

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. 27

SUNDAY, JULY 6, 1919

PRICE TWOPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

Peace and War

According to the Christian legend it is nearly 2,000 years since the angels ushered in the reign of peace on earth and good will to men. The message was delivered on the occasion of the birth—or was it the rebirth?—of God. From one point of view no message ever given could have come with greater force or authority. A message from God delivered by angels! In racing language it was a “dead cert” if ever there was one; A.D. 1 heard the angelic promise of peace.; A.D. 1919 has just witnessed the formal end of a nearly five years War unparalleled for its ferocity, its savagery, and the social demoralization caused by it. The belligerents were the professed followers of the God at whose birth the promise of peace was given, so they confidently called on him for assistance. His official representatives on either side were energetic in hounding their followers on to more and more bloodshed. On neither side did they, in even the remotest degree, serve as a restraining or moralizing force. And to enforce the lesson there was placed in St. Paul's Cathedral, during a service connected with the War, a large field gun as a comment upon the value of our trust in God. Those present prayed to God—and kept their eyes on the gun. If these worshippers had been warned that in future they must dispense with either the God or the gun, for which would they have voted? Twenty-five millions killed and wounded more than 1900 years after the angels delivered their assurance of “Peace on earth.” So much for the value of angelic communications!

* * *

Do We Hate Militarism?

Every one is glad that this long horror of the War with Germany is, formally at least, at an end. But whether it is a real peace or not remains to be seen. As it is, we do not think that thoughtful people can have entered into the celebrations of June 28 with real rejoicing. The War has left behind it too many evil memories and possibilities for that. It is like dancing in a pest-house in the midst of a huge graveyard. It is wholly to the good that militarism shall have been killed—in Prussia. It is also to the good that Germany shall have been made to realize that no nation can live for ever by the sword. But until the world realizes the

necessity for making the peace of Versailles the occasion of a real peace, we have little to atone for the misery of this five years' horror. While we have our triumphant militarists laughing at the possibility of preventing wars, while we have General Methuen assuring young cadets that they will be in the next war, Field-Marshal Haig voicing the old stupidity that the only way to prevent war is to go on preparing for war, Mr. Churchill lauding war as “a glorious adventure,” and about a score of wars still proceeding, in many of which this country is taking a hand, it seems little short of ghastly to talk of peace rejoicings. The world is not at peace, it would not be at peace even if all the wars now being waged were stopped, so long as other things were left unchanged. We should only have a pause between wars. An armistice, during which each nation is to go on increasing armaments, forming alliances, preparing for war, which, as Germany proved, is one of the surest means of getting it. If we have not learned these things from the War, then, indeed, it has taught us nothing.

* * *

The Way to a Real Peace.

It was inevitable that the peace of Versailles should be a peace of force. To complain of this is to spend our time in regretting the non-arrival of the unattainable. But the world needs not the peace of force but the force of peace—a real peace. If it is really necessary for the nations of the world to go on maintaining growing and competitive armies and navies, ostensibly for the purpose of keeping Germany down, but actually, as every one knows, with a view to other contingencies, then it is the sheerest stupidity, or worse, to call this a peace treaty. As it stands it is a treaty riddled through and through with conditions that make perpetual peace impossible, with the determination to maintain an alliance between one group of nations in order to keep another group in subjection. The peace of the world must be built on co-operation, not on a division of nations into superior and inferior. The facts are patent, and if this state of affairs is unavoidable, so be it; but, then, let us at least have the courage to look the facts in the face and not delude ourselves with mere words. As it stands, all we have secured is a momentary cessation of hostilities, with the practical certainty that war will be resumed when circumstances seem favourable. Our only hope is to make June 28 the starting-point for a new and a real peace treaty. And this must, as Lord Grey said, give as well as take. It must surrender the power of aggression at the same time as it demands its surrender from others. The German naval power is destroyed—is gone—absolutely. German military strength and prestige are broken almost beyond the possibility of rebuilding. The world has, therefore, the chance to make for itself a genuine peace by demanding the real disarmament of all nations, leaving, at most, an international force strong enough to prevent all breaches of the peace by disorderly elements. If that cannot be done, it is simply idle to talk of our having made a peace treaty. All we have done is to secure a little longer armistice.

Our Need to Clear Vision.

Never before has the world stood in such dire need of clear and strong thinking. The diplomatic pose of the allied nations standing disinterestedly for the self-government of the peoples of the world is too absurd to deceive any save the wilfully blind. If the world is to be saved from war, its salvation must come from the people themselves. But enlightenment must come to *them* before that can be done. For if a few make war possible, it is the many who carry it on. And the experience of the War has shown that in every country people are still under the hypnotic influence of verbal shibboleths by which war lives. The glitter of war still has its attraction; a uniform still has its compulsive influence. Raise certain cries, and the masses in every country respond to them. Put a man in uniform, and actions that he would never dream of doing normally, he will perform under "orders." That is really why in every country each war is a war of defence, a war waged in defence of home and fatherland. For many who have gone through this War, that glamour has gone for ever. But there is the younger generation, and it is with them that the future peace of the world rests. Their education rests with us. It is for us to stop war by picturing it as what it is. We must make them realize, with Moncure D. Conway, that "There can arise no important literature, nor art, nor real freedom and happiness among any people until they feel their uniform a livery, and see in every battlefield an inglorious arena of human degradation." Clear thinking and brave speaking are the world's greatest need now as ever. To see things as they are is the indispensable condition of getting them to be as they should be.

* * *

The Churches and the War.

When the War broke out, the Churches were ready with their call to arms, ready to play the part of recruiting sergeants, to pray for victory; ready to talk of the "moral uplift" of war, of its bracing effects on national life; ready, in short, to do anything save to point out the needed lesson of war's inevitably demoralizing influence. That would have meant a sacrifice of popularity, and required a courage of a higher order than the clergy display. And now that the War is over, the Churches are again ready to thank God for the victory—for being on our side—and so, by inference, helping one half his children butcher the other half. If God really gave the victory, why not have given it directly the War broke out? Some of the clergy were good enough to tell us that if God had stopped the War in 1915 or 1916, we should not have profited sufficiently by our experience. It was prolonged for our benefit. Well, we hope he is gratified with the result. We said above that the past five years had opened the eyes of many to the iniquity of war. It has certainly opened the eyes of thousands to the part played by organized religion in the perpetuation of conditions that make for war. And the clergy have during this war only played the part they played in previous wars. Lecky's verdict that, "instead of diminishing the number of wars, ecclesiastical influence has actually and very seriously increased it, (that), we may look in vain for any period since Constantine in which the clergy as a body exerted themselves to repress the military spirit, or to prevent or abridge a particular war with an energy at all comparable to that which they displayed in stimulating the fanaticism of the Crusaders, in producing the atrocious massacres of the Albigenses, in embittering the religious contests that followed the Reformation," has been well substantiated during the recent War. If the War has done nothing else, it has given the world an object-

lesson in the value of Christianity. It has been waged by the Christian nations. The appeals for victory and for justification have been made by both sides, to the same God. Christianity should have made the War impossible. It is something to know that the War has made the perpetuation of Christianity, if not impossible, at least more difficult.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The God-Eating Sacrament.

II.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the divisions and dissensions which rent the primitive Church asunder were caused almost entirely by the revolutionary ministry of the apostle Paul. Christianity began as a revised version of Judaism. It arose in direct fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and was intended for the Jewish nation alone. The kingdom of God which Jesus had preached so assiduously signified a new era of political emancipation and independence for the children of Israel. At the Last Supper, Jesus is represented as being convinced that the long-continued vassalage of his people was about to end, and that the inauguration of the new society would immediately follow. Foreseeing his own death and resurrection as the only means to that end, he is made to say:—

With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not eat it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body (Luke xxii. 15-19).

In the received text the passage ends thus: "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. And the cup in like manner, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." In the edition of the Greek New Testament by the distinguished scholars, Westcott and Hort, those words are bracketed as forming no part of the original text, because of their absence from the Codex Bezae and several old Latin MSS, as well as the Old Syriac. Now, assuming the historicity of the most ancient copies of the Last Supper narratives, there is certainly no indication in them of any intention, on the part of Jesus, to inaugurate a new rite. He simply speaks of the meal as the last he would partake in prior to the advent of the new order of things. It was an old sacramental repast eaten for the last time under existing circumstances. Besides, there is nothing whatever to show that the disciples looked upon the episode in any other light. Although the Book of the Acts mentions three times the custom of breaking bread, there is absolutely nothing said to connect it either with the Last Supper or with the Eucharist; and from this the only legitimate inference we can draw is that from the very first the followers of Jesus practised and enjoyed table-fellowship. In this, however, there was nothing unique or new. It was common to all religious and semi-religious communities. The Essenes gathered together at the conclusion of each day's work and partook of a holy supper, consisting of bread and water. We read of certain disciples who entered Emmaus one evening and there sat down to meat, when bread was taken, blessed, broken, and distributed by a ghostly visitor. The Egyptians, also, had a sacred meal every fiftieth day, and this also consisted of bread and water.

The Jews often substituted wine for water; and we know that wine came to be freely used at the Christian Love-feasts. In course of time, indeed, the Love-feast developed into a magnificent banquet, to which all the worshippers were invited.

Paul, born and bred at a great centre in the Pagan world, instinctively perceived that, if the Christian Church was to become an irresistible power in the earth, something more profoundly and dramatically suggestive than an ordinary convivial repast was needed; something that would appeal to the sense of wonder and supply the imagination with ample scope, working on a background of ignorance and fear. A supernatural religion is not amenable to reason and common sense; its very staff of life is mystery. To Paul, Christianity was the "wisdom of God in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory." To him also it was the death and resurrection, not the life and teaching, of Christ that supremely mattered; and so he raised the tragedy on Calvary into the domain of mysteries, treating it as a lost and ruined world's sole hope of deliverance. Such was his doctrine of the atoning sacrifice on the Cross, and this mystery of mysteries he resolved to embody in a rite which he called the Lord's Supper. Both the doctrine and the rite were repulsive to the Jerusalem Church, from which emissaries were sent out to do their utmost to counteract such dangerous heresies. Paul referred to these emissaries as "certain who came from James," "false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty," "to whom," he adds, "we gave place in the way of subjection not for an hour." He was strong enough to withstand all their attacks. Though they called his apostleship in question, denied his right to preach, characterized his Gospel as a lie, he persevered in his mission and prospered exceedingly.

Curiously enough, Paul did not try to abolish the Love-feast in order to introduce the Eucharist. He inaugurated his own rite as a valuable *addition* to the existing ordinances of the Church. The Agape and the Eucharist co-existed until the beginning of the fifth century. As time went on new Agapæ sprang into existence. There were banquets given at marriages and funerals, and in honour of the martyrs. Of the Martyrs' Love-feasts Milman writes thus:—

By a noble metaphor, the day of the martyrs' death was considered that of their birth to immortality; and their birthdays became the most sacred and popular festivals of the Church.....Hymns were sung in their praise (much of the early Christian poetry was composed for these occasions); the history of their lives and martyrdoms was read (the legends which grew up into so fertile a subject for Christian mythic fable); panegyric orations were delivered by the best preachers. The day closed with an open banquet, in which all the worshippers were invited to partake. The wealthy Heathens had been accustomed to propitiate the Manes of their departed friends by these costly festivals; the banquet was almost an integral part of the Heathen religious ceremony. The custom passed into the Church; and with the Pagan feeling, the festival assumed a Pagan character of gaily and joyous excitement, and even of luxury (*History of Christianity*, vol. iii., pp. 324-5).

As a rule, the Love-feasts were accompanied by the Lord's Supper, and Canon Robinson says that they were not always distinguishable from it. But at an early date the Love-feasts became objectionable because of men who were spots or blots upon them, when they feasted together and provided without scruple for themselves alone (Jude 12)—men who counted it pleasure to revel in the day-time, who were a stain and a disgrace, revelling at the Love-feasts (2 Peter ii. 13). These

descriptions of what often occurred at the Agape show conclusively that it and the Eucharist were never convertible terms, although they were usually celebrated the one after the other. When the common supper preceded the communion, it sometimes happened that not a few approached the Lord's Table in a state of hilarious intoxication, which gave rise to serious disorders and unseemly quarrels. And yet Paul, while strongly disapproving of such humiliating scenes and solemnly warning the brethren against them, did not recommend the discontinuance of the Love-feast, well knowing that ultimately the Lord's Supper would inevitably supplant it. Even at Corinth in Paul's own day, the excesses at the Love-feast were such as to disqualify many for participation in the Eucharist. He says:—

When you come together in the church I hear that divisions exist among you, and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and put them to shame that have nothing? (1 Cor. xi. 20-22).

The transition from the Jewish to the Gentile type of Christianity is an intensely interesting and instructive story; but the most important point in connection with it is that, if it had not taken place, the probability is that the religion of Jesus would never have survived the inevitable conflict with Pagan cults. Jesus Christ owes his immortality to the Pauline movement in the first three centuries. The Christian Church is essentially a Pauline institution, and the soul of Paulinism; the secret of its vitality and power, is *Christ crucified*. After all, the pillar-Apostles were nobodies, and their Gospel would have died with them. It was Paul's bolder, wholly irrational Gospel that captured the Western world; and the sublime irrationality of his Gospel found materialization in the Sacrament of the EUCHARIST.

J. T. LLOYD.

Theological Thimble-Rigging.

Hebrew mythology contains things which are both insulting and injurious.—*J. A. Froude*.

The Zolaism of the Bible is far more pernicious than the Zolaism of fiction.—*G. W. Foote*.

How pleasant it is for the cultured clergy to have resident scapegoats on hand to be "damned for the sins they're not inclined to." Whether the victims of clerical spite enjoy it so much seems of little moment. But when the shocked virtue of one of the Fathers-in-God utters squeaks of prudery concerning girls and the dangers of novel-reading, the feeling of hopelessness that must follow any attempt to instil one drop of fact into such muddled brain-matter leaves one again defeated by the outcry of Philistine pruriency.

The clergy are past-masters at stifling, or circumventing, any movement likely to prove dangerous to them. The original Sunday-schools were initiated by laymen with the sole idea of imparting real education to children on the one day of the week on which, in the time prior to the passing of the Factory Acts, they were free to receive it. Nowadays, Sunday-schools are not concerned with other than theological instruction, and the average Sunday-school teacher cares as much for real education as a pigeon cares for hydrostatics.

Similarly, the clergy circumvented the Public Library movement, which was intended to place knowledge

within reach of the people. They have always had undue influence on the local committees of public libraries, and their one aim has been to render such institutions, from their point of view, entirely innocuous. So long as the shelves of these libraries were stocked with the books of purveyors of sentimental pap for intellectual infants they were content. The instant any attempt was made to place before the reading public works which made for sanity or ordered thought, they at once displayed their hostility. The boycott was introduced, and the modern *Index Expurgatorius* ranges from periodical literature, such as *The English Review*, to the masterpieces of Thomas Hardy and George Meredith.

Some time ago, some clerical members of the Conference of Headmasters issued a warning to parents, in which they called attention of the danger to the rising generation of books, magazines, and even plays. And they added: "too little care is exercised to exclude them from the lives of the young." Quite recently, Dr. G. H. S. Walpole, Bishop of Edinburgh, declared that the modesty of young girls was coarsened by what they read in novels.

These men of God protest too much. To read such allusions to the books, magazines, and plays of the day, as if many of them were a noisome danger to society, is not pleasant. When such insults come from priests and their satellites, who thrust the ever-open Bible into the hands of innocent childhood, one's sense of justice is outraged. For there are things in the sacred volume which are objectionable, and which are calculated to bring the blush of modesty on any face except that of a priest. Raw, naked filth, which cannot be read aloud to a mixed congregation, is forced compulsorily into the hands of every child. Clergymen attach such loose meanings to the words they fling about so recklessly, but how such men can read calmly the story of Onan, the adventures of Lot, and the account of Ezekiel's banquet, and point the finger of scorn at modern novelists and playwrights is inexplicable, except on the hypothesis that they do so with their tongues in their cheeks.

If the novels, plays, and magazines of the day, which are all severely censored, are likely to corrupt the morals of boys and girls, what, in the name of common sense and common honesty, is the Bible calculated to do? In its pages may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of rape, adultery, and unnatural vice, written with all the nasty particularity and love of detail which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern writers. The florid, heated rhetoric of the Old Testament leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least-lettered reader can appreciate the glowing periods. In fact, Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off. And the Bible, be it remembered, is given away gratis, or sold "under cost."

If the clergy had any real reason for safeguarding the young, they would see at once that, if an ordinary novel or a play will corrupt a young boy or girl, the Bible will corrupt a regiment. No novelist or playwright would dare to fill his pages with details of incest, rapes, and unmentionable crimes. He would be imprisoned, and his books destroyed. Yet the clergy force the Bible, which contains all these things, and more, into the hands of every child.

We do not believe in bowdlerizing books, but if ever there were any occasion for such drastic and extreme treatment it should be directed against the Bible. Unfortunately, if all the objectionable passages were deleted, God's Holy Word would be so reduced in size as to be unrecognizable. Instead of prating and vapouring of indecent literature, let the clergy set an example.

Let them cease to place into the innocent hands of children a book which they dare no longer read aloud in its completeness to a mixed audience of adult persons. Until they do this they merit the contempt bestowed upon the Rev. Mr. Stiggins and Mr. Samuel Pecksniff.

MIMNERMUS.

John Lee and Providence.

Most people of middle age can remember the sensational murder of Miss Keyse, an independent lady, at Babbacombe, near Torquay, in the year 1884; also the still more sensational failure to execute the murderer, John Lee, through defects in the scaffold trap-door, which caused it to stick fast when it should have fallen.

Since then John Lee has become, with many people, quite a national hero. A mass of myth and legend have accumulated round the simple facts of the case. It is cited as a clear case of providential interference to shield an innocent man condemned on circumstantial evidence from suffering the extreme penalty of the law. It has been said that the rope broke three times; that a dummy was tried on the trap to test it; that it worked with the dummy, but would not work with Lee upon it; that Lee dreamed all about it, down to the minutest particular, on the previous night.

I have myself heard people express their firm belief in John Lee's innocence of the crime, and many others who doubted the justice of the sentence; for John Lee, after serving twenty-two years in prison, was liberated. He was invited to supply the particulars of his trial and attempted execution for publication, which he did. It was published as a shilling book, under the title, *The Man They Could Not Hang: The Life Story of John Lee*. It first appeared, however, by instalments in *Lloyds' Weekly Newspaper*. The book gives a facsimile letter which Lee wrote to *Lloyds'*, in which he says: "Since last Sunday I have received hundreds of Christmas cards, letters, and gifts from all parts of the country." Probably the hundreds who sent letters and gifts represent only a fraction of those who believed in Lee's innocence.

It must be admitted that there is some justification for this state of things; for the only statement of the case that has been published, so far as I am aware, is the statement of John Lee himself, in the above-mentioned work, and we had nothing to check his statements by. Any plausible story holds good until it is confronted by the real facts of the case.

There has just been published a book, entitled *The Prison Cell in its Lights and Shadows*, by the Rev. John Pitkin, which puts a very different complexion on John Lee's story, and reveals him as the cold-blooded criminal he really was. The author of this book was Chaplain of Exeter Gaol, and officiated at the scaffold at the failure to execute Lee. Moreover, Mr. Pitkin knew Lee before this, and it was by his advice that Miss Keyse, the murdered lady, again received Lee into her house. Mr. Pitkin was therefore indirectly the cause, quite innocently, of the tragedy.

We will first deal with Lee's life before the murder; then with the murder and trial; then with the attempted execution; and finally with Lee's life after obtaining his liberty. This will save referring backwards and forwards. We like to do a thing thoroughly while we are about it, or else leave it alone altogether.

John Lee, then, was born at Abbots Kerswell, Devon, in 1864. At the age of fifteen he left school to enter the service of Miss Keyse, at a lonely house called "The Glen," on the beach at Babbacombe Bay.

Miss Keyse was an independent lady of good position, and had at one time acted as a maid of honour at the Court of Queen Victoria. After eighteen months with Miss Keyse, Lee left to join the Navy, but at eighteen, owing to an attack of pneumonia, he was invalided out of the Navy. He was discharged with a good character.

Lee then obtained a place as "boots" at the Yacht Club Hotel at Kingswear, but soon left, and became a porter at Torre Station, where he only stayed a week. Miss Keyse still took an interest in him, and used to write occasionally and give him good advice. She now obtained him a situation as footman at Colonel Brownlow's, in Torquay, at which he was very pleased. But after a few weeks, when his master was from home, he stole the family plate, and pawned it. By means of the crest, the plate was traced to him as the thief. He was apprehended and tried at Exeter, where he received a sentence of six months' hard labour.

It was at Exeter Gaol, at this time, that Lee first met with the Rev. John Pitkin, the chaplain who officiated later at the scaffold. Miss Keyse, while Lee was in prison, was still solicitous about his welfare, and wrote to Mr. Pitkin, offering to take him into her service again, to work in the garden, under the gardener, to enable her to give him a character, until something desirable turned up. But it depended entirely upon what character Mr. Pitkin gave him, and whether he considered him trustworthy. Upon Mr. Pitkin's good report, he returned to Miss Keyse's service; and after a few months Miss Keyse was found cruelly murdered, and, to hide the crime, the assassin had poured paraffin over the corpse and furniture, and lighted paper soaked in paraffin in order to burn the house down and destroy all traces of the crime. Whether it also burned the other servants asleep in the house—one of whom was his half-sister—seems to have been quite a matter of indifference to Lee, for Lee it was who committed the murder.

Upon this point the Rev. John Pitkin is quite positive. He says:—

The chain of circumstantial evidence against John Lee was so strong that nobody who heard the trial, as I did, could have any reasonable doubt about his guilt. Twenty-two years after this event, Lee, when he had plenty of time in his prison-cell to concoct a pretty story to try and prove his innocence, was invited to supply the particulars of his life and attempted execution for publication; and his fabricated account was sold in a shilling book, which had a large sale. He, in that book, asserts that the failure of the execution was a Divine interposition to save the life of an innocent man. In similar cases, when criminals try to shift the responsibility of their guilt upon other people's shoulders, they invent very plausible tales, which deceive credulous persons who believe their tales, and show them unmerited sympathy; and, by a determined will, they keep up the deception to the very last. Lee was a person of this sort.¹

Mr. Pitkin points out that Lee's fabrication "has no corroboration in the evidence given at the trial. His being aroused from sleep by his step-sister shouting: 'Fire! Fire!' is contradicted by Ellen Neck, who went downstairs, and met him in the hall. It was Jane Neck who tried to find her mistress first upstairs and then downstairs. Lee made no effort to do so, and expressed no wish to consult her in the dilemma. And why? The only reasonable explanation is that he knew she was dead, and that death had been caused by his own bloody hands. The blood on his clothes may, or may not, have been caused by the cut he received in breaking the dining-room window to let out the smoke. At any rate,

the blood-marks he left on Jane Neck's nightdress could have had nothing to do with the window, as they were the result of some anterior act; and that act, the jury decided, was the murder of his mistress. Nobody but those acquainted with the pantry could have removed the hall knife from the hall, and placed it in the pantry smeared with blood, without Lee's knowledge, who practically had control of the pantry. A stranger could not have known where the oil-can was kept, from which the oil was taken to destroy all traces of the murder. The marks of blood upon it proved that the murderer had used it for that purpose. Lee says when he saw the body of his murdered mistress in the dining-room there were no papers around it. He wanted to see none, because the presence of papers saturated with paraffin, confirmed by witnesses at the trial, was strong evidence against him and nobody else. The plausible tale he wrote, or caused to be written and ingeniously put together after twenty-two years' imprisonment, was intended to carry on the deception he had practised from the beginning. And it paid him, because it brought in ready money; but very few sensible persons had any doubt about his guilt," pp. 200-2.

It was the pious *Lloyd's Sunday News* that tempted Lee to write this lying tale of his innocence. This paper boasts the largest circulation of any Sunday paper, and circulates among the least enlightened and instructed of our population, many of whom see no other paper from one year's end to the other. And this paper prints a sermon every week to show its competitors "I am holier than thou."

But what is the reputation of our criminal judicial procedure, compared with the duty of keeping up the biggest circulation, even by getting up false sensations, and propagating superstition among those most easily deluded?

Our glorious free press, which boycotts Freethinkers and whitewashes murderers. All for the Glory of God—and the filling of their own pockets.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

We referred last week to the clerical protest against the proposed parade of soldiers at Liverpool on Sunday, July 6. The protest has been successful, and the function has been changed to July 5. And now the ex soldiers are taking a hand and have threatened to stay away from the parade altogether if the change is persisted in. They echo our remark that if they could fight on Sunday, there seems no reason why they should not parade on Sunday. So say we; and it is worth recording that the clergy who saw nothing unchristian in men killing each other on Sunday, are shocked at these same men walking through the streets on the blessed "Sabbath."

The Church's hold on the Nation is weakening rapidly. Ecclesiastics frown at divorce, contending that "those whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder"; but few people pay much attention. The lists for the new term at the Divorce Court contain the names of about eight hundred petitions, including four peers, and ranging through the social scale to "poor persons."

The Pope is infallible, but His Holiness must now realize that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. Justice Powell decided in the Chancery Division, Dublin, that a legacy of £10,000 to Pope Benedict XV., to be applied in carrying out his sacred office, was not a charitable gift, and failed for uncertainty. Papa will agree with Mr. Bumble that "the law is a hass."

Speaking at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, at the annual service in connection with the Mothers' Union, the Bishop

¹ R. J. Pitkin, *The Prison Cell in its Lights and Shadows*, 1919, pp. 195-6.

of Lichfield declared that the best view of marriage was that it created the home, and this was the ideal of the Mothers' Union. It is well to remember, however, that the Bishop's home is a palace, and not a room under a cellar-flap.

A strike of clergy took place at Loreto, Italy, where the priests of the famous Church abstained from their clerical duties. The Archbishop at once promised increased fees. This Italian town contains the reputed house of the Virgin Mary, which, according to Christian tradition, was taken thither from Nazareth by angels when the Moslems got the upper hand in the Holy Land. It is all as true as the Gospels.

Announcing his resignation, the Bishop of St. Albans said he did not propose to "burden the see with a pension." It is pleasant to find one ecclesiastic who is not "starving."

Someone has suggested that a good way for people to help the country would be for them to burn a certain part of their War-stock. That would certainly be a very practical way of helping, and would be in the nature of a self-imposed levy. Anyway, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who have somewhere about three-quarters of a million in War stock, and the Free Churches, who also have heavy investments, might set an example. Then individual Christians might be induced to follow suit.

Some cinema proprietors have suggested that the clergy should withdraw opposition to Sunday picture shows, provided that comic films are deleted from the programmes on that day. These cinema proprietors have a lot to learn if they do not realize that the clergy will never look with favourable eyes on any show except their own. They desire a monopoly of Sunday, and full collections.

Ecclesiastical notices should be penned by the clergy themselves, for journalists have a worldly way of writing news. A recent press paragraph reads: "The King has appointed Dr. Burge to the Bishopric of Oxford." This is very crude. Our pastors and masters like people to believe that they are appointed to "cushy" jobs by the Holy Ghost.

Trinity Congregational Church, Croydon, has been transformed into a Christian Science temple. This is a "conversion" that will not appeal to the Orthodox.

Providence cares as little for "sacred" buildings as for other houses. Owing to sinking, St. Saviour's Church, Crouch Hill, has been closed. The Marist Brothers' College at Upstreet, Kent, has been destroyed by fire. There has also been an epidemic of robberies from Kentish churches, notably at Chatham, Gillingham, and Maidstone.

As a War memorial, new cloisters are to be built at Canterbury Cathedral at a cost of £22,000. When completed, a memorial brass should be affixed stating that the clergy of this country were exempted from military service, and when acting as Army chaplains they received officers' pay.

Lord Robert Cecil says that the League of Nations would be much more powerful if it had to deal with a united Christendom. If that means a united body of Christians, Lord Robert might as well try jumping to the moon. In all the centuries of their history, Christians have never yet been united on anything socially useful or sensible. They have been unanimous for war, but never for peace; in cordial agreement for persecution, but never for toleration. And centuries of Christian rule gave us a War such as we have just had, and a number of nations differing only in the degree to which they depend upon brute force, and the readiness with which they pursue schemes of spoliation and conquest under moral and religious pretexts.

The Suffolk Baptist Union has also been protesting against the tendency towards a "Continental Sunday." We wonder

what the returned soldiers think of the nonsense these men talk of the evils of the Continental Sunday? And what will the French people think of this new example of our religious humbug? But perhaps they are so used to it as to take no notice.

More good news for Glasgow children. The southern Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland has issued an appeal to the Glasgow Education authority urging that in view of the menace of Freethought, the Bible shall be read without comment in the schools, but there is to be no reading of fiction. No fiction, only the Bible—or perhaps one should say, no fiction except the Bible. Anyway, the children will have a happy time if the Glasgow pietists have their way.

A writer in the *Daily News* points out that a large proportion of the Christian populations of Europe is now totally uninterested in the official faith of Christendom. The statement gains in force by being written by a lady.

The Young Men's Christian Association is not all devoted to ginger-beer and skittles. A Christian Evidence platform in Hyde Park, London, was graced recently with some "delegates" of the Y.M.C.A., who were not acting solely as shop assistants. It was a welcome change, too, for the audience, for once, did not need to use a slang dictionary.

The Rev. F. H. Benson, of Birmingham, recently gave a sermon at Nuneaton on "Christ's Murderers." Now, we call that sheer ingratitude. Suppose these people had not played the part of "Christ's Murderers"? What, then, would have become of the Christian scheme of salvation? Mr. Benson, instead of blaming these people should praise them for having helped to found the Christian religion. Besides, the whole thing was pre-arranged, and unless Christ had been killed, Christianity would never have had even the chance of being the failure it has been. It could never have made a start.

At Poole, Dorset, one of the local Councillors has protested against the small attendance at church on ceremonial occasions. He says it is a great slight—to the Mayor. No one else matters.

To the lengthening list of "starving" clergymen who strove to emulate the founder of their religion must be added the name of the late Rev. W. Glaister, of Southwell, Nottingham, who left estate of the value of £39,716, and of the Rev. Alban Harrison, Rector of Great Chart, Kent, whose will was proved for £39,185.

A newspaper paragraph describes some provincial church bells as being "blasphemously out of tune." Haw, Hhaw! As the old mayor would say: "that's damnably good."

A pushful American publishing firm has just found out that Dickens wrote a *Life of Christ*. The great novelist also wrote a *History of England*. Both are of little value, and are but the excrement of his genius.

Sir James Cantlie, the surgeon, gave an address from the pulpit of St. Peter's Church, Vere Street, and spoke on prevention of disease, typhus fever, muzzling orders, hydrophobia, rats, and bubonic plague. It must have been a great relief to the congregation after the wearisome reiteration of the "old, old story of Jesus and his love."

The Church of England possesses "the most learned clergy of any Church in Christendom," chortles the *Daily Mail*. It did not add that "the most learned clergy" believe that Adam was the father of the human race, and that they pray for rain, just like their coloured brethren on the Gold Coast.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer declares that, at his church, one of the halls is used alternately as a gymnasium and for prayer-meetings. Apparently, at Westminster, they understand the art of using sprats to catch mackerel.

To Correspondents.

- C. TAYLOR (Glasgow).—As you may have seen, Prebendary Webb-Peploe denies having made the statement attributed to him by the papers. And clergymen have a quite sufficient stock of silly things of their own without saddling them with those they disown.
- R. ELMES.—Lange's *History of Materialism* is published by Trubner & Co. in three volumes. The pre-War price was 3s. 6d.
- ONE of our readers in India is anxious to obtain a copy of Holyoake's *Trial of Theism*, and Strange's *The Bible: Is It the Word of God*. If any who read this have copies for disposal, will they please write this office stating price, etc.
- J. HARRINGTON (Dacca).—We thank you on behalf of our staff for your appreciation of the quality of the *Freethinker*. We have heard several times from Mr. Love, who seems to have his heart in the cause. Why not set about forming a Branch of the N. S. S. in Calcutta? There must be plenty of Freethinkers there. We have a number of readers in India.
- T. N.—Isn't it fortunate for some of these people who howl out their gratitude for Jesus having saved them that he did so before he saw them? Otherwise he might have hesitated and wondered whether it would be worth while.
- F. LONSDALE.—Received. Please give our compliments to Mrs. Wells.
- J. C. P. (Leytonstone).—The matter concerns the relatives not ourselves.
- A. CRUIKSHANK.—We are pleased to hear of your interest in Freethought, and are sending you some literature that may be useful.
- C. S.—Received and handed to shop manager. We note what you say. It is of course quite impossible to so conduct any paper as to give complete satisfaction to all. The demand for what we may call applied Freethought has been very insistent for years. Mr. Foote several times opened an "Independent Department" for the discussion of political and economic questions.
- T. WRIGHT (N. Y.).—We do really attach considerable importance to the ferment set up by the introduction of new ideas as such. So long as they are open to discussion, their consideration will arouse mental activity, and in the clash of ideas the dross is discarded and the true metal displayed.
- SCOTIA.—Sunday is not at all an unusual day for Christians to fight battles on. Waterloo was fought on a Sunday; so was the Battle of Barnet and the Battle of Inkerman. The list might be prolonged to great length. During the recent War, we should say there was fighting on every Sunday while the War lasted. Christians have objected to honest work on Sunday; to playing, or singing, or laughing on Sunday. But when it has been a question of killing one another on Sunday, that has been considered quite the proper thing to do.
- 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 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 are indebted to the *Daily Telegraph* for the following account of the last days of Ernest Renan. The account is by his son-in-law:—

Three months before his death, which he felt to be near, Ernest Renan prepared himself for it in Brittany, where the sunset on the emerald waters of the ocean formed a familiar

mirror for his dearest thoughts. He spoke little. He suffered much. He never complained. He was always working, always correcting proofs at his desk, or consulting his Hebrew Bible either for his own purposes or in response to some question raised by him who writes these [lines]. He was resigned, tranquil, and good. Never a deprecatory word did he utter of anyone; never did he cease to be affable or to have a smile of welcome.

Once during a crisis which he suffered he cried, "Moses on Sinai. This is how he spoke!" And one understood by the play of his features, on which death had set its seal, the mental effort to form a final interpretation by which he sought, near death's door as he was, to define in historic truth the personality of Moses..... On another occasion, sitting before the little window which looked on a small court of the College de France, he said "Open the curtain, open the curtain! The sun on the Acropolis! Do that, my dear Jean!" It is probable that his eyes had become clouded at that moment, and that he asked that the curtains should be opened for a last vision of the Acropolis..... At last, at the College de France, when alone with the same person, he uttered, in the penetrating accents of his authoritative voice, in the thick and guttural tones of his great days, which put aside all reply, these unforgettable words: "I know that when I am dead nothing of me will remain. I know that I shall be nothing, NOTHING, NOTHING." The gradation in the letters gives but an imperfect idea of the force of the affirmation—strong, heroic, and clear.

He died twenty-four hours afterwards. It should be said, in complete justice to the Church, that no priest, under any pretext, tried to make his way to the bedside of the philosopher. Contrary, therefore, to the story which gained currency, none was ever turned away. If one had come Ernest Renan would have talked with him in his accustomed kindly and courteous way.

As noted, Renan did not escape the usual death-bed fable. Pious lies are such an established part of the order of things that apparently they must be told. Renan had protested against these lies in advance. In his *Recollections of My Youth*, he said:—

I should be very grieved to have to go through one of those periods of enfeeblement during which the man once endowed with strength and virtue is but the shadow and ruin of his former self; and often to the delight of the ignorant, sets himself to demolish the life which he had so laboriously constructed..... If such a fate be in store for me, I hasten to protest beforehand against the weaknesses which a softened brain might lead me to say or sign. It is the Renan sane in body and mind, as I now am—not the Renan half destroyed by death and no longer himself, as I shall be if my decomposition is gradual—whom I wish to be believed and listened to.

But the Churches care little for a man's protests. The lie is there. It was prepared before he was born, and it is certain to be used when he is dead.

Mr. J. R. Williams writes a very pertinent letter in the *County Express* (Stourbridge) in reply to the stock expression that Christianity has not failed because it has not been tried. He rightly says that is a much clearer admission of failure than anyone has a right to expect. A religion that has existed for nearly two thousand years, and then has not managed to get itself practised, is about as complete a failure as one could wish to see. If Jesus ever thinks of the apologies his followers make, he must often say, "Oh, Lord, save me from my friends."

At the Annual Meeting of the South Shields Branch on Sunday last, Mr. Ralph Chapman resigned the post of Secretary after thirty-three years' service. Failing health is the cause of Mr. Chapman's resignation, which all who know him will hear of with regret. He has been a most devoted and loyal servant of the Freethought cause, sparing no effort, and bringing to his work a keen and educated intelligence. We desire to pay our sincere tribute to one whom we have known and respected for over a quarter of a century. The new Secretary, Mr. J. Fothergill, 3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock, will, we feel sure, prove a worthy successor, difficult as it may be to follow in Mr. Chapman's footsteps. He will, of course, have the co-operation and assistance of his predecessor whenever necessary. All the other officers of the Branch were re-elected.

A World of Hypocrisy.

THE readers of this journal will remember that when I discussed with Uncle Joe on "Determinism and Responsibility," at our last meeting in his nicely appointed villa residence at Dulwich, we wound up by agreeing to change the subject. This we did by retiring into the breakfast parlour to tea, during which time we conversed on various subjects of local interest, on several of which Aunt Jane led the conversation. After tea, Uncle Joe and I had a quiet game at draughts, in which I was badly beaten in two out of three games. Whether I was annoyed at this unexpected result or not, Uncle Joe and I soon got into another discussion, which finally developed into one on the question of whether Christians and indifferents were hypocrites, and professed to believe a good many things which they not only did not believe, but which in their daily lives they openly repudiated. At some points, I am afraid, the discussion became rather acrimonious; but still, I will try to faithfully record its main features, and leave the readers to judge how far I was able to make good my contention.

"I maintain," I said, with emphasis, "that the majority of Christians are flagrant hypocrites."

To which Uncle Joe replied just as emphatically that he denied it.

"Well, then," I went on, "take the clergy. Most of them know that the Bible is not God's Word—in fact, that it is a purely human production. Yet they go on teaching their flock that it is a divine book, and that it contains the beginning and end of all wisdom."

"I deny that," said Uncle Joe. "The clergy are much more enlightened and careful in their teaching today than they were in my youth."

"That may be; but still, you know as well as I do most of them teach that Adam and Eve were our first parents, when they know perfectly well they were not."

"How do you know that?"

"Because I am foolish enough to waste some of my time in reading their sermons."

"Well?"

"And they still teach the story of the Flood, as though it were an historical fact."

"And how do you know it isn't?" said Uncle Joe, with an air of triumph.

"How do I know? Because the story is a great deal older than the Biblical story, and several other nations have stories of a Deluge, from which the Bible story was undoubtedly taken. You have only to read Bishop Colenso's *Examination of the Pentateuch* to be convinced of that. If the clergy do not know this fact, they are inexcusably ignorant."

"There you are again," said Uncle Joe, with great warmth of feeling. "Everybody who differs from you in opinion you call 'inexcusably ignorant.' That seems to be a stock expression of yours."

"Well, I can't help saying so, because everybody with the slightest intelligence must know, if they have only an elementary knowledge of science, that the story is not true. And I say the same about the story of the Confusion of Tongues at the Tower of Babel. Such stories are childish and stupid to an almost incredible degree, and yet the clergy go on teaching them as true."

"Well, I suppose the clergy may be allowed to have their opinion as well as you. You speak as though the clergy had all one view on the subject; such a statement is not true. The clergy are allowed to exercise their own thoughts on the subject, and consequently they differ very much among themselves. All the clergy are not fools, let me tell you."

"No, not all; I admit that. But on the whole they

are not distinguished for their good sense. Most of them believe that Abraham was a real historical character, yet it is more probable that Abraham was a sun-god. Abraham means a 'father of nations,' and the story of Sarah, his wife, being barren until she was ninety years old, and then bearing her husband a son and heir in the person of Isaac, requires a good deal of credulity and faith to swallow."

"Well, we Christians believe that years were not of the same length in those days as now, and that accounts for the longevity of many of the Biblical characters."

"But the Bible gives no warrant for any such conclusion. It says plainly that 'the evening and the morning' was the first day, and a certain number of days make a week, and a certain number of weeks a month, and so on to years. Why should you read into the Bible ideas and theories for which it gives no support?"

"I am merely giving the view of many learned divines, and I think they are quite as likely to be right as you."

"It is not my intention of going right through the Bible chapter by chapter and verse by verse. I will just take one or two stories, and ask you whether the clergy do not lead their followers to believe that such stories are true. Take the story of Balaam being admonished by a talkative ass that refused to budge an inch, after having been beaten by the prophet, because he saw an angel in the pathway. Do Christians believe in such a story as that?"

"Yes, most Christians believe in the story, but not in the way you state it."

"How, then? Shall I be wrong if I say that asses are the only creatures that ever do see angels?"

"Now, don't be nasty. I admit that, in the way you put it, the story does seem ridiculous; but then, Christians do not believe it in that way."

"And do they believe in the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale; or, rather, if I may put it in this way, of Jonah converting a whale's stomach into a house of prayer until the sea monster got sick of him and deposited him safely on land? And a number of equally silly stories."

"Yes, they believe them, but they don't see them in the same light as you. Besides, it is all very well for you to laugh at the stories of the Old Testament. Let me tell you that there are some fine passages in the Old Testament, some beautiful poetry, and some lofty sentiments."

"I acknowledge that; but there are also very horrible passages, stories of terrible battles, of bloodshed, murder, and rapine. Read the Book of Kings and see what you think of that. Read about the doings of David, the man after God's own heart."

"Oh, I have read it all, and though David made some terrible blunders and committed many crimes, he was, nevertheless, a good religious man. And remember that he repented of his misdeeds before he died."

"Yes, they all do that; but he was a rascal nevertheless. Now, honour bright, wasn't he?"

"Well—he wasn't exactly a saint."

"You are right. Now listen to this:—

Solomon and David they both led awful lives, For what they chiefly thought about was concubines and wives. But when old age came o'er them, their consciences had qualms So Solomon wrote the Proverbs and David wrote the Psalms."

"Where did you get that from?"

"I saw it at the head of an article in the *Referee* a Sunday or two ago, and as it expresses my view on the subject, I take the liberty of quoting it, with acknowledgments, of course."

"But why harp so much upon the old Testament?"

Why not deal with the New, that is what Christians believe in, and I think you will find its teachings beyond your power of ridicule."

"There you are wrong. Many of the stories of the New Testament are just as ridiculous as those of the old—the stories of the miracles for example. Who believes to-day that Jesus fed five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two fishes; or opened the eyes of the blind by sticking clay on them; or walking on the sea without the aid of Boyton boots; or calling Lazarus out of the grave when he had been dead for several days, and his body in a state of decomposition; who, I ask, believes in such stories as these in the twentieth century?"

"Well, as Christians, we are supposed to believe them."

"Supposed is right. And yet if Christians do not really believe them, they are hypocrites. And, as for acting up to the teachings of Jesus, who believes in turning the other cheek when one has been smitten, or in giving their cloak when any other article of their wearing apparel has been stolen from them? Who believes in 'Taking no thought for the morrow what they shall eat or what they shall drink, or wherewithal they shall be clothed'?"

"Some good Christians do follow out such teachings," said Uncle Joe, with firmness, "but not many, I admit. It requires great courage to do it, and that's where most of us fail."

"But if it's unreasonable, why do it? What I object to is, Christians pretending to do these things, and acting in direct opposition to them. Then, again, there is the teaching: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.' You know the passage?"

"Of course I do, and I know your contention. You say Christians don't act up to it; and you point out that some of the bishops have died leaving thousands—in fact, tens of thousands. I know it, and I deplore the fact. But I am tired of your taunts on the subject."

"Surely you don't mind being told the truth?"

"When I remember how badly the majority of the clergy are paid, especially the poor curates, I resent your taunts; they are unworthy of you."

"Very well. Let me sum up by saying that Christianity, as it exists in this country, is an organized hypocrisy, and, apparently, it is the same in other Christian countries. And I maintain that any man who disbelieves in Christianity, and says so, is penalized. He cannot obtain employment in any public office unless he pretends to believe in a faith he despises. He has to get a character from a priest or a parson, otherwise the best of qualifications are of no value. If he becomes a member of a public body, he is expected to attend church or chapel, or he is pointed out with the finger of scorn as 'an unbeliever' or 'an infidel.' In fact a premium is put upon hypocrisy wherever he goes, and in whatsoever society he moves."

"Stop—that's enough," said Uncle Joe, rising from his seat and pacing up and down the room. "I am tired of hearing these charges hurled against Christians. Anybody would think that Christians persecuted unbelievers to-day as, I confess, they did years ago. But it is not true. Freethinkers may be reformers—but a world full of reformers and Freethinkers would be an intolerable place to live in; they make themselves such an infernal nuisance."

"So you think, no doubt; but let me tell you, Uncle, that if it had not been for Freethinkers and reformers in the past, you would not enjoy the liberty you do to-day. So be of good cheer, for it was such men who made the world worth living in to-day, and will make it better and brighter in the future."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Sordid Plausibility.

AT the time these words are being written (on June 27), the peace terms to Turkey are unknown to the world at large. Probably to a considerable extent they are not even settled by the high negotiators themselves. They may at any time be known, and therefore (both by reason of their present inaccessibility and also because of what they may or may not be when they are known) speculations about them render difficult the composing of this article.

Nevertheless, the tale we would tell is so interesting and so instructive that we will not let the above considerations deter us from telling it. Should the Turkish terms, when known (either before or after this essay is out), necessitate any modification of statements herein, readers themselves will be able to make it.

Amongst Anglican Churchmen, and also to a lesser degree amongst Nonconformists, a little agitation has been going on to "restore to Christendom the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople." As one passes the Memorial Hall in the City of London, one sees a notice: "Santa Sophia Redemption Committee." Often, as one passes some Anglican church, one sees a placard with a picture of the minarets and cupolas of the great basilica of Stamboul, and underneath it some such notice as this: "Will you help to do a great act of justice?"

The idea is to take from the Muslims the Mosque of St. Sophia, and give it to "His Beatitude the Orthodox Greek Patriarch of Constantinople." The argument in support of this policy runs thus: For hundreds of years the glorious edifice in question was a Christian church. Then the armies of Muslim military power seized Constantinople, and, merely as a symbol and result of their triumph, transformed the church ("Hagia Sophia" or "Sancta Sapientia," the "Church of the Holy Wisdom") into a mosque. This was 468 years ago; it was solely an act of conquest; is it not right that the building should now be given back to the Greek Patriarch?

Whatever view the Peace Conference may take of this agitation (one feels doubtful; for, after all, in many cases expediency and pliability seem to have guided its decisions as well as pure justice), one may at any rate say that the agitation deserves to be remembered. It is such a splendid instance of misdirected eloquence and misleading statement; such a moving example of "sordid plausibility."

One has seen sometimes, in the church-advertisements of the "great act of justice" referred to above, names of speakers at some meetings in support of this movement. Such names as the Anglican "Archbishop of Armagh" in Ireland. This disestablished but only partly disendowed prelate is eager to take the Hagia Sophia from the Islamic Power and give it to those from whom it was taken 468 years ago. His Grace, however, forgets that he himself occupies an ancient edifice, too. The cathedral he officiates in was not built for Protestants, such as he himself is, but for the Catholic and Roman faith. It was taken from that faith by pure military force not 468, but 360 years ago; so (if His Grace's Hagia Sophia argument is right) there is, if one may so express oneself, "one hundred and eight years' more reason" why His Grace's cathedral should be taken from him and given to the rightful original owners. So also in England: how many of the ancient fabrics were built for those who have them now? Yet this argument is little heard of from the leaders of the "Redemption of St. Sophia" movement. Charity does not begin at home. Neither does justice, it would seem.

Who is "the Greek Patriarch?" Here we come to an interesting little tale of the ancient Roman Empire. That Empire, then, had adopted the Christian religion. In our modern days the great part (though not all) of the Eastern Churches are separated from the Roman Church; but in those old times this was not so. Well (as concerned in the present question), there were four bishoprics: Heraclea, Ephesus, Cæsarea, and Byzantium (the latter afterwards renamed "Constantinople"). Byzantium was not even an archbishopric. It was a suffragan see of Heraclea; a little see, in short, dependent from another. In our times, however, things are not so, for Byzantium is now "His Beatitude the Ecumenical Patriarch." He has swallowed Heraclea, Cæsarea, and Ephesus whole. He claims to be Lord and President (if not in "jurisdiction" at least in "honour," and he has claimed the "jurisdiction," too, whenever he could get it) of all the Eastern Christians. He is, indeed, a person of note. How did he so rise from being a petty little suffragan?

Of course, it all came from the division of the old Roman Empire into two. Two Emperors were set up: one, the Emperor of the West, lived at Rome ("old Rome"), the other, Emperor of the East, lived at Byzantium ("Constantinople," known as "New Rome"). Your Bishop of Byzantium saw his chance and took it. With the obsequiousness and Court-worship so characteristic of the time and the place, he was always round the vicinity of the "Emperor of New Rome." From one promotion he rose to another, and soon he was no longer a mere suffragan, but had "eaten up" his own superiors and was a Patriarch. All came of fawning round a Court.

Soon the Patriarch cast roving eyes abroad. Over at "Old Rome" was a bishop, too, and that bishop claimed to be a *Pontiff* as well as bishop, and, as such, to be pre-eminent. True, the Roman Bishop as Pontiff rested his claims on a real or, at anyrate, alleged Apostolic foundation and commission, as in the Bible at Matthew xvi. 18, and other places. Nothing like this in the case of His Beatitude the Ecumenical Patriarch of New Rome. No particular "venerability" in climbing up from nothing by keeping in with a new-made Emperor.

In time the haughty upstart was at war with the Pontiff. Then Photius comes on the scene. Photius was a man of great learning, but also of unbridled ambition. In 867, he excommunicated Rome. In 869 he was deposed and Ignatius put in his place. This Ignatius died, and Photius, getting the position once more, again "banned" Rome. Eight years later he was again deposed, and, dying in 891, was never restored. The East and West were reunited for nearly 200 years.

Such is the "Patriarchate of Constantinople," a sordid tale of a "climber" who rose "from nothing" by Court flattery, and then set the world at odds by claims based originally on such foundations. This is the Patriarchate to which some people want to "restore" a Church which was only originally made his when Christians were united, but which he would like to possess now they are not. And the people so zealous to "restore" it will make no mention of restoring their own illegitimately acquired goods. "Sordid plausibility"!

J. W. POYNTER.

Notes From Ireland.

Each of the competitors, moreover, received as a present an artistic crucifix.—*Irish Catholic*.

I have heard Catholics say it, and Protestants too, and I've seen it repeated in the columns of this journal, that the antagonism of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is the cause of Ireland's backwardness. It isn't. Catholicity, and

it alone, is the big, fat cancer; it alone is the huge vulture whose talons are ever shredding to ribbons the intellectual fabric of our minds; it alone is the greasy ogre still glut-tonously devouring the sparse bit of flesh that yet remains to our frame. Yes, Catholicity is the enemy. It reigns serenely, with its head in the hidden mansions of heaven and its feet firmly planted upon the luxurious fields of hell. Protestantism scarcely matters; it is a mere jelly-fish—soft, and easily pulverized.

A practical illustration: A very large Protestant church in Dublin has recently been closed, and has now been acquired by the Ministry of Munitions. A few days ago a small, dirty, holy-looking urchin accosted me: "Will you buy a ticket for the new chapel, sir?"

In a recent issue of the *Irish Catholic* I counted no less than *forty-six* appeals for money.

In the same paper the pious were informed that the Catholic Mission in Africa was in dire need of a "soap-box for the tabernacle."

Some time ago I was held up at a street corner by a procession of about one hundred little girls on their way to confirmation. Each child was decked out as a bride. (Indeed, I wonder how many of those girls will, in time to come, be the brides of celibacy within our vast convent prisons!) Each face was decked with the smile of innocence and sweet vanity; and each forehead was, of course, channelled with the furrows of understanding. Such poor, helpless little mites; each entering upon her career of misery and of nothingness. And the mothers, too! they—they laughed! Oh, the tragedy of it all! their eyes sparkled with glee as they drove their offspring into the darkest pit in the world! Oh, my blood boils when I think of the abominable contrivances whereby the innocent and the pure and the beautiful may escape hell's conflagration.

Listen to this, which came within my own personal notice. I know a woman who sent her child this year up for confirmation. But the little shoes and the little frock would cost one pound. Her good man, however, hadn't a pound. He'd a large family, but he hadn't a pound. In his extremity, he had to borrow that amount from his employer, who arranged to accept repayment by deductions from the weekly wages. That debt is, I believe, not yet cleared off.

I have just been to a local library, where I left an old copy of the *Freethinker* underneath a religious journal. I then retired behind a book to a place of vantage. An old man came along, saw the damnable paper, and, apparently not knowing the meaning of "Freethinker," read the most inflammatory article in it. Having finished the article, he read no more, put the paper back where he found it, and proceeded calmly to examine the neighbouring "daily." I left the poisoned arrow behind me.

DESMOND FITZROY.

Correspondence.

DRIVING OUR RACE TOWARDS THE CEMETERY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—On Sunday last the following paragraph appeared in the *National News*:—"We are living in a day when the Divorce Courts are congested, when the nurseries are empty, when we are making more coffins than cradles, and when we are driving our race towards the cemetery—*Father Vaughan*."

For empty nurseries we have the example of *Father Vaughan* and the celibate priests of his Church, and upon sexual morality I commend to your readers the teaching of *Liguori*, a canonized saint of the Roman Catholic Church. In his *Moral Theology*, vol. ii., p. 125, he says:—

It is asked whether an adulteress can deny adultery to her husband, understanding that she may reveal it to him. She is able to assert equivocally, that she did not break the bond

of matrimony, which truly remains; and if Sacramentally she confessed adultery, she can answer I am innocent of this crime, because by confession it was taken away. Thus Cardenas, *dics. 192 54*, who, however, here remarks that she cannot affirm it with an oath, because in asserting anything the probability of a deed suffices; but in swearing moral certainty is required. To this it is replied that in swearing moral certainty suffices, as we said above, which moral certainty of the remission of sins can indeed be had when any morally well disposed, receives the sacrament of penance.

R. LEE BLISS.

FREETHOUGHT AND SOCIAL ECONOMY.

SIR,—Your correspondent, Private F. Margetson, asks me (29 inst.) if I would prefer State officialism to private ownership, and substitute sloth for industry? He must have read my articles very carelessly to ask such an absurd question, and I invite him to quote any words of mine which could possibly lead to any such deduction.

Mr. Margetson is, apparently, unaware that there are two Socialisms, whose antithesis has been aptly described by Ernest Lesigne, the brilliant French journalist and historian, in the following words:—

The first proclaims the sovereignty of the State, the second recognizes no sort of sovereign.

One wishes all monopolies to be held by the State; the other wishes the abolition of all monopolies.

One wishes the governed class to become the governing class; the other wishes the disappearance of classes.

The former threatens despotism; the latter promises liberty.

The first has confidence in social war; the other believes only in the works of peace.

G. O. WARREN.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

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REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 26.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Dobson, Kelf, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, and Silverstein; Miss Pitcher and the Secretary.

This being the first meeting of the newly appointed Executive, the following Committees were elected:—Benevolent Fund Committee: Messrs. Kelf and Roger, and Miss Pitcher. Organization Committee: Messrs. Neate, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, and Rosetti. The election of the Finance Committee was deferred.

New members were admitted for Barnsley, Belfast, Edinburgh, Kingsland, and South London Branches, and the Parent Society (twenty in all).

The Secretary reported that as the L.C.C. still continued to refuse the grant of a general permit for the sale of the *Freethinker*, some further action would have to be taken by the Protest Committee.

Arrangements for autumn and winter propaganda in London were discussed, and the Secretary instructed to make inquiries in regard to certain halls.

Matters remitted from the Conference were then discussed and dealt with.

The Secretary's salary was discussed and readjusted.

It was agreed unanimously that Miss Kough continue to act as Honorary Assistant to Miss Vance.

Certain additions to Rules and the preparation of Standing Orders were remitted to the Organization Committee.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if sent on postcard.

LONDON.**INDOOR.**

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Paradox of England."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Mr. E. C. Saphin. 3.15, "The Gospel according to Smith"; 6, "The Fathers and the Faith."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.—Outing to Laindon Hills. Train 10 a.m. Plaistow, calling at Upton Park, East Ham, and Barking. Fare 2s. 6d. return. Members will bring mid-day meal. Tea will be arranged, 1s. 6d. per head. All Freethinkers invited.

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

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 6.30, Members' Meeting.

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