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Views and Opinions.

War and the Churches.

It requires but little study of the daily and weekly press to perceive that the Day of Intercession on January 6 was anything but a pronounced success. Save where a special advertising policy had been adopted, the Churches do not appear to have been much fuller than usual, and the non-church-going public—which is the larger portion—was quite unaffected, where it was not disgusted. Most of the papers described the Day of Prayer as having been "widely observed," when it was not width but thickness that was required. A pound of butter may be widely spread, but its width gives little satisfaction to those who eat it. And now that the Day of Prayer is over, things seem to be going on much as usual, except that the food question is growing more acute. The nation looks more like standing in queues than going on its knees. And if it opens its mouth, it is in the hope of filling it with food, rather than to return thanks to a God who has allowed *his* world to get into its present state, and who, while able to save stone crosses from shell fire, is powerless to prevent the destruction of food or the sinking of hospital ships.

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The Impotence of Deity.

If anything, the Day of Prayer seemed only to emphasize the impotence and worthlessness of the Christian Churches. The function of a Church, if it is to have any useful function at all, should be that of keeping aloft the light of the ideal. In this War, more perhaps than in previous conflicts, there has been a greater readiness to ignore those elements of truth, justice, tolerance, and humanity, upon which the permanent welfare of the race depends. Step by step the process of demoralization has gone on, and those who have shrieked loudest about, but have not perhaps felt most keenly, the brutality of the German campaign, have been most anxious for us to imitate German methods, by way of out-deviling the Devil. In such circumstances, the Churches had a clear part to play, if they would only have played it. What

part have they played? Let anyone glance over the reports of the services held during the "Command" performance of a Day of Prayer, and what will he see but, in the main, an appeal to force as the arbiter of national destiny? The prayers are for victory, chiefly by force of arms. No prayers were offered that God would change the heart of the Kaiser or open the eyes of the German people, and so once more give the people peace. Apparently that is given up as hopeless. Christ, who can change the heart of the converted burglar, is powerless against the Emperor William. God, who could move the American people to come into the War, cannot, apparently, move the German people to get out of it. He can only operate to nerve men to keep up the fighting. The Christian Deity is still a God of war, in England as in Germany; not so openly proclaimed here as there, but a God of war nevertheless.

* * *

A False Standard.

Quite significant of the mental characteristics encouraged by the Churches was the classification of the peoples of the world. "We pray thee for the small peoples as well as for the great," we will "maintain the freedom of a great people as well as of a small people" (this from the *Church Times*), and so on through endless variations. But who are the great peoples, and who are the small peoples? The only standard in Christian countries, and in the Churches on Prayer Sunday, is that of money and arms. By what other standard is England greater than Switzerland, or France greater than Denmark, or America greater than Holland? A nation is not necessarily *greater* because it is forty million strong instead of ten, or because it can raise a million soldiers instead of ten thousand, or because it can count its wealth in millions instead of in thousands. Size is not greatness. Multiply armies and navies, and wealth, and population as you will, and in the absence of other and more valuable things, you are only multiplying evil and misfortune. Germany's criminal folly was that it took world-power, huge armies, and a colossal commerce as the marks of a nation's greatness. It has yet to realize that the Germany which achieved these things was a *littler* Germany than the one that knew them not. But in defence of Germany, it might be said these were the ideals of Christendom. They are the ideals expressed in the prayers for the "great" and the "small" nations. It is an ideal that rests upon the belief in force. Christian nations, and the Christian Churches, have not yet reached the point of classifying nations as "great" or "small" in proportion as they are morally developed and mentally enlightened. The Churches do not yet see that the only way to kill one passion is by arousing another; the way to weaken one ideal is to develop another; and that German militarism can only be successfully killed by destroying the ideas and ideals by which it lives.

* * *

Russia to the Rescue.

It is for these reasons that the one event of profound significance in this War is the Russian revolution and its

outcome. This may have been a set-back to the Allies' military operations; the duty of an army is to beat its opponent, and anything that stops this is properly enough regarded as a disaster. But with this aspect we are not concerned. In the Russian revolution, and, for the first time, a great idea has come definitely and commandingly to the front. It has already borne fruit. It has drawn from President Wilson the clearest and finest expression of war aims yet published, and one on behalf of which, so long as it is fairly interpreted, soldiers abroad and civilians at home, may fight without misgiving. For the first time in this War all the peoples engaged therein have a clear cut idea before them. Are we to continue to live in a world dominated by the glamour of "possessions," of alliances cemented not by mutual esteem and confidence but by distrust of others, or are we to work for a new world that shall take the form of a community of nations in which the presence of a standing army shall serve as a reproach, if not as an actual disgrace? Whatever be the outcome of Russia's present plight, she has set this ideal before the world. And nothing can undo that. It is the 1789 French Revolution over again. Monarchical and Christian Europe hurled itself against the French people. Every country—our own included—strove by wars and repressive laws to prevent the ideas of 1789 gaining entrance. But with only very partial success. The Revolution might be suppressed at home, and much of its advance lost, but the ideas lived on. They were all over Europe; they were persecuted, but they defied annihilation. The Freethinking revolutionary leaders of Russia are doing to-day for the world what, over a century ago, France did for Europe. These leaders may be false to their own ideals, the revolution may be crushed, but the work it has already done will remain and fructify.

* * *

The Blunder of the Churches.

It is in this direction that the Churches have shown their weakness and their worthlessness. If they taught ideas they were wrong ones. They have held up the idea of force as bravely as the crudest of politicians. Always ready to sell themselves for an advantage of the moment, they have never realized that in human affairs the ultimate and the decisive force is the force of an idea; that the real task before the world was not to get bullets into German bodies, but to get better ideas into German heads. Had they realized and preached this right through the War, an institution such as the Church, which can reach every town and village in the kingdom, would have had a claim on the respect of men, even though they could not believe in its theology. The Church has done its best to strengthen men for the War; it has done nothing to strengthen them in the direction of ending this War in such a way as shall make future wars impossible. And when the War is over, impartial students are not likely to forget this. They see now that the force upon which many counted as being able to curb the passions of men is in every country in the world at the service of the Government it serves. It preaches a German God in Germany, as it preaches a national deity in whatever country it exists.

* * *

The Power of Ideas.

Finally, the Church would not have "hindered" the War had they acted thus. They would only have clarified men's minds, nerved their spirit, and made the "war aim" clear to all. For there is nothing in the world for which men will fight so desperately, and so cheerfully, as for an idea. The very history of religion itself proves this. When Garibaldi called the youth of Italy around him, with the offer of nothing but a crust

and hard blows, it was for an idea. When the ill-trained, ill-fed, ill-clothed armies of Republican France swept over Europe, it was as the propagandists of an idea. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, proved more powerful than pay, plunder, and patronage. When Bruno went calmly to the stake, it was for an idea. When free-thinking men and women braved Christian prisons and outrage, it was for the idea of free speech and a free press. The man who fights for an idea holds the future in pawn. But the Churches have no hope in the future. They know this holds nothing in store for them but condemnation. They are condemned by their past. They are condemned by their present. Nothing is left for the future but to pass sentence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Lord, Increase Our Faith."

SUCH is the prayer for the New Year which the *British Weekly* for January 3 urges its readers to adopt as a motto for these troublous times. Jesus was enjoining his disciples to the practice of forgiveness. Dora Greenwell says that "We might have expected, when a moral duty difficult to the natural man was in question, the words would have been 'Lord, increase our charity.'" But what the disciples seem to have realized is the alleged fact that forgiveness is too difficult for the natural man to exemplify in his own strength, and being fully aware of this they naturally prayed "for an increase of the faculty through which alone the Divine aid can be made available by the soul." Hence, in its first issue for the year, the *British Weekly* devotes its leading article to a stirring commendation of faith as the Alpha and Omega of religion. Nothing can be truer than the statement that without faith supernatural religion is a natural impossibility. He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he hears and can answer those who call upon him. Sir William Robertson Nicoll, for the article under consideration is presumably from his editorial pen, is perfectly justified in assigning to faith the supreme place in religion, and in regarding it as a distinct gift from above. The natural man does not possess it, nor does he feel the need of it. Faith is a faculty of a new, spiritual man, created by Jesus Christ. Sir William thinks there "may be lives so smooth and easy that faith is apparently little needed, the outward tokens of prosperity and peace amply sustaining the soul." The truth, however, is that the natural man, whether in prosperity or in adversity, has no sense whatever of the supernatural. He is a citizen of this world only, and it is this world that supplies all his wants. The difference between the natural and the spiritual man is that the former is pre-eminently a knower and walks by sight, while the latter is pre-eminently a believer and walks by faith. Faith should never be confused with knowledge. Sir William affirms that "by faith we know God;" but, as a matter of fact, God is never known at all. Were he an object of knowledge faith would be superfluous. Even believers are never absolutely sure of him.

Sir William tells us that "we must have faith first of all in God's moral government of the world." The distinguished editor is fully aware that this is exceptionally difficult, for "often it seems as if God had abandoned his own creation." The prosperity of the wicked, he admits, tries everybody's faith, as it did that of the Psalmist long ago. Then he says:—

Faith may be sorely tried by the apparently impregnable lines of the enemy. They have thrown up fortifications which to all eyes but the eyes of faith appear to be impassable. Again and again the faithful are com-

pelled to spend their lives under the tyranny which appears to be in perpetual possession, and they die in the day of its strength.

That is a very old complaint, and often it is nothing but a pious excuse for radical inefficiency. Generally, prosperity is the reward of well-organized industry, but "the faithful" derive much consolation from the belief that their non-success in life is due to their superior honesty and godliness. There are people who seem born to be trampled upon. They are unfortunate in all their ways. As Sir William puts it:—

Nothing prospers in their hands. A blight seems to have come upon them. They lose the brightest and the dearest by untimely deaths. They fail in business. Cloud follows cloud, and storm follows storm, and when the end comes it is welcomed as a deliverance from a burden too heavy to be borne.....There is before us the prospect of many sad to-morrows, each bringing its own weight of anxiety and anguish. Need we wonder that in these circumstances faith is often very difficult? It may diminish. Questions are put to which no direct answer can be returned. There may come instead of faith a morously sullen or defiantly rebellious mood.

The troubles described in that extract are peculiar to those who have more or less religion. They believe in God, but doubt that his providence extends to them. It is not the existence but the goodness of God that they are inclined to question. A morously sullen or defiantly rebellious mood is possible only to lukewarm believers. If they only used their reason and consulted history, they would understand that the circumstance of their life and the trials that overtake them are easily explained without any reference to supernatural agencies of any kind.

The writer of the article informs us that "faith is called to superior contests in this our day," and that "by faith we may overcome the world even when we seem to be defeated." Here we have the testimony of neffectual and unconvincing pietism. Take this sample of the reasoning:—

Times have been dark and bloody before this and faith has won through. If we are to give over believing we sin against the whole Israel of God. We offend the generation of God's children. We abandon that precious tradition of faith which is the sacred treasure of the world. We desert the forlorn hope of the righteous. We renounce fellowship with the martyrs and saints who have fought for the good cause from generation to generation. Many of them died fighting, and all the hope of the world is with them.

That passage is a sentimental appeal to the emotionally religious class, and the unethical or anti-ethical nature of its argument is patent to all. Should we continue to believe against evidence and against the direct testimony of common sense merely in order to avoid hurting the feelings of those who do so believe? Is not Sir William aware that the tradition of faith is precious only in the estimation of believers, while to honest unbelievers it is by no means a sacred treasure? There are thousands of men and women in London alone whose conscience backs their intelligence in the rejection of what Sir William terms "the good cause," and are they to disregard the testimony of the highest and best within them for the sake of remaining in "the fellowship of saints"? Or, are we not to give over believing in order not to "desert the forlorn hope of the righteous"? Surely to employ words which imply that the righteous pursue a "forlorn hope" is to give the Christian case wholly away. Some four years ago we read a series of *British Weekly* articles, contributed by the editor, on "The Difference Christ Has Made," in which the triumph of the Cross was depicted in extravagant terms, and a positive assurance was given that whilst we might still

have wars, they would be conducted in a much humaner and milder manner than any wars of the past; but since then we have had three years and a half of the bloodiest and most brutal war on record, and now it is admitted that the Christian hope is a "forlorn" one. What is a forlorn hope? "A desperate case or enterprise"; "any enterprise having little prospect of success." The Christ who, four years ago, was declared to have conquered and won Europe, and to have established his kingdom of righteousness and love upon earth, is now seen to be face to face with an exceptionally perilous or desperate situation, with scarcely any chance whatever of a victorious issue. Sir William's tone to-day is radically different from what it was four or five years ago. He says:—

Our faith sometimes seems to be very weak, sometimes it seems to have vanished altogether. Sometimes we are tempted to close our Bibles and say we will never open them again.

That is a temptation against which Christians struggle with all their might, but which even the saintliest among them never entirely overcome. It returns again and again to the end of life, and the question naturally arises, Why is it so difficult to believe, and what accounts for the never-ceasing tendency of faith to decline? The Christian answer is that the cause of unbelief is the sinfulness of human nature, the natural depravity which has been the lot of humanity ever since the Fall in Eden. The temptation to disbelieve comes from the Devil, who has easy access to our souls; and somehow or other there is that in us which falls in with his evil suggestions. This explanation satisfies the theologians; and their message to those whose faith is weak, and getting weaker, is "Pray for grace to resist the Devil and compel him to take his flight." That is Sir William's way of escape. Faith is increased by prayer. "In answer to prayer we are visited by the breathing of the spirit of Christ." But the Christian solution of the riddle is not a true one. The truth is that belief in the supernatural is difficult because it is unnatural, because the spiritual man so enthusiastically introduced and eulogized by St. Paul is a sham, existing only in imagination; and faith, being a faculty of the spiritual man, is likewise foreign to our nature, and can never form a part of our life as children of the earth. St. Paul's natural man is really the whole man, and his whole duty consists in being a useful, sympathetic, and helpful member of the race to which he belongs.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Pennyworth of Prophecy.

Hotsbur.— At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets; and at my birth,
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward.

Glendower.— Why, so it would have done
At the same season, if your mother's cat had
But kittened, though yourself had ne'er been born.
—Shakespeare, "Henry IV."

THOMAS MOORE, the poet, was nearly choked with indignation by being asked by a lady at dinner how he got his forecasts for his famous almanac. Yet the fact remains that "Old Moore," the prophet, counts more readers to-day than the author of *Lalla Rookh*, a poem much admired on publication, and for which the author received ten thousand pounds.

Prophecy, it used to be said, found a man mad, or left him so; but an exception must be made in the case of "Old Moore," the most genial and kindly of prophets, whose almanac is known to everybody. Not long ago, there rose up, in an idle week, the old newspaper dispute

over the names of the twenty greatest men now alive and famous. Reputations tossed and rose and fell. There were odd folk who were not quite sure of Mr. Lloyd George. Over the merits of the Bishop of London and Billy Sunday there were unkind comparisons; but none of the correspondents ever questioned the right of "Old Moore" to be considered a great man.

His is a fame that flourishes wherever the English language is spoken. He has shown to hundreds of thousands the annual vision of the future, and he has carefully observed the secret of anonymity. As for the public, the prophet serves us well. His manly utterances set us right at the moment when a new bacillus swims into our ken; when we are anxious over a coming eclipse; or the press-gang screams over the inadequacy of the defences of the country.

"Old Moore" should know something of the stars, for he has been in active communion with them for over two hundred years. At least one of the editions of his almanac claims to be in its 221st year, whilst another is said to have a circulation of over a million copies annually. It is true that the name of "Francis Moore; Physician," is not in the Medical Directories, but, probably, on account of his patriarchal age, he is on the retired list. He must have seen many ups and downs during his interesting career, having started in business as a prophet prior to the reign of good Queen Anne.

"Old Moore's" Almanac for the present year suggests that the "voices of the stars" are very clamorous, although, like the clerical prophets of Armageddon, the seer's anticipations are delightfully vague on matters of real consequence. The prophet's principal hieroglyphic for 1918 is a fearsome and a wonderful sight. To the uninitiated onlooker the chief features seem absolutely weird. In the top corner Uncle Sam, who represents America, is seen putting his head in a lion's mouth, but, fortunately, the animal seems unusually well-fed and good-tempered. Close at hand is an American flag, very much the worse for wear. On the right is a boy in a bathing costume, carrying a crucifix up a hill-side on which a bonfire is burning. Underneath, a lady, attired like one of the witches in *Macbeth*, is attempting to lasso a good-sized tiger; whilst in the centre a cock is crowing over some skulls, and three Scotch soldiers are giving an open-air concert. The foreground shows a number of workmen engaged in pulling down a jerry-built church. The accompanying letterpress conveys the distressful information that "during the year religious matters will endure a good deal of rough usage," but, lest any reader should get cold feet in consequence, the prophet adds, "there will be a great revival in spiritual concerns." The military concert is interpreted by the prophet as a sign of peace, and "Old Moore" concludes his remarks on his chief cartoon with the inspiring and patriotic words, "God Save the King."

The dozen smaller hieroglyphics, thoughtfully provided for the twelve months of the year, supply considerable food for reflection, and amplify the larger drawing. From the attached letterpress we learn that "during many months of the year" the question of drink "will call for special attention," and that a duke will shuffle off this mortal coil in February. More saddening still, the unexpected death of a well-beloved clergyman will throw a gloom over the merry month of May. A celebrated actress will be beckoned from the stage of life in July. Of more interest to general readers is the autumn forecast that the question of excessive smoking among soldiers will be investigated. In December there will be "a bad railway smash," but, lest this calamity should induce pessimism, we hasten to point out that "trade will be good and cash plentiful," and "grand weather may be looked for."

That is how a twentieth century "prophet" looks out on the unknown year that stretches before us. It cannot be said to be an inspiring message in the unprecedented days in which we live, when the world has plunged back into "chaos and Old Night," and murder is the principal industry, and the preaching of hatred between men is the tender gospel of the Christian Churches. But "Old Moore's" pathetic commonplaces are no worse than the imbecilities of the spiritual leaders of the Christian world, which have varied from the boisterous braggadocio of the German pastors to the timid silence of our own Archbishops, the baby-talk of the Bishop of London, and the determination of the Pope to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. It will never be forgotten that the clergy have stood aside from the world struggle, and have been exempted from military service. The Churches have been organized on a national basis in every country, and they have acted the same as other official bodies. Hence the edifying spectacle in all Christian countries of the paraphernalia of religion being subverted to political ends, and the clergy of the hostile countries appealing to "God" for support for the machinations of the politicians, and subordinating the Christian religion to the secular necessities of the State. It can have but one result, and that is to reduce to the lowest ebb the prestige and influence of the Churches, which only continue to flourish in those half-educated stratas of the community which welcome "Old Moore" among the prophets.

There are so many people out walking in the streets who are celebrated, or notoriety, that it is a pleasure to find a prophet whose features are veiled, and whose private life is unreported in the daily papers. In these days, in this Bagdad of ours, no Haroun al Raschid can venture abroad undistinguished and escape the snapshotters of the illustrated journals. But "Old Moore's" fame is still safe without his portrait being reproduced alongside those of the Bishop of London and the star artists of the music-halls. Let the gloomy deans, and the still more gloomy laymen, give us as careful and as comforting anticipations, and there will be an end of the slump in prophecy.

MIMNERMUS.

Atheism and the French Revolution.

IN itself the capture of that prison-fortress, the Bastille, by the people was not a wonderful achievement; it was ill-defended, and its governor might, had he chosen, have exploded the powder magazine and blown it sky-high. But the event was the parting of the ways. It showed that the multitude had got the bit between its teeth, and needed a more potent master than the poor king at Versailles. And the event itself was a striking one. Men are led by imagination, and the Bastille was the symbol of centuries of oppression. Within its gloomy dungeons hundreds of innocent men had perished in solitary misery, without indictment or trial, consigned to death-in-life by the arbitrary order of irresponsible power. Men of the most eminent intellect and character had suffered within its precincts for the crime of teaching new truth or exposing old superstitions. Voltaire himself had twice tasted imprisonment there. What wonder, then, that the people fixed their gaze upon it on that ominous fourteenth of July, and attacked it as the very citadel of tyranny? The Bastille fell, and the sound re-echoed through Europe. It was the signal of a new era and a new hope. The Revolution had begun—that mighty movement which, in its meaning and consequences, dwarfs every other cataclysm in history.

But revolutions do not happen miraculously. Their advent is prepared. They are as much *caused* as the fall of a ripe apple from the tree, or the regular bursting of the buds in spring. The authors of the Revolution were in their graves. Its leaders, or its instruments, appeared upon the scene in '89. After life's fitful fever Voltaire was sleeping well. Rousseau's tortured heart was at rest. Diderot's colossal labours were ended; his epitaph was written, and the great Encyclopædia remained as his living monument. D'Holbach had just joined his friends in their eternal repose. A host of smaller men, also, but admirable soldiers of progress in their degree, had passed away. The gallant host had done its work. The ground was ploughed, the seed was sown, and the harvest was sure. Famished as they were, and well-nigh desperate at times, the men of the Revolution nursed the crop as a sacred legacy, shedding their blood like water to fructify the soil in which it grew.

Superficial readers are ignorant of the mental ferment which went on in France before the Revolution. Voltaire's policy of sapping the dogmas by which all tyranny was supported had been carried out unflinchingly. Not only had Christianity been attacked in every conceivable way, with science, scholarship, argument, and wit; but the very foundations of all religion—the belief in soul and God—had not been spared. The Heresiarch of Ferney lived to see the war with superstition carried farther than he contemplated or desired; but it was impossible for him to say to the tide of Freethought "thus far shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The tide poured on over everything sacred. Altars, thrones, and coronets met with a common fate. True, they were afterwards fished out of the deluge; but their glory was for ever quenched, their power for ever gone.

Among the great Atheists who prepared the Revolution we single out two—Diderot and D'Holbach. The sagacious mind of Comte perceived that Diderot was the greatest *thinker* of the band. The fecundity of his mind was extraordinary, and even more so his scientific prescience. Anyone who looks through the twenty volumes of his collected works will be astonished at the way in which, by intuitive insight, he anticipated so many of the best ideas of Evolution. His labours on the Encyclopædia would have tired out the energies of twenty smaller men, but he persevered to the end, despite printers, priests, and governments, and a countless host of other obstructions. Out of date as the work is now, it was the artillery of the movement of progress then. As Mr. Morley says, it "rallied all that was best in France round the standard of light and social hope."

Less original, but nearly as bold and industrious, D'Holbach placed his fortune and abilities at the service of Freethought. Mr. Morley calls the *System of Nature* "a thunderous engine of revolt." It was atheistic in religion and revolutionary in politics. It challenged every enemy of freedom in the name of reason and humanity. Here and there its somewhat diffuse rhetoric was lit up with the splendidly concise eloquence of Diderot, who touched the work with a master-hand. Nor did this powerful book represent a tithe of D'Holbach's labours for the "good old cause." His active pen produced a score of other works, under various names and disguises, all addressed to the same object—the destruction of superstition and the emancipation of the human mind. They were extensively circulated, and must have created a powerful impression on the reading public.

Leaving its authors and precursors, and coming to the Revolution itself, we find that its most distinguished figures were Atheists. Mirabeau, the first Titan of the struggle, was a godless statesman. In him the

multitude found a master, who ruled it by his genius and eloquence, and his embodiment of its aspirations. The crowned king of France was pottering in his palace, but the real king reigned in the National Assembly.

The Girondists were nearly all Atheists, from Condorcet and Madame Rowland down to the obscurest victim of the Terror, who went gaily to their doom with the hymn of freedom upon their proud lips. Danton also, the second Titan of the Revolution, was an Atheist. He fell in trying to stop the bloodshed, which Robespierre, the Deist, continued until it drowned him. With Danton there went to the guillotine another Atheist, bright, witty Camille Desmoulins, whose exquisite pen had served the cause well, and whose warm poet's blood was destined to gush out under the fatal knife. Other names crowd upon us, too numerous to recite. To give them all would be to write a catalogue of the revolutionary leaders.

Atheism was the very spirit of the Revolution. This has been admitted by Christian writers, who have sought revenge by libelling the movement. Their slanders are manifold, but we select two which are found most impressive at orthodox meetings.

It is stated that the Revolutionists organized a worship of the Goddess of Reason, that they went in procession to Notre Dame, where a naked woman acted the part of the goddess, while Chenier's *Ode* was chanted by the Convention. Now, there is a good deal of smoke in this story and very little flame. The naked female is a pious invention, and that being gone, the calumny is robbed of its sting. Demoiselle Candeille, an actress, was selected for her beauty; but she was not a "harlot," and she was not undressed. Whoever turns to such an accessible account as Carlyle's will see that the apologists of Christianity have utterly misrepresented the scene.

Secondly, it is asserted that the Revolution was a tornado of murder; cruelty was let loose, and the Atheists waded in blood. Never was greater nonsense paraded with a serious face. During the Terror itself the total number of victims, as proved by the official records, was less than three thousand; not a tenth part of the number who fell in the single massacre of St. Bartholomew!

But who caused the Terror? The Christian monarchies that declared war on Freethinkers and regicides. Theirs was the guilt, and they are responsible for the bloodshed. France trembled for a moment. She aimed at the traitors within her borders, and struck down many a gallant friend in error. But she recovered from the panic. Then her sons, half-starved, ragged, shoeless, ill-armed, marched to the frontier, hurled back her enemies, and swept the trained armies of Europe into flight. They *would* be free, and who should say them nay? They were not to be terrified or deluded by "the blood on the hands of the king or the lie at the lips of the priest." And if the struggle developed until the French armies, exchanging defence for conquest, thundered over Europe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from the orange-groves of Spain to the frozen snows of Russia—the whole blame rests with the pious scoundrels who would not let France establish a Republic in peace.

(The late) G. W. FOOTE.

NO FAVOUR SHOWN.

On Hogmanay a queue was formed outside the premises of a licensed grocer, in Glasgow, waiting to get in their supplies for Ne'er Day. A minister who happened to be passing, with the usual curiosity of his kind, went forward to one of the queue to inquire the cause for such a crowd, when one of the women of the queue shouted out: "Hey, you there, gae awa' back to the end o' the queue. Minister or no minister, ye'll hae tae tak yer turn wi' the rest."

Writers and Readers.

"THINKING," says one of the talkers in Wilde's witty dialogue, "The Decay of Lying,"—

thinking is the most unhealthy exercise in the world, and people die of it just as they die of any other disease. Fortunately, in England at any rate, thought is not catching. Our splendid physique as a people is entirely due to our national stupidity. I only hope we shall be able to keep this great historic bulwark of our happiness for many years to come; but I am afraid that we are beginning to be over-educated; at least everybody who is incapable of learning has taken to teaching.

I am reminded of this amusing paradox, which is really more than half a truth, by a book which I have just finished reading. It is called *Poets of the Democracy* (Headley Bros.), and the writer, Mr. G. Currie Martin, seems to be one of the earnest and well-meaning teachers that Oscar Wilde had in mind. He has a commendable enthusiasm for poetry—in itself something to be thankful for nowadays—and for those ideals and aspirations which are not unfrequently misnamed democratic. If he had been wise enough to put off his desire to teach until he had served his apprenticeship to learning, the result, I imagine, would have been more weighty. Yet it would be unfair to be too hard on a writer who is invariably modest, if not always wise. The chapters first saw the light in the pages of a popular journal, and seem to have been enjoyed by the men in the trenches—a sign, at least, of a mild interest in ideas. But I am afraid that Mr. Martin has not thought it necessary to think out his subject. Democracy, he holds, is a "spirit and an atmosphere"; its essence, "trust in the moral instincts of the people." Such definitions are a hindrance rather than a help to clear thinking. Democracy, like Socialism, and some other words in popular use, has anything but a precise meaning. We find it applied at one time to a state of society, at another to a form of government; or, it may be, to a combination of both. The United States, Mexico, and the South American Republics have democratic government; and yet, socially, they are less democratic, in many ways, than is England with a limited monarchy. In fact, the world has never had *the* democracy—that is, a pure democracy. A better title for the little book would have been *Poets and some Democratic Ideals*. Equality, freedom, the brotherhood of man, and all that are implied in these ideals, are not really peculiar to popular government. They depend upon thought, and perhaps more upon sympathetic imagination. For Mr. Martin, however, it is these ideals that constitute *the* democracy, and he accordingly hails as a democrat any poet who gives expression to them.

What, then, one may ask, are the signs of democratic poetry? Mr. Martin imagines that he is helping us when he quotes with approval Dowden's *dictum* that aristocratic art is "selective and exclusive"; implying, I suppose, that democratic art is not so. I can hardly imagine Dowden as standing to so absurdly wrong-headed a conclusion. Even the dull chronicles of our realistic fictionists or the poetry of Whitman's English disciples is not haphazard. The democratic writer must choose his subject, and must exclude vigorously everything that does not help him to express his ideas. Certainly, he may widen the scope of his art; but he cannot change its nature. Whitman called his poems *Leaves of Grass*, in order to suggest, I suppose, that democratic poems are, or ought to be, as much alike as two peas, or two blades of grass. I am ready to admit that with some writers I could mention the democratic process of levelling down is pretty successful; but I am glad to say that Whitman's practice was better than his theory. No

poet has ever been more intensely individual. He sang the "powerful uneducated man," we are told. Precisely. Not the average uneducated man, mind you! but the exception; the uneducated man with a powerful brain, and strong emotions and will. It is the "superman" of our aristocratic friends in another form; the hero of Shakespearean tragedy translated in terms of democratic sociology. The art of Whitman is as selective and as exclusive as that of Shakespeare. It has more in common with the imaginative sympathy and broad philosophic serenity of *The Tempest* than with the sentimentalism and factitious simplicity of *Towards Democracy*. In fine, all art is in essence the same; it is the representation of the universal by the particular, and this process is always one of selection and exclusion.

Democracy, as we understand it, found little expression in early English verse. The *Canterbury Tales* reveal a tolerant sympathetic humanism; but Chaucer's standpoint was distinctly an aristocratic one. He did not take the plebeian as seriously as he did the man of high birth. The only poet of the fourteenth century who felt deeply the intolerable burden of poverty was the satirist, William Langland. The voiceless and long-suffering labourer in the fields of England found in him another Ebenezer Elliott. But the traditional ideals of English poets remained unaltered. For Shakespeare, and for the play-writers generally, the populace was an unwashed turbulent rabble, fit material only for comedy or broad farce. The only bright exception I know is Thomas Decker, who shows a sympathy with fallen and struggling humanity equalled only by that of modern Russian novelists, his song in praise of honest toil being one of the jewels to the crown of our lyric verse. In Gray, Goldsmith, and Cowper, the democratic ideals are present in varying degrees, but are not, I think, sufficiently pronounced to make a body of democratic thought. They are seen better in some lyrics of Burns, and in the whole work of Crabbe. We have the more philosophic side of democratic thought in Shelley, whom Mr. Martin thinks too difficult a poet for his readers. He shows his consistency by asking them to study Meredith, who is fifty times more difficult.

It is a misnomer, I think, to call Meredith a democrat. He had many opportunities in his novels of proving what he was made of, and, strange to say, he took pains to avoid them. His rustics are amusing puppets—never serious human beings. It may be said that Rhoda Fleming and her sister are a farmer's daughters. It is true; but, for all that, they are not less aristocratic than are any of the fine ladies of the novels. Meredith's commoners are either not commoners at all, or are treated with the traditional aristocratic mixture of condescension and good-humoured contempt. Meredith is said to have been a Radical; yet no Tory could have ridiculed Radicalism more effectively than the creator of old Dr. Shrapnel in *Beauchamp's Career*. Then consider what an opportunity he missed in *Evan Harrington*! It will be remembered that the problem to be solved is this: How is a son, whose father, a tailor to the aristocracy, has died, leaving behind him some thousands of pounds of debts, to pay off the creditors? The mother, who is the only democrat in the piece, says he must carry on the business; but the son who has been brought up to luxury and has fallen in love with a country gentleman's daughter is not in love with trade. Meredith solves the problem in the old snobbish way by making him marry an heiress. There is a similar democratic problem in *Richard Feverel*, the solution of which is just as carefully avoided. What would have happened if Lucy had not been the daughter of a naval officer? Meredith,

I am inclined to think, for all his pumped-up interest in *Juggling Jervies* and *Old Chartists*, had no inkling of what democracy means for most of us.

The lover of English poets—more especially the beginner—will find in Mr. Martin's little book a stimulus to an intelligent study of it in connection with democratic ideals, but he will do well to be on his guard against the sentimentalism of the writer, and must take some of the statements with a grain of salt. For instance, he says of Meredith that "he believed that the real strength of life consists in spiritual communion and fellowship, in truest brotherhood, in education, and in prayer." The prayerful mood was certainly not cultivated by Meredith, who, if he was not a democrat—and if I do not blame him for his aristocratic bent—was a convinced Freethinker. Apart from such stupidities of criticism, some banalities of phrase, and a syntax that is anything but aristocratic, Mr. Martin's book is worth reading if only for the attention it draws to the fine work of Mr. W. W. Gibson, who is far and away the biggest democratic figure we have in modern verse. I hope to return to him at another time.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Acid Drops.

The House of Lords passed the Woman's Franchise Clause in the Representation of the People Bill by a majority of sixty-three. More remarkable still the bishops voted for it. And the Archbishop of Canterbury gave the reasons for their doing so. He said it was a "plunge in the dark," but there was a "great change of public opinion," and they had to consider the consequence of placing themselves in opposition to public opinion. That might mean, in a few weeks, "a humiliating surrender." So they voted for what it was not safe to oppose. There is one thing about a modern bishop, if he has no ideas to get saved by, he has none worth being damned for, and he will always give way if the pressure be strong enough.

What we should now like, is to see the bishops attempt would be to justify the historic teaching and practice of the Christian Churches in relation to women. No other institution has so uniformly and so universally denied to women legal equality as the Christian Church has done, and no institution was so powerful in moulding public sentiment in this direction. How Freethinkers, who inaugurated and carried on the fight for the equality of the sexes in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, would smile if they were here at the vote of the bishops. They would agree it was due to the pressure of public opinion, and an opinion they were instrumental in forming. An idea may make headway slowly, but provided it be a sound idea, it is as near being indestructible as anything we know. The next step of the bishops will be to prove that the legal equality of the sexes is in the Bible.

The Bishop of Peterborough, in his New Year diocesan letter, says that labour should put all the cards on the table. Presumably in order that the ecclesiastics should trump them.

Romanoff Omar, a Brahman, charged at Marylebone with concealing a deserter, was described as a crank who claimed divine powers. In a letter he had written he claimed to have healed wild tigers, and to have cured persons of diseases. Evidently his assumption of divine powers was worth very little, for his career has been stopped by the police.

How is it that the dear Bishop of London always talks like a negro preacher? Speaking at the London Opera House on Intercession Day, the Bishop said: "We need courage like that of the servant girl in East London to whom I said during the last raid: 'I hope you are not afraid,' and

who replied: "I am, Bishop, but I keep it under. They do say there is no God, but I say there must be some one above the Devil." Is it a matter of surprise that such theology no longer appeals to educated persons?

Pity the sorrows of a poor old deity. The Intercession Day has been followed by a "Week of Prayer," with many of the same performers in the bill.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, is in the habit of saying foolish things, but the other Sunday he surpassed himself in the pursuit of that art. He said: "The God of Germany is a false God. The God of England is the true God." Amazingly prodigious is the self-conceit of some people. We believe that all Gods are equally false; but, certainly, a believer in God has no right to differentiate between the God of Germany and the God of England, for they are both identical. It is high time the reverend gentleman learned that when he utters a word about any God he wickedly exceeds the limits of his knowledge.

Is not Mr. Phillips aware that every time he talks in that extravagant, irresponsible style, he is playing the fool, and involving himself in a sea of inconsistencies and contradictions. In the first place, England is at present without God, for we read that "when God comes many things will have to go." God is in Germany now, only he is "largely Pagan and altogether German." The chief function of the German Deity is "to secure victory for the Central Powers." What will be the function of the English variety when he comes? Will it be to give the English an inglorious defeat, in spite of all their praying that their enemy may receive his knock-out blow?

Mr. Phillips, evidently, is blind to the fact that if Germany possesses a separate God, he seems to have had things pretty much his own way up to the present. He wanted war and got it, while the God of England wanted peace and failed to get it.

Mr. John MacLeod, M.P., says he is not troubling about the soldiers when they come back. He is only concerned about the people at home. Mr. MacLeod is afraid of what the soldiers will think when they find us neglecting the things that the Christian religion stands for. This pious M.P. may possess his soul in courage. Judging from the men who are home on leave, they bear up with remarkable fortitude. They are even considerate enough not to attend church during their fourteen days in "Blighty." But probably that is because they don't want to appear to reproach the wicked ones they are visiting.

What Secularists those Christians are! A Sunday periodical prints a motto in each issue, and a recent one ran: "This old earth, that is what we have business with, how to shape her into something more worthy of our best." This is saner writing than beautiful nonsense about the Star of Bethlehem.

Since it has been patronized by Royalty, the Salvation Army has become very respectable. Further evidence of its respectability is shown in the display of Booth's posters outside the Law Courts, in the Strand, and outside St. Paul's Cathedral, the latter announcement being pasted on the statue of Queen Anne, near the west door of the cathedral. Innocent country folk will begin to think that the Government religion is the "Blood and fire" brand.

A new drama bears the captivating title *Out of Hell*. It ought to interest a number of pious folk.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley has a pawky wit of his own. In an article in a Sunday paper, published on Intercession Day, he said: "To-day the nation is supposed to be at prayer." A palpable hit!

Mr. H. B. Irving has been advocating the opening of theatres on Sundays, and pious people are angry. Yet who

can say that it is more wicked to sit attentively through a play of Shakespeare's than to sleep through a sermon.

The piety turned on to order by the press on the Day of Intercession was not all of that childlike variety beloved by the clergy. Some of the newspaper comments were critical, as, for example, the remarks by the *Weekly Dispatch* (London) on the closing of the cinemas: "So the people of London who never go to church will now spend their day of intercession walking about the streets. There were never enough churches to hold them, even if they ever went."

First the men, then the women. First the boys, then the girls. Many pious headmasters of secondary schools have been lamenting of late that the boys have small sense of religion. Now the head mistresses are following suit. Their Association has been discussing the amount of "vague scepticism" among their pupils. This exists among girls who come from Christian homes. With the others, we assume, the scepticism is not "vague."

The conclusion reached by the Association was that religious teaching should be given in an earnest way by teachers who believed it. That looks like picking out the dullest members of the teaching staff, and advertising their dullness by giving them this special work. Further, there should be no desire to evade or exclude the results of scientific research, but they should be used "to fortify religious truth." But that is an impossible conclusion. If a teacher sticks to scientific teaching, "bang" goes religion. If it uses scientific teaching to "fortify" religion, it must distort, or evade, or misrepresent science. Why don't the teachers make up their minds to leave religion alone? Perhaps one cause is the number of parsons who can influence their appointment or determine their promotion. The first requisite for a good teacher is independence. And they will never get that while the parson is permitted to influence their career.

The *Daily News* is quite surpassing itself in its daring references to religion. In its issue for January 10 it cites the following from Mr. Siegfried Sassoon:—

The Bishop tells us "When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
New right to breed an honoured race.
They challenged Death, and dared him face to face.
"We're none of us the same!" the boys reply,
"For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert's gone syphilitic: you'll not find
A chap who's served that hasn't found some change.
And the Bishop said: "The ways of God are strange."

Mr. Sassoon is a commissioned officer and writes, so to speak, from the inside. But to find the *Daily News* satirizing on God's ways is something of an advance.

It is very hard for a clergyman to surrender anything really stupid. Here is the Vicar of Selby, Yorks, resurrecting the Angels of Mons. He says it was quite clearly the "intervention of God" that turned back the German Army. It is a pity God wasn't equally attentive on Italy and Russia, or Cambrai, when the Germans counter-attacked. But what a back number the Vicar of Selby must be.

The *Church Times* got furiously angry over the appointment of Dr. Henson as Bishop of Hereford in succession to Dr. Percival, but our contemporary evidently forgot that it represents only one of the parties in the Anglican Church, and that the other parties have equal rights with itself. The Catholic party is exceedingly zealous, but it is also extremely bigoted, and sadly lacks the grace of toleration. These ecclesiastical wrangles highly amuse outsiders like ourselves, and afford a fresh example of the rarity of Christian charity under the sun. The Bishop of Oxford goes the absurd length of advocating the Christian duty of refusing to consecrate the

new-elected prelate. One of Dr. Henson's chief offences is that he has demeaned his sacred office by preaching in Non-conformist pulpits!

The Protestants of Germany have issued a manifesto demanding that Courland and the Celtic provinces of Russia shall be annexed by the Fatherland in order that German religious influence may be extended. This suggests Christianity by compulsion, but it does not imply that the Germans are "Atheists."

There has been trouble in Inverness over Sunday concerts. The Town Council had permitted the use of a music-hall for a Sunday concert in aid of a hospital for wounded soldiers. The latter were pleased, but the "unco' guid" were not. And so a protest meeting was held—supported by a number of clergymen, of course—to denounce the Council. The chairman said they had many privileges in this Christian land, and amongst others the Bible and the Sabbath; and Scotsmen were noted for their love for these two things. And so the gathering of parsons protested vigorously against the desecration of the "Sawbath" even to aid wounded soldiers. There is no cause for surprise in the protest being made, but that the Sunday concert should be arranged in far-off Inverness is surely an event worth recording. And when the Scot moves he is not likely to go back. Slow to move, but firm to stick.

"Providence" goes its usual way in 1918. On January 4, in bitter wintry weather, a hospital ship was sunk by submarine action in the British Channel. The cold-blooded brutality of the act makes one almost sick. And the callousness of "Providence" runs a good second to German cruelty. Perhaps some of those who spent their time in stupid prayers on January 6 will give the matter a little serious thought.

Most decently intelligent persons will be pleased that the proposed Government "air raid" on the British Museum has failed. And now one is left wondering at the psychology of those who could see in the British Museum, with its irreplaceable wealth of art and literature, nothing better than an office for a war service. May we suggest to the Government that if public buildings must be commandeered there is St. Paul's, the City Temple, Westminster Abbey, and a large number of nearly unoccupied City Churches. And what about Buckingham Palace or Carlton House?

That New Reader!

No one is quite certain where he is. He may be sitting next to one in train or tramcar. He may be one's next door neighbour; he may be an old acquaintance with whom we have never exchanged opinions on religion. All we are certain is that he is somewhere near us, and that he can be discovered.

Finding a new reader for the *Freethinker* is quite an interesting occupation, and not by any means so difficult as many imagine. There are thousands of potential readers up and down only waiting to have the paper brought to their notice. They only want looking up, and they are quite grateful for being discovered. That is why finding a new reader for the *Freethinker* often means making a new friend. It is a pleasurable experience on both sides, with a helpful outcome so far as we are concerned.

Last year our friends helped us considerably in securing new readers. We feel sure that this year most of them will not mind emulating last year's efforts. And they will be helped by the many new friends made since.

We want to see the *Freethinker* well read in every town and village in the country. There is no reason why it should not be. There is every reason why it should be. All that is required is for us to say that it shall be—and to see that it is done.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 20, Southampton; January 27, Swansea; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 20, London; January 27, South Shields; February 3, Failsworth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

P. G. TACCHI.—Literature is being sent. Certainly we will come to Inverness, if arrangements can be made. It is a deuce of a journey: but as we have been told we are going to the Devil, it is as well to get used to long journeys.

S. G. (Bristol).—The data needs very careful scrutiny. The statement that so many cases of hereditary disease were noted may mean only that the disease in question occurred in parent and child, and may ignore the fact that certain predisposing conditions remained the same in both cases.

T. MOZLEY.—Thanks for papers. You will see we have used them. Getting your newsagent to show an extra copy of the *Freethinker* is an excellent way of helping. Hope to meet you again before long.

G. WALLACE.—We remember the fight at Stockton well. It was warm, but enjoyable all the same.

J. BURRILL.—Sorry your letter came to hand too late for a reply last week. You have put up a brave fight for your opinions, and in a community which placed any real value on opinion, that would command success. We believe things in the future will be better than you anticipate. There is never action without reaction. We hope to see you when we again visit Manchester. The Society about which you inquire has suspended operations.

HELEN LUCAS.—We have sent your interesting letter on to "Mimnermus." He will greatly appreciate its contents.

S. THOMPSON.—We are inclined to agree with what you say; but tastes differ, of course. We hope to issue some leaflets and pamphlets soon on the lines you suggest. The great obstacle is the cost of production.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Quite ready to take the will for the deed.

A. F. DICKINSON.—We regret we have mislaid your address, but if you will forward it to this office we will put you in communication with one of our readers who may be able to supply the copies of the *Freethinker* you need.

R. NISBET.—Thanks for securing two new readers in the first fortnight of the New Year. Keep it up, and your total will be fifty-two for the year. The calculation is quite simple, and its realization is often not very difficult.

W. BATT.—Pleased our lectures at Manchester gave you so much pleasure. Yes, they did lead to some new members, but the Secretary is still unsatisfied.

TAB CAN.—Not only was Gibbon "Bowdlerized" to suit the Christian palate, but Hume was served in the same manner. And we drew attention a few years back to the Bowdlerizing of Melville's *Typee*, issued by Mr. John Lane, for, apparently, the same reason. Christians appear to be without compunction in such matters.

T. C. writes:—"In the *Daily News* of Jan. 10 the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell has a long article on 'A Strange Epiphany,' in which he takes a somewhat mournful look round. He is severe on the state of England just before the War, and considers that the twentieth century has not markedly improved upon the eighteenth. And he has no certain hope even from what was mediæval, superstitious Russia. But a few weeks ago he declared that his spiritual home lay in *Jerusalem*. May we not, therefore, consign his ideas to Jericho?"

S. COPLEY.—You acted quite rightly, and hope you will persist in your attitude. Are we at liberty to make the facts in your letter public? Sorry that *God and the Air Raid* is out of print. We may reprint shortly.

HASTAZLE.—Pleased to learn that your newsagent is selling more copies of this paper, thanks for your co-operation. We are greatly obliged for such cheerful help, so readily given.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—M. B., 10s.; W. Dodd, 12s. 6d.; H. Good, 6s.; P. C. Harding, 7s. 6d.; G. R. Harker, 10s.

E. C. F. JAMES.—Next week.

ALICE BEACHEY AND J. H. LAYCOCK.—Crowded out this week.

G. L. BRADSHAW.—Paper sent as requested.

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.

To-day (January 20) Mr. Cohen breaks new ground at Southampton. He will deliver two lectures—the first Free-thought lectures in Southampton for many years—in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road. The morning lecture at 11 is on "Do the Dead Live?" The evening one at 7 is on "Christianity and the Logic of Life." Local friends are doing their best to secure good meetings, and for the sake of the cause, we hope they will be successful. Next week Mr. Cohen visits Swansea.

Mr. Cohen often receives letters asking him what is his "fee" for lecturing. It may save time, and serve a useful purpose, if it is said now that he has not, and never has had, any regular "fee." When there is anything coming after lectures are delivered he takes it gladly. When there is nothing he takes—the situation—cheerfully, if not gladly. But he has never made the payment of a fee a condition of the delivery of lectures for any Branch of the N.S.S. He has always felt that Branches will pay when they can, and if they can't, well, no useful purpose would be served by not having lectures on that account. Mr. Cohen's services are at the disposal of the movement when ever any good is likely to accrue.

We have several times commented on South Wales as a favourable ground for Freethought work, and we are glad to have independent—even if unwilling—testimony to the work we have done there. The *Plebs Magazine* for December contains a communication lamenting that "many of the active minority" in South Wales are being claimed by Freethought. We are pleased to record this endorsement of what we have said, and we hope to provide further cause for complaint in the near future.

The above leads us to say that we have long been desirous of setting things moving in Cardiff. The difficulty there is in getting a suitable hall. Can any Cardiff reader help us in this matter? We feel certain of success if only a start can be made.

Mr. Lloyd delivers the third of the course of lectures at the West Central Hall, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, this afternoon (January 20) at 3.15. Londoners have too few opportunities of listening to Mr. Lloyd, and we hope they will make the most of the occasion. It will be an afternoon well spent.

Our appeal to Freethinkers belonging to various organizations to see that the question of Secular Education is kept to the front is bearing fruit. In addition to those instances already announced, Mr. F. C. Warren writes us that Branch No. 22 of the Furnishing Trades Federation passed a resolution, without dissent, in favour of Secular Education, and ordered that a copy of the resolution be sent to the Minister for Education. Other Societies, please copy.

Mr. F. J. Gould is lecturing for the Birmingham Branch on Sunday, 20th inst., at the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, at 7. Subject: "Lamennais, the French Democratic Priest." Mr. Gould's many friends and admirers in Birmingham will, no doubt, do their best to see that the theatre is well filled.

Mr. S. Scott writes from Scotland:—

In renewing my annual subscription to the *Freethinker*, I desire once more to express my satisfaction at the admirable manner in which it is conducted.....I, for one, have nothing but thanks and congratulation to offer for the help and comfort the brave old publication has been—and is—to me.

I first made the acquaintance of the *Freethinker* in 1884, when I was living for a time in London. I had never seen or heard of it before; but when I read that first number I said, "This is just the thing I want, and have often longed for." I have never missed an issue since then. I have met many other readers of the *Freethinker* during my lifetime, and all say the same. All love the paper. I do not believe there is any other periodical, "sacred or profane," in the United Kingdom that has so devoted and affectionate a circle of readers. The *Freethinker* is absolutely unique in this respect. And long may it be so. Long may it flourish and prosper, and deeply may its flashing blade gore the filthy and cruel flanks of superstition and imposture.

Quite a cheery letter with which to start the New Year. A knowledge of the affectionate regard in which the "one and only" is held by its readers acts as a constant inspiration to all concerned in the upkeep of the *Freethinker*.

Manchester friends will please note that Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Ardwick to-day (January 20), afternoon and evening. We hope the hall will be well filled on both occasions. We are glad to learn that the recent "social" held by the Branch was a complete success. Another one is in contemplation before the close of the season.

We are asked to announce that Mr. Miller will open a discussion at the St. Pancras Reform Club, under the auspices of the North London Branch of the N.S.S., on "The Religion of Russia and the Revolution." The subject is an interesting one, and should attract a good audience.

The Executive of the Miner's Federation of Great Britain recently passed a resolution protesting against military drill in elementary schools, pointing out, at the same time, that this was not to be taken as involving a protest against Swedish drill. We believe this to be a wise move, and hope that other organizations will follow suit. Germany, to use a famous phrase, turned its schools into training stables for the Army, and the world sees the consequence. If we are fighting against German methods of militarism, our first step ought to be to see that they do not effect a lodgment in the schools of the nations.

At the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive permission was given to form a new Branch at Nuneaton, and thirty new members were admitted to the Society. This makes eight new Branches opened within the past two years, while the number of new members enrolled almost equal the number on the books at the opening of that period. This is good progress, particularly when one bears in mind that the work has been carried on under conditions of unprecedented difficulty, and with a great increase on the cost of railway travelling. We are expecting more Branches in the near future. Meanwhile there is Nuneaton and Birmingham with Coventry between. The latter is without a Branch of the N.S.S. We hope that omission will be repaired shortly.

Freethought is cropping up in all sorts of unexpected places. Thus, in a recent issue of the *Licensed Vehicle Traders' Record*, we observed a reprint of the late S. P. Putman's "blasphemous" poem, "Why Don't He Lend a Hand?" And A. G. G.'s article, "The War and the Churches," in the *Daily News* for January 5, read very much as though portions of it were reprinted from some of our own articles on the same subject written about six or seven months ago. These things, added to the passages one finds

cited from the *Freethinker* in the provincial press, make one wonder what is happening. Hope we shan't get too respectable.

"The nominee of the Baptist Prime Minister" is, apparently, giving the bigwigs of the Church of England an attack of mental indigestion. The election of Dr. Henson to the Bishopric of Hereford will, says the *Church Times*, "be as the letting out of waters." Let brotherly love continue.

For the first time during the War period, Mr. J. T. Lloyd is visiting South Shields next week-end, and will lecture twice (afternoon and evening) in the Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, on Sunday, January 27. It is therefore hoped that Mr. Lloyd's numerous admirers will embrace the opportunity of once again hearing his voice in this North-East coast town. Suggestions or inquiries should be addressed to the local Secretary in time for the final committee meeting to-day (Sunday), when the arrangements are to be completed; and, in addition, Mr. J. Fothergill, the Treasurer, will give a brief survey of Professor Bury's famous booklet, *The History of Freethought*.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

THIS Fund is to raise the balance of expenses incurred in defending the right to sell literature at public meetings in the London parks. A Protest Committee was formed, and after carrying the question into the High Court, the London County Council was induced to rescind the offending resolution. It was a splendid victory, and that should specially appeal to all Londoners.

Previously acknowledged:—£40 8s. 2d.; J. Lazarnick, 10s. 6d.; Taxi Driver, 5s.; W. H. Harrop, 2s. 6d.; G. Grove, 1s.; J. Ratcliffe, 10s.; W. H. Shepherd, 2s. 6d.; Pte. W. Perry, 2s.

Correction—"W. Benn," in last week's list, should have been "W. Bean."

This Fund is now closed.

Answers to the "Day of Prayer."

- Dec. 1, 1917, to January 6, 1918.—Warning to the people to prepare for prayer, with full notice to "God" that the prayers would be offered.
- Jan. 6, 1918.—Level start of the petitioners and the petitioned—People praying—Meat famine all over the country.
- " 8.—Sudden fall in temperature—burst water-pipes everywhere.
- " 9.—Destruction of British Torpedo Destroyer off the Irish Coast, all lives lost.
- " 10.—Twenty-five British Merchant Ships reported sunk by enemy action.
- " 12.—Mine Disaster in Staffordshire, 147 men reported "missing."
- " 14.—Yarmouth shelled by enemy gunboats.

The Orb of Day.

OUR globe, with all its multitudinous modes of being, derives its existence from the light and generous warmth of the sovereign sun. That mighty and majestic luminary is, indeed, our father throned in heaven. The rain that falls; the winds that blow; the heat which cheers and sustains us; the light, apart from whose beneficent activities no faunal or floral life could exist, are all ultimately due to the prodigious outpourings of the lord of day. Air and ocean alike would promptly freeze were the sun's powers withdrawn, and our planet's vast and varied population of animal and vegetable organisms would perish in the pitiless cold.

With the cessation of the radiant light and heat now received from the sun, our earth would rapidly become

a floating graveyard. All our hopes and aspirations, all our trials and sufferings, all the grandeur and glory of human achievement, would fade into oblivion. In company with our pale satellite, the moon, our planetary home, tideless and inert, would spin in desolate space, with no mourner surviving to grieve over its departed pride.

Still, the sun does shine, and although until recently it was feared that its benignant activities were destined to near their end in the course of some twenty million years, we now possess cogent reasons for believing that the lord of heaven will continue to shower forth his prodigal blessings on just and unjust for countless ages to come. Indeed, in the light of the now ascertained energies resident in material bodies, Professor Arrhenius, the world-renowned chemist, speaks of the probable duration of billions of years for future expenditure of solar power.

But even now, when from our planet's point of view, the sun probably radiates its maximum heat and light, we experience a striking difference both in light and temperature between night and day. When, on a serene and cloudless afternoon in May, the sun warms the atmosphere almost to summer's splendour, the approach of twilight and the setting-in of night herald a remarkable fall in temperature, particularly when a cool breeze flows from north or east. And what a contrast between sable night and twilight grey, and the rising of the golden sun! As Browning depicts the dawn and sunrise:—

Day!

Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim,
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then over-
flowed the world.

The sweet light of the sun is a great natural marvel, but perhaps even more wonderful are our luminary's heat-conferring powers. Sir Robert Ball has compared the heat of the solar globe with that of a perfect industrial furnace, in which—

even steel itself, having first attained a dazzling brilliance, can be further melted into a liquid that will run like water. Let us imagine the temperature of that liquid to be multiplied seven-fold, and then we shall obtain some conception of the fearful intensity of the heat which would be found in that wonderful celestial furnace, the great sun of the heavens.

To enable one to realize the enormous heat radiated from the sun's surface, it is essential to note the titanic proportions of our luminary. The moon journeys round the earth at a mean distance of nearly 240,000 miles. Now, if we were to imagine a hollow globe occupied by our planet, together with the space embracing our moon's orbit, then the body of the sun would completely fill it. And every square mile of that tremendous mass of flame is perpetually pouring forth immense torrents of heat. So gigantic is its energy that it is a fair estimate that the heat which radiates from two square feet only of its heated surface would be sufficient, and more than sufficient, to propel the engines of a huge Atlantic liner in its voyage from New York to Liverpool.

The sun's heat is flung into space with reckless prodigality. It is said that the light and heat daily expended by the solar orb might illuminate and warm 2,000,000,000 planets each as large as our earth. In the light of this truth, the theological theory that the sun

was designed to shed its light upon this globe is palpably preposterous. Well may Ball, the astronomer, inquire, as he does in his *Earth's Beginning*:—

What would be thought of the prudence of one who, having been endowed with a fortune of ten million pounds, spent one single penny of that vast sum in a profitable manner, and dissipated every other penny and every other pound of his fortune in aimless extravagance? But this is apparently the way in which the sun manages its affairs, so far as our earth is concerned.

And even when we consider the sun's output of energy from the viewpoint of the entire retinue of planets, we discover, according to Dr. Sampson, the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, in his work on *The Sun*, that "the only portion that produces any known effect is the minute fraction intercepted by the discs of the planets, and this is about the hundred and twenty millionth part of the whole." So far as science can ascertain, the inconceivably vast remainder is utterly wasted.

The mind almost reels when one seriously contemplates the problem of the manner in which the sun's colossal expenditure is sustained. For we cannot escape the conclusion that this prodigious expenditure has been proceeding for untold ages. We know from common experience that, no matter how vast a conflagration may be, it ultimately dies down unless constantly replenished with fresh fuel for burning. Professor Langley informs us that an entirely incredible quantity of fuel would be required were the sun's daily outpouring of heat maintained by processes of combustion. If all the immense coal measures of Britain were completely exhausted, and even if all the vast coal fields of China, America, and all the earth besides were entirely utilized for the purpose of supplying the sun with fuel; and were we to imagine the titanic task of plunging into the sun the whole of the coal reserves of the world in one stupendous effort, this huge mass of highly combustible material would immediately be reduced to ashes, and, doubtless, an unspeakable quantity of heat would be generated. One might conjecture that a mass so vast would at least suffice to sustain the sun's heat for an appreciable period. But it is a sober scientific truth that all our planet's stores of coal, estimated to serve the wants of the human race for centuries to come, which, if consumed at one time on our tiny earth, would cause a conflagration so vast as to be almost inconceivable—this colossal accumulation of coal would, nevertheless, fail to evolve as much heat as the sun normally expends in the tenth part of every single second of its existence. In the course of a few minutes a quantity of heat arises from our potent and majestic luminary, and is urged into space, which is some 5,000 times as great as the totality of heat that has ever been generated, or ever can be generated by the burning of all the coal our globe has at any period possessed. And when we reflect that during long long ages, prior even to the appearance of life on our planet, this boundless prodigality of heat and light has been proceeding, and seems likely to proceed for unspeakable æons of future date, the magnitude of the problem confronting us almost defies the most comprehensive imagination. The sun must have inherited a stupendous fortune to enable it to maintain its splendour through the ages undimmed despite its unrestrained and, apparently, improvident expenditure. How can the sun persistently squander two thousand million times as much heat and light as that which the world receives? And yet the insignificant portion received by our globe is sufficient for our needs in temperate regions, while, in the tropics, the heat is insufferably intense.

A fairly accurate estimate of the daily radiation of the solar orb has been secured through the researches of

several scientific investigators. These inquiries have proved both delicate and difficult; but the results have been fruitful in no small measure. The unit of heat employed for the purpose of determining the temperature of the sun is the quantity essential to raise the temperature of one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit. What is termed the solar constant is the number of heat units which impinge "in one minute, on one square foot of a surface placed at right angles to the sun's rays, and situated at the mean distance of the earth from the sun." After allowing all due deductions for the sum of heat absorbed by our atmosphere, the quantity derived from the sun at its mean distance of 93,000,000 miles is determined. The result thus obtained teaches us that one square foot of the terrestrial surface exposed to the solar beams at right angles, is the recipient during each minute of such exposure, of sufficient heat to exalt the temperature of one pound of water fourteen degrees Fahrenheit. This radiation arrives from the solar surface, and it is mathematically certain that the number of units of heat requisite to furnish this result prove that the total heat units "emerging each minute from a square foot on the sun's surface must be about 640,000."

The meaning of this statement will be clearly seen when we ascertain the amount of coal necessary to evolve the same quantity of heat. It can be conclusively shown that the heat discharged by each square foot of the sun's surface in one minute is equal to that generated by the consumption of forty-six pounds of coal. From this it follows that the annual radiation of one square foot of the solar exterior equals that obtained in the combustion of 11,000 tons of high quality coal. To annex Ball's vivid illustration:—

If we estimate the annual coal production in Great Britain at 250,000,000 tons, we find that the total heat which this coal can produce is not greater than the annual emission from a square of the sun's surface of which each side is fifty yards. All the coal exported from England in a year does not give as much heat as the sun radiates in the same time from every patch on its surface which is as big as a croquet ground.

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

Freedom.

THE most precious thing that men can have, because with it all other good things are obtainable, is that for which most of us care the least. I mean *freedom*—freedom to think, freedom to speak, freedom to act, to labour and to rest in whatsoever manner and at whatsoever time we please, provided only that in exercising our freedom we do not interfere with that of others. To have such freedom would be to live naturally, and, therefore, according to the highest physical, mental, and moral laws of our being. Few persons understand this, and for that reason few persons desire the priceless treasure. Most people think that freedom means lawlessness—the absence of all restraint. They think that it would lead to every form of crime—*theft, lasciviousness, and bloodshed.* They have been dominated by artificial religions and cunningly devised statute laws so long that they have no faith in natural religion and natural laws. They are like a man who has been taught to walk on crutches from infancy, until he has come to believe that crutches are better than legs. Most of us have grown to love creeds more than thought, and to trust the decisions of the Courts more than in the laws of the universe. Many of us have grown to believe that nothing is true except what is decided by the particular Church to which we belong, notwithstanding that almost every doctrine that

has been declared true by this authority has been shown by facts to be false. Infallible men, infallible books, or infallible majorities are blindly followed, although they are almost always wrong. He whom the world calls an infidel is more likely to be right than the Pope. The minority is generally nearer to the truth than the majority. And the truth is to be found best of all in facts—the facts of the universe external to us and the facts of our own mentality. Unfortunately, few people know much about either, and so they believe that the individuals who compose society would not know what they ought to do, and would not do it if they did, were it not for statute laws with policemen to enforce them. The next time you see a member of Parliament, a judge, a parson, or a town councillor, gaze upon them studiously, for these constitute the conscience of society; and when you see a soldier with his gun, and a policeman with his club, mark them well, for they constitute our moral motive power.

Statute law is our conscience. Brute force is our moral motive power. Is it any wonder, then, that we have to watch each other like hawks, for fear of being robbed? or that we can hardly allow our daughters, sisters, and wives to be out after dark, when the real conscience has shrunk into the person of the man who makes our laws for us, for the interest of himself and his friends; when the still small voice has degenerated into the policeman's club?

This would not be so if people cared for freedom. But they do not. Rather than use their own brains, they prefer that the parson and the lawyer should think for them. It is a bother to think, and it may be expensive. It sometimes costs money, and often costs friends. It sometimes leads to prison, and even to death. It is so peaceful to believe, and so distressing to doubt. Let the parson find the way for me; I will ask no questions. It is so hard to know how to treat my neighbour. He might get the better of me if I settled our affairs with him alone. Let the lawyers fight it out between them—his lawyer and mine. What the Courts decide will be right.

Is it any wonder that the world is overrun with fools and rogues when most people relegate the whole subject of religion and morals to others? And not only to others, but to those least likely to know anything about them? Those who know least of religion, as a class, are the parsons and priests; and those who know least of morality, as a class, are the lawyers. Theology is the death of religion, and statute law is a device to escape doing right.

Neither do most people desire freedom of speech. They do not wish him who does think to speak. No sooner does he begin to say what he really thinks than his best friends, as well as his worst foes, try to shut his mouth. They urge him to keep silent for his own sake as well as for the sake of society. There is no one society fears more than he who speaks the truth. There is nothing society fears so much as the truth. And the cause of this dread is that people have no real confidence in the present Church and the present system of society, for it is manifest that the outspoken truth could not injure either true religion or a state of society based on justice, because true religion is devotion to the truth, and just society is fraternity in accordance with the truth.

Strangely enough, and yet not so very strangely, when you consider how both the parsons and the politicians have conspired to stifle thought and manhood, the very victims of our barbarous industrial system do not care for freedom. Here is an agricultural labourer, with a wife and six children. He works hard and cleverly, and gets 18s. a week as wages.

"Are you contented?" I ask him.

"Content and thankful," he says.

"But you are very poor."

"It is the will of God."

"But you have to do without many things you want, and your wife and children have barely enough to live on."

"That is true, but I am glad of that, for if we had plenty we might forget God. By-and-bye we shall be in a world of eternal bliss."

"When you are dead?"

"Oh, sir, we shall live for ever in heaven."

"Then it does not matter how much you suffer in this world?"

"No, sir."

"But this great landlord who employs you he is not poor?"

"Oh, no; God has blessed him with the power of getting plenty of money without doing any work."

"But does it never occur to you that you and your fellow-workers produce all the goods, while he and his fellow-idlers get most of the money, and that it is a little queer that the men who make all the goods should not also get all the money?"

"No, sir; I never thought of that. But it must be quite all right because God is good. Besides, I have blessings that he knows nothing of. He has only two children while I have six. He has several fine mansions while we live in a poor hovel, but you know what is said about love in a cottage."

When will such poor fellows learn that contentment under injustice is a crime? Poverty is the mother of every crime and vice. Poverty is a disgrace to every community, because there is not the smallest natural reason for it. And he who is contented so long as his fellow-men are wronged and imbruted is irreligious, immoral, and heartless. If we did not pity him for his ignorance, we should hate him for his cowardice.

And this is what the present Church and State have done for men. They have pushed them down so low in body and mind that the love of freedom is nearly dead—the aspiration to know more and to be more is nearly gone.

But there is much now to look forward to, for this great War has stirred the dry bones of feudalism and monopoly as no mere preaching ever could have done. The brain of the great giant Labour is awaking to the sense of his enormous power by which only can peace again be permanently ensured to a tortured world. And in the coming days when the workers enjoy free access to the soil, and the inestimable boon of their own bank, supplying them with a paper currency based on their own productive power; in that day when man will labour and enjoy the full fruits of his labour, his brain will grow, his heart will grow, his character will grow, his span of life will be happy and prolonged, he will be no longer debased by the sordid industrial struggle of the sorrowful to-day. Then there will be no poems but those of Labour and of Love, because the workers of every nation will have come to recognize that their interests are identical—that he who robs and oppresses any of them is the enemy of all—and that the scourge of War was fabricated solely by the cunning hands of those who wanted to perpetuate industrial slavery.

G. O. WARREN.

Correspondence.

WHAT IS CAPITAL?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* for January 6, Dr. C. V. Drysdale accuses Major G. O. Warren of having been captured by

that "plausible compendium of economic fallacies, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*." It would be interesting to learn by what "plausible compendium of economic fallacies" Dr. Drysdale has been captured.

In his letter, Dr. Drysdale defines capital as dwellings, factories, tools, railways, food, etc., and then triumphantly asks "how many people would be employed or able to work at the end of a month if capital were destroyed."

What is a negro slave? A man of the black race. This explanation is on all fours with Dr. Drysdale's explanation of capital. A negro is a negro; only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton; only under certain conditions does it become capital.

Let me here condense Karl Marx's definition of capital. Capital consists not only of means of subsistence, instruments of labour and raw material; not only of material products, it consists just as much of exchange values. All products of which it consists are commodities. Capital, consequently, is not only a sum of material products, it is a sum of commodities, of exchange values, of social magnitudes. Capital remains the same whether we put cotton in the place of wool, rice in the place of wheat, etc., provided only that the cotton and the rice, the body of capital, have the same exchange value, the same price, as the wool and the wheat in which it was previously embodied. The bodily form of capital may transform itself continually, while capital does not suffer the least alteration. The sum of commodities of exchange values becomes capital when as an independent social power—i.e., as the power of a part of society, it preserves itself and multiplies by exchange with direct living labour power.

It is only the dominion of past accumulated materialized labour over immediate living labour that stamps the accumulated labour with a character of capital.

In conclusion, can Dr. Drysdale explain why, if his explanation of capital be correct, many past systems have not been known as capitalist systems?

NAT STRIEMER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JAN. 10.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Braddock, Eager, Lazarnick, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, and Thurlow; Miss Stanley, Miss Kough, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

Thirty new members were admitted for Birmingham, Goldthorpe, Manchester, North London, Nuneaton, and the Parent Society.

Permission was granted for the formation of a new Branch in Nuneaton.

Various items of correspondence were read and dealt with. The adjourned discussion *re* finance, carried at the Interim Conference, was resumed. Mr. Brandes (South London delegate) presented some suggestions on the matter, and finally the motion of Mr. Samuel, adjourned from the last meeting—"That the Editor be asked to start a Shilling Fund in the *Freethinker* for the N. S.S."—was carried.

The Secretary reported a successful opening of the afternoon meetings at the West Central Hall, and it was resolved to continue these meetings in London, if halls could be obtained.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Obituary.

Just as we are going to press, we receive with the greatest regret news of the death of Lance-cpl. L. H. Evans, the only son of Mr. N. J. Evans, of Palmer's Green, N. We regret that considerations of space prevent our inserting a fuller notice in our present issue. We insert this brief note in order to explain its non-appearance to those interested.

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, R. Miller, "The Religion of Russia and the Revolution." Open Debate.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, J. T. Lloyd, "Is Secularism Dead?"

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, F. J. Gould, "Lamennais, the French Democratic Priest."

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beevor Street): 3, "Selections from Voltaire."

LEICESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "New York in Wartime." Lantern Illustrations.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 3, "Christianity and the Child"; 6.30, "Religion and Liberty."

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): Chapman Cohen, 11, "Do the Dead Live?" 7, "Christianity and the Logic of Life."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, J. Fothergill, "The History of Free-thought."

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

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

London.

E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate. M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking. Messrs. Duncumb & Sons, 287 High Street, Stratford.

E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6, Byward St. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Rd. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch St. J. J. Jaques, 191 Old St.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Rd., Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Rd. (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Rd., Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore St., Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Rd. E. S. Smith, 7 Turnpike Lane, Hornsey. E. J. Diffey, 44 Cheverton Rd., Whitehall Park.

N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 316 Kentish Town Road. W. Lloyd, 5 Falkland Road, Kentish Town.

S.E.—J. H. Killick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham. B. Dean, Southwark Bridge.

S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.

W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King St., Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Rd., Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82, Seaford Rd., West Ealing.

W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

Country.

Aberdeenshire.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.

Askam-in-Furness.—Mr. J. Gill, The Pharmacy, Duke St.

Barrow-in-Furness.—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.

Beccles.—C. Chase, Station Road.

Birkenhead.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.

Birmingham.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook St. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Worcester St. F. Holder, 42 Hurst St. Mr. Benton, High St., Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Rd. Post Office, Saltley. Messrs. Stanford & Mann, New St. Mrs. J. E. Burns, 478 Bordesley Green.

Bolton.—E. Bassett, Church Street, Westhoughton. W. Atkinson, 364 Blackburn Road.

Breconshire.—Mrs. Jenkins, Gartly House, Talgarth.

Carlisle.—Ashton Ridley, 16 and 18 Bridge St., Caldewgate.

Carshalton.—Mr. Simmons, 29 North Street.

Cheltenham.—S. Norris, Ambrose Street.

Coventry.—Miss Bowry, 6 Earlsdon St.

Cullompton.—A. W. Clitsome, The Square.

Derbyshire.—Mr. Featherstone, Chapel-en-le-Firch.

Dublin.—J. C. Kearney, 59 Upper Stephen St. and 52 South St. George's St.

Dundee.—Mr. Cunningham, St. Andrew's Street. "The Hub," High Street. Mr. Lamb, 121 Overgate.

Edinburgh.—Mrs. Telford, 43 Broughton St. A. and L. Jeffery, 26 Elm Row.

Exeter.—T. Fisher, 37 South St.

Falkirk.—James Wilson, 76 Graham's Road.

Gateshead.—Henderson & Birkett, 4 & 5 Hills Street.

Glasgow.—David Baxter, 32 Brunswick St. Mr. Alexander, Stone-law Rd., Rutherglen. W. Lowe, 220 Argyle St. Mr. Cooper, 53 Main St., Bridgeton. Mr. Shields, 1125 Pollokshaws Rd., Shawlands; 249 Newlands Rd., Cathcart; 359 Holmlea Rd., Cathcart; Tramway Kiosk, Battlefield; 1 Kennishead Rd., Thornliebank; 111 Gloucester St., S. S.; 139 West Nile St., City; 197 George St., City. Mr. Hamilton, 90 Whitevale St.

Gravesend.—Mrs. Troke, 10 Passock Street. Mr. Love, Gassick Street. Mr. Gould, Milton Road. Mr. Troke, Clarence Place.

Hastings.—King Bros., 2 Queen's Road.

Ipswich.—A. E. Hiskey, 1 Old Cattle Market. T. Shelbourne, St. Matthew Street. Mr. Fox, Fore Street. Mr. Fox, St. Helen's Street. Mr. Roberson, Back Hamlet. Mr. Joyce, Fore Street.

Jarrow.—L. Prescod, Railway Street.

Kent.—E. J. Voss, 148 Broadway, Bexley Heath.

Lancashire.—John Turner, Scourbottom, Waterford. W. Restall, Station Bridge, Urmston. J. T. Middlehurst, 43 Water Lane, Preston.

Leeds.—J. Bray, 95 Park Lane. J. Sutcliffe, West St. C. H. Johnson, Corn Exchange.

Leicester.—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate.

Liverpool.—S. Reeves, 316 Derby Rd., Bootle. Grant's Bookstall, Lord St. Arcade.

Manchester.—Mrs. Tole, Whitelaw Rd., Chorlton-cum-Hardy. John Woods, 2A Spring Gardens. Mrs. Clark, 25 Leicester Rd., Hr. Broughton, Salford. Wm. Cox, Broad St., Pendleton, Salford. W. Winckle, Bury New Rd. Post Office, Prestwich. J. Wheeler, 206 Stockport Rd., Chorlton-on-Medlock.

Monmouth.—Mr. Davies, Pontnewydd. Wm. Morris, Windsor Rd., Griffithatoun.

Neath.—W. G. Maybury, 57 Windsor Road.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.—Messrs. Wilson, Raby St., Byker; Shields Rd., Byker. Mackay's, 30 Newgate St., Newcastle. Birkett, Hill St., Gateshead.

Northampton.—Mr. Bates, Bridge St. A. Bryan, Barracks Rd.

Norwich.—Harold Palmer, 82 St. Giles' St.

Notts.—Mr. C. Jalland, Bridlesmith Gate. Mr. Redfern, Ilkeston Rd., Radford.

Oldham.—Mr. Heath, 35 Manchester St.

Radcliff.—J. Booth, 297 Bolton Rd.

Southend-on-Sea.—Harold Elliott, 1 Belle Vue Terrace.

Stockton-on-Tees.—Mr. Elgie, Bowesfield Lane.

Swansea.—The Bomb Shop, 60 Alexandra Rd.

Teddington.—H. H. Holwill, 105 High Street.

Torquay.—L. Priston, 103 Union St. A. Priston, 47 Market St. A. Peters, Old Mill Rd., Chelston. Mr. Ronayne, Walnut Rd. H. Peters, 193 Union St. W. J. Peters, 37 Union St. Mr. Hunt, Lucius St.

Woolwich.—G. Hayward, New Rd.

Yarmouth.—C. H. Knights, 87 & 88 Northgate Street. H. Bird, 19 Howard Street South. J. M. Headley, North Howard Street.

To South African Residents, SETTLERS, AND TRAVELLERS.

READERS of the *Freethinker* and sympathisers with its cause will always be welcome to call on or correspond with the following;—

Names for the above list are requested, and will be published from time to time free of charge.

Contributions towards the expense of printing should be marked S. A. I. D.—i.e., South African Information Department.

To be distributed in Thousands.

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