

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XXXVIII.—No. 10

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 1918

PRICE TWOPENCE

CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Sociology and Religion.</i> — <i>The Editor</i>	145
" <i>A People's Soul.</i> "— <i>J. T. Lloyd</i>	146
<i>Gerald Massey.</i> — <i>Mimnermus</i>	148
<i>The Last Day.</i> — <i>Andrew Millar</i>	149
<i>Richard Wagner.</i> — <i>Robert Arch</i>	150
<i>Acid Drops</i>	151
<i>Pilate.</i> — <i>G. H. Bosworth</i>	152
<i>To Correspondents</i>	153
<i>Sugar Plums</i>	153
<i>The Queen of Night.</i> — <i>T. F. Palmer</i>	154
<i>The Poet of Mortality</i> — <i>H. George Farmer</i>	155
<i>Up for Judgment.</i> — <i>Arthur B. Moss</i>	156
<i>The Blank Wall.</i> — <i>Arthur F. Thorn</i>	157
<i>Notice of Meetings</i>	158
<i>Pamphlets</i>	159
<i>Books</i>	160

Views and Opinions.

A Religious Revival.

It is generally agreed amongst religious writers that the last twenty-seven years of the eighteenth century, and the first twenty-five of the nineteenth, witnessed a great revival of the religious spirit in England. And there is much to justify the statement—always bearing in mind the compensating fact that it was a period during which popular Freethought also made a great advance. But limiting our survey to religious activities, we have to note that the Wesleyan revival was in full swing, and Evangelical Christianity was never so busy, nor, apparently so full of promise. That it was a period of great religious activity is undeniable. The British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1802, the London Missionary Society in 1800, the Religious Tract Society in 1799, the Church Missionary Society in 1796, the Mission to the Jews in 1808, the Christian Knowledge Society in 1804. And putting on one side a number of smaller societies, we have to note that Parliament voted a million for building churches in 1813, and a further half-million in 1824. Finally, between 1801 and 1831 no less than 500 churches were built. If religious activity meant increased happiness and well being, the England of the first quarter of the nineteenth century should have been an ideal place.

* * *

Religion and the People.

Now, we would like our readers to pay special regard to the intense religious activity of these years, because it has a very direct bearing on what follows. For some time we have been intending to deal with *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, by J. L. and Barbara Hammond.¹ As a study of one phase of English civilization, the importance of the book is beyond question. As a study of brutality under a gloss of morality and religion the book is profoundly interesting—even where it rouses moral nausea. It is a story of the practical enslavement of a whole class of the population, of the exploitation of young children and women in the in-

¹ Longmans, Green & Co. 10s. 6d.

terests of a "soulless" commercialism, and by a people who, all the time, professed the utmost concern for the religious condition of their serfs. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond lay but slight stress on the religious side of the picture, nor do they point out the way in which the Christian religion helped to perpetuate the horrors they describe. To do so would have been outside the scope of their purpose; but it is quite within ours. Indeed, our purpose in writing is to point to the conclusion that but for religion the things that Mr. and Mrs. Hammond depict would have been almost impossible of realization. And this not alone, because of the influence on those who suffered, but also because of the influence of religion on those who perpetuated the injustice. That provided the moral outlet essential to the occasion. And the moral we wish to emphasize was never more important than to-day.

* * *

The English Factory System.

Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's book covers the period during which the manufacturing power of England was organized and consolidated. The Common Lands had been taken from the people; agriculture was discouraged or deliberately obstructed in order to drive the labouring classes into the towns and to furnish material for the factories. The factory system was established, huge fortunes were made, and the commercial prosperity of England went ahead by leaps and bounds. Everything that made for greater profit seemed allowable. Says our authors: "Immense fortunes were made in cotton, wool, iron, and coal, but on the workers in these industries there fell degradation and distress.....The general feature of the times was the rise of a large class of rich employers and the creation of a large and miserable proletariat." It is, perhaps, impossible for anyone to-day to realize the full horror of the English factory system or of the conditions of labour generally a hundred years ago. Women worked long hours in factories and in mines—in the latter places with chains belted to their waists, drawing trucks of coal from the face of the seam to the bottom of the shaft. Men were poorly paid, and there were rigorous laws against any attempt at combination to raise wages or secure any change in the conditions of labour. But worst and most revolting of all was the universality and the character of child labour. Workhouse children were purchased by employers, and remained practically at their mercy. In the Macclesfield mills children under five years of age were at work. In other mills the official age was six or seven. The various parishes apprenticed their unwanted children to mill-owners at the age of seven, remaining until they were twenty-one. They were kept working from twelve to fifteen hours per day, and thrashed for offences. Their bed often consisted of a dirty blanket to lie on, and another for covering. But it is cheering to know that, against charges of cruelty, it was retorted that the children were taught to read the Bible and the New Testament, and "every attention was paid to the strict observance of the Sabbath." In the mines, children of seven were employed—underground, be it re-

membered; and older girls, "chained, belted, harnessed like dogs in a go-cart, saturated with wet, and more than half naked, crawling upon their hands and feet, and dragging their heavy loads behind them." Children were also employed to sweep chimneys—a practice unknown outside the British Isles. These were sent up narrow chimneys, brush in hand, and often straw lit behind them to encourage quickness of movement. Their flesh became broken, but in about six months hardened to the work. Some masters washed them once a week, others just left them alone. The boys were stunted in growth, blear-eyed from the soot, 'flapper-kneed' from climbing. Deaths were common. Yet in 1803, when a mild Bill was introduced into the House of Lords, regulating the trade, it was rejected by a House consisting of one Archbishop, five Bishops, three Dukes, five Earls, one Viscount, and ten Barons. During the existence of these complicated horrors, and the systematic slaughter of children for pure gain, the country was bristling with renewed religious activities, punishing Freethinkers for circulating Paine's writings, and fighting France for the preservation of freedom and the security of civilization.

* * *

How Religion Works.

Education during this period was at a low ebb. Churches were plentiful, and ignorance was general. In Oldham and Ashton, with a population of 105,000, there was not a single public school for poor children. As late as 1840, 40 per cent. of the men and 65 per cent. of the women could not write their own names. Where schools existed, the schoolmasters were often of the most ignorant type, "the refuse of other callings." England was, in the matter of education, behind the rest of the world. Said Dean Alford in 1839, "Switzerland is before us, Prussia is before us, France is before us." England alone left the education of the poor to charity schools and Sunday-schools. There was, however, method in the madness. It was said by one authority that education given to the poor—

would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them.....It would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors.

But if education was scanty and oppression rife, at least religion was well looked after, and that atoned for much. Hannah Moore consoled the poor of one parish with the reflection that "in suffering by the scarcity you have..... the pleasure of knowing the advantage you have had over many villages in your having suffered no scarcity of religious instruction." To the women of Shipham, in 1840, she wrote that their sufferings had been "permitted by an all-wise and gracious Providence.....to show the poor how immediately dependent they are upon the rich, and to show both rich and poor that they are all dependent upon Himself." So also Wilberforce—keenly interested in the abolition of slavery, with the maintenance of which English manufacturing interests were not vitally connected—wrote, in his *Practical View of the System of Christianity*, that religion taught the poor to be diligent, humble, and patient, and advises them—

that their more lowly path has been allotted them by the hand of God; that it is their part faithfully to discharge its duties and contentedly to bear its inconveniences.....Having food and raiment they should be content.....that all human distinctions will soon be done away with, and the true followers of Christ will all, as children of the same Father, be alike admitted to the possession of the same heavenly inheritance.

It was not without cause that the ruling classes of a

hundred people years ago dreaded the growth of Free-thought. They at least had grasped the lesson that nothing would so serve their purpose as a properly taught religion. It would be well if all reformers saw that truth with equal clearness to-day.

* * *

Pietistic Activities.

Finally, our survey of the period would be incomplete if it failed to notice the activity of the authorities against Freethought. This, of course, lies outside the scope of Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's work, but its importance is great nevertheless. The influence of Paine was great, and his writings were a source of terror to the authorities. Associations were formed for their discussion, and prosecutions were numerous. Paine himself was tried and condemned in his absence. Many people, in both England and Scotland, were imprisoned or transported under various charges. It was the period of the series of Carlile prosecutions. Carlile himself spent over nine years in prison for selling the *Age of Reason*. One of the cases connected with Paine, noted by the authors, is decidedly humorous. In 1819 a man was arrested for selling Paine's works. He was thrown into prison, and remained there until some "respectable gentleman" wrote the Home Office pointing out that a mistake had been made. The pamphlet was *against* Paine—not for him. It was a peculiarly vile production, composed by Mrs. Trimmer, of the Religious Tract Society, giving a lying and repulsive picture of Paine's life and death. We happen to have a copy of this pamphlet, and we can answer for its objectionable character. The man was, of course, released. But it was, probably, the only case in connection with Paine's writings that deserved severe treatment.

* * *

There is one other, and most important, aspect of this subject with which we hope to deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"A People's Soul."

THE *Cambrian Daily Leader* for February 19 contained the report of a remarkable speech which the Rev. Dr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, had just delivered at the Walter Road Congregational Church, Swansea. It was an appeal, in "moving words," to the Nonconformists of South Wales to bestir themselves and prepare for the mighty changes which the War is sure to bring about. Dr. Selbie began his address by asserting that "the spiritual side of a nation's life was the most important." Clergymen seldom open their mouths without indulging in some vague expression of that kind. Usually, by the spiritual life is meant the religious exercises in church and chapel which professing Christians are supposed to go through with unbroken regularity. Such exercises are generally described as public worship, the neglect of which is one of the chief of our national sins. We must, however, do Principal Selbie the justice of chronicling the fact that, in his estimation, the spiritual quality of man means simply his "morale." He finds many instances of this out on the battlefields. "Men who were regarded as being of but little use in the world—mere wasters—face to face with the terrible conditions out there had made good." This is doubtless true enough, and is a source of genuine rejoicing, though we utterly fail to see how it shows "the immense power of the spiritual over the material." But what does our divine understand by the term "material" as opposed to spiritual? He contends that prior to the War "there had been a preponderance of the materialistic view of things in this

country"; but he is careful not to supply us with a definition of what he calls the materialistic view of life. Newspaper correspondents, like all others, have their faults; but it is quite possible that some of them are as well versed in history as the Principal himself, though their interpretation of life may be different from his. He is certainly mistaken if he imagines that so-called Materialists regard the strength of empires as resting "on material force alone." We confidently challenge him to name one accredited Materialist who can legitimately be charged with such an error. He is reported to have said:—

The history of the Babylonian, the Roman, the Græek, the Spanish Empires demonstrated that their downfall had taken place not when they were weak, but at the moment of their greatest material power, when they had reached the acme of their strength. Suddenly they had faltered, failed, and were destroyed—when the hearts of the people had become unsound, when they were sunk in materialism and sensuality.

We do not accuse Dr. Selbie of ignorance of history but we cannot close our eyes to the fact that he distorts it to serve his own purpose of discrediting what he falsely calls Materialism. The fall of dynasties is always preceded by a decline. They do not suddenly collapse when at the zenith of their power; and both the decline and the fall of the Roman Empire, for example, occurred after it had become Christian. Long before its end came it had been, intellectually, morally, and even physically, seriously on the down grade. In consequence of climatic conditions, and the inevitable falling off in the physical qualities of men and women in consequence of inferior men becoming fathers through the absence of the physically fittest on distant battlefields. The only rational conclusion, therefore, is that the Roman Empire fell, not when it had reached the acme of its power, but when it had undergone fatal deterioration in every respect. The historians trace that gradual degeneration through many generations.

What Principal Selbie means by the soul of a nation he does not tell us, nor does he attempt to define the term "vital principles"; but he is of opinion that a nation may lose its soul, whatever it may be. Etymologically, spirit, soul, or ghost signifies wind or breath. That is the primary sense of the words, while in the secondary sense they denote the life and disposition, or character, of individuals and nations. It is clear that Dr. Selbie does not employ the word "soul" in either of those senses. He means it by "reverence for the Unseen," "spiritual powers and faculties"; and he concludes that if the British people lost their soul, as thus defined, "then, however large the Navy or Army, they would perish, and nothing could stay their fall." To the Principal, evidently, the Unseen is only another name for God, and spiritual powers and faculties are the means of communion with Heaven for the cultivation and maintenance of which the churches exist. The pious divine explains his position fully in the following passage:—

The churches existed to worship God, to keep the soul alive. Thus was their existence justified. They were doing as great and as good a work—yes, that night in thinking of God and the things of God—as if they were actually fighting at the front. They were fighting a greater enemy than Germany or Austria. They were fighting the internal enemy of the soul of man. So long as the world continued, that fight would have to go on. Germany might be conquered, but the Devil would be unconquered still, and they would have to fight for the soul of the people.

Beyond a doubt the soul of a people is their capacity for belief in and fellowship with God, without which they

cannot prosper. Such is the contention of one of the most prominent leaders of the Free Churches. They all seem to believe that it is thinking of God and the things of God that makes an individual or a nation great and powerful; but the fact that stares us in the face is that God has not succeeded in persuading individuals and nations to think of him and his things with sufficient energy and ardour to make them invincibly great. The Churches have a greater enemy than Germany thirsting for their blood, and that is godlessness; and it is to fight this foe that they exist. The curious thing is that the soul of a people resides alone in the professing Christians to be found among them, and that the Christians of every age have failed to communicate it to outsiders. It is a more astonishing fact still that Germany, despite her evangelicalism and the growing orthodoxy of her churches and universities, is said, with "good reason," to have lost her soul. What that "good reason" is we are not informed, though, reading between the lines, we infer that it is her alleged responsibility for the present War.

Apparently, the main difference between Germany and Great Britain is that the former has lost her soul, while the latter is only in danger of losing hers. In both countries the Church is the army of God, and in both its mission has been a signal failure. It is only natural for Dr. Selbie to think highly of the institution whose servant he is, and upon which he is dependent for his livelihood; but there is no getting away from the fact that this God's army is the most inefficient force in the world. No great world-movement is aware of its existence, or has been affected by it in the least. The Principal tacitly admits that this is true. He says:—

He thought that one of the greatest things that had been impressed upon the mind by the circumstances of the War was that the churches were not ends in themselves, but means to an end. Jesus Christ came into the world not to found churches but to establish the kingdom of God. The Church was set up as a means to that kingdom. The Church was not a comfortable coterie of people, but it was here on earth as a living instrument in the hands of God.

That extract puts a most cogent argument into the hand of the critic of the Church. The claim made for the War is that, somehow or other, it has brought home to the Churches the great truth that they are but means to an end, namely, the establishment upon earth of the kingdom of heaven. Assuming that the War has made such an unlikely revelation, the only possible conclusion is that the Church has come deplorably short of answering the object of its existence. Even Principal Selbie has not the timidity to assert that the kingdom of God has been set up on earth. But the Church has been a failure, not as a human institution, but as "a living instrument in the hands of God," which is tantamount to saying that God himself has failed. Does the Principal not realize that this is the only natural import of his statement? Of course, he shifts the blame from God to the instrument, saying: "It is no use crying over spilt milk." That is true by whomsoever the milk is spilt. Dr. Selbie holds the Church responsible, and observes:—

There was among Christian people to-day a real spirit of penitence because the Church had not been able to do more. But it was far more important to ask themselves what they could do rather than sit down regretting. Repentance was not remorse. Repentance was not the headache next morning. It was a change of mind, of attitude. It was a fresh start.

In reality, however, he who needs repentance is God, not man. God ought to repent in dust and ashes, and in his case repentance should be remorse, the headache next morning, for having created a being capable of com-

mitting suicide, or endowed with a natural tendency towards that which is evil. He ought to repent, besides, for having chosen the Church as his instrument for remaking the world. It is his fault, and his alone, that what goes by the name of the kingdom of heaven is still a dreamed-of reality of the future. A well-known divine said not very long ago: "The wonder of wonders is that God has appointed us to do his work, when we know that he could have done it infinitely better without us." The truth is there's not a single scrap of evidence that there is a supernatural being in the business at all. Indeed, speaking of the child, Dr. Selbie says: "So long as there is necessity for a society such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, we should be modest about our Christianity." Surely, no remarks could be more opportune. Christianity has either woefully neglected or shamefully maltreated the child. It has always endeavoured to train it for heavenly rather than earthly citizenship, with the result that Christians regard themselves as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, whose only treasure is in heaven, where their hearts should be also. What is needed is a system of education in which life here and now is the only thing that matters, and in which no supernatural dreams find a place.

J. T. LLOYD.

Gerald Massey.

The genius that can stand alone
As the minority of one,
Or with the faithful few be found
Working and waiting till the rest come round.

—Gerald Massey.

GERALD MASSEY, poet, ethnologist, and Egyptologist, had a very interesting career. To use Browning's expressive phrase, he was "ever a fighter." He fought every day of his long life, which was prolonged beyond the usual span, and his sword was in his good, right hand until the day of his death. Massey's early life is the grimmiest of comments on the "good, old days." The son of a bargeman, he was born in the grip of poverty. At an age when more fortunate children were at school, he was working in a mill for eleven hours daily at the weekly wage of one shilling. This was not the worst. He became a straw-plaiter, and for three years lived in the black shadow of starvation, often prostrated by illness. Writing of that awful, early life of his, he said afterwards, "I had no childhood." Think of it! The author of those beautiful and tender poems, "Babe Christabel" and "The Mother's Idol Broken," "had no childhood." It is a tragedy "too deep for tears."

In spite of it all, young Massey learned to read and write, and became familiar with *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Brave, old Bunyan and "unabashed" Defoe are not bad schoolmasters for a quick, intelligent boy, for they wrote their books in two languages—in literature and in life. At fifteen years of age Massey came to London and became an errand-boy. In the great Metropolis books were procurable, and his literary appetite was voracious. He read everything he could lay his hands on; "going without meals to buy books, and without sleep to read them." What a picture of the past, the old days of storm and peril, when the soldiers of freedom arose almost every day to meet a fresh difficulty or a new danger. For Massey lived right through the heroic age of English liberty. It was during that stirring period that he laid the foundation of that encyclopædic knowledge which made him one of the noted critics and scholars of his time.

The revolutionary movements of 1848 greatly impressed Massey, and many of his verses are the direct

outcome of this period of struggle. Republicanism was in the air, and he became a Republican. At twenty-one he was editing *The Spirit of Freedom*, a revolutionary publication, mainly written by himself. Then he contributed to Thomas Cooper's *Journal*, and other democratic papers. He became known, and numbered among his friends the warm-hearted Charles Kingsley, and Frederick Denison Maurice, a Christian minister, who is remembered for his denunciations of one of the chief dogmas of the religion he professed.

Massey's first book of verse was issued when he was but nineteen. Later came his *Voices of Freedom*, which showed a notable advance. Hepworth Dixon, of the *Athenæum*, was greatly attracted by the fiery and impassioned *Song of a Red Republican*, and recognized it as the work of a man who had something to say and could say it well. Among the admirers which Massey's early poems won for him were Landor, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Lytton. A still greater honour awaited him, for "George Eliot" made him her model for the hero of *Felix Holt*, which was like having his name written in gold on the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

It was "Babe Christabel" which made Gerald Massey famous. With this he stormed the bastions of success at one leap. Lion-hearted Landor praised it, and the author was hailed as a rising star. The following lines give some idea of the poem:—

Babe Christabel was royally born!
For when the earth was flushed with flowers,
And drenched with beauty in sun showers,
She came through golden gates of morn.

The tenderness and grace of this poem are in direct contrast with the stirring music of his political songs, which recalls the effects of sonorous metal blowing martial sounds. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny roused the poet, and he never sang so finely as in his *War Waits*, a volume which is well worth reprinting. He was never so near being a great poet. Despite his limitations, Massey was a real singer, and his verses came straight from his heart, and are charged with passion. There is the true lyrical note, and he sang to a richer music in a clearer tongue than many of his contemporaries. One of his poems, "Scarlett's Three Hundred," indeed, challenges comparison with Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade."

In the maturity of his powers, Gerald Massey deliberately put aside the laurel wreath, and devoted himself to the nobler work of the emancipation of his fellows. He turned away from verse writing and put all his energies to a scholarly and philosophic exposure of the greatest religious fraud of all the ages. His books, *The Book of Beginnings*, *The Natural Genesis*, *Ancient Egypt; the Light of the World*, have had to be reckoned with. For Massey shows that the holy mother and child—the one a virgin, the other a god—were worshipped in Egypt many centuries before the Christian era. It was there that all the dogmas of early Christianity, and all its myths and legends, were manufactured. In a pregnant passage in *The Natural Genesis*, Massey says:—

The writer has not only shown that the current theology is, but also how it has been, falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man and ignorantly mistaking these for divine revelations.

It was not an easy task that the poet-scholar had imposed upon himself. In the noble dedicatory verses to *The Natural Genesis* he shows, with rare pathos, the isolation of a scholar's life. He compares himself to a diver whose friends watch anxiously for his return:—

Year after year went by,
And watchers wondered when
The diver to their welcoming cry
Of joy, would rise again.

And still rolled on Time's wave,
That shortened as it passed;
The ground is getting toward the grave
That I have reached at last.
Child after child would say—
"Ah! when his work is done,
Father will come with us and play"—
'Tis done. And playtime's gone.
A willing slave for years,
I strove to set men free;
Mine were the labours, hopes, and fears,
Be theirs the victory.

When George William Foote was in Holloway Gaol for "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt," Massey wrote to Dr. Aveling and, referring to Foote, said, "I fight the same battle as himself, although with a somewhat different weapon." Massey wished clearly to be reckoned as a fellow-soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity. Yet, at his death, the "glorious free press of England" concealed the fact that the scholar-poet was a Free-thinker. One specially "Liberal" paper proudly claimed him as a "Christian Socialist." The plain truth is, that Massey spent half of a very lengthy life in showing the mythical nature of the Christian superstition. And he did wisely. The instinct of Massey's maturity, which led him to forsake poetry for Freethought, was a perfectly sound one. His poetry largely belongs to the past, but his scholarly criticism of Christianity has helped, materially, to hasten the dawn of Freedom.

MIMNERMUS.

The Last Day.

A Vision of Judgment.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away.

WHETHER I believed or disbelieved, I cannot quite remember, but I used to imagine it fearfully enough. The picture must have been early engraven on the mind, for I cannot recall a time when it did not appear, more or less vividly, far or near, in the vista of childish psychology. I can see it still when I choose. It was very grand in its way. The Lord of Hosts, like a great military commander, had made his headquarters at the end of a green and rocky valley. The valley is verdant, the dear old rocks are vivid still, because mundane and familiar, perhaps; all else is vague, but omnipresent—celestial messengers going and coming, fiery aerial chariots, seraphim with swords of flame, and, browsing somewhere, all the horned and hydra-headed menagerie of the Apocalypse; the angels and the vials of wrath, lit in the baleful glare of subterranean fires; all the quick and the dead from our bucolic neighbourhood, from hamlet and cemetery, the halt and the blind, hurrying to be damned! It was the last great assize, the ultimate court-martial. The Crown Prince was on his way, somewhere between Jupiter and the moon, as foretold in the line, "Lo, He comes, in clouds descending," but this time coming to condemn; militant at last, and mighty, as "So spake the Son, and into terror changed his countenance." The celestial Kaiser ought, also, to have been clothed in "fear and majesty," but was merely a vague, indefinable Presence. Poor devils—I mean of earth—on whom the rocks of calamity had been falling all their lives, were on their knees, calling to those dear old rocks to complete their destruction, and hide them from the awful gaze of "Deity offended." Had my dream been more realistic, and not merely idyllic and picturesque, what nameless myriads would have surrounded the throne! One could not have seen the

play for the actors. As it was, it was merely a kind of Mauchline Holy Fair. I have often thought of Ingersoll standing there, smiling, candid, courageous, giving God a "red face," heaping coals of fire on the almighty head by telling him that he passed most of his life on earth strenuously defending the divine reputation; but who, according to the Code, would have been hurried off and directed hellward, according to the formula, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Poor Ingersoll! Poor Bradlaugh, Foote, and Cohen! Alas, poor me!.....

As a matter of fact, every day is the Last Day—the past for the pleasures of memory, the future for the pleasures of hope. The present moment is the life of man. So I thought as I sighed to-night, as I saw the day die out of the sky. "Be ye also ready, for at what hour ye know not the Son of man cometh." This is good counsel, but it should be "at what hour the Son of man *goeth*." It was the counsel of a secular sage that we should have all our affairs in order, as if we expected every day to be going out of the world. And the lugubrious Doctor Young, of the *Night Thoughts*, rather grandly advises:—

Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer,
Next day the fatal precedent will plead.

Procrastination is the thief of time,
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene!

The scene *before* concerned the sombre theologian. What he leaves *behind* is the concern of the good Free-thinker. And that, if not so "vast," is of infinitely greater importance. All down the ages the imaginary has obscured the actual and clamant issues of life. The fiction has fettered the fact. A pale ghostly vampire and "palpably nugatory" supernatural has sucked the blood from an otherwise wholesome and happy natural. And the end is not yet. Contrary to report the Devil is not dead—at least the story of his demise has been greatly exaggerated. He is lurking still in ignorant and simple skulls, and has lodged there so long he has become one of the family. His landlord, indeed, is quite proud of him, and would defend him to the last gasp of his last day. Although a creature of lurid light, the Devil's guest chamber is always kept dark. To light the room is to lose the lodger. No one is more careful than the clergy to keep the shutters up. And no wonder, for so long as there are devils to exorcize the exorcist, will never be out of a job. And when the remuneration for this kind of work runs from £300 to £15,000 a year, only that bigoted consistency, which is the bugbear of little minds, could reasonably look for the last Devil till the Last Day.

Those winter sunsets are wonderful. Again, it is the last hour of the last day. The scene is simple but sublime. There is a great lofty wall of misty drab-grey cloud piled round the S.W. (seaward) horizon. The red sun passing behind peers for a moment in a crevice. In the pale yellow skies above a large "gold fish," or rather, crimson cloud is floating, with other "minnows" hovering near, all steeped in solemn, quiet, crimson, fire; all merged at length in the grey battlement of cloud; so the shadows fall, and the night wind croons its eerie monotone.

ANDREW MILLAR.

It is easy to say that opinion cannot be coerced. But this is true only of the small minority of mankind who are in the habit of thinking for themselves; and, secondly, if it were true, it would only show that, in some cases, persecution is too late to be effectual.—*Sir F. Pollock.*

Richard Wagner.

IN writing for some sections of the public at the present time, it would, I suppose, be impossible without an apology, and difficult even with an apology, to devote an article to Wagner. For some people, it would appear, the guilt of the present German rulers extends, by some mysterious logic, to the whole German race, past as well as present; and a German musician, though he died as long ago as 1883, is in some way responsible for the crimes of the Prussian war-lords a generation after his death—on the same principle, perhaps, as the infant born yesterday is held by Christian theologians to be a partaker in the mythical peccadillo of Adam and Eve. I shall pay the readers of the *Freethinker* the compliment of refusing to offer any such apology. I take for granted that those who read this are Rationalists; that they hold, as I do, that a criminal action brands the doer, not the children or ancestors of the doer; and that they are as willing to recognize the genius and appreciate the masterpieces of Richard Wagner as if this present deadly conflict were not raging between his nation and ours. For my part, it will be one of my bitterest reproaches against the authors of this War that, thanks to them, we in England are likely to be debarred for many years to come from hearing and enjoying the greatest of those masterpieces.

Richard Wagner was born in Saxony in 1813, and in his early life developed two enthusiasms, one untiring and permanent, for the art of music, the other unstable and soon spent, for revolutionary politics. On the latter I touch here on account of its natural interest to us as Freethinkers, and of the influence it had on Wagner's work. In 1843 Wagner became musical conductor to the court at Dresden, and during his tenure of that office wrote and composed *Tannhauser* and *Lohengrin*. 1848 was "the year of revolutions." In 1849 there was an abortive revolution in Dresden, in which Wagner took part, and for which he had to fly into exile. In this exile he wrote the libretto of his greatest work, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, in which the influence of his revolutionary enthusiasm is clearly visible. That enthusiasm, however, did not long survive disappointment, and in 1854 Wagner became a convert to the pessimist philosophy of Schopenhauer. The next ten years were a period of wandering and failure, during which Wagner wrote the words of *Tristan and Isolde* and *The Master Singers*, and composed the music of the former, but could not get it performed. In 1864 the eccentric king of Bavaria extended his patronage to the composer, who was thereby enabled to produce *Tristan*, finish *The Master Singers* and *The Ring*, and end his life in the sunshine of royal favour. As might be expected, the effect on Wagner's genius was decidedly reactionary. His later music, that of the last part of *The Ring* and of *Parsifal*, is as superb as his earlier; but we miss in *Parsifal* (as Nietzsche missed in it) the defiant, revolutionary Free-thought that inspired *The Ring*, and we regret that the revolutionist of 1849 should have ended by wallowing in morbid mysticism for the edification of the Catholic court of Munich.

It is tempting to draw a comparison between Wagner in the world of music and Swinburne in the world of poetry. Both had something of the same greatness and the same infirmity. Both were daring innovators in the technique of their respective arts, and with wondrous results; both lead themselves to weak imitation and to parody. Both first became known as fearless singers of liberty and revolution; both exhausted their enthusiasm in middle life, and ended up as reactionaries.

Wagner's most popular work in England, though by

no means his greatest, has, undoubtedly, been *Tannhauser*. For most music-lovers, I suppose, this opera has served as their introduction to his work. I shall always look back on my first hearing its gorgeous overture as a decisive turning-point in my musical taste, which, in one day, revealed to me something greater than I had ever before known. It is a commonplace to sum up the theme of *Tannhauser* as the theme of "sacred and profane love." Yes; but with what a difference! Wagner does not preach or moralize (it was hardly in his character); he simply states both sides. And in what a wonder-language he states them! No one can say that he does not give the flesh its due; and yet he brings out the spirit triumphant. What listener does not feel a thrill when, in the overture, after the severe theme of the pilgrims' chorus has been stated and worked up, one weird chord translates us, unwarned, into the forbidden realm of Venus? How the music whirls us on through one mazy theme after another, till the whole orchestra peals out Tannhauser's triumphant praise of the goddess! We are reminded that Swinburne made his name by similar audacity:—

What ailed us, O gods, to desert you
For creeds that refuse and restrain?
Come down and redeem us from virtue,
Our Lady of Pain.

From this climax Wagner leads us back with a genius only equalled by that with which he led us up to it. I confess I have never liked the so-called "Paris" version of the overture, which carries us straight into the first scene of the opera without solving the antithesis. Wagner's first conception was better. I prefer to hear the slow notes of the pilgrims' chorus gradually making themselves heard through the bacchanalia, and persevering till they emerge victorious, supported, but not drowned, by "the pulses of life, that throb and leap for joy in this song of salvation."

Tannhauser is an excellent introduction to Wagner; but he does not know Wagner whose studies end there. I must pass over *The Master Singers*, that wonderful mosaic of melody, which I am afraid it will be long, long before we are able to hear again on British soil. The same, I suppose, applies to *The Ring*. *The Ring*, a music-drama consisting of four parts—"The Rhine Gold," "The Valkyrie," "Siegfried," and "The Twilight of the Gods"—is the work in which Wagner gave to the world his best message, the message of Free-thought and emancipation of the individual. Nothing could be further than this from the Moloch of Prussianism which has since claimed the worship of his countrymen, of which some ridiculously see in him a precursor. He casts his iconoclastic thesis into the mould of old northern mythology—the same mythology which William Morris presents to us in his noble poem of "Sigurd the Volsung." Wagner's drama tells how the supreme god Wotan, to stave off his inevitable overthrow, built him a mighty castle, and was constrained to pay the builders of it with the accursed ring, which the evil dwarf Alberich had stolen from the daughters of the Rhine in his lust of world-dominion. It tells how the god went in guilty fear lest the dwarf should win again the ring and master him thereby; and how he sought to save himself by raising up a hero, Siegfried, to whom fear was unknown; and how the hero not only gained the fatal ring, but shivered the spear of Wotan, who had raised him up. And it tells how Siegfried in his turn, mazed by a treacherous draught given him by bad friends, would not give up the ring to the Rhine maidens; and how its curse rested on him, and he was murdered by his friends. And it tells how the ring was in the end restored to the Rhine, and how the castle of the gods, and they that dwelt in it, and the old world of oppression

which they ruled, were burnt with fire and passed away. You can read this allegory as you like: I know how I read it.

And the music! Never again, perhaps, shall we have a chance to sit, packed in the vilely uncomfortable gallery at Covent Garden, to enjoy delights which the royal box itself could not make more delightful; to wait breathless before the first bar of "The Rhine Gold," and hear the long, deep note growing out of the silence, and becoming the "nature motive" out of which that endless network of themes, which sustains the drama, is to take shape. But if we can no longer enjoy the whole on the stage, we can at least listen to priceless parts of it in the concert-hall. There is the excerpt called "The Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla," which has a sinister magnificence. Onward move the gods into their castle to the glorious music of the "Valhalla motive." Up from the distant river comes the Rhine maidens' lament, silencing for a moment the pomp of godhead. Then the procession passes on over the rainbow bridge, to the blare of trumpets and the roll of drums, like the jackboot of authority trampling upon humanity. There is, too, the piece called "Wotan's Farewell and Fire-Magic," taken from that part where the god condemns his own daughter for disobeying his unjust command, to sleep on a mountain ringed round with flame till a fearless hero shall wake her. And "fire-magic" it is! The flames flicker, leap, and blaze on the orchestra, for any novice to hear. There are few such wonderful things in music. There is, above all, the incomparable "Closing Scene" of *The Twilight of the Gods*, when the world's great wrong is righted, and the gods perish in the avenging flames. Here again, for the last time, we hear the great "Valhalla motive," breaking out in one key after another, in a sort of dying agony, through the leap of the flames and the glad song of the daughters of the Rhine, until the turmoil subsides and peace reigns. Wagner's conception is identical with that of Swinburne in his "Hertha":—

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the
terror of God.

For his twilight has come on him,
His anguish is here;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
Grown gray from his fear;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his
infinite year.

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

ROBERT ARCH.

Talent forms itself in the silence of the study; character in the stream of the great world.—*Goethe*.

Suspension of judgment is as imperatively required of us by science, as faith in the unintelligible was demanded by the Catholic Church.—*John Addington Symonds*.

We are emerging from an age of commercialism, but there are sure signs that we are moving towards an age of humanity. The Victorians may have imagined that the world was a very pleasant place—at any rate, for the well-to-do. We are learning that it is not. There is room for improvement. And improvement will not come by thinking less about the Paradise that awaits the saints and more of the earth that was made for man.—*R. B. Ince*, "Globe."

Acid Drops.

A manifesto on the War has been issued by, what the *Daily News* styles, "Church leaders," and the document supports the idea of the League of Nations. It is, however, of interest to note that the signatures to the manifesto include, among others, the Archbishop of Canterbury, four bishops, a member of the Society of Jesus, a number of Free Churchmen, and Messrs. Arthur Henderson and George Lansbury. The document mentions, respectfully, the Pope's Appeal to the Powers, and the action of the Convocation of Canterbury. But what we should like to know is how the two Labour leaders got into such company. A democracy that remains Christian is a democracy that will always be getting there and yet never arrives.

Elim Welsh Congregational Church, Cundare, has discharged its minister, says the *Aberdare Leader*, for preaching that war and preparations for war are irreconcilable with the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ. When the Germans invoke Jesus to justify war they are accused of blasphemy. When a British parson says Jesus is against war he gets the "sack." Which proves how fitted Christianity is for man under all conditions.

Clergymen pretend that they are engaged in work that is on a higher plane than ordinary business, but there are exceptions. A parson advertises in a daily paper that he supplies "Commercial training for one shilling weekly." He will require a large number of pupils before his salary approaches that of the Bishop of London, to say nothing of that of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lord Hugh Cecil declares that "Christianity presupposes the brotherhood of man." Heigho! In the Christian scheme the bad brothers outnumber the good ones.

Miss Helena Normanton, of the Women's Freedom League, pleads for the wearing of brighter colours in clothes, and a return to older forms of costume. Perhaps the lady admires the highly coloured blankets worn by the twelve disciples—in pictures.

"There is no getting away from the fact that soldiers are very superstitious," says the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Of course they are, otherwise this would not be a Christian country.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll says that we know our loved ones much better when they are dead than we did while they were living amongst us. He also maintains that our fellowship with the dead is purer and nobler and much more intimate than with the living. He does not mention his authority for such a statement; but, if there is any truth in it, will he be good enough to inform us why believers in personal immortality mourn for their dead much more hopelessly than unbelievers? Is it not a fact that Sir William bases his teaching upon mere belief, not upon knowledge, and that belief invariably breaks down when confronted by the grim realities of Nature?

Sir William is a sentimentalist, and not a calm, cautious reasoner. He tells mourners that Christ will comfort them if they love and trust him; but, as a matter of simple fact, Christ does nothing of the kind. We admit that there are times when the belief in Christ does minister consolation to those who are contemplating bereavement as a possibility; but when it becomes an actuality the belief collapses, and then those who have it are much worse off than those who never possessed it. It is a characteristic of Christianity that it is of absolutely no avail in the great crises of life. It can no more do away with mourning than it can prevent or put an end to a War.

"The result of Chief Constable Bain's campaign to cleanse the streets of Norwich from certain features have had, to say the least, some remarkable results. One 'bag' included a doctor, a grey-headed military officer, and the conductor of

a picture palace orchestra. Then complaint was made by a Cathedral dignitary of impropriety within the Cathedral precincts. The Chief Constable took up the challenge, and the sequel was forthcoming in the Police Court on Thursday of this week, when, strangely enough, almost the first man to be dealt with by the police was —, the sub-sacrist of the Cathedral, and a well-known Y.M.C.A. worker."—*Norwich Mercury*, February 16.

According to *Truth*, the Russian Church is immensely wealthy, and the convent Churches are full of splendid tombs and rich shrines, lavishly adorned with gold, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. No wonder the Patriarch of Russia has cursed the Bolsheviks because they have deprived the priesthood of its property and privileges.

Dr. William S. Bruce, the well-known traveller and explorer, advocates the use of whale flesh as an article of diet, and says that whales are canned in America. What a change from the time when a business-like whale "canned" the prophet Jonah?

What noses the clergy have for nastiness! The Bishop of London raised a discussion on prostitution at the House of Convocation, and at a meeting in London to consider the question of Army morals, the speakers included Dr. Orchard and Miss Maude Royden, the assistant minister at the City Temple.

A religious contemporary complains that few people are converted after they are thirty years of age, and calls it a "saddening fact." It also notes that twelve, sixteen, and twenty are the fruitful ages for conversion, and professes inability to explain the phenomenon. We think we can explain it in a sentence. It is simply the exploitation of adolescence.

The Life of Christ is to appear on the film. The Bishop of London, Cardinal Bourne, and F. B. Meyer are among those who guarantee its "reverential treatment"; so the pious may go to the "pictures" with safety. But by a greasy hypocrisy that seems inseparable from English Christianity, the title of the film is "Christus." Why not Jesus Christ? Perhaps it is thought that English Christianity wouldn't stand it. But the device is so English! It is like the English Christian letting himself go on the Continent under the pretence of conducting a moral investigation, or some of our clergy wading neck deep in filth and persuading themselves that they are animated by a desire to improve public morality.

Writing in the *Daily News*, the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell quotes the bitter saying: "I forgive him as a Christian, which means that I do not forgive him at all."

Professor Scott Lang, of St. Andrew's University, speaking before the Perth Presbytery, said that: "In the whole Church the average contribution per member for the year was a halfpenny per Sunday, and even that was an over-estimate." The inference is that the work of the Church is of small interest even to believers.

At Newport Pagnell, the Revs. W. Rice and W. L. Eaton were each fined £3 for infringements of the motoring order. Apparently religion does not always make for good citizenship.

This month, in the presence of the Pope, the decree of the beatification of Oliver Plunkett, a former Archbishop of Armagh, will be read. In these strenuous days is it not like children playing with dolls in a nursery?

Prebendary A. W. T. Perowne says that one proof of the failure of the Church is that the men in the Army don't understand what the Church stands for. We don't think that is quite correct. The trouble—to the Church—is that the men are beginning to understand what it stands for. They don't believe in what it says it stands for. But that is quite a different thing.

Dean Inge advises all whom it concerns that it is quite right to pray, but we have no right to expect that our prayers will be answered. Therefore "we must not expect that the prayers which we offer for dear ones in danger and for the restoration of peace would at once be answered." The plain English of which is that prayers may be offered, but answers will not be given. That is precisely our own counsel. Only we wonder how people will pray, knowing that they might as well try to ward off an air-raid by playing a concertina.

Erasmus once said that the Bible was a nose of wax, which could be twisted any way that suited. The *Church Times* realizes this, and has been girding at pious folk who quote Biblical texts against war and monarchy, and upset the religion of simple men. There is little doubt of the simplicity of religious persons, but Freethinkers will be amused at the spectacle of the engineer being "hoist with his own petard."

A newspaper paragraph had the attractive headline, "Bishop and a Tank." It did not relate to a deed of heroism, for it recorded that the Bishop of Peterborough was to speak from a tank in the quiet surroundings of the cathedral town.

The Salvation Army's bold advertisements in the press of its "Self-Denial Week" show that this organization is getting respectable, and can now command large sums of money for purely advertising purposes. The results of Salvation Army work are immensely exaggerated. Salvationists have all to be teetotalers. What effect has that on the national drink-bill? Salvationists have all to be non-smokers. What effect has that upon the tobacco trade? The Army boasts that it takes religion into the slums. And the slums are no better for it. The Salvation Army's motto is "Blood and Fire"; the blood of Christ and the fire of hell. This is plain Bible teaching; this is Christianity.

"E. A. F.," in the *Daily Mail*, raises a protest against schoolboys being allowed to spend their money on food, but being asked to "disgorge" for church bazaars and missionary work. The protest seems to apply to adults no less than to children. If economy is really a vital need for the country, it would be only the proper thing to withdraw contributions from church and missionary work, the latter of which is certainly the most useless service to which one can put money.

Mr. T. Vivian Rees, addressing a Conference of Sunday-school officers, said that "The pettiness and stupidity one came across at times in Sunday-schools are tragic, criminal and devilish. Some of the schools were slaughter-houses for human souls." But the slaughter is inseparable from the system. Their purpose is to prepare the "lambs" for shearing by the time they become fully-grown sheep.

Pilate.

A SONNET-PROBLEM FOR CHRISTIANS.

DEAR Christian friends who love your enemies
More than the tongue of man can ever tell,
And loving thus much, sentence those to hell
Whose faith from yours by hairbreadths disagrees,
Whilst lately sitting 'midst your devotees
I chanced to speak of Pilate, and there fell
From someone's lips—your looks approved him
well—
The one word "Coward!" Now I think I seize
Your meaning; but suppose awhile that he
Had liberated Christ because he showed
No fault, and all the horror of that cross
Set up for sinners on sad Calvary
Had never been, nor had his blood outflowed
For all your sins. Would that be gain or loss?

G. H. BOSWORTH.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; March 31, Blaengarw; April 7, Glasgow; April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

E. F. BROWNE.—The matter is common knowledge with all who know anything about pre-revolutionary Russia. But we give you the following from *The Russian Jews*, by L. Errera, published by David Nutt: "The right of residence in every city of Russia is granted to prostitutes who are provided with a yellow card for this purpose. This infamous passport has more than once been solicited by respectable Jewesses, desirous of being enabled to penetrate into certain great cities in which they are not permitted to dwell.....A young girl came to Moscow to learn shorthand. She demanded and obtained the yellow card; but after a time the police expelled her, because they discovered after watching her, that she refrained from following her assumed trade" (pp. 27-8).

C. F. BUDGE.—We cannot say whether it is true or not. Should like confirmation.

H. M. DABALL.—We do not confine the question of God to the deity taught by Jesus. Our survey includes all religions, but we are unable to detect substantial differences between the gods of the leading faiths.

PTE. W. WALDEN.—We are sending a parcel of literature, free, to the soldier's address given. Thanks for your offer to provide a copy of the *Freethinker* weekly in the reading-room. We hope it will be accepted.

J. G. HOWARTH.—Literature is being sent. Thanks.

We inadvertently last week gave the publishers of Mr. Clodd's book on Spiritualism, *The Question*, as Methuen. The book is published by Grant Richards.

R. W. BLAKELEY.—Probably some injustice is done to Professor Alexander by the compression of his argument. It is, however, a pity that people so play with the word "God," which is bound to mislead, because it has a fairly fixed connotation in the general mind.

G. PROCTOR.—Ivor Tucker's *Evidence for the Supernatural* and Edward Clodd's *The Question* would probably give you what you want.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—G. S., 2s. 6d.

J. G. BUCKLE.—Thanks for copy of letter, which we have read with interest and appreciation.

J. EFFEL.—Thanks for portraits. We hope their future will realize all that their faces promise. Please do as you suggest.

O. A. PENSIONER.—We do not know anything of "a well-known Atheist lecturer" named Musgrave Reade. A person of that name was, we believe, a member of the Manchester Branch many years ago, and he or his friends appear to have been exploiting his connection with the Society. A well-known Atheist lecturer is pure imagination.

MERANDER.—Next week.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4 by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We have to thank many correspondents who have written concerning "Our 'Round Up'" in last week's issue. These communications prove that what we ask for is being done, and with success. Meanwhile, we may note that paper gets scarcer and dearer month by month. Even the paper we printed on last week, and of which we hold about another four weeks' supply, represents a twenty-five per cent. increase on last year's prices. The new Paper Order also cuts down the supply of imported paper-making material to half that of last year, and as the War seems to be settling down to a permanent institution, the outlook is not very cheering. All we can say is that we shall avoid making any change so long as it is possible to do so. How long this will be must depend upon circumstances.

The following communications have reached us regarding our notes of three weeks ago on compulsory religious service in the Army. One comes from the Army and the other from the Navy. We take the Navy first. It is written from one of our chief naval bases:—

I was very pleased to read your very pointed article in the *Freethinker* on Compulsory Army Church Parade. Your remarks apply equally to the Navy. There is more profane language over this order for Sunday Church than over any other order we may get. It is altogether inconsistent is this forced religion. A very big church has now been added to the Naval Base, and by compulsory means it is over-packed for the morning service. An evening service is also held, to which all are welcome. On Sunday, February 4, I happened to pass whilst all was in motion. The congregation consisted of eight sea scouts (boys) and four naval ratings. Comment is needless. Church is looked upon by the "Command" really, I think, only as a habit, and not for the good of men who have to attend, but as something in numbers for "Acting Chaplain, R.N." to show in his weekly report. It is the compulsory business we do not like. We have to sleep, drink, eat, and do everything by numbers, but the sooner the authorities get it into their heads that we do not think by numbers then this Church Parade will stop.

And this from the Army; from a soldier home from the Front, wounded:—

It may interest or amuse you to be informed that I sent my *Freethinker*, with the splendid article "Religion and the Army," to the Colonel of my present Battalion. Of course, I did not give my name. But I think your article gives vent to a great grievance soldiers suffer in the Army, irrespective of their opinion on religion, either for or against. The majority of the soldiers hate—I prefer the word "hate"—going to Church Service; and if the Christian religion is true, I have no hesitation in saying that the Church Service is the cause of more men being damned in hell for ever than it saves, by compelling men to go against their will. There is more cursing and swearing by men getting ready for Church Parade than any parade of the week. It is the most unpopular parade of the week.....You will have, and deserve, great thanks if you can force those in authority to make Church Parade optional. The men only go because they are forced to go.....When we came forward to assist the country in her hour of need, we did not sacrifice our right of opinion; and the Army Council should understand that men's opinions are not issued out like so many tons of bully beef or tins of plum and apple jam. The sooner Church Parades are abolished, there will be less crime in the Army; for it is the cause of much petty crime. Let the Army Council give no Church Parade one month's trial, and they will have overwhelming evidence that the Church Parade is the most unpopular thing in the Army.

The testimony from both branches of the Service as to the bad language generated by Church Parade is striking. And it is very evident that the compulsory attendance at church is felt as a real injustice by many thousands of the men in both the Army and the Navy. The men know that it is not essential to their doing their duty as soldiers and sailors; they naturally resent being *ordered* to prayers; and we hope that the Army Council will follow the example of our American Ally, and make the Church Parade quite voluntary, even if it does not imitate the French, and abolish it altogether.

The following, from Pte. W. Walden, is also of interest :—

I am writing to thank you for forwarding the Army Council Instruction No. 179, *re* Religion in the Army. When I showed it to the S.-M., he stated that he was not aware till then that anyone could join the Army without professing a religion. I am pleased to state that he has since rectified the error dealing with me. I feel certain that if men did not display so much timidity in reference to religion when joining the Colours, that the lot of "Tommy Atkins" in connection with Church Parade would not be so unpleasant as it is.

With the latter sentiment we quite agree. Anyway, we are glad to have been of use in this particular case, as we have been in many others.

Mr. Harry Snell is lecturing for the Birmingham Branch at the Repertory Theatre, Sunday, March 10, at 7 p.m.—"Religion from Martin Luther to Sir Oliver Lodge—and After." It is a few years since Mr. Snell lectured for the Branch, and he is sure of a hearty welcome from his old friends. Those who have not heard him should make a special effort to do so.

We are asked to announce that Mr. F. E. Willis lectures at Nuneaton, in The Palace, Queen's Road, to-day (March 10), at 6.30, on "What is the Use of Prayer?" We hope there will be a good muster of both Freethinkers and Christians.

The Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. is holding a Social Evening—whist drive, concert, and dance, on Saturday, March 16, at 7 o'clock, in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick. Tickets are 1s. 6d. each, and can be obtained of the Secretary, Mr. H. Black, 446, Great Cheetham Street, East, Higher Broughton. We hope the meeting will be a success.

Dr. Arthur Lynch, M.P., is an outspoken advocate of Republicanism, and is opening a debate on that subject before the North-West London Branch to-day (March 10), at 7.30. There ought to be a good audience and an interesting discussion.

The Queen of Night.

OUR planet's pale attendant, the moon, is a spectacle of fascinating interest at any time to the student of Nature, and the ruler of the night has, from the earliest ages, attracted the attention of man. The constant waxing and waning of the lunar orb probably impressed primitive peoples to an even greater degree than the comparatively changeless sun. And now, again, at least in latitudes subject to uncanny visitations from the air, particularly on moonlit nights, an unusually large amount of interest attaches itself to our silvery satellite. In reality, one of the smallest celestial objects visible to the unaided eye, our moon, owing to its proximity to the earth, seems an orb of considerable dimensions, and appears equal in diameter to the mighty sun itself, and this deceptiveness is increased by the fact that our nightly companion confers upon us a far greater amount of light than all the planets and stars combined, the lord of day alone excepted. The telescope reveals innumerable heavenly objects, many of which are immeasurably smaller than the moon, but these lie quite beyond the range of the naked eye.

The lunar diameter is 2,160 miles, and is therefore slightly more than one-fourth of that of our globe. Its mean distance is about 240,000 miles, but this varies considerably; so that at perigee, when the moon lies nearest to the earth, its distance is reduced to 221,600 miles; while, when our satellite is at apogee, that part of its orbit most remote from the earth, its distance extends to 253,000 miles. Thus we see that the path pursued by the moon, in her monthly revolution round the earth, cannot be a true circle, while even the form of our satellite's orbit is variable. In consequence of the varying

attractions of the earth and sun, the moon's elliptical orbit becomes a little more or a little less eccentric. These fluctuations are responsible for the fact that the moon appears appreciably larger at one time than it does at another.

The disc of the full moon contains 7,300,000 square miles, and is therefore slightly larger than the continent of South America. One aspect only of our satellite is presented to us. No mortal has ever viewed the other surface of the moon. There are numerous conspicuous features on the moon's face, which have been noticed from the earliest historical times, and whenever the lunar orb is visible, these identical markings appear. One reservation only need be made, and this is that the moon's surface is sometimes slightly tilted, with the result that the lunar landscape, near the edge, varies somewhat. There is every reason for the belief that the unseen surface of the moon is a mere variant of her visible disc. In any case, of the 7,300,000 square miles of surface open to observation, about 2,900,000 comprise those mottled areas which were long regarded as oceans, while the remaining 4,400,000 represent a rough and torn territory environed by the apparent remains of once energetic volcanoes, whose enormous craters exceed anything of the kind existing on our planet. So immense are several of the lunar volcanoes, that it is estimated that a single explosion of one of these titanic mountains would have sufficed, on our earth, to shake it to its very core.

It seems strange that while the sun and planets all revolve on their axes, and present every feature of their surfaces to us, that the moon should turn one face only to the earth. Many have contended that the moon possesses no axial rotation whatever, but this belief is entirely erroneous. Our satellite unquestionably revolves on its axis, but its period of rotation is equal to that of its revolution about the earth. Newcomb, Serviss, and others have cogently illustrated this curious phenomenon. Another most convincing illustration is supplied by Ball in his *Starry Realms*. That able expositor imagines a horse galloping round a circular course with a human spectator standing at the centre. The running animal, as he careers round the course, will necessarily present one side of his body only to the observer, while the other side of the animal will remain hidden from sight. So far this is what happens to the earth-dweller as the moon journeys through the sky. Now, it is self-evident that when the horse has travelled the complete circuit, it has not only completed a revolution round the course, but it has also rotated. The animal in making the circuit must have moved successively towards every point in the horizon, because in the course of his journey he is compelled to travel north, south, east, and west in order to complete the circuit. As Ball states :—

It is clearly impossible that the horse can have faced north, south, east, and west, without performing a movement of rotation. Unless he rotated he would necessarily be always journeying towards the same point of the compass. Suppose that, at the moment when he was facing due north his right side being turned towards the spectator in the middle, we bring him to the opposite side of the course, and again place him facing due north. It is clear that the left side of the animal will now be towards the spectator. In such a case it is plain that the movement has not been at all like that of the moon, the characteristic feature of which is that the same face is always directed towards the earth.

It is, therefore, perfectly certain that if our satellite did not turn on its axis in the course of its monthly journey, or lunation, as it is termed, then every part of its surface would appear in succession, although only at

periods of full moon would an entire hemisphere be illumined by the sun. At the time of old and new moon the side presented to our planet would, in the absence of rotation, prove exactly the opposite to that displayed at full moon, while during the last quarter, the lunar region facing our earth would be the reverse of that presented to the earth at first quarter.

This striking coincidence between the period of the moon's axial rotation and its revolution round our globe has been traced to definite causes. As we have seen, the moon's surface displays a dead world of barren rocks and stones. But the extinct lunar volcanoes were once active, and in that remote age our desolate satellite was the theatre of great internal heat and energy. The further we peer back in time, we picture the moon growing hotter and hotter, until we reach a period when it was partly, or even entirely, molten. Its rugged scenery sufficiently indicates that the moon was once the seat of titanic volcanic upheavals greatly exceeding any so far known to have occurred on the earth.

To-day the moon exercises powerful tidal influences on our planet's waters. In early ages, before the moon became a burnt-out cinder, oceans rolled over its surface. Then, the earth, a much larger body than the moon, generated tides on the lunar seas which immensely surpassed those now raised by our satellite on the earth. Even in the absence of water, our planet's gravitational powers would exercise an enormous pull on any liquid or viscous substances on the moon. When the moon was still a molten globe, the earth's influence would be exerted over every portion of its mass. The same forces which originally gave birth to the moon when it was separated from its earth-mother and thrust off into space are responsible for our satellite's inability to show us her hidden face. Both of these phenomena are traceable to tidal friction. The giant tides raised on the unsolidified moon by the earth's attraction acted on the rotating orb like brakes on a wheel, and at last they lessened its rotation until its period coincided with the moon's monthly revolution.

As the centuries stole away, the moon gradually radiated its heat into surrounding space, and evolved from a molten into a solid state, on its surface, at least. At a later stage of its history its oceans appeared, and life may have arisen; but if so, it has had its day, and ceased to be. The moon's exterior seems quite dead; and if heat be absent, no liquid remains, even in the orb's interior. Some astronomers surmise that the earth no longer exercises tidal control over the moon. But the adjustment established by past tidal authority persists, and this truth is most clearly exhibited in the changeless face with which our sad satellite looks down on the inhabitants of the earth.

T. F. PALMER,

(To be continued.)

The Poet of Mortality.

It is in the sonnet that Marston's genius is supposed to show itself most unmistakably. These sonnets of his, at their best, have qualities which, in the main, would justify a critic in his placement of them extremely high in the sonnet-literature of the later Victorian period—perhaps, even, in ranking them superior to those of any other contemporary poet, after the generous and intensely artistic series by the author of *The House of Life*.—William Sharp.

WHATEVER our barbarian Britons are compelled to cede to other nations as our peers in the fine arts, in *belles-lettres*, and in poetry, certainly, we can surely claim precedence. Still, it is a curious anomaly, that we are, as a nation, less appreciative of poetry than nations of lesser literary repute. At any rate, the number of

our so-called "minor poets" who have been relegated to the top shelf of the book-case, is considerable. Yet, in glancing over the names of some of these, the thought constantly recurs to me, that had some of these "minor poets" been cradled in any other land but Albion, they would probably have been heralded among its literary glories.

Among the moderns, perhaps, the "best neglected" of the "minor poets" is Philip Bourke Marston (1850-87), yet no less masters than Rossetti and W. Scott Bell placed him in the first rank of lyric poets. Indeed, Rossetti said of Marston's *Garden Secrets* that it was not too much to say that they were "worthy of Shakespeare in his subtlest lyrical moods." I remember praising Marston to G. W. Foote on one occasion, and with youthful enthusiasm, I spoke of him as the first of modern lyricists and sonneteers. G. W. Foote, who, by the way, knew the "blind poet" (he met him in company with James Thomson, B.V., at the literary salons of a certain well known author) did not agree with so sweeping an estimate, and said that Marston's work, *as a whole*, would not stand this criterion, but he admitted that probably his best work, taken by itself, would perhaps stand favourable comparison with any of our best modern poets. I mention this especially, as Foote's opinion in a matter of this sort is of the highest importance, although it falls short of the estimate of William Sharp. I do not think that many will deny this to Marston, for surely those remarkable sonnets in *All in All*, such as "Not Thou but I," the gorgeous imagery of *Garden Secrets*, say, for instance, "The Rose and the Wind," as well as a host of truly exquisite lyrics—"Come, Buy," "Love has turned his face away," etc., are without equal.

One of the main points urged against Marston is that his limitation of "forms" is bound to tell against him. True, Marston rarely deviates from the sonnet or lyric, yet where he does, such as in that remarkable poem, "A Christmas Vigil," written in his nineteenth year, we see that he was equal to it. Yet, even so, I fail to understand why we should suspend judgment merely because we do not know what Marston could do in certain "forms." Surely it is sufficient for us to judge him by what he did use. Why the small *genre* painter, or the song-writer, such as Jan Steen or Hugo Wolf, should not be admissible for comparison with artists of larger "forms," such as Rubens and Richard Strauss, passes my comprehension. It does not matter to us what the artist presents, or what he selects to present it in. It is *how* he presents his art that is, or should be, the sole criterion.

William Sharp, in his sympathetic and appreciative memoir of Marston, is replete with all sort of moral and philosophic "conditioning" with regard to the poet's art-work. He assures us that nowhere does Marston manifest any depth of vision into the life of nature or of man, nor any genuine knowledge of the great motors and complex issues of human nature in general. Although, personally, I do not admit of this criterion in any art or literary judgment, I am "in arms" against Sharp in this case, because, in point of fact, he seems to be strangely inaccurate. Why, Marston's particular themes—Love, external nature, the travail and uncertainty of life, prove the very opposite. Take, for instance, his love themes. None but a poet with the deepest vision of life could have penned such realism as Marston. The love that is brought into rhapsody by him is not the love ordinarily dwelt upon by poets, but a strong, sexual, natural, human thing, naked and unadorned. His many arraignments of Providence, and his indictments against the philosophy of "All's right with the world," again reveal to us that Marston most

certainly had a "depth of vision into the life of nature." This is especially noticeable in his treatment of Christians and religion in general.

Sharp tells us that Marston belonged to no sect in "matters of religion," but leaves the question there as though we may understand that the poet was merely a Freethinker in regard to sects. That is not so, as we know from his poems, as well as from other sources, that Marston repudiated Christianity and was an Atheist. In spite of Sharp's strictures concerning Marston's "knowledge," the poet was sufficiently logical to see, for instance, the falacy of Pantheism in deifying the *actual* as an escape from the *ideal* of the conventicle. In his remarkable sonnet, entitled "Atheist to Pantheist," he openly boasts his Atheism (it can mean nothing else), and denies that it is possible to distinguish Pantheism from Atheism:—

.....Absorbed in all pervading God,
You think to live, conscious, yet knowing naught
Of all the past with pain and joyance fraught,
An Atom, where the atoms onward plod.
What you call God, I Nature name, and hence,
Am Atheist; but where the difference?

Although the life of the "blind poet" was an extremely sad one, yet the religion which promised rest and consolation to the "weary and heavy laden" found no response in the breast of Marston. In that finely sustained dramatic poem, "A Christmas Vigil," he openly inveighs his scorn where he makes the wanton confess herself:—

Too blind perchance it may be to discern
God's mighty mercy, and the boundless love
That all paid, praying preachers tell us of.

And as for the man with whom her shame began, she admitted that both were to blame, although

He was the snare in which my soul was caught,
Yet God, not *he*, my wrath of soul shall bear,
God set the snare!
God made him lustful, and God made me fair.

Orthodoxy seemed almost a theme for merriment with Marston. His ballad, "Caught in the Nets," is a story which the poet found in Sir Richard Baker's *Chronicles*, about a merman which some fisherman caught, and although "oftentimes brought to church, never showed any signs of adoration." This part, in Marston's versification, is the merman's story:—

I heard them say it was the time to pray,
And one man cast a chain my neck about,
And with a mighty grasp he dragged me out,
Right out into the sunlight and the wind,
And some men walked before, and some behind,
So on we wended, till we reached a hall,
Where all around upon their knees did fall,
And made together a most dismal noise.
Then one cried to them, in a louder voice,
Whereat more wail upon the air they poured,
Then rose. Next in their midst a monster roared,
Whereat they yelled; yea, all they yelled as one,
So that I thought by fear they were undone;
And much I marvelled that they kept their ground,
For still that monster made the dreadest sound;
Then ceased he, and they ceased, and one man rose
And shouted to them, and with many blows
Did beat himself, and long and long he screamed,
And like some fearful dream that I had dreamed
It seemed to me, and full of dread I was,
Not knowing well what next might come to pass.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

(To be concluded.)

Commenting on the religiosity of the Northcliffe press, the *Daily News* asks, satirically, "Is Lord Northcliffe taking holy orders?" Cynical folk imagine that his lordship is taking all he can get.

Up for Judgment.

TOWARDS the end of last summer I went with Uncle Joe and Aunt Jane to the local cemetery to witness the burial of a young soldier who had given his life in the service of his country. It was a beautiful day, and the flowers round many of the graves looked lovely and fresh; the fragrance from them being very pleasant and exhilarating. The young soldier had fought in several important engagements in France, and had been seriously wounded; but when he recovered from his wounds, he was sent back to France, and fought in further engagements until, at last, he was gassed, and then he was sent home, where he developed lung trouble, from which he ultimately succumbed.

Besides the large crowd of spectators, there was a small contingent of officers and men of the regiment to which the dead soldier belonged, and these came to pay the last tribute of respect and admiration to the gallant young fellow who had given his life for his fellows, and to fire a volley over his grave. The scene at the graveside was most impressive and touching—many of the spectators being moved to tears.

After the ceremony, Uncle Joe, Aunt Jane, and I walked through the cemetery and looked at many of the massive monuments erected to the memory of important parishioners in what is called "the consecrated ground," and then we went and looked at many of the small tablets erected over the graves of what are called the "common interments."

While we were gazing at these I could not help remarking to Uncle Joe that, even in death, class distinctions were made, and the wealthy had massive marble monuments, while the poor had only small tablets—most of them wooden—and these were often trampled into the earth during the wet weather, so that many were unable to find the spot where their dear departed friends had been interred.

Uncle Joe who, although a Conservative and a Churchman, was very democratic in many of his views, could not help acknowledging that he did not like these class distinctions, and that it appeared to him these great marble monuments were erected more for the gratification of the living than for the benefit of the dead.

Then we began to discuss many of the inscriptions and verses on the tombstones and monuments, and I noted that most of the dear departed were buried in "a certain hope of a resurrection," and that some of them had gone straight into the arms of Jesus. I noted, further, that most of the verses suggested that the dead had either gone to heaven or awaited the great day when they would be called from their long rest to their heavenly abode above the skies, and none of them even hinted at the possibility of their going to the other place down below.

"Yes," said Uncle Joe, "that is the best of the Christian religion—there is hope for all. The repentant sinner can always find salvation, even in the last hour; but the final judgment rests with our Heavenly Father."

"Then do you really believe in the resurrection of the body, Uncle Joe?"

"Most certainly I do. Does not the Church Service say, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting'? Yes, I believe it. But I do not believe that we shall rise with the same body we had on the earth. We shall have a celestial body, not a terrestrial one."

"What is a celestial body?" I asked.

Aunt Jane smiled, but said nothing; she felt instinctively that Uncle Joe was getting out of his depth.

"A celestial body?" said Uncle Joe, with something

in his voice approaching indignation; "how can you ask me such a question?"

"Well, I thought you knew something about it, since you say that you believe in it."

"No; it is what we are taught to believe as Christians, and I see no reason to doubt it. We cannot rise with the same body; we know that. We know that our body turns to dust. Besides, look at the thousands of bodies that are cremated nowadays. Well, those people could not rise again with the same bodies—that stands to reason," said Uncle Joe, with great vigour of expression, "therefore they must be celestial bodies that rise again; and that is what I believe, and that's what the bulk of Christians believe also."

"Indeed! Oh, very well. And do you believe we all come up for judgment on the last day?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Well, how can it be the last day if the glory or the condemnation that is to follow are to last for ever and ever?"

"Why, the last day on this earth, of course," said Uncle Joe, with an air of confidence, glancing at Aunt Jane to see how far his remarks would meet with her approval.

But Aunt Jane only looked puzzled and sad. The questions were rather calculated to unsettle her belief than otherwise.

"Oh, the last day on this earth, eh? So we all leave the earth together, some to go up above and the remainder down below. And then the earth will be destitute of all the people, and so I suppose it will go to smash or become engulfed in the sun, or something of that sort?"

"I don't know," said Uncle Joe, quietly.

"And have we all to be judged on one day, or shall we have a fair trial, and hear the evidence of our guilt on all the charges that are brought up against us?"

"I certainly think that God would give us a fair trial," said Uncle Joe, "the justice of the case would at least demand as much as that."

"God the Father will preside, I suppose?"

"Yes, I think so."

"With God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost on the bench?"

"Yes."

"Then the whole affair would be converted into a great assizes?"

"As Tom Hood says:—

"Then turning round his head again,
He saw before his eyes
A great judge and a little judge,
The judges of a-size."

"Now, my dear boy, please do not joke on so serious a subject," said Uncle Joe, warmly.

Aunt Jane smiled again. She had a good sense of humour.

"Oh, very well; only I can't help laughing—the idea is so ludicrous," I replied.

"Fancy, millions of human beings coming up for trial—all the millions of people who have lived in all the ages—not only all the Christians, all the Jews, all the Mohammedans, all the Bhuddists, all the black races."

"Stop!" said Uncle Joe, "I said nothing about black souls—I mean the souls of the blacks. That's a question I shall have to submit to our vicar; indeed, I think it is a matter that might be put to the Archbishop himself."

At that moment the church bell began to toll, and we knew that the body of another poor soul was to have the beautiful burial service of the Church of England read over it previous to being consigned to its last resting-

place—the grave, or more properly speaking, to mother earth—from which we all spring, and to which we all return.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Blank Wall.

IX.

THE question of the sanity of man is one with which few minds are troubled. Perhaps the question is, in itself, a little mad! On the other hand, how is it possible for those clear brains so much alive to the fact of life as to be perpetually at war with the extraordinarily stupid conventions of the human race, to avoid for any length of time the problem of the sanity of man? Almost every manifestation of civilization is so deliberately sordid and ugly as to create a feeling of revulsion. The tone of popular thought, if it can legitimately be termed thought, is on a plane of obvious decadence and insanity. Vacuous newspapers, puerile novels, vapid and dull plays, cant, pornography, hypocrisy, and ignorance everywhere. The seeker after truth and beauty, dignity of purpose, and the enlightenment of the human species generally, discovers practically no vital response to his exertions. He is pushed outside the feverish stream of current "life," and more and more is driven inwards to live his dream unseen, unheard, neglected and labelled "Crank."

Where, then, the pertinent question arises, is to be found sanity, or at least a desire for its establishment on earth? A people possessed of one tenth the sanity of the reformer or revolutionary would not tolerate the existing conditions of life for twenty-four hours. A sudden lightning stroke of sanity would cause the people to realize that the precious gift of life was being thwarted in a thousand sinister ways; that an existence which might be made a radiant journey of delight and decency was being converted into a monstrous nightmare far worse in many respects than death itself. With a universal War in full swing we may well wonder whether the seeker after Truth and Life, is not, after all, a mere curiosity. The sacrifices of to-day may not count at all in the future; the dreams of to-day may become nothing more than a glorious and haunting memory to the select few. May we not, in all seriousness, be merely repeating such experiences as were the lot and destiny of those who would be with us to-day, but who are now something less even than memories? Despair, however, will not prevent us from handing on the torch.....A time may come.....who knows?

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Mr. Stiggins-Chadband at the end of an hour finds he has joined the "movie" in mistake for the margarine queue.



By kind permission of the Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly.

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.

LONDON SOCIETY, Morality based on Laws of Nature (West Central Hall, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.30, The Baron de Bethune, "Our Destiny." Lecture in French. Discussion invited.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Is the Present Time opportune for the Study of the Republican Idea?" Affirmative, Dr. Arthur Lynch, M.P.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Spiritualism—Is It a Delusion?"

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Religion from Martin Luther to Sir Oliver Lodge—and After."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars Hall, 120 Ingram Street): 12 noon, A Meeting of the Branch.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mrs. B. A. Bayfield, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

NUNEATON, GEORGE ELIOT BRANCH (The Palace, Queen's Road): 6.30, Mr. F. E. Willis, "What is the Use of Prayer?"

SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. W. W. E. Hart, "Citizenship."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, 3, "Religion and Liberty"; 7, "The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Morality."

South Place Ethical Society, SOUTH PLACE, MOORGATE STREET, E.C.

Sunday Morning Services.

March 10, at 11 o'clock—

JOHN A. HOBSON, M.A. "The Emotion of the Ideal."

March 17, at 11 o'clock—

C. DELISLE BURNS, M.A. "The Democratic Ideal."

WANTED.—The New Moral World, by Robert Owen, and other Works by the same author. Also Works by Richard Carlile and "Isis." Good prices given.—X., Freethinker Office.

To South African Residents, SETTLERS, AND TRAVELLERS.

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

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

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

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President:

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary:

MISS E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

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

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

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

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

Membership.

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

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

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation

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

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

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

Immediate Practical Objects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE.

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

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.
CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.
G. E. MACDONALD - - - - - EDITOR.
L. K. WASHBURN - - - - - EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

Subscription Rates:

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

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

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

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,
Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,
62 VESEY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

- BIBLE AND BEER. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- MY RESURRECTION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ½d.
- THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

Pamphlets—continued.

By J. T. LLOYD.

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

- PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By MIMNERMUS.

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

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

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

By J. BENTHAM.

- UTILITARIANISM Price 1d., postage ½d.

By LORD BACON.

- PAGAN MYTHOLOGY. Price 3d., postage 1½d.

By D. HUME.

- ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- MORTALITY OF SOUL. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- LIBERTY AND NECESSITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By M. MANGASARIAN.

- MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By ANTHONY COLLINS.

- FREEWILL AND NECESSITY. Price 3d., postage 1d.

By DIDEROT AND HOLBACH.

- CODE OF NATURE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By P. B. SHELLEY.

- REFUTATION OF DEISM. Price 1d., postage ½d.

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

For a Freethinker's Bookshelf.

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

By L. FEUERBACH.

Translated by GEORGE ELIOT.

A Drastic Criticism of Christianity in terms of Psychology and Anthropology.

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

BYGONES WORTH REMEMBERING.

By GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

Two Volumes. Published 7s. net. Price 3s., postage 6d.

THE POSITIVE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION.

Its Moral and Social Reaction.

By FREDERIC HARRISON, D.C.L.

A Criticism of Supernaturalistic Religion from the standpoint of Positivism.

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

STUDIES IN ROMAN HISTORY.

By DR. E. G. HARDY.

Vol. I.—Christianity and the Roman Government.
Vol. II.—The Armies and the Empire.

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

DARWINISM TO-DAY.

By PROFESSOR V. L. KELLOGG.

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

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

THE ENGLISH WOMAN: STUDIES IN HER PSYCHIC EVOLUTION.

By D. STAARS.

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

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

HISTORY OF SACERDOTAL CELIBACY.

By H. C. LEA.

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

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

THREE ESSAYS ON RELIGION

By J. S. MILL.

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

There is no need to praise Mill's Essays on Nature, The Utility of Religion, and Theism. The work has become a Classic in the History of Freethought. No greater attack on the morality of nature and the God of natural theology has ever been made than in this work.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL MORALS.

By CARVETH READ.

Professor of Philosophy in the University of London.

8vo. 1909. Published at 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 5d.

A Fine Exposition of Morals from the standpoint of a Rationalistic Naturalism.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

By G. W. FOOTE.

First Series, with Portrait, 216 pp. Cloth. Price 2s. 6d. net. postage 4d. Second Series, 302 pp. Cloth. Price 2s. 6d. net, postage 4d. The Two Volumes post free for 5s.

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

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

THE MOTHER OF GOD

BY (THE LATE)

G. W. FOOTE.

With Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN.

Should be read by every Freethinker.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

(Postage ½d.)

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

LIFE-LIKE PORTRAIT OF

G. W. FOOTE.

Art Mounted, 10 by 7. With Autograph.

SUITABLE FOR FRAMING.

Price ONE SHILLING.

(Postage: Inland, 3d.; Foreign, 6d.)

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

"Has Germany a Conscience?"

By J. C. THOMAS, B.Sc. (Keridon).

Author of *Darkness, Dawn, and Day, etc.*

Price One Penny.

It is not the object of this pamphlet to seek either a negative or a positive answer to this daily query during the first year of the War, but to indicate its utter irrelevance, by pointing out the purely mythical function ascribed in popular belief to the ethical emotion usually denoted as "conscience."

WATTS & CO., 17 JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C. 4.

Printed and Published by THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. FOOTE AND CO., LTD.), 61, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.