

# The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper.

VOL. XXXIX.—No. 15

SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 1919

PRICE TWOPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Good and Evil.—The Editor</i> . . . . .	173
<i>"From Unbelief to Faith."—J. T. Lloyd</i> . . . . .	174
<i>The Cry of the Curates.—Mimmermus</i> . . . . .	175
<i>Word-Power.—G. O. Warren</i> . . . . .	176
<i>Man's Discovery of the World.—T. F. Palmer</i> . . . . .	180
<i>The Seance.—James H. Waters</i> . . . . .	181
<i>April.—A. M.</i> . . . . .	182
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

## Views and Opinions.

### Good and Evil.

"Let us pray for the Devil" once suggested a sympathetic and daring person at a prayer meeting. Whether the advice was acted on we know not, but we are certain that for those who believe in this fourth member of the divine government the suggestion was a very sensible one. The worse one is, the greater the need for help; and really no one is so bad as to be beyond assistance. If all things serve a useful end, some purpose must be found for the Devil, and it is just possible that bad people render a service to the world that is as real, if not as obvious, as that rendered by the good ones. And certainly Christians ought to put in a good word for the Devil. They owe him so much. Speaking theologically, it would have been a disaster had there been no Devil to tempt Eve, and had she and Adam never fallen. They would have remained in the garden, mentally and morally, as well as physically. The eating of the tree of knowledge is the beginning of civilization. The world owes Satan much, the Churches owe him more. Yet no one has built a monument to him—unless we say that all the churches and chapels are so many monuments to his greatness. The Churches to day may disown the Devil, but the historic fact of their debt to him remains. It is little short of a public scandal that in the whole of Christendom there is not a single monument honestly devoted to the greatness of the Devil. The nearest the clergy ever get to this is to assert that everyone whom they dislike is a testimony to his person.

\* \* \*

### The Pleasure of Strength.

Now, in a way, the clergy in their scurvy treatment of the Devil reflect a characteristic of human nature. For we are all ill-appreciative of the bad things and the bad people in the world. Consider what a tame place the world would be if everything were as some people think things ought to be. It is not that there would be nothing to do—people can get along with doing very little—it is that there would be lacking the satisfaction derived from the contemplation of other people's deficiencies. Everybody will disown any such satisfaction, but it is there. The strong, healthy man usually feels the stronger and shows a keener appreciation of his own strength when he contemplates the weaknesses of other people. He is not, of course, pleased that they are as they are,

but their being as they are makes him feel the more pleased for being as he is. The pride of intellect is also notorious. The keen-witted man feels elated at his own mental strength, but how much of his satisfaction is due, sub-consciously perhaps, to his clear perception of the folly of other people. One's pleasure at solving a difficult problem may be greatly intensified by the knowledge that others have tackled it in vain. The folly of some is the background that throws into relief the wisdom of others. The half-pitying expression, "How simple some folk are!" is often only one aspect of "How clever, mentally, I am."

\* \* \*

### The Use of Self-Satisfaction.

With morals, this principle is still more manifest. With many adults, half the pleasure of feeling good is derived from the feeling that others are worse. Listen to the average religious person dwelling upon the evil of human nature, and one cannot help the suspicion that there is a latent feeling of thankfulness that things are so, if only because it sets out his own superior morality in a stronger light. With many religious moralists, while the existence of evil is explicitly condemned, it is dwelt upon with such constancy and so great zest, that one feels pretty confident a considerable satisfaction is derived from its existence. The evil in other people forms, too, an almost endless topic of conversation and interest to a certain class. Not only an interesting topic, but a convenient one. The grocer who has strengthened his sense of the supremacy of the moral law by denouncing the surreptitious use of cardboard in boots, may, with a much clearer conscience, place sand in his sugar. The judge on the bench, after lecturing a poor offender on the crime of stealing a shoulder of mutton valued at a few shillings, feels his own moral character strengthened thereby, and may with an easier conscience commit offences that are as much beyond the reach of the offender he has just sentenced as the offender's faults are removed from his own circle of temptations. In the political world, each party is busy with the glorification of its own virtues, qualities that have hardly any other basis than the faults of the party to which it is opposed. Were it not for the contemplation of other people's faults, our own might appear to us in more striking perspective. Let us, therefore, be duly thankful that other people are worse than we are; or, at least, that we think they are. And let us not grudge them the satisfaction of reversing the positions in the moral scale.

\* \* \*

### Good and Bad Folk.

In yet another way one may illustrate the truth that vice has its virtue as virtues have their vices. What is it, or who is it, that causes the bulk of the trouble in the world? Not the rogues, surely. This cannot be, for the simple reason that the majority of people are not rogues, but good, simple, blundering people, who are far more dangerous. The thief, the murderer, the dangerous brute, these represent stray specimens of humankind. And from such stray specimens society may be easily protected. Nothing is more absurd than to listen to a

judge lecturing a criminal as though the stoppage of burglary or pocket-picking was one of the most important tasks before the community. One might suppress every offender of this kind and still leave the greatest untouched. The trouble is really caused by the people who are so impressed by their own goodness that the desire to fashion all in the same mould becomes a perfect obsession. They interfere here, and they interfere there; their energy is so great, and their knowledge of affairs so limited, that their very goodness becomes a greater source of evil than the action of any criminal who is marched from the dock with a judge's denunciations ringing in his ears. The great historic evils of the world, the enduring wrongs to mankind, have been perpetrated by "good" people out of the very quality of their goodness. Good men kept the Inquisition alive; good men kept burning for witchcraft in existence; good men created the English Sunday, than which no single thing has done more to demoralize the people; good men opposed with force scientific discoveries and philosophic speculations; good men have hurried us into ill-advised legislation that has often inflicted more harm than it has removed. Heaven preserve us from the "good" people; the bad ones we can safely take our chances with.

\* \* \*

#### Intelligence versus Good Intentions.

The world is not short of "good" people; it never has been, and it is never likely to be. It is not deficient in moral council, either. There has always been a plethora of this article. If a man with the toothache took all the remedies suggested by solicitous friends, he would probably be dead in a week. And if a man carried out—or tried to—all the moral advice he is favoured with, life would be intolerable. There is only one thing that makes the capacity of some people to give moral advice bearable, and that is the capacity of other people for ignoring it. The world is in far greater need of intelligent perception of humanity's problems than it is of moral fervour. And if we were all quite honest, we should admit that the character with a smack of evil about it is the most attractive. Not too much, of course; but enough to give it variety. It takes all sorts to make a world, as the shrewd Scotsman observed; and let us not forget that in the make-up of the "all sorts" every sort has its value. That there may be evil in all things good, as well as good in all things evil, are two aspects of the same thing, although it is a truth that is often overlooked.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### "From Unbelief to Faith."

THE above is the title of a tract by the Rev. Professor Orr, published by the Drummond's Tract Depot, Stirling, and circulated for missionary purposes. Professor Orr was a conservative theologian who believed in the Virgin Birth and wrote a book in defence of it, and who vigorously opposed the Higher Criticism of the Bible. His work, *The Problem of the Old Testament*, won the Bross prize of £1,200, and is characterized by its stout antagonism to all advanced views on the Bible. Dr. Orr was undoubtedly an honest man, held in high esteem by all who knew him; but he entertained erroneous opinions on many subjects, and often mistook fancies for facts. *From Unbelief to Faith* abounds in assertions which are either absolutely false or entirely misleading. It opens with a flat denial of the statement that "within the last few years there has been a great intellectual landslide from faith to unbelief," or that "the learning and culture of the age have gone over—by far the larger proportion of it—to unbelief," or that "believers in

Christianity are being left in a miserable minority." Dr. Orr, claiming a fairly full knowledge of the intellectual conditions of the age, its thoughts and its books, solemnly assures his readers that it is unbelievers who are everywhere in the minority. It may be perfectly true that the greater number of the men distinguished in science and intellectual pursuits of various kinds whom the reverend gentleman had the privilege of personally knowing were Christian believers, though he admits that even among them there were exceptions; but it is within the recollection of many that so illustrious a scientist as the late Dr. Russel Wallace often publicly bewailed the fact that in the scientific world there were not more than about half a dozen men who shared his religious faith; and it is well known that even he was neither a Christian nor a believer in a personal God. Present-day psychologists are engaged in a statistical study of religious beliefs generally, and their finding so far is that they are rapidly dying out, especially among educated people. The statistics issued by Professor Leuba are based upon most careful and scientific investigations made among American college students and men of learning, and what they clearly establish is that "considerably more than one-half of all the men included in our investigation, and over two-thirds of the more eminent of these are non-believers in personal immortality and in God" (*The Belief in God and Immortality*, p. 293).

Dr. Orr is equally wrong on another point. He says:—

We see what is happening around us, and are apt to believe that there never was, an age in which unbelief was so rampant as our own; never an age in which Christianity was so keenly assailed as it is in our own day. That also is an illusion. The opinion simply results from want of perspective on our own part. If you go back into the history of the past, you will find that there never has been wanting a very keen conflict between Christianity and unbelief; and in particular ages that conflict has been far keener, and apparently far more deadly to Christianity, than it is to-day.

That statement, whilst partly true, is largely false and wholly misleading. The inference the ignorant would draw from it is that throughout its history, Christianity, in spite of opposition, has, in the main, been winning; but every student of history is aware that for several centuries it has been visibly losing its hold upon Christendom. It is true that in the eighteenth century Deism was rampant in England, Voltaireism in France, Rationalism in Germany, and Moderatism in Scotland; but it is totally false to say that the conflict between Christianity and unbelief was then keener and far more deadly to the former than it is to-day. Christianity received its deadliest blow in the middle of the nineteenth century, to wit, on the twenty-fourth of November, 1859, the date of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. From that blow it has shown no tendency to recover. Like the proverbial snake, it has been dying bit by bit ever since. Its very appearance has so altered in the process that those who knew it a hundred years ago would not be able to recognize it could they but see it now. Professor Orr writes as if the latter half of the nineteenth century had been completely erased from his memory, as if he had never heard of the terrific pitched battles over the *Origin of Species* fought at the Oxford meeting of the British Association in 1860, in the course of one of which Bishop Wilberforce made his vicious attack on Professor Huxley, and of the bitter controversy which raged at innumerable meetings and in the press for many years afterwards. The Bishop's vitriolic address ended in the following banter:—

I should like to ask Professor Huxley who is sitting by me, and is about to tear me to pieces when I have

sat down, as to his belief in being descended from an ape. Is it on his grandfather's or his grandmother's side that the ape ancestry comes in?

To that Huxley made the following dignified reply:—

I asserted, and I repeat, that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a *man*, a man of restless and versatile intellect who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions, and skilled appeals to religious prejudice.

The Bishop of Oxford was thoroughly justified, as a Christian minister, in the attitude to look up towards the new theory. He foresaw with the utmost clearness that the acceptance of Darwinism would involve the downfall of the Christian religion. That accurate prevision fully accounted for the unrestrained violence of his onslaught upon it in pulpit, press, and platform. He regarded it as a poison which would inevitably kill Christianity unless it was itself destroyed forthwith, before it had time to fulfil its hateful mission. He was right, and to-day we are witnessing the fulfilment of his predictions. Darwinism came to stay and to conquer. All attempts to suppress it completely broke down, with the unavoidable result that the Christian faith is now threatened with extinction. With few notable exceptions, due to easily explainable causes, churches and chapels are at a lower ebb than within living memory. And yet Dr. Orr had the audacity to write as follows in his tract, which is still being used in the interest of Christian propaganda:—

The Church of Christ, notwithstanding all these forces we hear about that are against us, has more members, is circulating more Bibles, doing more good, extending herself more widely in the world, cherishing in her heart the dream of universal empire more earnestly than at any previous period of her history. Let us thank God for it and not be downcast. You cannot have Christianity doing any good work or manifesting any power without keen opposition; but even, let me say, in the present day unbelief—not in all of it, by any means, but in the best of it—there is a spirit of reverence, a looking to Jesus Christ such as there was not in a former generation.

Now, nearly the whole of that extract is undiluted, even if unconscious, falsehood; and the writer had within easy reach ample evidence of the falsehood. For many years before he died the annual report and statistics of the majority of the Churches recorded alarming decreases both in memberships and attendances at public worship; and during the last few years the decline has been on a much larger scale. Both in the pulpit and in the press this fact is being repeatedly admitted and deplored, and numerous schemes are being constantly devised to check the leakages and transform the losses into gains, but not one of them has been crowned with success. The mighty revival so frequently and so confidently predicted fails to materialize. The clergy of all denominations are as zealous and resourceful as ever, there is no lack of machinery nor of means to put it in operation; but the power has departed, the ancient fire of conviction is well nigh out, except in rare cases. Fear, which used to serve as an invaluable asset, is practically dead, and with the fear of hell has all but clean gone the hope of heaven; and without these, supernatural religion cannot long survive.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be concluded.)

## The Cry of the Curates.

The revolt of the clergy has come at last. To-day comes the news that they are forming a trade union.—*Daily Paper.*

Do you hear the curates calling, O my brothers?

—Adapted from Elizabeth Browning.

ANYONE who pays attention to the utterances of the clergy and their apologists will perceive that they are conscious of the reproach which the great World-War implies. It had been the clerical boast that the Christian Superstition had civilized Europe, and none, except the half-mad ex-Kaiser and his obsequious Lutheran pastors, had the courage to claim that such a War was in harmony with the principles and ideals of Christianity. The Great War brought the clergy face to face with facts, and some unpleasant ones, too. The big stick of brute force was thrust suddenly into the chariot wheels of ecclesiasticism. The wheels ceased turning, and the familiar hymn tunes died into silence, broken by the noise of battle and of falling thrones. Not only religion, but humanity itself, was arrested. Humanity had discovered that it has been hoodwinked, and just too late the clergy discover the state of affairs, and begin to apologize for them "with bated breath and whispered humbleness."

The responsibility is laid at the door of the clergy, and it may well prove the despair of organized Christianity. For the complicity of the Churches with the existing social order precludes any hope for their future. The industrial aftermath of the War must affect the Churches seriously. There is already a shortage of parsons. The Churches show a beggarly array of empty benches, and are hard put to it to keep things going. Sunday-schools suffer from lack of workers. All the activities of the Churches are crippled by the strain of the abnormal industrial conditions. The problem of finance is growing daily more serious, and curates and church-workers demand more money.

The curates are discontented, and look with envious eyes at the loaves and fishes shared by their superiors. So loud is the cry of the curates that the Bishop of London has already collected £40,000 to protect his poorer brethren from the blessings of poverty. Indeed, the sympathetic Bishop of London goes so far as to claim that the poorer clergy are "starving." He has referred to the awful instance of a provincial parson who fed his family on sixpence a meal, and the still more awful example of another minister who went mad for want of money.

The Bishop of London is an expert on finance, and can perform miracles with balance-sheets. Some time since he explained that, after drawing his official salary of £10,000 a year for fifteen years, he was £2,000 worse off than when he started the fearful experience. In short, clerical wealth is but the road to ruin, a martyrdom without a crown. Mr. Samuel Pecksniff, had he been a bishop, could not have done it better.

Unfortunately, the plea of the Bishop of London is not so convincing to outsiders as it might be to a Christian congregation. Personally, his Lordship may be as poor as the Founder of the Christian religion, although we doubt it. There are other financial matters than the disbursements at Fulham Palace. For instance, there are the Church of England endowments, consisting of tithes and grants of land. Lord Addington's return of 1891 showed that the annual value of these endowments is £5,469,171, exclusive of modern benefactions amounting to £284,000 annually. Thirty-nine archbishops and bishops share £180,700 yearly between them. Large sums have been spent on the upkeep of bishop's palaces. In twenty years the Ecclesiastical Commission spent no

less than £170,000 upon episcopal residences. A considerable number of the lesser clergy are well paid, if not over-paid. In the City of London, for example, fifty-five rectors and vicars divide amongst them about £45,000 a year, without reckoning their parsonages. The whole resident population of the City is only a few thousands, a very large proportion being Jews and policemen, who do not often trouble the pew-owners.

Despite the plea of the Bishop of London, the bishops have not all died broken and ruined men. Some of them left large sums of money. The late Bishop of Colchester left estate valued at £60,848. Bishop Creighton, who used to talk of the fearful struggles of the wretched clergy to keep out of debt, left £29,500. Archbishops Tait and Benson each left £35,000. The biggest episcopal estate of recent years was that of Bishop Walsham How, who left £72,240. A good second to this was Bishop Tuffnell's £65,800. Bishop Phillpott left £60,000, whilst Archbishop Thomson left £55,000, and Bishop Trollope £50,790.

Apart from all this, the iniquitous Education Acts carried in this country since 1870 show that the Church, as a Church, is intent on public plunder in her own interests. Politically, the Established Church is the ally of the most reactionary body in the nation, and the votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords prove it beyond dispute. When Leon Gambetta declared that clericalism is the enemy, he knew it to be the enemy of justice and progress in France. We have a powerful clerical caste in this country. It pretends to be the champion of civilization, whilst its higher ecclesiastics are gorged with wealth, and its poor curates demand a living wage.

MIMNERMUS.

### Word-Power.

Society has just two mortal enemies—the man who will not speak his mind, and the man who tries to close the mouths of those who do not think as he does.—*T. L. M'Cready.*

Most people think that in intellectual and social movements we should be able to reckon up results just as we do in the production of material things. For example, a farmer sows so much seed and can figure out just what he ought to get for his labour when the crop is sold; and there are many people who think that when we speak or write with the object of creating public opinion for the truth, we ought to be able to reckon up results just as the farmer does. If they do not see those results they get discouraged; think that time and money are being wasted, and allow the work to go on without their help. But the work of the social reformer pertains to the mind, the morals, and the affections. We are not trying to do something that can be figured out and set down in a book, but to influence the thought and character of those who come under the range of our words. We are trying to get men to think aright, because right action must follow on right thought.

Nowadays, a great many people are very much dissatisfied with both the Church and the State, but they don't take the trouble to think it all out, and they are scared from expressing their doubts about both by the fear of losing their "respectability."

The masses of the people have, most undoubtedly, been humbugged by the Church and tyrannized over by the State for many centuries. By the false teaching of the clergy they have been brought to believe in an imaginary God, and an imaginary heaven and hell that does not exist. And by the false teaching of the orthodox economists, the workers of the world, whose labour has produced all the wealth that ever existed, have been induced to give a very large part of that wealth to a few

wealthy idlers who have produced nothing. Kings, landlords, and bondholders live in luxury without doing any useful work, and pass this legal privilege on to their heirs for ever. Whole volumes have been written to prove that interest, rent, and taxes, are fair and just; but they never can convince any thoughtful person than an able-bodied man or woman who does no work—such men and women as spend all their time in flirting, and gambling, and sport, and who pride themselves on belonging to the upper ten—I say that no amount of casuistry can convince me that such persons are not simply thieves. I know that most of them do not know this, and that the few who do know it do not know how they can avoid it, but there can be no doubt about the plain facts of the case.

It is a disgrace to the human race that this should be so. It is enough to make any thoughtful and sensitive person go crazy almost to visit the slums and tenement houses in which so many of our workers are condemned to pass their whole dreary lives, and then think of the privileged few whose whole object in life is the finding of new ways to amuse themselves, and to know that these sated and mostly unhappy idlers can live that way because the workers are robbed of a large part of their just wages.

Nobody can deny that this is a plain statement of the case in every civilized country to-day, and it is flatly impossible to reconcile it with the existence of a personal, good, and omnipotent God. There cannot be such a God and a London slum in the same universe. The two things are mutually exclusive, and you cannot explain such a contradiction by any appeal to mystery.

Nor is it possible to believe the story in the Gospels about Jesus Christ. He is there represented as a kind-hearted person and the God of the universe, the one who made it and runs it, and he is said to be able to answer prayers. It is also said that he left this world and went to sit upon a splendid throne in heaven, and that he is still sitting there, while the poor people, whom he loved, are being ruined, bodily, mentally, and morally, by the schemes of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom he hated. I cannot believe such a manifestly contradictory story. If he were such a good person, and had almighty power, he would long since have come back to earth to set things right.

All the wrongs of the working people are plain, horribly plain, to any thoughtful person; but there is no real remedy except to get them to think out the causes of those wrongs, which lie entirely in their own ignorance and superstition. Sometimes I fear that the masses will get just enough light to infuriate them, and that then they will take to pillaging and murdering people just because they are rich. That would be doing something, indeed, but it would be utterly useless, because nobody can be enlightened by violence.

It is, of course, true that the present unjust arrangements of society are maintained largely by violence, but the agents of the rulers are drawn from the masses themselves, in the form of soldiers, sailors, and police. The real trouble is that the masses do not think rightly. They passionately love the Church that deceives them, and idolize the politicians and monopolists that fleece them. This matter was put to their vote in England only a few weeks ago, and they deliberately placed in power the very men who have been so shamelessly robbing them for many years.

Supposing a violent revolution were to overthrow any existing Government to-morrow, another, and perhaps worse, would take its place, because the people are not yet enlightened enough to want their freedom. They like to give a part of their wages to an old man at Rome, who tells them that he is the vicegerent of God

on earth, and to subscribe largely to the upkeep of an army of clergy whose services to them are useless, if not harmful. They worship the politicians and plutocrats who prey upon them, and only wish that they were clever enough to achieve the same power of getting wealth without work. So there is no possible use in fighting, for no good can be accomplished until the great majority cease to like doing such stupid things, and then there will be no need for fighting.

When the people come to understand that the clergy and the spiritualistic mediums are of no earthly use to them, they will cease to support them.

When they understand that all paper titles to land are based on fraud or force, they will go to work on vacant land, and snap their fingers at the landlords.

When they understand that a sound and efficient paper currency can be supplied to them at a cost of only 10s. per £100, they will organize their own Mutual Banks, and refuse to be fleeced by the present ring of gold-based Banks.

When they understand the principles of co-operation, they will join the present Co-operative Movement, and thus escape from the clutches of the profiteers.

Most people think that the best way to get things done is to organize a political party. This is said to be the "practical," the "peaceful," way wherever the people have the ballot. But the ballot is merely a weathercock to show how the wind of public opinion is blowing, and has no effect whatever on the strength or direction of that wind. Moreover, it is an appeal to violence, and no statute law can be enforced against the wishes of any large section of the people. Was not Home Rule for Ireland obtained by the ballot five years ago? Yet it has not become operative, because Sir Edward Carson and his backers are still too strongly entrenched behind public opinion.

Listen to M'Cready:—

We let a lot of men assemble in a legislative hall and pass what they call laws to hinder us from doing wrong; and the result is, first, that we come to believe that nothing is wrong that is not illegal, and next that we develop a class of men whose business it is to tell us how to do wrong things without breaking the law. I say that all this is absurd—that it is retarding civilization. I say that whatever civilization we have exists in spite of statute law, and not because of it.

Don't think that nothing is being done by the *Freethinker*. We cannot see just what is being done, and perhaps we never may; but in the great emancipation of humanity that is even now dawning you may rest assured that thinking, talking, and writing will have been the only useful factors.

G. O. WARREN.

#### STUPIDITY.

The one enemy we have in this Universe is Stupidity, Darkness of Mind; of which darkness, again, there are many sources, every *sin* a source, and probably self-conceit the chief source. Darkness of mind, in every kind and variety, does to a really tragic extent abound; but of all the kinds of darkness, surely the Pedant darkness, which asserts and believes itself to be *light*, is the most formidable to mankind! For empires or for individuals there is but one class of men to be trembled at; and that is the Stupid Class, the class that cannot see, who alas are they mainly that will not see.—*Carlyle*.

I reverence truth as much as anybody; and when it has slipped us, if a man will but take me by the hand, and go quietly and search for it, as for a thing we have both lost, and can neither of us do well without.—I'll go to the world's end with him.—*Stearn*.

#### Acid Drops.

We are heartily glad that the Government was compelled to withdraw its proposed legislation which would have made it an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment for anyone to write or speak in such a way as was likely to prejudice recruiting. Had this passed, it would have been illegal to have said or written that armies ought not to exist, to advise any person not to join the Army, or to do or say anything that would lower the military in the opinion of the public. All that was needed to make Prussianization of Britain complete would have been to compel civilians to salute all military officers, or to give way to them in the streets. The destruction of militarism is an excellent thing—in Prussia. Some of our governors seem to see in it an opportunity for its establishment in England.

France was morally brave enough to undo the injustice of the Dreyfus sentence. It is to be hoped it will rise to the same level in the case of Vaillant, the murderer of Jaures, and Cottin, the attempted murderer of Clemenceau. The latter has been condemned to death for attempting, and the former liberated after succeeding. To liberate one man as a patriot because he killed a Socialist who supported the War, and to execute another because he attempted to kill a Socialist who supported the War, is a mere travesty of justice. If it had occurred in Russia, the papers would have been full of denunciations of the latest sample of Bolshevik barbarity.

Sir Frank Benson comes of a religious family, and that may account for his saying that the creed of the soldier was:—

God has been good to me in my life, I think when the call comes he will be as good to me as he can. I shall see him when the call comes, stooping forward and taking me by the hand.

Evidently Sir Frank Benson's soldiers are different from the ones we have come across. And we all know the piety of the soldiers when we meet them in trains, or trams, or in the street. We are afraid Sir Frank Benson has a very vivid imagination.

Rev. Dr. Groves, of Kansas, says that in his trip through England he found the Churches empty, as a rule. This was also the case in his own country. Dr. Groves is convinced that if the country does not alter it will go to hell, and adds there should be no poverty anywhere. We beg to remind Dr. Groves that Jesus said, "The poor ye have always with you," and it is quite evident that the New Testament contemplates the poor as a permanent social institution. As to hell—well, what decent people would dread is the Christian heaven.

Providence is not more concerned with parsons than with ordinary folk. The Rev. O. R. Owen, a Welsh Calvinistic minister, was killed whilst cycling. He was knocked down by a runaway horse.

As a War memorial, electric light is to be installed, and the heating improved, at the Church of St. Helen, Bishopsgate. It is a very quaint "memorial" of the parsons who were too proud to fight. It reminds us of the lady who used to commemorate her husband's birthday by buying herself a new costume.

According to the press, Pastor Eaton, a Baptist clergyman of New York, is vastly popular on account of his use of "swear words in driving home his points." There is very little to make a fuss of. A man who damns the majority of the human race will, naturally, curse a number of other things.

A Sunday-school boy was charged at Tower Bridge Court with setting fire to a Bermondsey mission-hall. It was stated that he stuffed the organ with Bibles and Prayer-books, and applied a light to it. Quite an example of the value of religious education.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's advocacy of Spiritualism has led to a lot of controversy, some of which will not be welcomed by the bogey-men. Some time ago, Sir Arthur stated in a magazine that "the most extraordinary" messages from the dead were those which led to the discovery of the lost Edgar Chapel at Glastonbury Abbey. He strongly urged all to read these messages in early English script and Latin. Since that a clever scholar has examined carefully these so-called spirit messages, and declares them to be not in the language of the time, but "Wardour Street" faked English. He added the caustic remark: "Give me a gang of men with spades, and without any ghostly aid, I will find you all the foundations that remain at Glastonbury."

Shakespeare said man was "the paragon of animals," and he has the support of Darwin, Huxley, and the consensus of scientific opinion of the civilized world. According to the Rev. G. S. S. Kennedy, better known as "Woodbine Willie," "all these men are liars, because the statement is a stupid, thoughtless, brainless lie, completely false to facts." Indeed, the statement is also "the supreme blasphemy." So these great men are blasphemers as well as liars. Presumably, "Woodbine Willie" knows that a blasphemer is one who brings religion into contempt. Which better deserves the title, Shakespeare or "Woodbine Willie"?

"Europe has been driven mad by lies," sagely observes the Rev. G. S. S. Kennedy. There is some truth in the remark. Such, for instance, as the lie of the divine right of kings.

The Salvation Army advertises "Four Days with God" in Manchester, and adds: "Conducted by Mrs. General Booth." It sounds as though it were a Cook's tour with Mrs. Booth as guide. Anyway, it is a good stroke to have secured "God" for four days in Ancoats.

Among the many items of stealing, swindling, etc., in connection with Army supplies and payments, says the Auditor-General in his last report, was the sum of £675 overpayment to clergymen for ministrations to prisoners of war. According to the *Star* of April 2, the official comment is that, as the money was received in good faith, "it would be inequitable to recover from the clergymen." We should like to know more about that "good faith."

Christians are becoming quite humane to one another. Canon Veazey, head of St. Mark's Church, Camberwell, presided at a "recognition service" for the new pastor of a local Baptist chapel.

The Bishop of Winchester has been presenting some knotty problems in the *Diocesan Chronicle*. One of them is, "How many Labour men if they were employers would not think as employers do?" Unfortunately, mother Church has such curious ideas of employment. She pays the bachelor Bishop of London £200 weekly, and a poor curate, with twelve children, a few shillings.

Prebendary Carlile is making appeals for money on behalf of the Church Army, and the appeals are headed "In loving memory of the Great White Army, which gave itself to uphold the Right and to save England." It is a pretty trick, for the money collected goes to further the ends of the Black Army.

"J. M.," in the *North Eastern Daily Gazette*, says:—

I am sure all thoughtful readers must have noted recently the suggestive remark on Councillor Sockett, when the Town Clerk announced that rooms were available and to let for office purposes in a Presbyterian Church, in Corporation Road. Three chapels—one in Linthorpe Road, another in Corporation Road, and the last in Marton Road—are offered for sale for secular purposes. This state of things should awaken ministers and leaders of religion to the uselessness of chapel buildings. A few weeks ago, I went to a Nonconformist church to hear a discourse on "Self-culture." It was

an able and excellent sermon. Yet, including myself, there were five grown-up men to hear it; the rest were women and children. Certainly the Church of England at her full services is well attended. But still there is the oft-repeated observation three out of every four are of the female sex.

The same writer says he saw a church that was being used as a communal kitchen. Where the pulpit stood was a cooking apparatus, and where the minister once stood was potato peelings, dripping tins, etc. But we dare swear that the church was never before put to so excellent a use.

It is difficult for ordinary folk to understand why the Bishop of London, Father Bernard Vaughan, and so many prominent Free Church ministers so often libel the community in their sermons. These black-coated medicine-men, of various denominations, are always telling people that they are going to the Devil. Perhaps the real reason of their common sorrow is the dearth of threepenny-bits in the collection bags.

The majority of children in Belfast, said Sir Edward Carson in the House of Commons, pass into industry at the age of ten or eleven. That is a fine comment on the value of the intense religiosity of the city. Between them, Presbyterian parson and Catholic priest rule the roost. But neither are in the least upset at this exploitation of children. Christianity is a delightful thing in itself, but when it becomes allied with money-making, it is perfectly lovely.

Mr. Harry Furniss throws some interesting sidelights on the inner life of the clergy in his Parliamentary reminiscences. He says: "The Chaplain to the House in those days, the Hon. and Rev. F. Byng, was another jolly Bohemian—outside Westminster. His little Bohemian suppers at his club were highly popular." That is how some parsons take up their crosses and follow their Saviour.

Better late than never! The candidates at a confirmation service at Whettlesey, near Peterborough, included a woman of ninety-four years of age, and a man of eighty.

The late Canon Albert Wilde left estate to the value of £11,499. He should go to the same warm place as the Rev. W. J. Swayne, of Clifton, who left £27,409.

"Doth God care for oxen?" is a question asked in the New Testament. It seems as if Providence were equally contemptuous of human life. In France alone, 800,000 persons are suffering from consumption.

At Christie's Sale Rooms, a pearl necklace was sold for £6,600, and a diamond tiara realized £3,750. Yet English people profess to worship a pauper-god, who extolled the blessings of poverty.

Under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, a social club, including a cinema and a swimming bath, is to be erected in West Ham. A preliminary newspaper puff states that "the interest of employers in this district is going to provide a magnificent club building." It is decidedly curious how the Christian religion is so constantly associated with "the interest of employers."

When I seriously believe a thing, I say so in a few words, leaving the reader to determine what my belief is worth. But I do not choose to temper down every expression of personal opinion into courteous generalities, and so lose space, and time, and intelligibility at once. We are utterly oppressed in these days by our courtesies, and considerations, and compliances, and proprieties. Forgive me them, this once, or rather let us all forgive them to each other, and learn to speak plainly first, and, if it may be, gracefully afterwards; and not only to speak, but to stand by what we have spoken.

—Ruskin.

## NOTICE.

THE *Freethinker* is now distributed to the Trade through all the principal wholesale Newspaper Agents, and may be ordered from any Newsagent or from Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son's railway bookstalls. To those who wish to have the *Freethinker* supplied through the post the terms are: 3 months, 2s. 8d.; 6 months, 5s. 3d.; 12 months, 10s. 6d., post free.

## O. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 13, Glasgow; April 27, South Place, London.

## To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Louis Levine, 7s. 9d.

J. HARRIS (Middlesboro).—We are sorry you are not getting your *Freethinker* regularly. It is entirely the fault of the newsagents, and we hope that you will bring as much pressure to bear on them as is possible. We do our best at this end in the same direction.

TYNESIDE.—We are sending what you desire. If more needed let us know. If a suitable hall could be obtained in Newcastle we would be pleased to pay a visit and "stir things up."

G. E. F.—MSS. received with thanks.

C. S.—It is not a question of sanity so much as a readiness to accept certain conclusions towards which one is predisposed. The fact of people who have lost someone they loved dearly attending these spiritualistic meetings introduces an element almost fatal to an unbiased judgment.

S. LAW.—Clever and amusing, but, from a literary point of view, hardly up to standard. Thanks all the same; also for your good wishes.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—T. A. Matthews, 5s.; Nuneaton Branch, 3s.

N.S.S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—T. M. Gorman, 2s. 6d.

B. F. B.—Shall be pleased to see MSS. and will give it a careful consideration. Our comments seemed justifiable on the facts before us.

C. ROGERSON.—There is no clear proof of a future life that we have ever come across. All we have met is groundless assertion and unwarrantable inferences.

J. NEIL.—Thanks for cutting.

T. W. H.—Much obliged for parcel of cuttings. Will be very useful. Shall hope to meet you again before the year is out.

F. C. W.—Pleased to know that you were able to make such good use of our *Christianity and Slavery* in the local press. Naturally, it is a story Christians would prefer to forget.

B. N. B.—Extra posters being sent. Pleased to know that your newsagent received thirteen readers as a result of displaying the posters. Thanks for your efforts in the matter.

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.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

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 of marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (April 13) Mr. Cohen lectures twice—12 o'clock and 6.30—in the Good Templars' Hall, Ingram Street, Glasgow. We have no doubt there will be the usual good meetings, but we hope that all the local saints will do their best to bring a Christian friend along with them.

The "No Returns" order has been withdrawn, and the *Freethinker* is now supplied to the trade on the old conditions of "On sale or return." There is nothing to prevent newsagents now displaying the paper, except their unwillingness to do so, and we look to our readers helping to overcome this. We thought that with the new rise in wages, a reduction of hours, and twelve days holiday each year (paid for) which was agreed on a few weeks ago, expenses would have remained stationary for a time. A still further increase in wages is, however, imminent, and we must exert ourselves still more to meet the extra expense. There is, therefore, every necessity for all concerned to exert themselves to the utmost.

Here is an example of the way in which the *Freethinker* strikes a new-comer. The writer is on one of our naval vessels:—

Having read one or two of 1915 *Freethinkers*, I am surprised at what I read, and feel inclined to ask for more; so would you send on six months' *Freethinkers*?

We take this as an example of personal propaganda, and print it to encourage others.

## From a South African reader:—

We are but a small band of *Freethinker* readers here—so far as I can discover, but I cannot resist telling you with what pleasurable anticipation we look forward to the arrival of our paper.....May I also take the opportunity of expressing our admiration for the wonderful way in which you have held on during the war period. The difficulties called for exercise of courage and judgment. You have won through with distinction, and I for one shall henceforth regard the future without fear.

Unasked appreciation is pleasant and inspires to renewed efforts.

A course of three special lectures has been arranged at the South Place Institute under the auspices of the N.S.S. The first will be on April 27 when the lecturer will be Mr. Cohen. The second is on May 4, and Mr. J. T. Lloyd will occupy the platform; the concluding lecture will be by Mr. Harry Snell. Slips advertising the lectures have been printed, and we ask the help of our London friends in seeing that these are well distributed. A supply can be obtained either from Miss Vance or from the *Freethinker* office.

The members of the Glasgow Branch had their usual Sunday morning meeting last Sunday, when there was a good attendance. "A. Z.," an old friend just returned from his War service, gave an address on "The War and the Death of God," which was much enjoyed. After some interesting discussion, arrangements were completed for Mr. Cohen's strenuous week in Scotland, which promises to be a great success.

Her many friends will be glad to learn that, despite the cry of "Atheist!" raised against her, Miss Vance has come out top of the poll for her Ward at the election for the St. Pancras Board of Guardians on Saturday last.

Mr. H. C. Latimer Voight has a good and telling letter in the *Hendon and Finchley Times* on the question of the Sunday opening of Picture Palaces. We gather from the letter that the editor of the paper is also advocating their opening. There are, indeed, many signs that British Sabbatarianism is on its last legs.

The last lecture of the North London Debating Society will be given on Sunday next, when Mr. T. H. Elstob, a Vice-President of the N.S.S., and an esteemed member of the Newcastle Branch, will give an address on "Psychology of Spiritualism," a subject he is well qualified to deal with. The local Spiritualists have been invited, and we are looking forward to a most interesting evening.

Before you exist for others it behoves you to exist for yourself; before giving you must first acquire.—*Matterlinck.*

## Man's Discovery of the World.

### III.

(Continued from p. 169.)

GENERATIONS passed when, at the opening of the fourteenth century, an eminent physician, Peter of Abano, ventured to advocate the theory of the antipodes, together with other unpalatable scientific heresies. But the Church was determined to destroy the apostles of unscriptural science, and this bold thinker only eluded the fangs of the Inquisition by a fortunate death. Another luckless pioneer was Cecco d'Ascoli, an inquirer, famous for his astronomical studies. D'Ascoli's enemies insinuated his fondness for sorcery. He was stripped of his professor's robe, banished from Bologna, and burned alive at Florence. His tragic death was hailed as a well-merited punishment for his earthly sins, and the artist, Orcagna, was praised for his picture of the martyr's unspeakable sufferings as he moaned amid the flames of eternal hell.

With the deepening knowledge of the time many thoughtful men must have secretly inclined to the true belief. But so powerful was the sacerdotal spirit both among ecclesiastics and laymen that none dared openly avow his adherence to the detested antipodean doctrine.

We all remember the celebrated picture in which Columbus is depicted as he strives to convince his clerical adversaries that the world is round. Yet, even after the discovery of the New World, the popes and cardinals refused to recognize the truth. For, when settling the rivalries of Spain and Portugal to the newly found lands of the Western hemisphere, Pope Alexander VI., in 1493, proceeded on the assumption of a flat earth. The line of demarcation drawn between the territories of the contending States by papal decree produced great confusion. Pope Julius II. was driven to attempt another settlement of the differences between Spain and her neighbour. This also gave rise to angry disputes. Naturally, the curved surface of a sphere refuses to conform to the lines laid down on a plane surface, for this was what the divinely guided popes imagined the earth to be. As White says:—"The lines set down by Popes Alexander and Julius may still be found upon the maps of the period, but their bulls have quietly passed into the catalogue of ludicrous errors."

Although the orthodox remained as obstinate as ever in their attitude towards enlightenment, still, compromise was in the air. In 1519, Magellan circumnavigated the globe. Not only did this renowned voyage demonstrate for all time the rotundity of the earth, but it established the existence of the antipodes beyond all question. The children of Nature who dwelt within view of the constellations of the southern sky were seen by the sailors who served with Magellan's expedition. Yet so unwilling are men to abandon error that for fully two centuries later there were many who denied the existence of the antipodes. The exploits of the navigators were seconded and supported by the proofs afforded by the astronomers and mathematicians, until at last the very missionaries returned with tidings of people to whom to the Christian religion was previously unknown. The testimony of that zealous Catholic missionary, Acostas, is accessible in Grimston's quaint rendering of his work:—

Whatsoever Lactantius saith, we that now live in Peru, and inhabite that parte of the worlde which is opposite to Asia and their Antipodes, finde not ourselves to bee hanging in the aire, our heads downward and our feete on high.

Thus was the bitter conflict of over a thousand years ended with the complete victory of science.

It is well worth noting that during the period when the Church has apparently succeeded in subordinating science to Scriptural authority the dawn of a fairer day had risen in non-Christian lands. The Arabians in Western Asia and Northern Africa, and a little later in Spain, as well as the Norsemen of Scandinavia—the one a Moslem and the other a heathen race—were then advancing man's knowledge of the earth. The Viking voyagers in their earlier enterprises made many important discoveries. The Arabs enjoyed and profited by their control of the leading centres of classical culture in Asia and Africa. Draper and others have shown that no race ever manifested a greater affection for knowledge or a keener appreciation of the value of science. Any sincere Christian who studies this period of Arabian splendour and compares it with the contemporary mental darkness of the environing countries dominated by the Church will be moved by feelings of shame.

One feature only in Moslem achievement was absent, and that was their ability to realize the importance of a wider acquaintance with the secrets of the sea. The revolution in thought subsequently accomplished through maritime adventure owed little or nothing to Arabian initiative. Those geographical discoveries which coincided with astronomical advance at the time of the Renaissance were entirely dependent upon the fearless explorers who went down to the sea in ships. Still, as Beazley remarks:—

Leaving on one side their achievements in chemistry, in physics, or in mathematics, and looking only to their geography, we shall find the contrast between Islam and Christendom more and more sharply defined in this age, if judged not by faith but by works, by contemporary monuments rather than by the prejudice of later times.

Moreover, the Arabs preserved and handed down to us the ancient Greek geography which would otherwise have been lost for ever, while they also progressed beyond their earlier preceptors. No Christian writer prior to the thirteenth century could approach the Arabs in their earth knowledge. Well constructed globes and excellently drawn maps were common in Islam long generations before globes were known, or maps had passed out of the most childish and fabulous stage in Christian Europe.

To Arabian travellers we owe a more extensive acquaintance and greatly improved connections with China, India, and the Further East. In fact, these pioneer geographers gave us our first adequate conception of the vastness of the Asiatic continent. In Africa, the Moslems were the earliest civilized people who penetrated beyond the Sahara or explored the Ethiopian continent along the Zanzibar coast. The steppes of Russia were first brought within the ken of civilization by the commercial travels of Saracen merchants. In the days of the undivided Caliphate, the Arabs were most favourably situated to pursue their overland undertakings.

The scientific spirit so splendidly displayed in Arabian achievement owed nothing to religion. The science of the Jewish Scriptures is no more worthless than that of the Moslem Koran. Everywhere in Islam, particularly in Saracen Spain, the Koran was either circumvented or disregarded by the most illustrious disciples of science.

Nor is the comparatively insular outlook of Mohammed as reflected in the Koran to be wondered at. His knowledge of the earth's extent was strictly limited. But his conquering successors, who swept all before their



victorious march over vast tracts of territory, became acquainted with countries and races unknown to the Prophet. Nor were the Arabs disdainful of the knowledge subject peoples could impart. Mohammed commanded the faithful to "seek knowledge even in China." They obeyed, and chose learned Hebrews and Nestorian heretics as their teachers. The Nestorians were employed as pedagogues and doctors; and Monotheistic Jews not only found shelter from Christian animosity, but their scholars and medical practitioners enjoyed both high honour, and emolument.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

### The Seance.

JONES was overflowing with his new fancy of Spiritualism. The newest revelation had hit him very hard. "Marvellous manifestations! Absolutely convincing messages from the dead! Fraud impossible under the conditions!" And so on. We listened to him with resignation. In the next three months he would be gummed on to some other absurdity, and it was just his fickleness that made him bearable. Certainly, no one could accuse him of being monotonous. Meantime he made us mentally bilious with his babble about the life of the dead. I wish he could be made to perceive the deadness of some of the living. He was dabbling in photography at the time of his conversion to spookism, and began to find spiritual evidences in the atrocious prints he got from his underexposed and blurred negatives. Having made, unknowingly, two exposures on the same plate, he became firmly convinced that he had secured a spirit photograph, and the evidence of the camera was flaunted in our faces for many days. Then came experiments with an instrument called a planchette, a thing resembling a palette on castors, and fitted with a downward holder for a pencil. The planchette was placed on a large sheet of white paper which was spread on a table. Two or more persons placed the ends of their fingers on the instrument, and as the muscles of their arms became fatigued, the planchette made erratic movements on the paper, which sometimes resulted in the pencil scrawling "rats," or some similar manifestation of psychic influence. Jones bought all sorts of weird contrivances for writing, talking, scratching, tapping, rattling, and ringing messages to the dead. Mrs. Jones patiently endured her husband's new hobby, and fervently hoped for the best; otherwise she would have been deranged by the mental guys her husband brought home with him to help in calling up spooks. But Jones was not getting sufficient return for the money he had already spent on the spirits—that is to say, the dead were not enough alive for him. He approached me concerning the matter. I considered a moment. "Why not hold a *seance* in a haunted house, five miles away from civilization?" I suggested. Jones looked dubiously at me, then became very excited. "The very thing," he shouted; "you have put me on the right track!" I may mention that Jones' mother was Welsh and his grandfather Irish. He consumed the following ten days in quest of the sort of haunted house he wanted, and got it. Jones is no dawdler, however fickle he may be, and he makes the ground hot when he tries for anything. We heard a lot about that haunted house, for Jones took a foggy photograph of it, and talked about it as though he were a highly paid estate agent. In fact, his description so affected us that we felt our melancholy would not be complete until we had seen the haunted house.

Usually I spend Saturday afternoons in a lazy fashion,

therefore I felt somewhat out of my element on the particular Saturday afternoon when our party set out to hold a *seance* at the haunted house. We numbered eight persons—Jones, myself, two gentlemen friends of ours, and two lady and two gentlemen members of Jones' spook society. We made a railway journey of twelve miles, and arrived at Mud Hollow, the place of the haunted house. Jones had brought with him a copy of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," I had my violin, and the spook people had brought a sort of sistrum, which looked like a Chinese puzzle of steel wire with small bells attached to it.

In my opinion, the scenery at Mud Hollow is not beautiful. Speaking generally, Mud Hollow is a marshy wood intersected by oozy ditches, the trees are thickly moss-grown, and it is known as a "very rheumatically country." As soon as I perceived the miry monotony of Mud Hollow, I very earnestly remarked to Jones, "I hope we shall not lose the last train to London."

A walk of two miles, in which we climbed two dilapidated stiles, crossed a small field which had not been properly dried, and passed down a forest path which was ankle-deep with decayed leaves, brought us to the haunted house. I shivered at the aspect it presented, but Jones and his spooky friends looked as if they had "struck oil."

"An ideal spot for psychic research," said one of the spook-hunters, "don't you think so, Mr. Jones?" Mr. Jones did think so, perfectly agreed with the speaker, then we entered the mouldering pile. A strong earthy smell assailed our nostrils as we stepped inside, the house reeked of damp, and the walls and floors were green with mildew.

The short wintry day was quickly gliding to darkness, and the mystery of night was stealing into the wood and lurking about the derelict house. There was a distant sound of running water, and an eerie rustling of leaves that seemed to me like uncanny whispering. Jones had lighted a small lantern he had brought with him, and its dismal flicker just made us visible to each other.

In order to put us in a proper frame of mind, Jones began to recite "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." I must confess that I was not very attentive, and only partially heard the reading of the poem. I remember "glittering eye" and "skinny hand," "From the fiends that plague thee so," and "slimy things did crawl with legs upon the slimy sea." Further snatches were: "The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she," and "The stars were dim, and thick the night," and "there the dead men lay."

Jones got so far as "The dead men gave a groan," when he intimated to me that it was time to oblige with the violin. So I wailed and moaned out a "Valse Triste," a diabolical composition, which must have been written by a man whose liver was quite out of order. I know that the nerves of us all were on edge before I had finished, and one of the spooky friends of Jones accompanied me with the sistrum. At this moment one of Jones' lady friends began to talk in a babbling fashion. Her voice sounded strangely far away to me, a numbness to my present surroundings came over my mind, then I seemed to be squatting beside a fire in the wood outside in company of an old man and a young woman. But the habit of my companions startled me. Both were long-haired, unkempt, and wore skins. Looking down at my body, I was amazed to find that I was clad as they were. The scene changed, the old man was dead, and the woman and I were regarding him with sorrow and wonder. I placed food on his lips and asked him to wake up, but he remained supremely indifferent. Days went by and he still slept, but it was not possible for us to remain near

him now, so we covered him with branches of trees and leaves and much undergrowth. The scene changed again. We were again seated before a fire under the trees, the woman and I, and I was telling her how I had walked and spoken with the old man while I slept, that we had hunted together and fought enemies. She replied that she had watched while I had slept but she had not seen the old man, that I had not moved from the spot and only had muttered in my sleep. In particular, I wondered at my using in my sleep a stone axe which I had dropped into a deep river many days ago. Two days later we met a company of our tribe, and I talked with them about my sleep experiences. They all said they had had similar adventures, and that some of them had fought against men who had been eaten by bears a long time ago. We were greatly puzzled, but had we not seen these things with our own eyes! There was one very perplexing thing; weapons we made or game we killed in our sleep could not be brought by us to where we slept. We concluded that something we had, did all these things while we slept, and that something was most likely the shadow that followed us about on the ground in the daytime. Everything had a shadow, the tree, the stone, the axe, the spear, the bear, and men, women, and children. Yes, that was it, the shadows did all these things while we slept. I pondered this as I sat by the fire that night, when I was suddenly shaken by the shoulder. Like a flash the fire and the trees disappeared, and I was again looking at Jones and the other members of the seance party.

"You've been asleep," growled Jones. "We thought a manifestation was about to be given us, and it was only you beginning to snore."

JAMES H. WATERS.

### April.

THE month, from its associations, has acquired a significance of its own; the name of it, even, falls like the sound of bells, with silv'ry cadence on the ear, cheerful and inspiring, sweet with the hopes and longings of weary winter days, written in shining filagree across the "mental screen," on a ground of fleecy white, rich green, deep azure, and fading russet hues, giving place to vernal bud and grass and flower, all smiles and tears, all softly shaken by the gentle breeze. Such is the vision and the anticipation; but March is too often a greedy borrower, and April a too generous lender to her hard-featured and austere sister. The valley may be filled with sunshine, the roads dry and dusty, but the wind is cold, and distant or near, the snowy hills hold the landscape in their chill embrace. The snowdrops have come and gone, the primrose should be here, and even the violet bathed in dew, but vision and reality are at variance, or as Keats says:—

The passions will rock thee,  
As the storm rocks the ravens on high;  
Bright reason will mock thee,  
Like the Sun from a wintry sky.

But we have survived the Winter, we can await the tardy Spring. We have (some of us) survived the War, let us enjoy the peace and establish it.

A. M.

### Correspondence.

#### POLAND AND THE JEWS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have read your "Views and Opinions" in the issue of March 30; with the usual interest in, and admiration for everything that falls from your pen; but, with your kind permission, I would like to express my dissent from only one statement in the above issue. I am sure you made it in perfect good faith, but based it on information, of the falsity of which you were not aware. I am alluding to page 150, line 4,

of the part entitled "Why not civilize the Christians," which runs as follows:—"if they (the Jews) are to be outraged and murdered in Poland, as they have so long been outraged in Christian Russia, etc." It seems to me when you were writing those lines you had in your mind the newspaper reports of the Lemberg pogrom, supposed to have occurred there several weeks ago. I am a daily and diligent student of the *current history of the world*, and remember no other Jew-pogrom in Poland in the columns of the Press except that of Lemberg. My own experience and the study of Polish History enables me to assert that hatred of the Jews has never been a Polish characteristic as it was that of Western nations in ages past, and still is that of the Russians and Roumanians. And having made inquiries in proper quarters, I unhesitatingly declare the Lemberg pogrom to be an abominable and atrocious Hun lie, the aim of which was to slander the Poles—Germany's past and present enemies—and discredit them in the minds of the Entente Powers now discussing the terms of peace to be imposed on Germany, the constitution of the League of Nations and the fate of the provinces of which the Huns robbed Poland within the last 150 years or thereabouts. No lie is too mean, too dishonourable, for the Huns to utter and spread abroad if only it will save for them the Grand Duchy of Posen, the cradle of the Polish race, the rich mines of Silesia, that belonged to Poland not many hundreds of years ago, and Western Prussia, with Danzig, that was lost to Poland finally in 1814. All these lands are still inhabited by Poles, either in majorities or in respectable minorities. The Entente Powers, however, were too well informed to believe the Hun lie concerning the imaginary Lemberg pogrom, and never for a moment ceased to help the Poles in their struggle against Russian Ruthenian German, and now also Hungarian Bolshevism. Only a few days ago I read a "wire," or "wireless" in newspapers stating that all parties in Poland, the Jews included, were unanimously pulling together in favour of the Entente Powers. I must also point out that at the time when the Huns invented the Lemberg pogrom and accused the Poles of it, the latter were fighting the Ruthenians *i.e.*, the Ukrainians, the sworn enemies and pogromists of the Jews, many of whom actively aided the Poles. I should have exposed this Hun Lemberg lie more extensively knowing that there are but few Poles in London, and fewer still who are sufficiently acquainted with English as *she is spoke*, or as *she is wrote*, to undertake the task, but unfortunately I am close upon 78, the infirmities of old age press upon me heavily and my health has been troublesome for months past. I have however, written this protest, because I earnestly desire my fellow Freethinkers to have a right opinion of the Poles, and you, dear sir, were not the first of them, who, to my knowledge, believed the Hun lie concerning the Lemberg pogrom, and that the Poles were the perpetrators thereof.

Thanking you in anticipation for the insertion of the above.

B. F. B.

#### RUSSIA—THE REAL TRUTH.

SIR,—Dr. Lyttelton concludes his article by saying that "there are various books I could recommend to any reader who may care to send a postcard, with his address." This is a very thoughtful suggestion, and as one good turn deserves another, I should like to recommend to Dr. Lyttelton Ernest Moulin, a Belgian, who has written in the *Daily Herald* on the Bolsheviks:—

If I have any political prejudices they are certainly against the Bolshevik system. I do not believe in it..... These stories of wild orgies and terrorism are monstrous falsifications. Never, since the Revolution, has such good order been maintained as at present in the territory embraced in Soviet Russia.....How is it a whole society, millions of people, become thus deceived? If it is sheer ignorance what is our press doing? If it is organized misrepresentation, what are the forces which can thus deceive half mankind?

I would just like to say that Ernest Moulin speaks Russian fluently, and has lived twenty years in Russia among all classes of Russian society.

F. C. W.

One hour in the execution of justice is worth seventy years of prayer.—*Mohammedan Proverb.*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 3.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Davidson, Eager, Gallagher, Gorniot, Kelf, Lazarnick, Leat, Moss, Neate, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Spence, Miss Kough, Miss Pankhurst, Miss Pitcher, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members were received for Belfast, Birmingham, Coventry, Glasgow, Goldthorpe, Maesteg, Manchester, Newcastle, North London, Rhondda, Southampton, South London, and the Parent Society, thirty-two in all.

The President reported large and enthusiastic meetings at Belfast and Leeds on the occasion of his recent visits, in consequence of which greatly increased activities were expected in the near future.

Correspondence from the Southampton and West Ham Branches and with Mr. W. Heaford were dealt with.

Invitations for the reception of the Whit-Sunday Conference were received from both Birmingham and Manchester Branches, and the Secretary was instructed to ask all Branches to record their voting in favour of one of these towns before the 15th inst., by which date all notices of motion for the agenda must be received.

Messrs. Kelf and Roger and Miss Pitcher were elected for the Agenda Committee.

The Secretary formally reported her attendance at the hearing of the charge against Freethinkers recently reported in these columns. Her action was endorsed, and the President called attention to a circular issued by a person quite unconnected with the Society, asking for contributions for an alleged special object, and hoped whenever the name of the N.S.S. was used, unofficially, inquiries would be made of the General Secretary.

E. M. VANCE, General Secretary.

Obituary.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—At the Mere Knolls Cemetery, Fulwell, near Sunderland, on April 1, were interred the remains of the late John Proctor, a typical Wearsider, who passed away in his ninety-sixth year. Although retired from business for some time, he was still active until recently. His recollection of local history almost covered the century, and up to the age of ninety-three he was able to recite canto after canto of Milton from memory. Formerly a member of the Free Associate Church, founded by Mr. Wm. Brockie, for many years he had been a staunch and generous supporter of the Freethought Movement and its leaders. In obedience to a last request, on behalf of the South Shields Branch, Mr. R. Chapman read the Secular Burial Service of Austin Holyoake in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends.—R. C.

Mr. Charles McDiarmid, after a long and painful illness, died on February 28 at Fort William, and was buried at the Craggs Cemetery. For many years a member of the Glasgow Clarion Field Club, a lover of Nature, and a regular reader of the *Freethinker*.—J. F. S.

PRINTING.

Under Healthy Conditions, Trade Union Hours and Rates of Pay.

Send me a Trial Order. Estimates for any Class of Work.

Quality and Value my Working Motto.

W. H. HEARSON,  
Printer,  
UTTOXETER.

The Humanitarian works by Joachim Kaspary, out of print, can be studied in the Reading Room of the British Museum, London. They will, however, be Revised and Published as soon as possible.

THE FOLLOWING WORKS ARE IN PRINT.

1. International Peace. Price 2d., post free ... 1898
2. The Guide of Life and the Ethics of Humanitarian Deism compared with those of Christianity and Buddhism ... 1899  
Price for Poor People, 2s., post free.  
Price for Rich People, 21s., post free.
3. The Humanitarian View of the British-Boer War, of the Chinese Question, and of the Restoration and Maintenance of Peace. Price 6d., post free ... 1901
4. An Addition to the Humanitarian View of the British-Boer War, etc. Price 2d., post free ... 1902
5. The Humanitarian View of the Fiscal Question ... 1904  
Price 2d., post free.
6. Humanitarian Deism. Price 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1904
7. Self-Knowledge, or the Humanitarian Psychology ... 1904  
Price 1d., post free 1½d.
8. The Life of the Real Jesus. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1904
9. The Character of the Apostles. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1904
10. The Humanitarian View of the Public School Question ... 1904  
Price 3d., post free.
11. The Life and Character of Paul ... 1905  
Price 1d., post free, 1½d.
12. The Primitive Christians. Price 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1905
13. The Humanitarian Protest against Christian Blasphemies, Slanders, and Superstition ... 1905  
Price 1d., post free 1½d.
14. The Humanitarian Protest against Atheist Conceit, Ignorance, and Sophistries. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1905
15. The Humanitarian Protest against the Devil Worship of Unitarian Christianity. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1905
16. The Permanent Settlement of the Unemployed and School Questions. Price 1d., post-free 1½d. ... 1906
17. The Dishonesty of Broad Churchism and the Humanitarian Review of The Rev. R. J. Campbell's "The New Theology." Price 2d., post free 2½d. ... 1907
18. The Humanitarian Address to the Congregation of Westminster Chapel.  
The Abolition of Legal Murder, miscalled Capital Punishment.  
The Humanitarian Manifesto for the General Election.  
The above 3 pamphlets together, 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1909
19. Lady Cook on the Franchise for Women, and Joachim Kaspary on the Wise Home Rule Bill, and Home Rule Letters. Price 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1910
20. Real Liberalism and Real Progress against Sham Liberalism and Disguised Conservatism... 1910  
Price 1d., post free 1½d.
21. The Political Crisis and Eternity against The Origin of Species. Price 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1910
22. The Humanitarian Foreign and Home Policy. Also Humanitarian Salvation against Christian Damnation. Price 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1912
23. International Peace and the Termination and Prevention of Strikes and Lock-Outs. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1912
24. Wars of Conquest, or Wholesale Robbery and Wholesale Murders. Price 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1912
25. The Balkan-Turkish War and the Humanitarian Defence of Jesus against Christianity. ... 1913  
Price 1d., post free 1½d.
26. International Peace Armaments ... 1913  
Price 1d., post free 1½d.
27. The Restoration and Maintenance of Peace... 1915  
Price 1d., post free 1½d.
28. The Science of Reincarnation, or the Eternity of the Soul. Price 10s. 6d. nett, post free ... 1917
29. Dr. Woodrow Wilson's Oration and the Prevention of Future Wars. Price 1d., post free 1½d.
30. The League of Nations. War Price 6d., post free 6½d. 1918  
If any of the above published works cannot be obtained through Newspaper Agents or Booksellers, please order direct, enclosing Stamps or Postal Orders, from

J. KASPARY & CO.,  
Sole Selling Agents for the British Empire and U.S.A. for The Humanitarian Publishing Society, Ltd., 58 City Road, London, E.C. 1.

**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.**

**METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY** (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, W., near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. E. Baker, "Why I am a Secularist."

**NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.** (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, T. H. Elstob, "The Psychology of Spiritualism."

**SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.** (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. Percy S. Wilde, Lantern Lecture, "Man's Kinship with the Lower Animals."

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY** (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Dying Creeds."

**OUTDOOR.**

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

**COUNTRY.**  
**INDOOR.**

**GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S.** (The Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 12 noon, "Why Men Believe in God"; 6.30, "Freethought, Religion, and Death," (Silver Collection.)

**LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY.**—Members meet every Sunday evening at 5.45 for Business and Discussion at Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds. New and intending Members please note.

**LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY** (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta, "Bold Robin and the Babes." Performed by the Children of the Secular Sunday School. (Silver Collection.)

**SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Rev. J. Vint Laughland, "All the World's a Stage."

**SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S.** (Victoria Hall Buildings, First Floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Fothergill, "Happiness"; 7.15, Business Meeting.

**LANCASTER AND MORCAMBE.**—Readers in this district are invited to communicate with Mr. C. E. Hill, Blea Tarn.

**THE LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY** are in want of capable Freethought Speakers and Lecturers for Outdoor Propaganda during the coming summer months. Those within an easy distance of Leeds please communicate in first instance with the Secretary, A. RADLEY, 9 Grosvenor View, Blackman Lane, Leeds.

**PIONEER LEAFLETS.**

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

- No. 1. What Will You Put in Its Place?
- No. 2. What is the Use of the Clergy?
- No. 3. Dying Freethinkers.
- No. 4. The Beliefs of Unbelievers.
- No. 5. Are Christians Inferior to Freethinkers?
- No. 6. Does Man Desire God?

Price 1s. 6d. per 100.  
(Postage 3d.)

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

**Population Question and Birth-Control.**

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE

**MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE,**

48 BROADWAY, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1.

**NOW READY.**

**The Jewish Life of Christ**

BEING THE  
**SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU,**  
OR  
**BOOK of the GENERATION of JESUS.**

EDITED  
(With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes)

BY  
**G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER.**  
Price Sixpence, postage 1d.

A Work that should be read by all earnest Christians  
and preserved by all Freethinkers.

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

**Pamphlets.**

By **G. W. FOOTE.**

- BIBLE AND BEER.** Price 1d., postage 1d.  
**MY RESURRECTION.** Price 1d., postage 1d.  
**CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS.** Price 2d., postage 1d.  
**THE MOTHER OF GOD.** With Preface. Price 2d., postage 1d.  
**THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM.** Price 2d., postage 1d.

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

- DEITY AND DESIGN.** Price 1d., postage 1d.  
**WAR AND CIVILIZATION.** Price 1d., postage 1d.  
**RELIGION AND THE CHILD.** Price 1d., postage 1d.  
**GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.** Price 3d., postage 1d.  
**CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY: With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement.** Price 1s., postage 1d.

By **J. T. LLOYD.**

- PRAYER: ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND FUTILITY.**  
Price 2d., postage 1d.

By **WALTER MANN.**

- PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY.** Price 2d., postage 1d.

By **MIMNERMUS.**

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

By **H. G. FARMER.**

- HERESY IN ART.** The Religious Opinions of Famous Artists and Musicians. Price 3d., postage 1d.

By **T. F. PALMER.**

- THE STORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF LIFE.**  
Price 2d., postage 1d.

By **A. MILLAR.**

- THE ROBES OF PAN: And Other Prose Fantasies.**  
Price 1s., postage 1d.

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

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

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