vibrations which affect the environing area, while the volcano is convulsed by the pent-up energies of the steam and liquid rocks which are struggling to secure an outlet. Wells and springs disappear in the rock fractures occasioned by the internal turmoil. At last these imprisoned energies find a vent, and then the eruption commences, as a rule, with one titanic outburst which makes the entire mountain quiver from its apex to its very base. After this overture, explosions rapidly succeed one another with constantly increasing violence. Usually, the crater forms the centre of these disturbances, but at times the whole mountain appears to participate in these convulsions.

In the stupendous eruption which occurred at Krakatoa, in the Sunda Straits, which separate Java and Sumatra, in 1883, the sounds of the explosions were heard two thousand miles distant. Layers of volcanic dust descended within a radius of 1,000 miles; the more microscopic dust and vapour were urged to a height of from fifteen to twenty miles, and were carried by the air

currents all round the globe, while the particles suspended in the atmosphere caused most magnificent sunsets in many countries, including our own. It was even said that the English sunsets were beginning to imitate the paintings of Turner.

A hillside view of an air-raid on a clear, calm, moonlit night is completely eclipsed by the spectacle presented by a volcano in furious eruption. Volumes of liquid or semi-liquid lava may be hurled into the atmosphere. These volumes assume a spherical form, and are called "bombs." Viewed at a distance, they seem to be sheets of flame. So mighty are the forces of the imprisoned gases that, in their efforts to escape, they sometimes fling the volcano into space, and thus entire mountains have been shattered. The enormous discharges of steam issuing from the volcano expand, and ascend into the upper and colder regions of the air. There the steam condenses, and the rain descends in torrents. Immense masses of volcanic dust are transformed by the rain into mud, which tears down the declivities of the mountain. These mud rivers flow with enormous rapidity, and such streams of lava-water, as they are termed, were largely responsible for the calamity which destroyed the celebrated cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum at the time of the terrible eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Lava streams are sometimes small, but the effects of a giant stream may be gathered from what occurred in Iceland in 1783. Streams spread on all sides from the volcano Skaptar Jokull. They swept over the country, filled river courses 600 feet deep, and for nearly fifty miles the lava currents extended far and wide. A vivid impression of what this implies will be gained when we realize that if this eruption had occurred "in the south of England, all the country from the neighbourhood of London to that of Gloucester might have been covered by a flood of basalt of considerable thickness."

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

Booth to Scotland's Rescue!

EDINBURGH, in the estimation of several of her representative men, is apparently in a bad way. In an Edinburgh newspaper we see that "General" Booth has been visiting Edinburgh, where he received a welcome from various municipal dignitaries and a live M.P. The last-mentioned gentleman went the length of describing the Salvation Army's work as "a miracle." The "General" himself had been so impressed by the importance of the Army's work in Scotland "that he had decided to make Scotland a unit of the Army life and to appoint Commissioner and Mrs. Hoggard to the command of the territory." What this exactly means is best known to the "General," but his audience applauded the announcement, so perhaps they had been let into the secret. All the same, considering the length of time the Salvation Army has been in existence, the step seems a rather belated one. Its not having been taken earlier may imply a subtle compliment to Scotch piety; but its having to be taken at all suggests what we remarked at the outset, namely, that Edinburgh—nay, Scotland itself—has been falling from grace, and the only power that can restore the land to its pristine godliness is that whose emblems are the scarlet jersey and the tambourine.

There was one significant feature in the report of the "General's" meeting, and that was *the absence of the names of any of the Edinburgh clergy*. Was it not said long ago that the "Army" and the Churches were pulling happily together? All the "meenisters" are not away abroad in connection with the real War. Yet not one cassock—not one dog-collar—was to be seen in any

part of good Booth's Councillor-bestudded platform. Has there been a rift in the lute? Are there fewer converts being passed on by the Army into the Churches as potential members? In any view, the "General" himself lent colour to the suggestion that the reason for the absence of the reverends was a certain coolness, because in the course of his address, he said that in the work of the Army they had eschewed fine dress, tobacco, and strong drink—and in that respect he wished the Churches would follow the Army. That is certainly a nippy one. And it is two-edged. Not only are Church people greedy for luxuries, but also, they ignore the shining example of the musical band whose motto is "Blood and Fire." Alas! it is to be feared that the Scots parsons and the Army are not what they used to be to each other.

And by implication, at any rate, the "General" passed another slight upon God's chosen ambassadors in black. He went on to say that he believed the secret of the Army's "success" was that they had been able to use the people of every class for the saving of others of their class. This, one sees, cuts off at least half of the existing functions of the clergy. Can it be that the designing Booth sees fissures in the walls of the Temple of Clericalism? Does he make a bid for the laity who make not obeisance to the lordly priest? Drat us, what times we live in! Meantime, Scotsmen have the satisfaction of knowing that some one has flown to the succour of their land in her dire hour of need, and has made her a unit of the Salvation Army's life!

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

MEN, MONEY, AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The following extracts from an article called "War-Bondage, 1920," in the *Nation* of November 17, are so true to the actual facts, that they will go far to clear up any doubts about the question raised by Mr. Eden Phillpotts in your issue of November 25:—

Capitalism has been steadily working towards the final form of a free financial dynasty. This, the War brings about by substituting for the countless forms of stocks and shares and mortgages in many hands a single financial form, anchored in the safes of a few great Banks, Finance Houses, and Insurance Companies. These little groups of financiers already hold the mortgage deeds of Britain. Its lands and houses, mines and factories, ships and shops, belong to them. Such has been the secret achievement of the accumulating War Loans.....

It is true that many thousands of ordinary men and women hold small parcels of War Loan, in name at least.

But since all the later loans have been financed, partly by pledging earlier War Scrip and all sorts of other securities with the banks, partly by bolder fabrication of bank credit; when the War ends it will transpire that the War Financiers are the owners of all the property. For by that time the War Debt will have mounted up to a mortgage covering the whole estimated value of the national assets, and so the holders will virtually possess the country. Not only its capital, but its labour. For the labour of Britain will have to give up all the wealth it makes, beyond its necessary subsistence, to pay the interest.

Thus, when the men in the trenches and aboard ship return from their terrible ordeals, they will be forced to spend the rest of their lives in grinding out profits for the handful of cosmopolitan financial millionaires who will hold the great bulk of the huge War Debt. Any revolt by the workers is highly improbable because—

they will not know what has really happened, for the legend of financial ruin, universally believed, will continue to deceive them. The wail of the small investors over their depreciated securities will help to furnish a curtain of fiction, behind which our real capitalist smiles, contented and secure.

All this is equally true of every other country engaged in the War, because the cosmopolitan financiers will hold over

one-half of their War Loans, and each country's share of the War might have been financed, without any borrowing, through the agency of a State Bank, thus defeating the designs of these great financiers for the conquest of the world.

G. O. WARREN (Major).

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON NOV. 29.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Braddock, Eager, Gorniot, Leat, Lazarnick, Neary, Owen, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Thurlow, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members (46 in all) were received from Birmingham, Goldthorpe, Liverpool, Manchester, Southampton, Swansea, South London, and the Parent Society.

Permission was granted for the formation of a new Branch at Southampton.

Out of the report of the business transacted at the Interim Conference, a discussion arose upon the best methods of carrying out the South London Branch's resolution. After a statement by the President, expressing his view on the situation, it was resolved that the matter be adjourned until the next Executive meeting.

The President and Secretary gave a report as to the result of the application of the Protest Committee against the L.C.C. in the High Courts, and it was gathered from more recent happenings in connection with the meetings of the Parks Committee that the matter was nearing a satisfactory conclusion. The Protest Committee's appeal for funds was received, and a further donation of £5 voted.

The new regulations under D.O.R.A. affecting pamphlets were discussed, and the following resolution—

This Executive of the National Secular Society strongly protests against the proposed regulation under the Defence of the Realm Act ordering that all pamphlets dealing with war and peace shall be submitted to a Government censor before publication; it regards such a regulation as a direct attack upon the freedom of publication, and as foreign to British traditions of freedom of speech and writing. This Executive is of opinion that a decision as to the legality or illegality of any publication should be decided by a court of law, and not by a political censorship; and hopes that all lovers of freedom will unite in demanding the withdrawal of a regulation which must be regarded as mischievous in the highest degree—

was carried unanimously.

It was further reported that a series of Sunday afternoon lectures were arranged for January, to be held at 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, and that a grant of £15 had been made by Mr. Cohen from his Propagandist Fund.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Society News.

The Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. opened its Autumn Lecture Session on September 23 with two lectures in the Town Hall by Mr. C. Cohen, President of the N. S. S. The lectures were well attended, and it was very gratifying to old and new members and friends to note the large audiences and the marked manner in which the lectures were followed. Questions and answers at the close were interesting and enjoyed. On September 30 (Bradlaugh Sunday) a Social Gathering was held at the Cafe Oriental, Hill Street. Speeches suitable to the occasion were made by Messrs. F. E. Willis and E. C. Williams. The difficulty of obtaining a suitable hall for lectures was overcome when the Branch found itself able to book the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, and Mr. Lloyd delivered the first lecture there on October 7. He was followed by Mr. E. Clifford Williams, Mr. F. E. Willis, Mr. Cohen, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner.

The venture has been in every respect satisfactory. The audiences have been large, and the sale of literature excellent. Many people, strangers to our movement, have attended, expressed pleasure at the lectures, and purchased liberally at the bookstall. In the New Year the committee hope to fill dates in larger number than fortnightly as at present, and asks the support of all local friends in making the meetings widely known and getting strangers to attend.—J. PARTRIDGE.

Dr. Binnie Dunlop, Hon. Sec. to the Malthusian League, addressed a good audience—a very fair proportion being composed of ladies—on Sunday night last. Dr. Dunlop gave a particularly clear and lucid exposition of the rise and fall of the birth-rate, and stressed the connection between the Secular and Neo-Malthusian Movements. Many questions were asked and much interest shown. To-night Mr. J. K. Harris will open on "Freethought and Judaism." North Londoners, please note.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec. North London Branch.

On Sunday Mr. P. S. Wilde delivered a carefully prepared lecture on "God's Beginnings," which elicited some thoughtful discussion, including some very courteous opposition from a Christian Evidence lecturer. A pleasing feature was that a considerable proportion of the audience were total strangers to our meetings. Mr. Somerville occupied the chair.—V. ROGER, South London Branch.

Joint Committee of Protest Against Prohibition of Sale of Literature in London County Council Parks and Open Spaces.

THE legal victory gained over the London County Council on October 23rd has brought this Committee a long step nearer the achievement of its end; but this only serves to emphasize the critical importance of the present position.

Nearly 18 months ago, the "Joint Committee of Protest" was formed to resist a quite uncalled-for attack by the L.C.C. on the freedom of propaganda. The right to hold meetings in Parks and Open Spaces, where suitable accommodation exists, has never been questioned by any public body. When the L.C.C. assumed control of the London Parks it found this right in existence, and this right has been recognized in more than one of the Acts dealing with the powers and duties of the Council. Along with the right to hold meetings went the right to sell literature at the meetings—always subject in either case to such regulation as might be necessary in the general public interest—such sale being, indeed, an integral part of the educational work carried on at the meetings. An attack on the one right could not but be an attack on the other.

There has been no complaint from the public as to the nature of the literature sold, all of which had passed the censorship of the Council. No one has complained of annoyance: the literature is only offered to those who attend the meetings on the sites set apart for that purpose. There has been no complaint from the Council's Officials, who, on the contrary, reported that the arrangements had worked smoothly and without friction. It is confessed that there has been no complaint from the military authority.

When, therefore, the L.C.C. passed a resolution that the sale of literature should, after September 30, 1916, be prohibited, a number of Societies—including, among many others, such representative bodies as the London Trades Council, the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, the National Secular Society, etc.—rightly regarded this as an attack on the Right of Public Meeting, and this Committee was called into existence to resist by every means in its power the arbitrary action of the Council.

The Committee tried by every possible means, by deputations, correspondence, resolutions, etc., to induce the Council to alter its decision. Every attempt failed; and the Committee felt that the only way to bring the ques-

tion to an issue was to continue the exercise of a right which had existed before the Council came into being. Meetings were held and literature sold at them. After considerable delay, a summons was issued, and the magistrate fined the defendant. Several other prosecutions followed, defended in every case by the solicitor and counsel of the Committee.

The next step was taken in the High Court. Counsel was instructed to apply for a Rule calling upon the L.C.C. to show whether it had rightly exercised the powers granted to it in passing the Resolution of which this Committee complains. The application was at once granted; and, a few weeks later, a Divisional Court, consisting of Justices Darling, Avory, and Sankey, made the Rule nisi for a Mandamus absolute, the first-named Judge remarking that "he was unable to see how they could give judgment in any other way without disregarding the rules and construction of the law." This decision was in the nature of a severe rebuff to the Council, and Sir Ernest Pollock, K.C., on its behalf, said that it would consider the question of an appeal. The Committee awaits its decision with the utmost confidence.

It is well within the knowledge of this Committee that this action of the Council is regarded in some quarters as only the prelude to a more daring attack on the Right of Public Meeting. To allow the Council—whose life is prolonged beyond its natural term by the accident of war—to take advantage of the distraction caused by the war to destroy this cherished and well-established public right is to offer the strongest encouragement to the reactionaries of the L.C.C. Resistance in the end would become inevitable. It is far better to fight the enemy on the frontier than to wait till he is in the flush of a successful invasion.

The matter is of first-rate importance, and *the need for funds is urgent*. The fight is being conducted with the utmost economy, but it nevertheless involves considerable expenditure. The indebtedness of the Committee for legal expenses amounts at present to over £100; and, if the L.C.C. is so ill advised as to carry the matter further, more money will be needed. It would indeed be regrettable if the Committee were compelled to suspend its operations owing to lack of funds.

The Committee does not think that more need be said to impress upon all lovers of freedom the need for an immediate and generous response to this appeal. The issue is one which affects all interested in the education of public opinion. If the L.C.C. were to succeed in this endeavour, every attempt to appeal to public opinion by the sale of literature at Park Meetings would be stopped. The next step would almost certainly be to prohibit free distribution, and then to stop the meetings altogether.

The Committee has refrained from issuing this appeal until the latest possible moment. They are fighting for a public right, and they confidently rely upon public support.

FREDK. VERINDER, *Chairman and Hon. Treasurer*,
376 and 377, Strand, London, W.C., 2.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Hon. Secretary*,
62, Farringdon Street, London, E.C., 4.

The whirligig of time brings in its revenges. Once Thomas Paine's name was execrated by all Christians. To-day his name is held in honour, and even the Nonconformist *Daily News* writes of him with respect, and includes him among "a succession of great men" who were "inspired by the single idea of saving the New World from the tragedy of the Old."

Obituary.

I regret to have to mention that Bradford Freethinkers have sustained a loss in the death of an old sympathiser in the person of John Seymour, of 7, Burrow Street. He had been ill for some time, and resided with a married daughter at above address. I feel pleased to say that when he was occasionally visited and a copy of this paper left him he derived much pleasure in reading the same.—J. G.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Free-thought and Judaism." Introduced by J. K. Harris.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Tube Station): 7, F. A. Davies, "Essential Christianity."

WEST CENTRAL HALL (London Society, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.30, M. Puttemans, "Art from the Social Point of View." (Lecture in French.)

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Swasey, Kells, Dales, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (City Hall, Saloon): C. Cohen, 12 noon, "Do the Dead Live?" 6.30, "Why Men Believe in God."

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beevor Street): 3, Discussion, "Secularism." All welcome.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Bakers' Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, T. F. Greenall, "Shelley's 'Prometheus.'"

To be distributed in Thousands.

GERMAN CRIME AND SECULAR EDUCATION.

A Telling Exposure of the Falsehood that German Crime in the War is due to the lack of religious instruction, and a consequence of a system of Secular Education.

Every Freethinker should assist in the distribution of this Tract.

Issued by the Secular Education League.

Price 2s. per hundred, postage 4d., from
THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.

COMFORTABLE APARTMENTS, 4½ miles from Leicester.—Widow, without family, with spare rooms, with gas, can receive visitors for week-ends or longer. Moderate charges.—Mrs. W. PALMER, King Street, Enderby, near Leicester.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE.

MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE,
QUEEN ANNE'S CHAMBERS, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

G. E. MACDONALD - - - - - EDITOR.

L. K. WASHBURN - - - - - EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

Subscription Rates:

Single subscription in advance	- - -	\$3.00
Two new subscribers	- - -	5.00
One subscription two years in advance	- - -	5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra. Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies, which are free.

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,

Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,

62 VESEY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

- ROME OR ATHEISM? Price 2d., postage ½d.
- BIBLE AND BEER. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- MY RESURRECTION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- THE ATHEIST SHOEMAKER. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ½d.
- THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

- DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By J. T. LLOYD.

- PRAYER: ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND FUTILITY. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By WALTER MANN.

- PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage ½d.
- THE RELIGION OF FAMOUS MEN. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By MIMNERMUS.

- FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

- MISTAKES OF MOSES. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- WOODEN GOD. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- DO I BLASPHEME? Price 1d., postage ½d.
- HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- THE GODS. Price 2d., postage ½d.
- LIVE TOPICS. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- LIMITS OF TOLERATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- ROME OR REASON. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By J. BENTHAM.

- UTILITARIANISM Price 1d., postage ½d.

About 1d. in the 1s. should be added on all Foreign and Colonial Orders.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President :

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary :

MISS E. M. VANCE, 62 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation

Dated this.....day of.....19.....

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or the Free-thought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organizations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalization of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labour.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement, by all just and wise means, of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommensurable dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labour to organize itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalization, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

Never Before Published.

THE MOTHER OF GOD.

BY (THE LATE)

G. W. FOOTE.

With Preface by **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

Should be read by every Freethinker.

PRICE TWOPENCE

(Postage $\frac{1}{2}$ d).

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

For a Freethinker's Bookshelf.

THE POSITIVE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION.

Its Moral and Social Reaction.

BY FREDERIC HARRISON, D.C.L.

A Criticism of Supernaturalistic Religion from the standpoint of Positivism.

Published 8s. 6d. net. Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

THE NON-RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

BY MARIE JEAN GUYAU.

Published 17s. net. Price 4s., postage 6d.

DARWINISM TO-DAY.

BY PROFESSOR V. L. KELLOGG.

A Discussion of the present standing of Darwinism in the light of later and alternative theories of the Development of Species.

Published 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 5d.

STUDIES IN ROMAN HISTORY.

BY DR. E. G. HARDY.

Vol. I.—Christianity and the Roman Government.

Vol. II.—The Armies and the Empire.

Published 12s. net. Price 3s. 9d., postage 6d.

THE ENGLISH WOMAN: STUDIES IN HER PSYCHIC EVOLUTION.

BY D. STAARS.

Published 9s. net. Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

An Evolutionary and Historic Essay on Woman. With Biographical Sketches of Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, and others.

HISTORY OF SACERDOTAL CELIBACY.

BY H. C. LEA.

In two handsome volumes, large 8vo., published at 21s. net. Price 7s., postage 7d.

This is the Third and Revised Edition, 1907, of the Standard and Authoritative Work on Sacerdotal Celibacy. Since its issue in 1867 it has held the first place in the literature of the subject, nor is it likely to lose that position.

BY THE HON. A. S. G. CANNING.

INTOLERANCE AMONG CHRISTIANS.

Published 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 4d.

RELIGIOUS STRIFE IN BRITISH HISTORY.

Published 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 5d.

THE POLITICAL PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Published 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 4d.

The Three Volumes post free for 5s.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

A Record of His Life and Work.

BY HYPATIA BRADLAUGH BONNER.

Containing an Account of his Parliamentary Struggle, Politics, and Teachings.

BY JOHN M. ROBERTSON, M.P.

With Portraits and Appendices.

Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C. 4.