

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XXXVIII.—No. 4

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 1918

PRICE TWOPENCE

CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Demobilization.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	49
<i>Pulpit Recklessness.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	50
<i>The Real Burns.—Mimmermus</i> - - - - -	51
<i>No More Miracles.—Arthur B. Moss</i> - - - - -	52
<i>A Thought from Hippolyte Taine</i> - - - - -	53
<i>Anno Domini.—W.</i> - - - - -	54
<i>Acid Drops</i> - - - - -	55
<i>To Correspondents</i> - - - - -	57
<i>Sugar Plums</i> - - - - -	57
<i>Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.</i> - - - - -	58
<i>The Orb of Day.—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - - -	58
<i>The Cairn Revisited on "Thanksgiving Day."—A. M.</i>	59
<i>Letters to the Editor—Freethought and Birth Control, 60;</i>	
<i>A Plea for Justice, 61; The Evidence of the Churches</i>	61
<i>Obituary</i> - - - - -	61
<i>Society News</i> - - - - -	61
<i>Notice of Meetings</i> - - - - -	62

Views and Opinions.

Demobilization.

On all sides it is admitted that the difficulties facing the world immediately after peace is proclaimed will be hardly less serious than those fronting it during the War. Getting millions of men back to civilian labour will be no simple task, nor will it be easy to induce contentment with those hundreds of thousands who are in positions of "official" importance because of the War, and will hardly be pleased when they are called on to sink back into a position of unimportance. A uniform—civil or military—has a fatal fascination for many; medals, decorations, and titles are hardly less attractive—even when the latter are scattered about so profusely that one hardly knows whether one's dustman may not be a Knight Commander of something, or one's charwoman a Grand Dame of the Empire. Peace will appear drab to some, tame to others, and the psychology of the after the War period will provide an interesting and a profitable field for study. * * *

Why not the Clergy?

Demobilization of the military and civil forces, organized for the prosecution of the War, will be so great a task that it may well involve reconstruction on many new lines. And if new ventures are to be attempted, the end of the War would be the most favourable occasion. Therefore, we venture on a suggestion which may or may not be adopted by the Government. We have a khaki Army, and we have a "black" Army. The nation is ringing with the deeds of the first, it is more likely to grow vocal over the misdeeds of the second. The first has offered its bodies for the safety of the nation; the other has received a comfortable salary, or, when it has donned khaki—for other purposes than fighting—has received an officer's rank and pay. In pre-war days, many people who were under the delusion that the Black Army was essential to the safety of the nation, have now had their eyes opened. People will, moreover, be prepared for considerable rearrangements. No such

favourable movement is likely to present itself again. So, we say, let us demobilize the clergy.

* * *

The Black Army.

The Black Army numbers about 50,000 men. At present they are of no "earthly" use. Their true function is a heavenly one. Their real business is to prepare us for the next life; and if people really believed in it, and them, the present would be a very busy time for the clergy. How much money this Army costs, no one can exactly say. It is certainly not less than twenty millions annually; it may easily be half as much again. And they are always clamouring for more. The cry of the "poor clergy" is always with us; and even the Bishop of London once explained that, after paying for food, housing, firing, lighting, and servants, all he had left from his salary was a beggarly twenty-eight hundred a year for, apparently, clothing and pocket-money. Before the War, many of us knew the clergy were of no use; but others were under the delusion that, somehow or other, they helped people to live together peaceably, and stood generally for what was vaguely called the higher things of life. Now everyone knows that is not the case. The clergy are as useless in war as in peace. They cannot pray the world into good behaviour. They cannot pray an opposing army out of existence. They cannot pray for society with any prospect of profit. They can only prey on it, with disastrous results. So, once more, while we are demobilizing the Khaki Army of five millions, let us add the "Black Army" to the number, and demobilize the lot.

* * *

Work for the Clergy.

Now, in making this suggestion, we are not depreciating the use this army of educated men might be to the country. We are only desirous of putting them to greater use. Fifty thousand men, giving the whole of their time to the instruction of their fellows on any kind of social topic, would exert an enormous influence for good. And what they taught would not be of so great importance as the kind of subjects to which they were directing attention. The land question, the population question, the marriage question, the relations of employer and employed, sanitation, education—all of these are vastly important subjects, and the really important thing is to get people thinking and talking about them. Set people discussing things, and it will not be long before some solution to every problem will present itself. So, after demobilizing our Black Army, we should do with them exactly as we say we are going to do with the soldiers—draft them into some form of social employment of recognized utility and service. They could help to teach people how to live, instead of explaining to them how to die. They could emphasize the state of London, or Manchester, or Liverpool, instead of the New Jerusalem. Their work would be to train citizens for healthy human intercourse instead of making them candidates for heaven. They would teach people to rely upon their own intelligence and strength instead of upon the expected help of an antiquated tribal fetish. The

soldiers will be demobilized when the German, as an enemy, ceases to exist. But the enemy of the clergy, the Devil—or was he their friend?—ceased to exist long ago. Or, if the clergy still have an enemy to fight, it is common sense. And in the name of common sense, we say, let us demobilize the clergy.

* * *

In Defence of the Pulpit.

Of course, there may be objection raised to this being done. It may be argued that in demobilizing the clergy we should be inflicting an evil on society instead of removing one. Thus, it was once urged against the Church that it absorbed the best intellect of the nation to the impoverishment of life in other directions. That charge cannot with truth be brought against the Church at present. It may be urged, on the contrary, that the Church to-day, by attracting to its service a class of intellect not the best fitted for serious mental work in either science or social life, relieves the community at large from the direct weight of the burden. In any other walk of life it is clear that nothing like the salaries paid to leaders of the Churches could be earned by them. And there is in addition another aspect to be faced. Most people would admit that were the methods of the pulpit carried into social life the results would be disastrous. The habit of reckless statement, the unqualified condemnation of those who disagree with them, the inattention to facts, and the neglect of careful observation so emphasized by science, all these things are so patent with the clergy, that it would be disastrous to throw men to whom these things apply into the general stream of life. The Church, it may be said, with some justification, by acting as a selective force and confining to the pulpit a type of mind that would scarce be tolerated in either business or scientific circles, is performing a real service to the community. Demobilization might not, if this argument be admitted, then, mean the release of a serviceable body of men, it might only mean the casting adrift of a body of men, the major part of whom are by nature and training unfitted for any better work than the kind they are doing. Society has a certain responsibility towards even the clergy. We find suitable occupations for the mentally afflicted. Have we not some kind of duty towards those who are marked out by nature for the pulpit?

* * *

Payment by Results.

In any case, if we cannot demobilize the clergy, why not adopt the principle of payment by results? That would be quite fair to everybody, and the clergy are continually appealing to experience. The Prayer Book of the Church of England provides plenty of cases that could be tested. There are prayers for the sick, for the wounded, for a nation in times of War, for good harvests, for those at sea, etc. If the clergy can produce a beneficial result in any of these cases no one will grudge them either payment or honour. Why not place them in charge of a ward of wounded soldiers—provided the latter could be induced to agree—and then see what benefit their prayers are to the men? Or place the Archbishop of Canterbury in power at the Admiralty, and then note whether there is a marked diminution in the number of vessels lost. There are scores of ways in which we could test the usefulness of the clergy, if we only made up our minds to do so. We need not insist upon success in every case, a fair average would be enough. And if the clergy are honest in their profession of faith they would have no objection. At any rate, it would put the matter on a more satisfactory basis than is the case at present. But one of the two courses should be adopted. Either payment by results or demobilization. The first would be an interesting experiment,

the second would throw the "poor clergy" on their own resources. In either case, society would be relieved from the upkeep of a body of men of whose utility no one seems assured, and whose honesty even is often open to serious question.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Pulpit Recklessness.

m.

PREACHERS are unique specimens of humanity, and form an exclusive category. They claim to be ambassadors of a monarch whose very existence is unsusceptible of demonstration, with the result that for their ministrations of every kind they are, in reality, responsible only to themselves. Ministers of Christ, they call themselves; but as Christ is their own creation, it follows that their service is rendered only to the Church which appointed them. They pride themselves upon being Heaven's spokesmen, but are merely the expounders of man-made creeds. The other Sunday the Rev. Charles Brown, D.D., of Ferme Park Baptist Church, occupied the pulpit of Westminster Chapel, London, and endeavoured to justify the ways of God with man. As reported in the *British Weekly* for January 17, he said:—

The vital question for all of us is, Can you trust God? Can you commit yourself to him with security? Can you believe that, among all convulsion and change, his goodness abides? . . . We must trust God. People are asking to-day in bitterness, "What is God doing?" and they think something has gone wrong with the government of the world.

"We must trust God." Such is the dogmatism of the pulpit. But why must we trust God amid all the abominations and horrors of a world war? Dr. Brown's answer is that the world has always had its full share of suffering and sorrow. On "a green hill far away," two thousand years ago, Jesus was crucified as a common criminal; and it was God who did it. Now listen:—

What was God doing there? He was saving the world, and he is saving the world to-day. When I think of the great tide of sorrow, growing ever swifter and deeper, my only comfort is that through this agony of war the Divine Father is saving the world. There is no other way of destroying militarism than by taking upon our hearts the burden of it all.

By cruelly murdering his only begotten and beloved Son on Calvary two thousand years ago, we are told, God was saving the world; but saving it from what, and to what end? Can Dr. Brown honestly point to a period of time when the world was in any sense saved? It is true that Europe became nominally Christian under Constantine the Great, and has continued so to this day; but nothing is more absolutely undeniable than that a Christian world is a fundamentally different thing from a saved world. Indeed, Dr. Brown himself tacitly admits that for nineteen centuries God's attempt to save the world was a dismal and total failure, inasmuch as he is still working at the job by means of the most brutal war on record. Clearly the reverend gentleman, if correctly reported, is guilty of using words in the most reckless manner conceivable, and we conclude that he is able to do so simply because the God he pretends to represent exists only in his own imagination.

Dr. Brown is evidently a professional talker who has no inconvenient sense of responsibility. Being simply a product of the human fancy, God never interferes with his self-elected champions, no matter what they may say about him. So the reverend gentleman is allowed to blaspheme with a vengeance:—

"Why does not God intervene?" you ask. He is intervening. "Why does he allow this war?" He cannot help himself, unless he were to take from man

that prerogative of freedom which alone gives value to right-doing.

Is God free? Could he do wrong if he felt inclined? If not, his right-doing possesses no value whatever. The law that applies to man must be equally binding on man's Maker. Dr. Brown deliberately ignores this, and commits himself to the laughably absurd doctrine that man's freedom implies the capacity to do wrong; which means that unless he can tell a lie, his truth-speaking can have no value. Of course, this doctrine is a theological subterfuge, resorted to for the express purpose of exonerating the Supreme Being from all blame or responsibility for the evils so prevalent in the world. Very discreetly, the reverend gentleman contents himself with stating without defending the strange doctrine of human free-agency, and then proceeds thus:—

Amid this awful resurgence of wickedness in the world I still believe that God sitteth on the circle of the earth. I know that in history wrong has sometimes triumphed for a time, but it has ever been the conviction of the best and wisest men that right would ultimately reign. I believe in a God who suffers with his Universe. When we remember the horrors of the world, its sin, shame, and suffering, let us not forget that God is bearing it all.

Why does God sit on the circle of the earth if not to guide its every motion? Why does he sit as King for ever if not to reign over mankind? Why is he supposed to reign at all if not to have his will done both in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth? But Dr. Brown holds that the freedom which he has conferred on man precludes the possibility of his being absolutely supreme in his own Universe.

Dr. Charles Brown belongs to the orthodox school of theology, with all its prejudices and bigotries, and is completely out of touch with the spirit of the age, being one of the kill-joy fraternity. The Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, of Old Meeting Church, Birmingham, however, is a New Theologian of some note, from whom we would naturally expect utterances of a much more liberal and tolerant character. But the fact from which there is no escape is that all divines, in their attitude to outsiders, are significantly alike. The *Birmingham Gazette* for January 14 contains the report of a sermon which Mr. Thomas recently delivered before the University of Birmingham, in which he deplores the world's tragic alienation from Christ. Even the Church has gone terribly astray, and must be brought back. As in Dr. Brown's discourse, so in Mr. Thomas's, the central thought is that two thousand years ago "One offered himself in lowly life and agonizing death to heal the woes of mankind, and reconcile man to man and all to God," and that now, after so long a time, "men were again reconsidering and accepting the meaning of Christ." According to the testimony of more competent judges, there is no sign whatever of an approaching religious revival; but be that as it may, the fact remains that for fully nineteen hundred years Christ has not succeeded in healing the woes of our race, and that, judging by appearances, he is less likely to succeed now than ever. That Mr. Thomas is not a reliable guide even in plain matters of fact is shown by the following statement:—

I hope I am not mistakenly sanguine; but I believe that our very scepticisms and agnosticisms are changing their tone and quality. They are becoming modest, and, if not yet believing, willing and even eager to believe.

Either Mr. Thomas is insufficiently acquainted with present-day unbelief or he deliberately misrepresents it. We know some hundreds of Agnostics who are neither eager nor willing to believe, and who, if more modest than their fathers, are more zealous advocates of freedom

of thought and expression. Mr. Thomas is an ecclesiastic to the back bone. Whilst fervently hoping that "the mediæval subjection of University life to ecclesiastical authority is gone for ever," he is the sworn enemy of the policy of Secular Education. He says:—

I believe it were far better for humanity to restore the mediæval relation than to permit the interest of scholarship and education to be subordinated to secular ends. The independence of learning must be jealously safeguarded. It will be safe only when it is inspired throughout by the Christian spirit. Not education only, but every department of life, must respond to the appeal. It was not the business of the Christian Church directly and officially to interfere in activities that were best carried on in unhampered liberty, but it was its business so to inspire every human soul, so to Christianize the functions and activities of all Christians that their life was always flowing out from Christian motives, and measured by Christian standards and permeated by the spirit of Christ.

Mr. Thomas must be perfectly well aware that the Church has always hated and discouraged education as such, and done its utmost to suppress it. The sciences of chemistry, geology, and astronomy in particular, were bitterly denounced and opposed by ecclesiastical authorities, and there are those living to-day who distinctly remember the hostile reception to the *Origin of Species* on its first appearance less than sixty years ago. The divines were in a state of the utmost frenzy, and the then Bishop of Oxford utilized all his oratorical gifts in the effort to persuade his fellow Christians that it was a work calculated to subvert the Christian religion; and had the Inquisition been still in force, Darwin would have been burnt as the most dangerous of heretics. And yet Mr. Lloyd Thomas would rather see the Spanish Inquisition restored than that our education should be conducted on Secular lines. The age of persecution is past, but the spirit of persecution is still alive. The pulpit is as intolerant as ever, and if it had the power, its intolerance would be as drastically expressed as it used to be six and seven centuries ago.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Real Burns.

Two Essays. By Professor W. P. Ker, LL.D. Maclehose, 1918.

ROBERT BURNS has been dead over a century, and his fame is far wider and more secure than when he died. His life is now celebrated as an important event, and his poetry is rightly regarded as a glorious contribution to the world's literature. Admittedly, Scotland's greatest poet, he has been subjected to extreme adulation from his countrymen. Had he been a lesser genius than he was, this fulsome praise would have exposed his name to derision.

Professor Ker's essay on Burns will flutter Caledonia's doves. Greatly daring, he transforms Burns from a Scottish singer into a British poet. Burns, he contends, was the poet of a nation whose capital was not Edinburgh, but London. This is a direct challenge to those critics who declare that Burns depends upon dialect, and that when he tried to write English, he fell into mediocrity, fettered by the difficulties of an alien tongue.

This time-honoured contention is part only of the truth, and shows that Burns, like many another classic, is more talked of than read. One or two brief quotations, taken at random from his works, will modify this idea effectually. Take this from a love song:—

O my luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June!
O my luve's like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.

Here is another from a battle-hymn, one of the best ever written:—

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free.
Lay the proud usurper low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die!

How much do these two striking quotations depend on dialect? Or does this?

A fig for those by law protected,
Liberty's a glorious feast.
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

Then turn to those lines which are admitted to be among the very finest that even Burns ever wrote:—

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Do those superb lines derive their force from their one solitary word of dialect? Burns has suffered grievously at the hands of hiccoughing Highlanders and maudlin ministers, but professed critics might well give the corpses of defunct heresies decent burial.

Professor Ker has much to say concerning Burns's political views, but he says little of the poet's views on religion. In view of Christian cant on this subject, this is a pity. For Burns's heresy was "four square to all the winds that blow." Oliver Wendell Holmes, indeed, expressed surprise that puritanical Caledonia could take Robert Burns to her straight-laced bosom without breaking her stays. For Burns, like Paine and Voltaire, was a Deist. Of other religion, saved what flowed from a mild Theism, he scarcely showed a trace. In truth, one can scarcely call it a creed. It was mainly a name for a particular mood of sentimentalism, the expression of a state of indefinite aspiration. The Holy Willies of Orthodoxy have made the basest uses of this emotionalism; but Christians cannot read Burns without unloosening the shackles of their faith. David Hume's young Freethinking contemporary did not merely express his dissent from Calvinism. He struck at the heart of the Christian superstition. Seeing plainly that priests trade on fear, he sounded a true note when he said scornfully:—

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order.

How he lashes the rigidly righteous:—

Sae pious and sae holy,
Y've nought to do but mark and tell
Your naeboor's fauts and folly.

And, again:—

Learn three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, and lang, wry faces,
Grunt up a solemn, lengthened groan,
And damn all parties but your own,
I'll warrant then ye'er nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

Burns never hesitated to make a frontal attack on religion:—

D'yrmples mild, D'yrmples mild, th' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snow,
Yet that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye
For preaching that three 's ane an' twa.

The "Merciful Great God" of the Christians excites his derision and indignation:—

O Thou wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thyself
Sends ane to Heaven and ten to Hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for any guid or ill
They've done afore Thee.

The real Burns is not the popular Burns of the Scottish manse and drawing-room. When the peasant poet was received by the "unco' guid" aristocracy of Edinburgh, he was afloat on a treacherous sea. The company that professed to admire him stood on the land and drank the poor poet's health, and Burns raised his glass and bowed his acknowledgments on his frail raft. In spite of all the glib phrase-making of the critics, Burns belonged to a very different world to that which his patrons inhabited. The insuperable barriers between Burns, the rare genius, and his stupid, if well-meaning, patrons, is not got rid of by pretending that they do not exist.

Like all pioneers, Robert Burns was so much alone. So early was he in the field that he could do little more than anticipate Carlyle's bitter "Exodus from Houndsditch," or his caustic apostrophe to Christ, "Eh, man, ye've had your day!" But what he did was sufficient for his generation. He fought at fearful odds, and as Carlyle says, "Granted the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged, the pilot is blameworthy, but to know how blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs."

The noblest quality in Burns's magnificent poetry is the eternal quality of honest indignation. It comes always with no veil of invention; it is blunt, simple as daily speech, the man himself talking before us. It is this quality that makes his "Jolly Beggars," a poem which stands alone in literature, not only unmatched, but unmatchable. The beggars are not merely rebels; for them the laws and conventions of society have no existence. And so with Robert Burns himself. He rises above the network of clerical authority like a skylark. Every Freethinker will say of him what warm-hearted Burns himself said in his epitaph on his friend, "With such as he, where'er he be, may I be saved or damned."

MIMNERMUS.

No More Miracles.

I MET "Uncle Joe" the other evening coming home from an expedition round the streets of South London in search of food for Sunday's dinner and for the following days, one of which had been arranged by the Food Controller to be "a meatless day."

Uncle Joe, it may be explained, is a conventional Christian. At one time he was a Sunday-school teacher connected with the local church; then he became a churchwarden; but in recent years, under the stress by strain of the great War, he has fallen away from the paths of grace by attending the theatre or the cinema palaces, and getting what relief he was able by a little innocent amusement.

"Well, Uncle," I said, when we met, "how have you got on with regard to food—got any margarine or butter yet?"

"No," he said; "I've been round to about fifteen shops, and they've all sold out."

"Ah," I replied, by way of chaff, "time for some miracles now."

"No, my boy," he answered, "you always will bring that subject up. I have told you over and over again that the day of miracles is over—that the last miracle was performed by Jesus Christ himself—and to-day we have to rely upon human effort and natural forces for all that we get on this earth."

"Yes, Uncle, but what I always find is that you, like so many other Christians, forget what your Bible teaches and what ecclesiastical history has to say on the question. Don't you know that the New Testament says that Paul raised a man from the dead after the death of Jesus, and

that hundreds of miracles are alleged to have happened in the early history of the Christian Church? Besides, what do you pray to God for—to stop the War, to turn the hearts of the enemy to a nobler purpose—if you believe that the age of miracles is past?”

“Well,” responded Uncle Joe, “it does seem a little bit inconsistent I know; but who expects consistency in any man to-day?”

“Well, Uncle, you think yourself hard done by because you can't get a little margarine to put on your bread. Now I know a poor woman who has nine children under fifteen, and her husband only earns about two pounds a week—which in war-time means only about a pound—and her children have been out all day waiting in the various queues to get small quantities of tea, sugar, and margarine; while the mother is trying to get a small piece of meat of some sort to stew for Sunday's dinner. Now, I ask you, would not a nice little miracle come in handy for such a poor creature as that?”

“Well, what would you suggest?” said Uncle Joe.

“God used to drop manna from the skies for the benefit of hungry Israelites thousands of years ago, why cannot he drop—I don't suggest legs of beef or shoulders of mutton because, if they hit you, they might put you out of action for a time—but like the fairy in pantomime, he might transform a lot of useless articles into nourishing food for the benefit of starving creatures all over Europe. Could he do that if he would?”

“Certainly he could do it,” said Uncle Joe, “if he chose; but you don't suppose for a moment that God Almighty is going to be dictated to by puny man; certainly not.”

“Then God is responsible for the starvation of thousands of innocent women and children in all the so-called civilized nations of the earth to-day.”

“How do you make that out?” said Uncle Joe, in a tone bordering on anger. “God did not cause the War; man did that.”

“But God did not prevent the War, and therefore he is responsible for it, and you admit that he could if he had chosen. What is the good of you praying to him to stop it now, when he could have done so at the beginning, if it had not met with his approval?”

“You Atheists, I admit,” said Uncle Joe, “are so rigidly logical in everything, you leave nothing to faith; it never seems to occur to you that God knows a great deal better than we do what is good for us.”

“Do you say that starvation is good for any of us?”

“No, I do not say so. I do not know. But that may be God's way of punishing us for our sins.”

“All I can say is, that it is a very cruel method. Our Heavenly Father ought at least to be as humane as the best of our earthly fathers. They would never think of adopting such methods.”

“I don't know,” responded Uncle Joe. “Some of them would.”

“Yes, and they would be prosecuted for cruelty, and get long terms of imprisonment by a magistrate, who would be simply carrying out the feelings and sentiments of an outraged community.”

“But let me refer you for a moment to some of the alleged miracles of Jesus. He is said to have fed five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two fishes. Couldnt he do something of that kind now?”

“As I have said,” responded Uncle Joe, “he could if he chose.”

“But he doesn't choose. Very well. He is alleged to have opened the eyes of the blind. Could he do that now?”

“Of course he could. He is Almighty.”

“Very well,” he does not do it. Don't say there is no occasion for such a miracle. Look at the thousands

of soldiers that have come home from the War—not only blind, but deaf and dumb from shell shock. Cannot he restore sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb to-day?”

“He could if he chose.”

“But he doesn't do it. It is left to the skill of the doctors, and they cannot accomplish such tasks. They cannot perform miracles.”

“But they are performing wonders, you will admit. Their skill is marvellous,” said Uncle Joe.

“They cannot perform miracles, it is true—they would if they could; they do their best, and they do it all without the aid of the gods. Their methods are purely natural. Men are making the lame to walk by the aid of artificial legs, and artificial arms are being supplied to those who have had the misfortune to lose them.”

“Yes, I admit all that,” said Uncle Joe, “and I rejoice in their achievements. I have actually seen a man who had lost his nose supplied with an artificial one. War is a terrible thing, but how can we stop it? Christians are as much against war as you are.”

“Not quite. Freethinkers are uniformly in favour of peace, and are never in favour of war, except in self-defence, or in defence of unoffending people fighting for their rights against a powerful tyranny. But the Church has always been in favour of war—not one Church, but all the Churches. Read their history. There has never been a war fought that has not had the sanction of the Churches and the approval of the bishops and the clergy—at least not in my time—and, I think, not within living memory.”

“But the Churches,” said Uncle Joe, with an air of triumph, “are not Christianity.”

“Christianity has an existence quite apart from all the Churches.”

“Yes, I admit that, but you cannot think of Christianity without thinking of the people who profess it, and they belong, for the most part, to some Church or other, to some sect or other, however obscure and insignificant. Those who belong to no church—are indifferent—they are what I call nothingarians, and, I think, they form the largest part of any community.”

“That may be so,” responded Uncle Joe, with doubtful acquiescence.

“Well, and now we have discussed these matters, come with me to the Town Hall, and I will find out for you where you can get your margarine and other articles without the performance of any miracles. Come!”

With this exclamation I took “Uncle Joe” by the arm and accompanied him to the office of the Food Inspector, who soon put us on the track of the articles of food he required.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

A Thought from Hippolyte Taine.

UNTIL the age of fifteen I lived in ignorance and tranquillity, I had not yet thought of the future; I knew nothing of it; I was a Christian, and I had never asked myself what this life is worth, where I came from, and what I had to do..... Reason appeared to me like a beacon light, I began to suspect that there was something beyond what I had seen, and to grope as in the darkness. My religious faith was the first thing which fell before this spirit of inquiry. One doubt provoked another; each article of belief dragged another down with it in its fall..... I felt within myself enough honour and strength of will to live as a good man, even after losing my religion, I esteemed my reason too highly to believe in another authority than its own; I refused to recognize rules for my life and the conduct of my thoughts from any other person; I became indignant at the idea of being virtuous through fear and a believer through obedience.

Anno Domini.

I was "down on my luck," with no immediate prospects, and being a member of a Christianized nation, I ought to have trusted myself to Providence, and allured consolation by resorting to plagiarized platitudes. I did neither, which to my early ecclesiastic shepherd would seem damning evidence that his prophecy was nearing fulfilment. He had warned me on one occasion when I had asked a rational question (receiving the stereotyped irrational prevarication) that I was "lost," and augured well to deserving a bad and untimely end.

That my end was not near has since been fully evinced, but the times, I must admit, were both bad and untimely. It had been the same for weeks, continually hoping and expecting, and—disappointment. The wearying effects of daily endeavours all coming to naught were gradually transmuted optimism to cynical pessimism. This, in spite of the unassailable reputation I held of being a ridiculous optimist, and I well deserved the appellation, for usually I never found it difficult to be happy-go-lucky. It is easy, however, to show off a Touchstonean levity to patronizing associates, but in strange surroundings, alone and with rapidly dwindling means, the rose-water fragrance of make-belief and illusion no longer charms the drab of cogent circumstances.

I do not think any man can be really optimistic if cast alone with his thoughts when things go against him. He may talk to himself and circumvent facts with admirable subterfuge until he generates consolation—temporarily. I have tried it. I have interrogated my reflection in the mirror to the jingle of a few shillings and coppers—the whole of my financial backing—but the result did not encourage inspiration. Perhaps I ought to have tried the old-fashioned remedy of silent invocation in humble genuflection, but, secretly, I prefer the barbaric simplicity of seeing to whom, or to what, I am appealing.

The day of my story was the culmination of a gathering morbidness. I rose late and did not advance far with my toilet, for after washing myself I lounged all day, collarless, and with slippered feet. I smoked heavily until my tongue became most disagreeably furred, all the while restlessly endeavouring to read and play patience alternately. As a matter of fact, I had resolved not to do any work that day, and at least I was consistent in that.

By way of a brief explanation of my circumstances, I should say that, possessing an artistic temperament, I had centred my attention on advertising as a means of subsistence, but it was clearly becoming evident that nothing short of a Nazarine touch would prove my venture anything but an abortive speculation.

The rain had pelted down all the afternoon, and helped considerably to intensify my splenetic condition; yet, when evening came, I determined to face the aqueous elements and find convivial attraction elsewhere. I soon made ready, and set off with a dogged persistence. The street in which I was staying was a sort of bottle-neck communication, joining up a slum district with the busy thoroughfare of a middle-class neighbourhood.

I had not walked far before my well-worn clothing was reduced to a pitiable appearance. The weather was atrocious, and even in my state of mental insubordination, I recognized the futility of defying the wrath of Jove, so I decided to turn into an ale saloon that I should directly pass. I had been there before, and knew what to expect; but the sin of misfortune is a wonderful leveler. Whatever the conditions, I knew that I should be tolerated and receive a certain kind of welcome.

Through the swing-doors a sanded, uneyen-flagged

passage led forward to a zinc-topped counter, serving in a crude way—with a ridiculously small enclosure behind—as a bar. Around, there were sprawled two or three coarse-looking men, and an emaciated old woman, whilst the landlord was sitting down, looking lascivious with vulgar prosperity. On one side of the passage was a very small room with "snug" painted on the door, and presumably this retreat was reserved for any "select" company who may call. It is really peculiar how class distinction exists in the most strange and out of way places. Opposite the snug, near the bar, was a much larger room, from which could be heard a babel of voices and snatches of music-hall ditties.

The landlord nodded as I entered, and somewhat counteracted my rancorous mood. I ordered "a steady" (a pint of common beer) as I turned into the large room to join the noisy company, consisting of young people of both sexes, with the exception of a huddled heap in a corner near the door. It was a bundle of degenerate senility—a man about sixty years old—who could tell! The ages of the rest ranged from sixteen to thirty.

I sat down on a form that stretched the length of the room along the wall, and received a tacit recognition from a few of the company, for they were habitués, and I had seen them there before. Probably they now recognized in me a fellow-Bohemian and outcast, and accepted my presence as a charitable reciprocation.

But what a company! Animate frames—draped. Even my apparel made an aristocratic comparison, for filth and rents were complements to their attire, and I felt quite an interloper, wearing a very soiled soft collar. Several of the people were in a partial state of intoxication, but their mirth was innocent—sadly innocent, though ribald. Their world was a remote planet in the effulgent constellation of society. They did not know the other spheres. What instruments had they with which to astronomize; with which to probe the secret of contemporary cosmos? The means, where were they?.....Where? Thumb-marked by chanting parasites and rapacious legislators, what chance had they? Exemplifications;—living monuments of a deific chastity!

A besotted slattern, flushed with voluminous talking and singing, her hair falling in matted lengths over her shoulder, came and sat beside me. She sniggled and ogled stupidly. My acquired sense of respectability revolted; but why? Why should I? The primitive streak was still within me, and it conquered. After all, it was only abstraction that separated us.

The girl was not more than twenty, but her voice was fogged with repeated inebriation. She leered gapingly as I cut some tobacco (I had been forced to economize by using a rank substitute), and presently asked me to buy her a bottle of stout. I did, and it was gone in one drink! But her depravity was insatiable, for next she asked me for a "chew o' 'bacca.".....To what depths.....!

Those who live in the glass-house of religious jurisprudence will roll their eyes, and denounce my shameful aiding and abetting of such disgraceful morality. But puritan censure was always flaccid and superficial. There is no cavilling in the "backwash" of life. Driven into a state of abject passivity by the flagellation of circumstances, their meagre store of vitality finds expression in sordid extravagance.

I stayed an hour; an hour with unfettered primordialism. Bawling voices crossing the time of a metal-toned piano; freakish laughter and reeking jests. The girl danced up and down the sanded floor presumably imitating some music-hall star. It was mirth and melody to that shrunken crowd. Hellish! you say? Better that than the grind they would go to on the

morrow! Convention, propriety and discrimination were discarded. They were automatons of irresponsibility revelling in the freedom of a Bacchanalian licence—just human beings without the veneer.

This, the twentieth century A.D., and still the alliterate combination—parsons and politicians—meddle on!

"O Thou, the Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, look down upon these, Thy children, and rejoice!" So chants hypocrisy. W.

Acid Drops.

Perhaps it was only fitting that the Day of Prayer on January 6 having been ordered by the King, for the Government to issue "Instructions" to the clergy as to prayers and sermons. These "Instructions" were, it appears, issued by Captain Guest, Mr. Lloyd George's Whip and Patronage Secretary. This is all that was needed to make the elaborate farce of a Day of Prayer complete. And what is one to think of a clergy who receive "Instructions" in this manner? If the clergy don't get the contempt of decent men and women, they at least work hard to deserve it.

The clergy are asserting constantly that the World-War will benefit Christianity, but a few of them are beginning to have doubts on the subject. No fewer than seventeen Army chaplains contribute to a volume of essays, of which the scope is indicated by the title, *The Church in the Furnace*. Freethinkers will smile at the suggestion that the Church, which has consigned so many people to the immortal bonfire, is in the furnace herself.

Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance has set aside £500 as a fund for war bonuses to curates in the diocese. This special act of Christian charity may cause joy in heaven, but it will bring but little happiness to the numerous poor curates, who will remember, prayerfully, that the Dear Archbishop struggles to keep up appearances on £15,000 yearly, and that the bachelor Bishop of London exists on a paltry £10,000 annually.

At an inquest at Kensington on the Rev. Francis Sparkling it was stated that the deceased had been addicted to drink, and that death was due to chloral poisoning. The restraints of religion are not very evident in this instance.

We are glad to see protests against the compulsory religion of the British Army growing. In the *Daily Chronicle* of January 16, Miss Winifred Stephens writes a letter in which she says:—

Our soldiers and sailors are making unspeakable sacrifices for us. Ought we merely for the sake of orthodoxy, which will never save the military situation, to demand from any of them sacrifices of conscience? Ought we to require from the few, who are endowed with the mental activity and the moral courage, necessary for the facing of fundamental problems, the sacrifice of that liberty for the sake of which in the political world they are already risking their lives?

These were the questions which leapt to my mind when I recently heard how an able officer at the front, after having been twice vainly reprimanded for absence from Church Parade, was summoned to answer for his offence before his superior officers. He frankly explained that, being a convinced agnostic, Church Parade would be for him rank hypocrisy. He was told that if he persisted in his refusal to attend he would be tried by court martial.

Doubtless this case of a patriotic Englishman, who volunteered on the outbreak of the war, and who has ever since served abroad, having lately been promoted to high rank, is only one out of many.

Such treatment of those who are fighting for political and national freedom, ever anomalous when we have the French who know nothing of such things for our Allies, grows still more glaring now that we have at our side in the field our American cousins, who would never consent and who would never be asked to submit to such religious tyranny.

It is one of the ironies that, amid all the talk of freedom, men should be compelled to assist at a religious service

which so many of them regard as an outrage on common sense, and very few of them attend willingly.

The pill of religion has to be gilded nowadays. Listen to this account from a soldier: "We stroll down to the Y.M.C.A. tent, and have a gossip or a game of cards, meanwhile drinking enormous quantities of tea. We get fairly decent concerts at the Y.M.C.A. Saturday nights. One night we had a miniature bioscope featuring one of the "Exploits of Elaine." What a difference between this alluring picture and the attitude of the clergy in the ages of Faith: "Believe, or be damned."

Booker Washington, the negro educationist, in his *Up from Slavery*, tells of an old darkie who suddenly stopped work in the cotton field, and, looking towards the skies, said: "O Lawd, de cotton am so grassy, the work am so hard, and the sun am so hot that I believe this darkie am called to preach!"

An Anglican Church correspondent, referring to two extempore prayers, says that "the Almighty was given certain unnecessary pieces of information"; but, surely, the same thing is true of all prayer, whether extempore or not. The Creator is offered the insult of being told what vile, miserable creatures we are, how he has aided us in the past, and what he ought to do for us in the future. Yes, prayer gives God quite unnecessary pieces of information and instruction, and is in its very nature an impertinent but, fortunately, futile attempt to interfere with the course of things. All Christians affect to believe in it, though not one in a thousand ever practices it.

The newly appointed Governor of Jerusalem is the son of the Dean of Rochester, who was for many years vicar of the fashionable London church, St. Peter's, Eaton Square. When he left for Rochester, he said that he held so many offices he scarcely knew who he was. "I am vicar of St. Peter's," he remarked, "I am a surrogate of the Diocese of London, and Rural Dean of Westminster. Until the other day I was an honorary chaplain to the King. For a few more hours I am a Prebendary of St. Paul's." This is a striking example of the way some clerics take up their crosses and follow their Saviour.

The triumph of the Women's Suffrage Movement is a victory for Freethought, and the belated recognition of the rights of women is a tribute to the pioneers from Mary Wollstonecraft to John Stuart Mill. The completeness of the present victory is shown by the attitude of the Bishops in the House of Lords, for these right reverend fathers-in-God have been compelled by the logic of events to admit at last that women are human beings.

Canon J. G. Hannay—"George A. Birmingham"—as reported in the *Daily Mail*, does not believe that the War has brought any profit to Christianity. "The parsons," he says, "have messed their job":—

The War had not shown the nation, he said, to be in any way Christianized. This was what had come to the mind of the thinking man in the Army, according to his experience at the front: "If there's one for me it'll hit me, and I don't see that a man's religion makes much odds when there's high explosives knocking around."

That a man should enjoy shouting "Onward, Christian soldiers," was no kind of evidence that he was a Christian soldier. Some hymns had quite as agreeable tunes as "Keep the home fires burning."

Religion ought to have made Crusaders of our men. It seemed to have done no such thing. Never was there a greater contrast than between "Tommy," blasphemous and cheerful, and the knight of Mallory's chivalry at prayers before battle in a forest hermit's chapel.

But we only see Mallory's knights through a veil of romance. As a matter of fact, we have no doubt but that the Mediæval Christian knight was just a swashbuckling, foul-mouthed, lecherous ruffian. Our own Richard Cœur de Lion was not a bad specimen of this class.

Rev. Dr. Gtiffith Jones says that much damage is being done the Churches and the cause of religion by members stampeding into the country in the case of air-raids. But what are they to do? If "Providence" attended to its business, it would at least see that its supporters were cared for. But it allows German bombs to drop about in the most promiscuous manner. Neither they nor "Providence" seem to pay any more attention to good Churchmen than they do to Atheists. And such gross negligence is quite inexcusable—from the religious point of view.

We take the following from *Reynolds'* of January 20:—

Dear Gipsy,—Did you expect anybody to recognize you when you masqueraded in the Honours List of the British Empire Order as Rodney Smith, Esq.? Our old friend Ben Tillett has evolved into Mr. Benjamin Tillett on the Parliamentary Papers. It is very confusing. But now we have found you out. I heartily congratulate you on having collected £23,000 for the Y.M.C.A. huts.

In other words, Gipsy Smith, the vulgar blasphemer, gets—or rather buys—an honour for £23,000 of other people's money!

The minister of Melbourne Hall, Leicester, Rev. B. G. Gibbon, issues a circular to his supporters in which he says he finds "some people in our neighbourhood forsaking God, and renouncing both public worship and private prayer." We are very glad to hear it, and it bears out what we have said concerning the influence of the War on religious beliefs. Mr. Gibbon finds that, so far as the War is concerned, "nothing has happened inconsistent with the government of God as it is explained in the Bible." Naturally; as Heine said of God and foreigners, that's his trade. But even as it stands, Mr. Gibbon should reflect that the government of God as explained in the Bible is no more to the taste of millions than is the government of the Kaiser or the late Czar of Russia.

The appointment of Dr. Henson to the See of Hereford is causing some plain speaking in the press. The *Daily News* says that the Prime Minister's view is that "he has done the Established Church a signal service by making an appointment which gives much-needed strengthening, both in brain-power and courage, to the Bench of Bishops." The High Churchmen will remember Mr. Lloyd George in their prayers.

The clergy are not exempted from military service for nothing, and they are making the utmost use of their opportunities. In a letter to the President of the Sunday-School Union, the Archbishop of Canterbury writes: "We recognize to the full the vital importance of making right use of this solemn time in all our work with children and young people."

A newspaper paragraph states that a war-shrine at Ramsgate, destroyed by fanatics, has been replaced. How these Christians do love one another!

East Ham Corporation have taken over, and will cultivate, fifteen acres of a cemetery. Time will show whether "consecrated" ground is more productive than other earth.

"The world is a vile place," says Mr. James Douglas. The remark is largely true of the Christian world, where bayonets bulk more largely than beatitudes.

Dr. Fort Newton, of the City Temple, London, says that if the Government has the right to conscript a man, it has the right to conscript his conduct. Unfortunately, if bigoted Christians were in the seat of authority, this might mean that men would be frog-marched to a place of worship.

When the War started the clergy and their followers were almost unanimous in describing the Germans as "Atheists" in spite of the fact that every German soldier bears the words "God with us" on part of his uniform, and that for centuries Germany has held a conspicuous place in European religion. Now the clergy are beginning to admit the orthodoxy of the Germans, and speak of her "official

pastors." Official! The clergy are the very dutiful servants of the State in most countries.

The late Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, formerly pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and son of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, left estate of the value of £7,173. This sum should be sufficient to keep him out of heaven.

The Headmaster of Rugby, the Rev. A. A. David, deplors that in religious education there is too much insistence on the sufferings of Christ. Surely, to expect cheerfulness in the religion of the Man of Sorrows is as reasonable as to look for icebergs in hell.

The copyright of the popular song, "Eileen Alannah," was sold recently by auction for £1,051. The hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light," fetched £235. Secular music appears to be a greater favourite with the public than the sacred variety.

The *Irish Times*, commenting on the sinking of the hospital ship *Rewa* by a German submarine, remarks that "It was the will of God that the weather permitted the saving of lives." From which one concludes it was the will of God that the ship should be torpedoed and that four of the crew should be killed. And in that case it would seem that the Germans were carrying out the will of God. We wish it were the will of God that something approaching common sense should enter the heads of his supporters.

For my part, let me have people about me who can smile," declares Sir Leo Money. To arrange this matter satisfactorily, Sir Leo had better avoid the society of folk who worship the Man of Sorrows.

The *Westminster Gazette* states that a book will shortly be published by "a well-known man who is a self-styled heretic," which deals with the insufficiency of Orthodoxy. Surely, such modesty is unnecessary when Christianity is in the melting-pot.

Lady Byron has avowed herself a Christian in the public press, and has declared that a man who votes against women's right to vote has no right to call himself a Christian. The lady doth protest too much. The Christian Church has always regarded woman as "the weaker vessel," and most advocates of sex equality have been as heterodox as the freethinking Lord Byron, who was an ancestor of her ladyship.

What a plentiful lack of humour some pious folk have! Harry Lauder, writing in the *American Magazine* on the death of his son, says that he has "two comforts always with me. And those comforts are God and my wife. We wonder if he blushed to make the association."

"A flying machine is a sacred thing," declares Lieut. A. P. Thurston, an Air Board expert. We should like to hear the reply of those clergy whose churches have been smashed up by means of these "sacred" machines.

At the trial of Lieut. Aughuet, of the Belgian Army, on a charge of attempted murder, Mr. Justice Darling said that defendant had been acquitted by a court martial "on the plea that the devil counselled him, and that he acted under an irresistible force." This appears to suggest that Satan is still on active service.

In a striking article on "The War and the Churches," the *Daily News* says the clergy "have made no attempt to bridge the gulf between the warring nations. They have only sent up their cries to God to prove himself a German God, or a British God, a Prussian God, or an Austrian God." This is well put, but the discovery might have been made years ago.

Feltham magistrates have decided that a Mormon elder is a regular minister of religion, and so exempt from military service. The clerical umbrella is quite large enough when it shelters celibate Catholic priests and much-married Mormon elders.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

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

To Correspondents.

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

H. WRIGHT.—We have no copies of *Facts Worth Knowing* in stock. As you say, it was a useful pamphlet.

GUNNER G. LOVELL.—We are sending on a small parcel of literature for reading and distribution amongst your comrades.

PT. F. PETTIT.—We hope that when this War is over soldiers will insist on their religious—or rather non-religious—opinions being respected. Pleased to know you receive the *Freethinker* regularly.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—H. H., 5s.; New Reader, 5s.; C. L. Knight (Rhodesia), £2; W. Beeton, 2s. 6d.

E. B.—Evidently a misprint. Thanks for cuttings.

D. G. DOLLERY.—We see nothing either hopeless or despairing in the cause we advocate. We are not hopeless, or we should not be trying to impress people with our views. And we certainly do not despair of either human reason or courage. The way may be hard, and progress not so rapid as one would wish, but progress is made, and that is an inspiration to fresh endeavour.

O. J. ROSS.—We are obliged for copy of your "Lord God" address. Quite a useful propagandist lecture.

W. P. JACOBS writes suggesting the need for an annotated edition of *The Rubaiyat*, which will explain all the allusive words and phrases used by Omar. Perhaps some of our readers may know of some such edition.

E. A. MACDONALD.—Received and shall appear. Thanks for good wishes.

TAB CAN writes:—"The Divine Comedy—The Hensley Henson row." A distinct hit.

A. MILLER.—Pleased to have your appreciation of last week's "Views."

E. PINDER.—The world would be much surprised if it knew all the Freethinkers abroad; and we can quite believe that John Noble was one of these unknown, or little known, heretics. Glad to have your opinion of the *Freethinker* as "top-hole."

Would Mrs. Hinley kindly communicate with Miss Vance, General Secretary N. S. S.?

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—F. W. Curle, 4s. 6d.; G. Bate, 1s.

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.

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. 3d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Jan. 17) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures at Swansea. The afternoon lecture will be in the Elysium, High Street; in the evening in the Dockers' Hall, same building. The change of halls is due to the Elysium—the larger hall—not being available for both meetings; so friends will have to put up with a little crowding. It was hoped to arrange a debate between Mr. Cohen and a local clergyman during this visit, but the arrangements broke down. We understand, however, that some "official" opposition will be offered at the afternoon meeting. Good opposition is always welcome.

The new Southampton Branch of the N. S. S. made a good start last Sunday with two lectures from Mr. Cohen. There was a fair attendance in the morning, and a good one in the

evening. Both lectures were listened to with the utmost appreciation, and there were many requests for an early return visit. There were also a number of new members enrolled. Mr. Rayner, a very old friend of the Movement in Southampton, officiated as chairman on both occasions.

We received a surprise visit last week from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who was home on leave from the Western Front. His friends will be pleased to know, as we were pleased to learn, and also to see that he was looking quite "fit," although longing to be back once more in the ranks of our Army. Certainly no one will be more pleased than we shall to see him there. We were glad to have from him the same cheerful reports of the progress of freethinking ideas among the soldiers, and some very useful recruits for the Cause should be gained from this source when the War is over.

Mr. Lloyd delivers two lectures to-day (Jan. 27) in the Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, South Shields. The afternoon lecture is at 3, the evening one at 6.30. We hope that Tyne-side "saints" will make a special note of these meetings, and bring a Christian friend along with them.

For some time—ever since the War started, in fact—we have made it a practice to send out literature to men at the Front whenever we knew it would be acceptable, and as far as our means permitted. And we have every reason to believe that this literature has been well circulated and well read. Mr. N. L. Evans has now placed at the disposal of the Pioneer Press the sum of £10, to be used in sending literature to the troops, in memory of his son, Lance-cpl. Evans, whose death is regretfully recorded in another column. Lance-cpl. Evans was a very ardent Freethinker, and his father believes that in doing this he is paying a tribute to his son's memory of the kind he would have desired. We shall be glad to have from our readers the names and addresses of any soldiers to whom literature would be acceptable, either for reading or for distribution. We have some names on our list, but are open to receive more.

This from East Africa:—

DEAR MR. COHEN,—I feel that I must write and express my thanks for the many pleasant hours that the dear old *Freethinker* has given me, not only here, but also in dear old blighty. I have only just got the July issue—a bit behind times—but welcome all the same, and I notice in your issue of July 22, 1917, that some one has stated that you have to declare a religion on joining up, let me state that you do not, I know from experience that the recruiting authorities try all they can to make you have a myth, but, if you are firm, you need not take one. I, myself, joined up in 1914, and was attested and sworn in as a Freethinker. I have had a good few hard fights to maintain it, but have managed it so far, and always will. But here no one bothers about it at all. You see there are so many religions that if they remembered one, it might prove awkward, so they just let things slide, and the parson is looked on as just one of us.

As for the idea of God, I do not believe it enters the average Tommy's head. I have seen a few thousands in my time, but have never noticed that religion makes much headway with them, rather the other way about, that Tommy is making too much headway for religion. The way Tommy Atkins looks at the parson is, how many fags has he got, and after that question is answered interest ceases.

I think I can claim to be the first to introduce the *Freethinker* into this part of the world, and it is making headway, can always give it away, the fellows are anxious to get it, and while I have been in the Army, I have made that my plan as soon as I have read it to hand it over to my friend.—Yours sincerely, A. MATTHEWS.

The course of lectures at the West Central Hall, Tottenham Court Road, is concluded to-day with an address by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith. The lecture commences at 3.15, and we hope there will be a crowded hall. Admission is free.

Good audiences are still the rule at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, we are pleased to learn, and we hope that local

Freethinkers will continue to give the meetings the financial support they deserve. The lecturer this evening (Jan. 27) is Mr. Clifford Williams. His subject is "Freethoaght v. Christianity." The theatre ought to be again well filled.

We have received the following letter from Mr. Verinder, who has acted as chairman of the Committee of Protest in the fight with the L.C.C., and to whose unflinching labours the Committee is so deeply indebted:—

SIR,—I am asked by the Joint Committee of Protest against Prohibition of Sale of Literature in L.C.C. Parks to send you their grateful thanks for the valuable help you have given them in opening your columns to their appeal for funds. May we also thank those of your readers who so promptly and generously responded? The cheque you have just sent me has enabled us to clear off all our remaining liabilities.

Following upon the unanimous decision given in our favour by a strong Divisional Court in the case of *Rex v. L.C.C. (ex parte Corrie)*, the Council has granted the permit which Mrs. Corrie asked for, on behalf of the West London Branch of the League of the Blind; and the Parks Committee has drafted Regulations under which permits may be issued to other individuals and associations. Copies of these Regulations may be obtained from the Chief Officer, Parks Department, 11, Regent Street, S.W., 1.

We believe that the Parks Committee is now honestly desirous of restoring the conditions that existed previous to their unfortunate action at the end of May, 1916, and we are sure that all the Societies interested will do all in their power to make the new arrangements work, as the old ones admittedly did, smoothly and without friction.

The annual meeting of the Leicester Secular Society was held at the Secular Hall on Sunday, January 13, 1918. Mr. Sydney A. Gimson (President) in the chair had an excellent balance-sheet to present to the members, showing an income of £570, which the committee had found no difficulty in spending. Two series of lectures had been given during 1917, and many new members have been made. The Society has forty members serving in the Army, and two have been killed in France. A resolution impressing the importance of confining school instruction to secular subjects only was passed at the meeting. Mr. J. T. Lloyd was present and gave a short address.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

WE closed the fund rather abruptly last week, in consequence of a note from the Treasurer of the Committee, Mr. F. Verinder, to the effect that enough had been subscribed. The bill from solicitor and counsel proved to be extremely moderate, and the payment by the London County Council of the Committee's costs to the extent of £78 15s. decreased wonderfully the sum to be raised. So the Committee concludes its labours, for the present, having fully achieved its purpose, and cleared itself of all liabilities. But the Committee has decided not to disband, but to keep itself in being in case it is needed. From the *Freethinker* Fund £41 1s. 8d. was realized, which has been paid over to the treasurer, and for which we hold the receipt. A statement of the Committee's income and expenditure is being prepared, and will be sent to anyone interested in the matter. We have now only to thank our readers for their support, and to congratulate them on the result.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Orb of Day.

II.

(Continued from p. 44.)

ON our planet we are indebted to some mode of combustion for all our artificial heat. The phenomena of burning or combustion occur in consequence of the

chemical union between the oxygen of the surrounding atmosphere and carbon, or some other inflammable substance. Hence, a definite quantity of heat is evolved from a definite quantity of combustible material. Obviously, if the sun's heat were maintained in this manner its heat and effulgence would soon expire. The sun is composed of many chemical elements, but even if we were to assume that the solar orb is made up of oxygen and hydrogen in proportions in which they combine to form water on our globe, their thermal powers would prove hopelessly insufficient for this purpose. It has been ascertained by means of experiment that the sum of heat generated by the union of definite weights of oxygen and hydrogen will exceed that evolved through the combustion of corresponding weights of any other substances. Were then, the solar mass thus constituted, it is known how large a percentage of the sun's volume would be compelled to combine each hour to produce the quantity of heat hourly radiated by that orb. This calculation discloses the fact that the heat of our luminary, were it sustained by combustion, would be exhausted in the course of 3,000 years. This result places the hypothesis of combustion completely out of court.

That bodies which yield heat must ultimately contract appears to be a principle of universal application. The sun perpetually occupied as it is in pouring forth heat into space must consequently undergo a diminution in bulk. But solar contraction proceeds so slowly in comparison with the sun's enormous diameter of 863,000 miles, that in 40,000 years it has probably decreased nearly 4,000 miles only. This diminution in an orb so vast could only be detected by delicate telescopic measurement. As a matter of fact, were two suns suspended in the sky, one with a diameter of 863,000 miles, and the other with a disc measuring 859,000 miles, no difference could be established by any ordinary test.

Helmholtz contended that this lessening of the solar diameter, which appears to proceed at the rate of sixteen inches daily, completely accounts for the sustentation of the sun's radiation. The enormous sum of heat thus evolved will enable the sun to send forth his heat for countless ages to come. But there is unquestionably a limit to this constant contraction, for were it continued indefinitely the sun would shrink to a mere speck. So far as science can determine, the solar globe is a vaporous body. Neither the telescope nor the photograph reveals anything save volumes of gas in which clouds and vapours are suspended. The temperature of these outer gaseous regions, although immensely high, is probably feeble in comparison with that of the solar centre. This intense internal heat would not merely melt but immediately vaporize the most refractory substances. But it is important to remember that the stupendous condensing pressure to which these solar substances are subjected must so compress them that their density is probably as great as the density of any terrestrial material. Indeed, our terrestrial terms—gases, liquids, and solids—lose all those distinctions so familiar to us, when related to substances subjected to such pressure as prevails in the solar interior.

A far-reaching factor in the maintenance of the sun's heat is the force of gravitation. When attracted by the earth a body falls towards it, and such a body, when falling vertically, commences with a velocity of about 32 feet per second. In the vicinity of the sun, however, owing to that globe's vastly greater mass, the gravitational pull is more than twenty-seven times as large as terrestrial gravitation at our earth's surface. Therefore the solar luminary will impart to any molecule

near its surface a velocity of some 864 feet per second, and any body, big or little, will tend to approach the sun at this speed. It is immaterial at what velocities particles situated in the sun's neighbourhood are moving, or whether they are travelling to the right or left of the solar surface, upwards or downwards, or even when deflected by collisions with other molecules, the attraction of the sun's mass will tend to drag them towards him with a velocity of 864 feet per second. The velocity of the particles will, therefore, be accelerated. Thus the decision is reached that "the gain of energy by the molecules through gravitation towards the sun compensates for their losses in virtue of radiation." These considerations are held to remove the main difficulty concerning the sun's ability to sustain his tremendous outflow of heat.

Various methods have been adopted for determining the sun's remoteness and mass. But, perhaps, the gravitational process has most to commend it. The solar diameter must be many thousands of times that of our planet. And, although the sun is largely composed of vaporous matter, its mass is necessarily hugely superior to our earth's mass. Having secured the requisite knowledge of the leading physical characteristics of the solar globe, an estimate may be formed of its mass. This ascertained, startling as it may appear, the sun's distance from the earth is at once revealed.

Beginning with a knowledge of the earth's weight, our neighbouring planets, Mars and Venus, aid us in estimating the solar mass. Mars wanders round the sun in an ellipse beyond the earth's orbit. Now, were Mars the only member of the sun's family of worlds, his path would remain unchanged from century to century as he journeys around the solar orb. The other planetary bodies, however, produce perturbations in the orbit pursued by Mars, and in these the earth participates. The sun is, of course, the chief attraction which retains Mars in his orbit; but the earth also exercises an influence in deflecting the ruddy planet from the path it would otherwise pursue. The perturbations to which Mars is subjected prove that our globe's attraction is distinctly appreciable.

Were Mars influenced by the sun's attraction exclusively, the planet would move in an ellipse around its primary. But owing to the disturbances set up by the earth—and these alone we now consider, though several others are involved—the orbit of Mars is really one of considerable eccentricity. As a consequence, the distance of Mars from the sun varies to a greater degree than the distances presented by Venus and Jupiter.

In 1877 and 1892, Mars stood in opposition to the earth at a time when that planet was at perihelion—in that part of its orbit which lies nearest to the sun—and it sparkled in the sky with a brilliant red light. Without entering into complicated mathematical details, we may safely assert that it has been satisfactorily shown that the earth's mass is utterly insignificant when compared with that of the sun. If we assume provisionally that the solar mass is 100,000 times that of our globe, a calculation may be made on this assumption as to the extent of the earth's perturbing influences on Mars. Investigation, however, demonstrates that the earth's attraction causes a much smaller disturbance than that demanded if the sun is only 100,000 times the mass of the earth. Thus far, observations have not been sufficiently prolonged to weigh the sun quite accurately by this method. But there is no question that the earth's mass forms about 1-324,000th part of that of the solar globe. Moreover, once the gravitational pull of the sun on our earth and the other bodies of the solar system has been determined, the precise distance of our luminary stands revealed.

As we have seen, the mathematical astronomer, when he wishes to weigh celestial globes, must ascertain the attraction exerted by the various bodies on each other. This gravitational pull is proportional to the mass of the attracting body. The term "mass" is equivalent to quantity of matter, and thus, in ordinary circumstances, may be regarded as weight. And the astronomer really weighs a planet or sun on the same principle as a salesman when he weighs a ham in a spring balance. As Professor Newcomb puts it:—

When the butcher picks the ham up, he feels the pull of the ham towards the earth. When he hangs it on the hook, this pull is transferred from his hand to the spring of the balance. The stronger the pull, the further the spring is pulled down. What he reads on the scale is the strength of the pull. You know that this pull is simply the attraction of the earth on the ham. But, by a universal law of force, the ham attracts the earth exactly as much as the earth does the ham. So what the butcher really does is to find out how much or how strongly the ham attracts the earth, and he calls that pull the weight of the ham. On the same principle, the astronomer finds the weight of a body by finding how strong is its attractive pull on some other body.

Perhaps it will be well to point out the distinction between mass and weight, as the inability to grasp this difference has proved the source of much metaphysical confusion. The weight of substances is subject to variation. An object which weighs thirty pounds in London would weigh an extra ounce in Greenland, and nearly an ounce less than thirty pounds at the equator. These fluctuations are due to the fact that our planet is not a perfect sphere. Weight is entirely a question of gravity; and as the moon is a smaller and lighter orb than the earth, a body weighing thirty pounds in London would weigh five pounds only on our satellite. For similar reasons, an object weighting thirty pounds on our own globe would, owing to the gigantic gravitational pull of the sun, attain a weight of 800 pounds on that luminary. Thus, the astronomer does not refer to the weight of a body, but to its mass. The weight is relative only, but the mass is a constant quantity.

Although the exact distance of the sun is not yet known, the man of science is steadily nearing a definite determination of its remoteness in space. Measurement by parallax—the determination of the sun's distance by triangulation—yields a distance of 92,908,000 miles. Observations of the lunar motions give a distance of 92,008,000; the earth's mass returns a result of 93,113,000 miles; while the measurement obtained from the velocity of light furnishes a total of 93,075,000 miles. Allowing for the magnitude of the task, the close agreement among the figures obtained through methods so widely divergent serves as a guarantee for the general soundness of astronomical conclusions. Again, the wonderful accuracy with which solar and lunar eclipses, and various other celestial and terrestrial phenomena, are predicted many months, or even years, in advance of their occurrence, necessitate the conclusion that the science of astronomy is certain in the course of centuries to become perfectly exact in all its multitudinous departments.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

The Cairn Revisited

ON

"Thanksgiving Day," January 6, 1918.

WE had left a *Freethinker* in the canister in the Cairn. The "Visitors Book" acclaimed the fact that, in the interval, quite a party had been there. One had written

on the margin of the lonely pioneer journal: "Such papers as this are got up for a purpose; so I leave this copy here in case of extreme emergency." What delicate sarcasm! what magnanimity! Above all, what uncanny acuteness in the inference that such papers were "got up" for a "purpose"? What could one write in reply but "Thanks, awfully, old man!" And on the book we wrote our—

"THANKSGIVING."

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,—
That no life lives for ever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Must somewhere find the sea.

—Swinburne.

After which we felt comforted, descended a little, and sat in the lee of an ancient whin (furze) that sighed in soothing sympathy in the boundless awe and liberty of the moors. The low brow, and pitted eyes, and broken semblance of the ancient face in stone was in our thoughts, and seemed to whisper in the wind. And our mother—that most mellow, most loving heart of human-kind—we felt, ought to have approached us over the bleached and pathless heath, out of the mists of many years, and murmured to us gently again as in the long ago! But, no; only the memory. But the memory was divine! The moor-fowl derided our sweetly serious musings. They rather deprecated our visit, and flew round us all too near. Why, our large walking-stick might have been a gun! Their pretty breasts were made to receive the hissing hail. So thinks the sportsman, secure at the right end of his weapon. "Bick, bick, berr!" "Hurry up! Hurry up!" "Be quiet! be quiet!" "Huh!" "Scut!" in throaty dissonance, but in the true language of Nature and the wilds. What a friend they had in us; but they were right to be wary. What a friend man has in the *Freethinker*; but he is timid as the birds, or savage as the slayer. The visitors to the Cairn will find that not only the paper has been there, but the Freethinker himself; and in time they may learn the significance of that.

On the sea, past black and lowering clouds, fell a faint glow of dull silver—a little hope in a murky world of despair. This also is significant.

A. M.

Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT AND BIRTH CONTROL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I suggest to your readers interested in the recent Malthusian controversy appearing in your columns the desirability of reading *Malthus on the Principles of Population* first hand. The present writer, in reading Malthus, found many of the misconceptions due to deriving opinions second hand disappear, notably, the very prevalent idea that the Malthusian doctrine is advocated with a view to bolstering up the privileges of the wealthy classes. This view, I think, will be found untenable. Mr. Henry George's famous book, *Progress and Poverty*, contains, probably, the best attempt at refutation extant, and the book is well worth its place on any Freethinker's bookshelf. Although a student and admirer of Henry George, I think he failed to overthrow the Malthusian doctrine. Your correspondent, Robert Arch's, reference to Charles Bradlaugh's inability to understand Socialism is the difficulty of many, as there seem to be as many brands of this creed as of Christianity. Bradlaugh, however, was not isolated in that respect among the intellectuals of Free-thought—Huxley, Mill, Ingersoll, and Foote, to name a few were in the same dilemma. Marcus Aurelius's advice given on the frontispiece of *Progress and Poverty*—"Make for thyself a definition of the thing that is presented to thee so as to see

distinctly what kind of a thing it is in its substance, in its nudity, in its complete entirety," is sadly needed advice to the people who call themselves Socialists. But if it were understood, would not Socialism, or any reform, in the words of Mill—"let slip the reins that hitherto restrained population," and an equality of misery be the result. At the same time, Malthusians should not forget that the law of rent is equally with the law of population a barrier to economic progress, and if birth control resulted in economic betterment, would it not merely let slip the reins that hitherto restrained the cupidity of the landowners? I have no doubt that the Malthusian doctrine, as Dr. Drysdale puts it, is destructive of the myths of theology and of Socialism as commonly understood. Malthusianism seems to have received its recent impetus and revival from the present War, which, probably, would not have occurred had Germany only half her present population.

S. H. LAYCOCK.

SIR,—I have been intensely interested in the correspondence circling round Malthus's doctrine of limitation and its application or opposition to Socialism.

The disciples of Malthus have been most emphatic in their asserting of the soundness of his doctrine. But what surprises one is that not one writer has, so far, pleaded for limitation of the family on *moral* grounds. Robert Arch accepts the doctrine with reservation: it is good and useful for some—those who can afford to purchase preventatives—but for "the poor," whom, he says, have but two pleasures, "convivial drinking" and "connubial intercourse," and cannot afford the preventatives, to go to them with the propaganda is vain and useless.

But does it not occur to these correspondents that it is time connubial intercourse was lifted a little higher; that it ceased to be looked upon as a pleasure, and that it became what it is—simply a creative function? Cannot the Malthus disciples weave into their propaganda the fact that it is hurtful to the parents' health, and to their children's health, that intercourse should be indulged in indiscriminately? I think so.

Is it not time the followers of Malthus lifted their doctrine a little higher, and commenced to teach that sexual intercourse, used for any purpose but its true one, is a violation of Nature's law, and therefore immoral? The Socialist State of my dreams is peopled by men and women all accepting that.

ALICE PEACHEY.

SIR,—While agreeing in the main with Mr. Arch's letter, there are a few points that seem to call for criticism. By inference, we are left to understand that birth-restriction, as it operates amongst the upper and middle classes, is highly commendable; but for the lower classes, Socialism is the only cure for their ills. The statement that their "pleasures" are limited to "convivial drinking and connubial intercourse" is surely a trifle overdrawn. It is true that individuals may be found in this class of whom this may be said without fear of contradiction; but this type is to be found in every class of society. Generally speaking, this class has, I believe, hopes and aspirations in common with the rest of humanity that raises it above the level of the brute. To those of this class possessing such hopes the value of the Malthusian teaching compares more than favourably with that of the Socialist for this reason—that it offers an immediate improvement in the economic condition of the individual; or, at any rate, shows him how he may strengthen his position in the struggle with the forces that threaten to enslave him by restricting his offspring. Compare this with the prospect of the ideal State that is to be realized in the distant future. He and his offspring will all be dead, and it is not to be wondered at if some of us regard the result of Malthusian teaching among these people as being capable of producing something more tangible than "vain talk." Further, the degree of success with which the Malthusian meets will be shared in by the Socialist, who will find minds better fitted to grasp and grapple with the economic evils as they are exposed to them. On these grounds, it appears a little premature for the Socialist to indulge in mud-slinging.

The possibilities in food production may be all he claims for them; but people desire to obtain the best standard of life for the present, and they can't exist on possibilities. I agree with Mr. Arch that Malthusianism is not destructive of Socialism, but can see no reason for decrying the doctrine because an individual here and there uses it as a weapon against Socialism.

J. GRAHAM.

[We have received other letters on this topic, including a reply from Dr. Drysdale, which we are compelled to hold over until next week.—ED]

A PLEA FOR JUSTICE.

SIR,—Now that some Conscientious Objectors are being released from prison, may I crave your space in order to give publicity to the case of Emanuel Ribeiro?

Ribeiro had struggled for a number of years to bring up six children, and in the process he developed certain unfashionable ideas, while his thoughts, at any rate, if not his actions, were allowed to run along on free lines until the War came. It is almost superfluous to mention that he was for fifteen years an opponent, and a very forceful opponent, to all and every condition which makes for war. At any rate, he thought that, as he pleaded as a Conscientious Objector, he might have been allowed some consideration; but he was too uncompromising. Arrested and handed over on Jan. 17, he was sent to Bury Barracks, where they put food before him; but, disliking and disagreeing with everything pertaining to the glory of war, he declined. From there he was removed to where he is now, and forcibly fed. For twelve long months he has endured this treatment, and he is allowed to see no one but his wife and an Army "chaplain," whom Ribeiro has sent about his business, but who insisted on coming, until Ribeiro wrote to him, politely but firmly, telling him he had no use for him.

I would say that this man, an admirer of Ferrer and a descendant of the people who produced Ferrer—or, perhaps, it would be better to say that he is a descendant of the consequences of the Spanish Inquisition—is determined that nothing, *nothing*, can break him. No one can buy him, and he is prepared to suffer, and maybe die, for the principles he holds dear.

These facts have been published in the *Guardian*, *Labour Leader*, etc. One man, one woman, and six bright, intelligent little children going through these tortures because the father has a conscience and officialdom has none! He desires no advertisement. All he wants is freedom of thought. Ribeiro has shown his adherence to principle. It is for the Government to see that justice is done.

A. L.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE CHURCHES.

SIR,—I asked the following clergymen if they could give me any evidence for the existence of God.

The Archbishop of Canterbury answered: "Demonstration in these matters is not to be looked for."

The Rev. E. A. Burroughs: "It is not much use discussing questions of colour with the colour-blind."

Father Bernard Vaughan: "I see God in everything here, and hope to see everything in God hereafter, the difference between us is the difference between sight and blindness."

The Natural Religion, p. 56, by the Rev. Vernon Staley, with a preface by the Rev. J. R. Illingworth, M.A., Bampton Lecturer: "In the ordinary acceptance of the word, it may be granted that there is no absolutely convincing proof of God's existence. It may be doubted if any actual demonstration of the existence of a Divine Being can be adduced."

Lord Hugh Cecil says: "Belief in Hell brings before us God once more as the Father of all mercies, not in spite of, but because, he is the Architect of Hell."

Away with such debasing superstition.

E. C. F. JAMES.

Obituary.

Peculiarly sad circumstances attended the death of Lance-cpl. L. H. Evans, the only son of Mr. N. J. Evans, of Palmer's Green, N. A delicate-boy from his birth, it was only by the exercise of the greatest care that he reached manhood, and those who knew him were greatly surprised that a medical officer should ever have passed him for general service. For about twelve months of his Army life he was stationed on the South coast, and, being fortunate enough to be under the command of considerate and humane officers, suffered no ill. Then he was transferred to a Scottish regiment, and sent to the South-West of Ireland. Here he contracted a cold, but was ordered abroad, and towards the end of December came home on embarkation leave. He reached home very ill, and was taken—against his father's wishes—to the Edmonton Military Hospital. There, after three or four days, the doctor diagnosed double pneumonia, which eventuated in death on January 8. A sincere and earnest Freethinker, he could claim among his converts his own father. Quiet and retiring in disposition, and of studious habits, he never missed a chance of dropping a word in season for Freethought. His opinions were formed slowly, but once formed, were clear and definite. At the hospital he faced his doom with all the courage of a soldier on the battle-field. He was conscious to within five minutes of his death, and a few hours before he died said, "I will fight to the last gasp." He was cremated, in accordance with his own desire, at Golder's Green on January 11. One cannot help feeling that the placing of a man like L. H. Evans, with so delicate a constitution, was a blunder. His power of vital resistance was small, and he was certain to fall before the first assault on his health. We extend our sincere sympathy to his father, whom death has robbed of a son, a companion, and a friend.

Society News.

West Central Hall, London.—Mr. Lloyd was in his best form on Sunday afternoon, January 20, and delivered a most inspiring lecture. Opposition was furnished by Mr. Noah Bailey of Christian Evidence notoriety, who adopted the well-known Christian Evidence tactics of partial quotation. These were instantly demolished by Mr. Lloyd, whose wide-reading and excellent memory, make him more than equal to such attempts. The chair was taken by Dr. Binnie Dunlop.—E. M. V.

North London Branch N.S.S.—In spite of very bad weather there was a large gathering at the St. Pancras Reform Club on Thursday to hear the debate between Mr. Collette Jones and Mr. Horace Leaf. Mr. Leaf, though an excellent speaker and practised debater, completely failed to establish the contention that man survived death, and evaded the points put forward by Mr. Jones. On Sunday Mr. Miller delivered an excellent address on the "Religion of Russia and the Revolution," which was followed with great interest. To-day, January 27, Mr. H. V. Storey is enquiring "What is Now the Chief Duty of the Freethought Party?" and, as opinions may differ widely on this subject, we hope for a good attendance and an excellent open debate.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.

Manchester Branch N. S. S.—Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner delivered two lectures here on Sunday last to a highly appreciative audience, which included several of the old followers of Charles Bradlaugh. In the evening, interest was added to the proceedings by Mrs. Bonner "naming" a two-months'-old little girl. We wish Rosa Jean Foster, the little lady in question, every success in her future life. There was a good sale of literature, and several applications for membership.—H. BLACK, Hon. Sec.

THE CHURCH'S LOSS.

Colonel: "You're a thorough bad egg, your conduct's outrageous. How you ever came to be an officer, I don't know."

Subaltern (bitterly): "No, sir. If it hadn't been for this beastly War, I should have been in Holy Orders long ago."

—London Opinion.

A new book bears the title, *God and the Soldier*, and professes to give an account of the religion of the fighting men "as interpreted by two famous preachers." We should greatly prefer to read Atkins's own account of his religious views.

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, H. V. Storey, "What is now the Chief Duty of the Freethought Party?" Open Debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Oval Tube Station): 7, R. Miller, "The Religion of Russia and the Revolution."

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Passing of Christianity."

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "Freethought v. Christianity."

LEICESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss A. E. F. Horniman, M.A., "Under Castle Rule." Reminiscences of Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Miss Constance Brooks, "George Meredith."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Humanism: Its Rise and Growth"; 6.30, "Self-Reliance versus Trust in God." Music at 6 prompt.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): Chapman Cohen, 3 (Elysium, High Street), "Why Men Believe in God"; 7, "Christianity and the Logic of Life."

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. G. Lawrence, New Rd., Woolwich.

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., Shepherd's Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82 Seaford Rd., West Ealing. H. Bright, 2 Edward St., Wardour St., Oxford St.

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. Basnett, 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-Firth.

Dover.—H. P. Tarrant, 131 Folkestone Rd.

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. Mr. Leeson, Northampton St.

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.

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