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## Views and Opinions.

### The Spiritualistic Boom.

For some time Spiritualism has been having something of a boom. It is not at all surprising that this should be so. We have just passed through the prolonged strain of a huge War, everyone's nerves has been at a tension, the emotional strain has been great, and nothing so multiplies the chances of delusion and illusion as that. Apart from this aspect of the matter, there is no reason why Spiritualism should have gained popularity from the War. Death is no new thing in human experience, and the pain of parting is felt no more to-day than it was felt thousands of years ago. No new evidence on behalf of Spiritualism has been brought forward; all that has been said recently has been said over and over again, and repetition, in this case, adds nothing. But we have had four and a half years of a devastating War. During that time the public mind has been on the rack, emotion has been in the saddle instead of reason, credulity has been rampant—as witness stories such as the passage of the Russian armies through England, the Mons angels, the boiling of German dead, etc.—and it would, therefore, be indeed strange if in these circumstances the marvellous and the supernatural did not gain strength with certain minds. It is an old observation that man's weakness is God's opportunity, and that holds good of supernaturalism generally.

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### The Value of the Evidence.

If nothing new has been said or found in connection with Spiritualism, it is sheer inaccuracy to call the evidence offered in its behalf "scientific." It has not the slightest claim to be called that. When we speak of scientific evidence we mean—or ought to mean—evidence that is producible, in the legal sense of the term, that is verifiable, that is not dependent in any way upon personal feeling or individual peculiarity. It must be evidence that will carry conviction to all normally constituted minds. How does Spiritualism meet the test? We are told of the number of scientific men who have accepted the phenomena as genuine. But that does not carry us far. For, unfortunately, there is often a wide difference between scientific evidence and the evidence of scientific men. On the face of it this is no more than the argument from authority—the argument

that has done so much to establish many absurdities. When Sir Oliver Lodge, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tell us that they are convinced, the statement is interesting, but it is not evidence—except of the minds of these gentlemen on this subject. Admittedly the evidence is not producible on demand. It appears in a chance or haphazard way, and, more important still, others who have witnessed the same phenomena as the witnesses cited, have come to quite different conclusions concerning it. The evidence for the circulation of the blood, of the theory of gravitation, or the hypothesis of Natural Selection, was not of this kind. It was scientific because it satisfied the conditions named above. Clearly, then, we are straining language when we speak of the evidence brought forward on behalf of Spiritualism as "scientific." It is not. We have the expression of a personal conviction or idiosyncrasy and that is all.

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### All of a Piece.

We do not labour the question of fraud, although that is serious enough. It is certainly something that, sooner or later, one medium after another meets with exposure as a trickster. And, in many cases, the same kind of evidence was offered on their behalf that is now offered for others. That, at least, throws a little doubt upon the value of the testimony offered to us. But when we have quite eliminated conscious deception, unconscious deception still remains as a factor not to be lost sight of. And the possibilities here are simply enormous. Psychology, as a science, is yet in its infancy, and the field of abnormal psychology opens up enormous possibilities. Not so many years ago the now familiar phenomena of dual personality would have seemed to many positive proof of "spirit control." To-day another and more scientific explanation lies ready to hand. Another point worthy of note in this connection is this: if anyone compares a work on Spiritualism written fifty years ago with one written to-day he will notice a strange and striking difference. And the difference will be this: fifty years ago the future life was pictured in terms of the smugly respectable Victorian religion. To-day it is described in terms of the advanced and up-to-date religious adventurer. Now, we can quite understand that men's *opinions* should have undergone a change, but in what is claimed to be a matter of objective fact, how are we to account for this peculiar and discrepant change? We are told that each one makes his own heaven and hell, and with that we agree. All we are in doubt about is how far it is true of this side the grave as well as some alleged other side. Why should the future life be described, by those who are supposed to be in it, in terms of agreement with contemporary religious speculation? When the Esquimaux pictures heaven as a place filled with whale, oil and blubber, is he acting differently from "Raymond" in finding whisky and cigars in the next world? If the Redskin pictures heaven as a veritable "happy hunting-ground," what psychological distinction can we draw between him and our modern drawing-room ghost-hunters? It is really astonishing how little superstition alters during the ages.



### The Other Side of Death.

But we are not really concerned with the alleged proofs of "spirit" intercourse. That topic has been discussed by a large number of writers, and one could only repeat what has already been said. It is more interesting to notice the purely emotional appeal made by certain advocates of Spiritualism. On this point the Spiritualist and the Christian move on the same level. Both talk as if life would be valueless if it ended at the grave, and both talk of the comfort and consolation the belief in immortality brings. We believe this to be false in both theory and fact. One's attitude towards death is mainly a question of character and temperament, and in the experience of every-day life one fails to detect differences between believer and unbeliever in the grief displayed on the death of those dear to them. Spiritualistic talk on this topic is a mere echo of the pulpit without its excuse. Grief in the presence of death is a universal fact. It would be a disaster were it otherwise. For far more hinges on the fact of death than most people are apparently aware. Death snaps many ties, it lacerates many hearts; and in the resulting pain we are all apt to be blind to its other aspects. Yet we believe that a more careful consideration of the subject will show that some of our deepest feelings and some of our most cherished affections are centered in the fact of death. From one point of view, birth and death are antagonistic facts. But from a deeper point of view they are complementary. Death is implied in birth, and birth carries with it the promise of death. A world in which no one died would be a world in which no one was born. And a world in which neither birth nor death occurred would be a world emptied of human affection. It is the uncertainty of life, the possibility of accident, of disease, that gives life its principal value. Life is, in fact, and in unexpressed imagination, set in a veritable framework of death. It is death that defines life, conditions it, and gives it a meaning and significance. To ask for immortality in order to give life meaning and value is to ask for the removal of the one condition that makes it valuable to any or intelligible to all.

### Life and Adaptation.

The truth of the whole matter is that life in all its aspects—physical, mental, and emotional—is developed for this life, and will suit none other. All life is a question of adaptation, and this is as true of mental and emotional dispositions as it is of physical structures. Whatever human character may be worth, it has been developed by and for intercourse with conditions as they obtain here, and can only continue to express itself satisfactorily so long as these conditions remain substantially unchanged. Love and hate, fear and courage, with all the varied qualities of human nature, have a meaning only so long as we think of them in an environment that allows room for their expression. But if we assume some other state of existence in which a good half of these qualities must atrophy, owing to the great dissimilarity of conditions, we are, instead of providing for a development and perfecting of human character, really preparing for the abolition of its meaning and value. Thus, if we think of the next life as providing opportunities for the development of character, we must think of the present conditions remaining unchanged. In that case the argument of both the Spiritualist and the Christian breaks down. If, on the other hand, the conditions are vitally different, development is impossible, owing to the unsuitability of the conditions. Really, there is nothing new in religion. All that we meet with is a change of form. Of old, the primitive religionist drugged himself, fasted, and, by placing himself in an abnormal state of mind, brought himself

into communication, as he conceived, with the gods. Ages roll by, and some people are still pursuing the same policy. The expectant state of mind, the emotional stress, the play of primitive feeling in the seance-room, is no more than the modern equivalent of the fasting, dancing, and exploitation of abnormal states that have been characteristic of religion in all ages.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The God-Eating Sacrament.

### IV.

#### ITS VALUE TO THE CHURCH.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION was, from the first, virtually the only doctrine of the Church, though it was not formulated into a hard-and-fast theory till much later. Ignatius, only about sixty years later than Paul, speaks of the Eucharist as "the flesh of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the drug of immortality"; to Justin Martyr the flesh and blood of Christ were the soul's food, and became its very life by assimilation; Irenæus saw in the bread after its consecration a supernatural element as well as a natural, the supernatural element being the mysterious presence of the crucified Christ in both bread and wine; and Clement of Alexandria, though by no means a typical mystic, employed language which, to many, justifies his inclusion in the list of advocates of Transubstantiation. Origen, characterized as the most profound exponent of the Christian mysteries, says that in this Sacrament, Christ is the heavenly bread given to all who are spiritually able to digest him. Indeed, Harnack tells us that the Fathers were all "Sacramental theologians"; and the founder of the cult was Paul. What were they all setting up? At once the most stupid and most powerful superstition imaginable. Speaking of the movement generally, Harnack, the greatest living authority on the subject, says:—

One is convinced that all Christians with one accord attributed a magical force, exercised especially over demons, to the mere utterance of the name of Jesus and to the sign of the Cross; and then one can read the stories of the Lord's Supper told by Dionysius of Alexandria, a pupil of Origen, and all that Cyprian is able to narrate as to the miracle of the host. Putting these and many similar traits together, one feels driven to conclude that Christianity has become a religion of magic, with its centre of gravity in the Sacramental mysteries (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 292-3).

It is beyond controversy that Paul attached magical value to the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. He believed that it produced a magical effect for weal or woe upon all participants. His words remind us of the ancient custom of giving holy food to those accused of crime, whom it poisoned if they were guilty. On the Communion table was magic food, and those who consumed it without a due sense of its real character were visibly punished. "He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." What form the judgment or punishment was supposed to take appears from the next verse: "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep"—that is, have died. What Paul wants to impress upon the reader's mind is, that worthy participation in the Lord's Supper results in magical benefit, while the effect of unworthy participation is magically disastrous. Naturally, such a doctrine was calculated to be of immense service to the Church. As Bousset rightly observes: "Behind these words we catch glimpses of definitely sacramental feeling, the belief in the marvellous virtue of sacred food for weal or woe."



Inevitably the celebrant of the rite was invested with superhuman dignity and glory. Speaking of him, Cyprian, the famous Bishop of Carthage, who suffered martyrdom, says: "The priest imitates what Christ did, and offers then in the Church to God the Father a true and complete sacrifice. The passion of the Lord is the sacrifice we offer." Cyril of Jerusalem describes the effect of participation thus: "By taking the body and blood of Christ, you become one body and one blood with him. For thus we become Christ-bearers by his body and blood being digested into our members." Now, the bread and wine became the body and blood of Christ, by a mighty miracle, just as the celebrant pronounced the words of consecration, with the result that the priest was regarded and honoured as a semi-Divine being. It was Cyprian who laid the foundation of the priestly caste in the Church, and it is to him we are indebted for some of the silliest stories of the magical effect of taking the sacred food. When persecution prevailed under Decius Christian courage was lacking, and at Carthage, in particular, many Christians were subject to paroxysms of weakness, the number of the lapsed forming a considerable proportion. Some there were who even offered the condemned Pagan sacrifice, and when their readmission into Church fellowship became a subject of hot controversy, Bishop Cyprian opposed it with ferocity. Milman quotes the prelate's "energetic language" in denunciation of those who had committed the horrible crime of sacrificing, and then adds:—

Some of them died of remorse; with some the guilty food acted as poison. But the following was the most extraordinary occurrence, of which Cyprian declares himself to have been an eyewitness. An infant had been abandoned by its parents in their flight. The nurse carried it to the magistrate. Being too young to eat meat, bread, steeped in wine offered in sacrifice, was forced into its mouth. Immediately that it returned to the Christians, the child, which could not speak, communicated the sense of its guilt by cries and convulsive agitations. It refused the sacrament (then administered to infants), closed its lips, and averted its face. The deacon forced it into its mouth. The consecrated wine would not remain in the contaminated body, but was cast up again. In what a high-wrought state of enthusiasm must men have been who would relate and believe such statements as miraculous? (*History of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 190.)

Cyprian tells another equally unbelievable tale about a little girl who, having eaten some meat sacrificed to idols, became possessed by evil spirits. Going afterwards to the Lord's Table, she refused to communicate, and fell into fits. In the Acts of Thomas, composed probably at the commencement of the third century, we read of a young man who, having murdered his mistress, went and took the communion, as if nothing had happened; but the hand that performed the sacrilegious deed immediately withered up. "Confess thy crime," the Apostle is said to have exclaimed, "for the Eucharist of the Lord hath convicted thee."

To those who communicated worthily, however, believing the bread and wine to be the very body and blood of Christ, the Sacrament was a talisman and charm against weakness, sickness, and death. The moment the consecration formula was officially repeated, a miracle took place far greater than that of turning water into wine. The bread and wine were annihilated so far as their substance was concerned, though retaining their former colour, taste, and weight, and in their place were the body and blood of Christ, the food and drink of mind and body. Consequently, the bread and wine are not surrogates or substitutes for the body and blood of the Redeemer; they *are* his body and blood. It follows, therefore, that "Do this in remembrance of me"

is a wholly irrelevant phrase, because the Eucharist is in no real sense a commemorative service, but a service of participation in and thanksgiving for a present sacrifice to God the Father. It is a dramatic representation of what transpired on Calvary nineteen hundred years ago.

This was a view of the Lord's Supper for which the Church was prepared to fight with all her might. As time went on, the doctrine grew more and more bold, and independent theologians arose to challenge it, like Ratramnus in the ninth century and Berengar in the eleventh; but the ultimate effect was to confirm the orthodox belief and to make the doctrine still more rigid. The Mass, by being constantly repeated, became the central act of worship, and the people believed that the priest performed a literal miracle every time. Strange things were said to happen, such as the transformation of the host into a lamb. There were Masses when no people were present, and Masses, said in private, for the benefit of the dead. Berengar was a much stronger opponent of Transubstantiation than Ratramnus. He cleverly and most logically exposed the absurdity and harmfulness of the belief; but the Church, at Council after Council, condemned him. The master whom he followed was John Scotus, one of the keenest and subtlest logicians of the Middle Ages; but the Church excommunicated Berengar and committed the writings of Scotus to the flames. In the end, Berengar succeeded in winning Pope Hildebrand, at least partly, to his side; but it was foreseen by the generality of the priests that the adoption of Berengar's views would prove ruinous to the welfare of the Church, and some of them did not hesitate to charge Hildebrand himself with infidelity. Milman paints the result of the momentary defection:—

The priests' power, as it was afterwards intrepidly stated, of making God; the miracles which became, or had become, so common, to prove not the spiritual but the grosser material transmutation, fell away at once: and with it how much of sacerdotal authority, sacerdotal wealth, sacerdotal dominion!—some might suppose of true and humble reverence for the mystery of the Eucharist (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., p. 118).

Thus the Eucharist fed the vanity and love of power so strongly implanted in the priestly mind. It is an appeal from objective authority to the credulity of the ignorant. Fancy a man of God having the effrontery to assure his simple-minded dupes that he had seen and touched the form of a child on the altar, and that after he had kissed it, it resumed the appearance of bread. We inwardly smile as we read such puerile stories, but the bulk of the people of the Dark Ages sincerely though ignorantly believed in their absolute truth. Consequently, Masses became the most popular and profitable of Church ordinances. There were, and still are, Masses ordinary or regular, and extraordinary or occasional; Masses simple, half-double, and double; Masses black, dry, high, and low; all contributing to swell the revenue of the Church, and to confer more and more power upon the priesthood which naturally blossomed into the worst type of priestcraft.

J. T. LLOYD.

Religious people often pray very heartily for the forgiveness of a "multitude of trespasses and sins," as a mark of humility, but we never knew them admit any one fault in particular, or acknowledge themselves in the wrong in any instance whatever. The natural jealousy of self-love is in them heightened by the fear of damnation, and they plead *Not Guilty* to every charge brought against them with all the conscious terrors of a criminal at the bar. It is for this reason that the greatest hypocrites in the world are religious hypocrites.—*Hazlitt*.



## Mary Shelley.

Not for delectations sweet,  
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,  
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,  
Pioneers! O pioneers! —Walt Whitman.

SHELLEY'S alliance with Mary Godwin proved to be the happiest years of his life. Her father, William Godwin, was a philosopher of reputation; and Shelley was destined to be his most distinguished pupil. So much is this the case that a witty Frenchman once said that Godwin's finest work was not *Political Justice*, but Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. The young disciple was in the habit of calling on the philosopher at the Juvenile Library, Skinner Street, Holborn, where Mary lived with her father. For both Mary and Shelley it was a case of love at first sight. Hogg, the poet's friend, has described in vivid words the story of his first seeing Mary Godwin. That was in June, 1814, when Mary was sixteen and Shelley twenty-two. On July 28 Mary Godwin eloped with Shelley; an association that was only ended by the poet's untimely death, July, 1822. These years were the ripest period of his genius, during which he wrote some of the most glorious poems ever contributed to his country's literature.

Mary Shelley herself was a noble-minded and rarely gifted woman. In literature she might have taken higher rank had she remained unmarried, but her genius was overshadowed by the transcendent abilities of her husband. As it is, her novel, *Frankenstein*, is one of the most powerful books written by a woman; whilst her other works, *The Last Man* and *Lodove*, well repay reading. Her life was devoted to duty, and she was always thinking of others. So long as her husband lived she lived for him, and she was always more a mother than a daughter to her scholarly and unbusiness-like father. It is touching to read that the philosopher turned to her for help, for consolation in his troubles, and even for literary assistance in writing those novels which earned him his bread. Sir Timothy Shelley and her husband's relations treated her badly, and, like her husband, she was insulted and slandered. To the last she befriended and assisted her sister, although she found the capricious Claire a heavy burden.

With all her womanliness, Mary had much of the good comrade in her. Her relations with Trelawney were characteristic. He wished her to revise his novels, and she tried hard to soften his asperities. Trelawney would willingly have married her, but she never would consent. No woman could have been a more affectionate or a more admirable mother. She was spurred for her son's sake to excessive literary exertion that she might eke out the scanty annuity allowed grudgingly by her father-in-law. And when she sent her boy to a public school, she was sadly put about to pay the quarterly bills, estimated on the grand scale by a complacent headmaster.

Small wonder that many of her letters are tinged with sadness. It is pleasant to find that her son, when he grew up, did what he could for her comfort, and towards the close of her life her days were passed in comparative rest. If, during that time, we are inclined to think that Mary Shelley had become commonplace, let us at least remember that she was a woman, and that she had suffered what might have broken a stronger personality than hers.

Sir Timothy Shelley does not emerge from this story with much credit. Curiously, the causes of the estrangement between Shelley and his father centre round the sinister figure of the family solicitor, William Whitton, who was a most unamiable person. Indeed, Sir Timothy left to himself, would, in all probability, have effected a

reconciliation with his famous son. One very interesting statement is made in one of the solicitor's letters of complaint to the father "that Mr. P. B. Shelley was exhibiting himself on the Windsor stage in the character of Shakespeare's plays under the figured name of Cooks." This is delightfully vague, but we should like to know what Shakespearean character the author of *The Cenci* enacted.

On the principle of heredity, Shelley's son should have been a gifted man. First, his father was a really great poet, then his mother was a woman of genius, author of *Frankenstein*, and, finally, there are William, and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, his grandparents, both of whom made a great stir in the world; the one with *Political Justice*, and the other with the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Yet all this genius, talent, and initiative only succeeded in producing a country gentleman, with a little culture, but no taste for literature, and no sympathy with democratic ideals. The only taste he inherited from his distinguished father was his intense love of the sea and yachts.

MIMNERMUS.

## On the Hills.

The hills purify those who walk on them.

WE were having our day on the hills. We have always loved them; and, in our earliest days, we remember viewing the local eminences with awe. How high they seemed, almost reaching to the clouds. And well do we remember our disappointment, when we had acquired sufficient strength of limb and spirit of adventure to make our first ascent, to find that the clouds were even further away than they first appeared to be. There is something peculiarly attractive to us in the ascent of a hill, it is so real, there is an imperativeness about it that seems to be a unique lesson in perseverance. If the summit must be reached, every inch of the road must be traversed, there is no pretence about it, you can never get there for half-price; nature seems to say: "You may fool about cities, but the hills are only for the strong and persevering."

Thus, we were travelling through the hills and dales of East Durham. Cross Fell was our objective, it is situated on the border of Cumberland, in full view of lakeland, the pride of English scenery. We had traversed the four miles of macadamized road between the station and the beautifully situated and secluded village of Garrigal. This is near the southern origin of father Tyne, on whose banks we are proud to reside and claim as our home. We had just passed through the village and were beginning to draw hard breath on the steep ascent of Rotherhope Fell. We were in rather a meditative mood, certain problems still weighed heavily on us. We had not shaken off all the perplexities with which religion burdens the human mind. We were still somewhat in "The valley of the shadow," the sun of freedom had not begun to shine fully for us. However, just above the village and at the foot of the Fell, we met a tall gentlemanly looking man. He was clerically attired, and he appeared to us as if he occupied a high position in the Christian world. His appearance at once claimed all our sympathies, his days appeared to us to be few in the land. The hollow cough and the weary, tired look, in spite of the magnificent surroundings and the bracing air, betrayed his sad case. He saluted us, and that wistful look on his kindly face went to our hearts. He questioned us as to whence we came and as to our destination; and when we had explained to him, he expressed some doubts as to our ability to accomplish all we had undertaken. We however, assured him that we had travelled



the same road on previous occasions. After some hesitation, during which time he seemed to be thinking hard, he tendered us a little apology for detaining us. He then said, in a very sad tone of voice, "I have something that I very much want to say to you." We gently expressed our willingness to listen, quite expecting to be reproved for breaking the Sabbath. He, however, proceeded thus: "I am very well off so far as this world's goods are concerned; but," he repeated, emphatically, "but I would give all I possess if I could accomplish that which you are doing to-day." We shook hands with him. He wished us "Good day" in a broken voice. We were compelled to remain silent, and respond with a further grip of the hand.

We proceeded up the hill; the surroundings for a while were quite blurred. But we were thinking furiously. Had this poor gentleman become conscious of the truth of life? Had his religion failed him in the hour of his supreme trial? Had these stern everlasting hills impressed him? "There is nothing human in the whole round of Nature. All Nature, all the Universe that we can see, is absolutely indifferent to us, and except to us, human life is no more value than grass."

This little experience was one of the great lessons of our lives; it fixed once and for all our true place in the world. Our altruistic view of things causes us to hope that our short-time friend has overcome his illness, and still continues to see the recurring springtimes. He had learnt to appreciate life; religion was no consolation to him. We had our hour of exhilaration near the cairn. On our return we hoped to once more greet our friend, but we saw him no more. We never go on the hills without thinking of this episode; it set up a train of thought which has helped us to live, in its fullest sense.

J. FOTHERGILL.

### The Dog and his Gods.

ANIMAL psychology is a study of negation. No human being can apprehend the development, or even the phenomena, of such psychology, for the very simple reason that no method, or at the utmost a very limited and inadequate method of thought interpretation exists between the human and animal races.

Yet Jack London seems to have acquired a positive knowledge of the emotions of dog psychology. This may, in part, be on account of his intimate experience of the low level of intelligence displayed by primitive peoples, while, in part also, it may be the result of his daring to put into comprehensible language definite facts about doggy emotions, which no one could readily combat because of mere lack of data.

"White Fang" displays little interest in the ultimate. "Jerry of the Islands," however, under the influence of his training and unnatural selection, has life needs which are unknown to "White Fang." Less primitive, he becomes more emotional; and being more emotional, he is subject more easily to the analysis of psychology.

The immediate need, which crops out of such a sensitized mentality, is for somewhat to worship, and to Jerry it appears that the white god-ruler of the blacks of Malaita, Mr. Haggin, and after Van Horn, hold in their hands life and death, and the knowledge of all things. The limits of his intelligence lie in his immediate environment, and he knows nothing more of the mind of man than its prohibitions and gratulation, which are the outcome of very definite actions on his part.

When Van Horn is removed, Jerry seeks another god; and as he must have a god, is obliged to accept one of the inferior black race, who is, however, superseded later by the white gods, to whom he inevitably rallies. They are even more omnipotent than Van Horn; for not only do they hold suzerainty over black, but also over the minor white gods.

Thus, with the development of his intelligence, he seeks new gods; just thus was it with his black masters, and even so with his white gods themselves. They know only the

prohibitions and the praise of their gods. They know that certain actions will inevitably bring about certain results. They know the punishments and the rewards; and they worship a god, or many gods, accordingly.

In the first place, of course, a god is placed in charge of each set of actions; later, with the extension of natural knowledge and of closer acquaintance with the persistence of phenomena, the number of gods is reduced, until at length a tri-unity has been evolved. Is it to be understood that knowledge has reached its limit, and that no further change in the nature of God may take place with its increase, or that the Lord of the Universe shall be diminished by the extending of human knowledge to be but a part of his present self?

G. E. FUSSELL.

### Acid Drops.

God has been officially certified to have been busy in Bermondsey. The certificate was given by Judge Parry in the County Court and reported in the *Star* of July 12. There had been a heavy storm, and a woman stepping out of bed fell into eighteen inches of water. As this led to her being in bed for eight weeks, damages was claimed from the landlord. Judge Parry declined to allow damages, because, he said, it was "almost an act of God." Now, we wonder how he knew? And if his guess was accurate, of whom is the woman to get damages? Should she bring an action against the Bishop of London as God's representative? And if she did, what would he say? Suppose the woman had been drowned, would the Judge have returned a verdict of manslaughter? If not, why not? The curious thing is that people always seem most certain about things being due to God when they are of an unpleasant kind. It will be remembered that in the Bible it was when Moses brought the plague of lice on Egypt that the magicians threw up the sponge and said: "Now we know that this comes from the Lord."

The lavish adulation of the Prince of Wales has reached a humorous climax. Not contented with praying for him by name in public form of prayers, this young man has been admitted as an elder brother of the Trinity. That ought to settle the matter once and for all. Who can any longer dispute his god-like qualities?

A decree nisi was granted to Mrs. K. M. Creighton because of the misconduct and cruelty of her husband, John Henry David Creighton, formerly rector of Foulsham, Norfolk. The wife complained of his conduct with women, even in his own house, and said that he supplied very little money for anything, although his income was about £800 a year. The restraints of the religious life are not very obvious in this instance.

A Sunday paper, referring to the high wages of some mechanics, calls them "preposterous." That editor never uses such language concerning the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, whose salaries amount to £300 and £200 weekly, respectively.

A correspondence has been carried on in the pages of the *Daily News* concerning the most humorous book. So far, no one has mentioned the Bible, although it would be hard to beat the account of the animals going into the Ark two by two; or the story of Jonah's bed-sitting-room in the whale's stomach.

The following appears in the *Sunday Mail* (Glasgow):—

Sir,—I have had occasion to come in contact with a large number of ex-soldiers, and have discovered that many of them are now Atheists.

I wonder if other readers have noticed the same tendency in themselves (if ex-soldiers) or in others, and if they can explain the change in their beliefs.

The subject is an interesting one, and would bear discussion.

CHURCHMAN.

We wonder what the clergy, who have been so full of the religion of our soldiers, think of it? We fancy Churchman



will find the explanation in Lincoln's aphorism that you can't fool *all* the people *all* the time.

What beautiful nonsense the clergy utter in public! Speaking at Caxton Hall, London, the Rev. C. H. Lancaster declared that "the multitude of blessings" on this country was due to the Union Jack, which contained the Old Testament colours—"red for atonement; white for purification; and blue for love of God." Curiously, the same colours appear in the French tricolour flag, and our Gallic friends are often regarded as the most irreligious of men.

We have received a copy of an order issued to some of our troops in Mesopotamia, ordering a Church Parade, but bearing the information, "the service will last for half an hour only." Please put up with it—it won't last long, is, we think, the real meaning of the information. But we wonder how long it will be before the Government decides on treating soldiers as though they were grown-up men in full possession of their faculties, and capable of deciding whether they want to go to church or stay away? No one insults the soldier in so comprehensive a manner as they who profess to think most highly of him.

Lord Strathspey declares that "if the clergy and religion were on a proper footing there would be fewer strikes." This is a cryptic utterance; but the clergy have struck on the Continent, and are ready to strike anybody—for more money—in this country.

The Bishop of London still maintains that the clergy are "starving." Doubtless, some are in a bad way. For instance, the Rev. Sir E. G. L. Mowbray succumbed recently, leaving behind the sum of £188,766; and the Rev. W. E. Prickard, of Radnor, £21,302.

"Our cleverest thinkers should not be warned off by the Church, but should be called in to help solve its problems," says the Headmaster of Eton College. What Christian magnanimity! In the Ages of Faith the "cleverest thinkers" were murdered by the Church. We note the Headmaster's admission that the Church needs thinkers to-day.

A service in memory of "civil engineers" who fell in the War was held at Westminster Abbey. This is the "umteenth" War service in this venerable building. We are waiting to hear of the thanksgiving service for those who made their fortunes during the War. These cent-per-cent. War-patriots ought to be able to pay for a full choral service.

During the War, pious journalists wrote many paragraphs concerning Providence's care for churches and religious relics. This care is not so marked in peace-time. At Clifton Parish Church, Bristol, the altar-cloth has been twice set on fire.

The value of religious training and education is vastly over-estimated by the Orthodox. Mrs. Johnson was granted a decree *nisi* against her husband, the Rev. Noel Hugh Johnson, formerly an Army Chaplain. It was stated that he was living with another woman at Newhaven, and that he had been a co-respondent in another divorce case.

A daily paper assures us that "Rome has abolished the censorship." This refers to the Italian Government and War-time restrictions. The Church of Rome maintains her censorship during peace and war impartially.

Speaking at a Church of England's Men's Society service, the Bishop of Woolwich said that if they went into Walworth they would see conditions which were not only a disgrace to their Christianity, but to their civilization. He would like to see the names of the owners of such houses put upon them. Why, however, did the Bishop single out poor, old, Walworth? He could easily match the conditions in

other parts of London, such as his own diocese, or even in the shadow of Westminster Abbey. He might even consult the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Those worthy gentlemen ought to know where slum property is situated.

The Archdeacon of London preached a sermon on "Oranges and Lemons" at the service for the blessing of the bells at St. Clement's Church, Strand, London. The subject was no more silly than the fairy tales of the Bible.

The Rev. C. H. Chard, Rector of Christ Church, Spitalfields, says that half the population of that district live in single-room homes. The total population is about 20,000. A case of nine persons living in one room had been brought to the notice of the Whitechapel Guardians. Perhaps the reverend gentleman remembered that the overcrowding was even worse in Noah's Ark.

Christians of rival denominations sometimes worship together without falling to fisticuffs. A united service of thanksgiving was held recently at Trafalgar Square, and addresses were given by the Bishop of London, Mrs. Booth, and a number of Free Church ministers. The Bishop surpassed himself: "This is the greatest day of all our lives," he declared, "the Churches have come out to thank God together." Indeed, his faith was so manifest, that it was a wonder that Nelson's bronze lions did not roar in sympathy.

Providence has been more fatherly than usual. Two hundred people were killed by a tornado at Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

"Germany must drink the cup of her humiliation to the dregs," says Dr. Gore, Bishop of Oxford. The Bishop is as bloodthirsty as his name, and he has a very quaint way of showing his love for his enemies.

Modesty is a rare virtue in public men of to-day. In a Carmelite House publication, it was stated that prayers were offered at a Sussex school for Lord Northcliffe. It is a comfort to reflect that worse men have been deified.

On July 8 a man was charged at Old Street Police Court with being a suspected person. The man told the magistrate that he had come from Coventry, and had been to the Salvation Army. He was there offered work at sorting paper at a wage of 1s. per week and his food. The magistrate remanded the man for inquiries. For ourselves, we are not in the least surprised. Some years ago it was shown quite plainly what methods the Army employed; but the Army remained silent, and the public soon went to sleep again. The paper is for the most part cadged, and, having got it for nothing, the Army then sets to work to shamefully exploit the most helpless class of the population. Charity covers a multitude of—swindles.

The late Col. Vaughan, who raised many thousands of pounds for charities, was dubbed "the prince of beggars" by the journalists. Surely, the pushful penmen overlooked the claims of the clergy.

The Rev. A. T. Guttery says the Army chaplains were "the bravest men the Church had ever had." Just so! And the bravest thing most of them ever did was to guard the communion port—and get officers' wages for their courage.

The Rev. H. E. Bicknell fell dead on the lawn of the Dovercourt Sports Club. Had he been a prominent Freethinker, the kindly hand of Providence would have been traced in the incident.

"The Christian Church should have its own theatre," chirruped the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard. Going into details, the reverend gentleman declared "the company would be engaged on an adequate living wage, but no 'star' salaries will be given." In this case, the Christian theatre will be very unlike the Christian Church.



To Correspondents.

- S. CLOWES.—Thanks; will try and use at some later date.
- T. FISHER.—Our Shop Manager has written you. If any special supply of the *Freethinker* is needed, and for a special purpose, it would be as well to write direct to the office. We can then make sure that you get what you need.
- J. AMES.—It may sound conceited, but we feel inclined to ask: "Who the devil are you that God should have made his existence known to you and not to us?" We can't help thinking that we are as well worth saving as other people, and we are certain that we shall feel being damned quite as much. We don't like this kind of favouritism.
- C. LEWIS.—Pleased you find the *Freethinker* so much to your taste.
- N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—F. Glaser, 5s.
- W. MARTIN.—We intended it to keep alive the name and the memory of a brave man. We do not propose making any alteration at present.
- R. HARDING.—The reply to your friend is that a conviction in the victory of right is one of the factors that make for triumph. The formula you cite does at least offer an explanation of observed facts, and that is certainly something, since it closes the road to false ideas.
- W. ROBERTS.—Received too late for use in this week's issue, and it will be out of date by the 27th. Sorry.
- 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 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 glad to say, judging from the letters received, that our "Special" of last week has had a good effect. Those who have written express their determination to do all that is possible to break down any attempt at boycott, and we feel sure that if Freethinkers are insistent on their demand for fair play, they will get it. Anyway, we thank our friends for their help. And we hope they will not allow the matter to drop. When Christians discover that Freethinkers mean to have fair play, they will give way.

Mr. W. Repton writes:—

Although grateful to "Mimnermus" for his contribution, entitled "A Century of Christian Charity," I regret that he omitted to mention the offensive patronage of Francis Thompson in his essay on the immortal poet. Open this book at any page and the sense of condescension strikes one forcibly—but there—perhaps it is what we deserve. Did not Homer in *Elysium* fail to recognize the great number of his commentators? Although I would not use a Freethought microscope to examine Shelley, I should think twice before using Catholic spectacles, and three times before paying 2s. 6d. for the Essay itself.

Following upon the article on the Papal Catholic Church in our issue of June 29, a correspondent asks our attention

to a sentence in "My Journal in June and July, 1914," which the editor is producing in his paper *Common Sense* of June 21. He is mentioning his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, including the Foreign Office and Diplomatic and Consular Services. He says: "The number of Roman Catholics is rather surprising." It is presumed he means that the civil servants professing that superstition exceed in number those of other superstitions. Some years ago the *Freethinker* called attention to the fact that an undue proportion of Papal Catholics were on the newspaper and journalistic press. Perhaps that has been a cause of the degradation of the press in recent years. Not long ago we had occasion to criticize the *Daily Telegraph*, and we are reminded that Mr. Foote quoted the declaration that the *Daily Telegraph* was run by a Jew in the interest of Christianity. Thirty-five or forty years ago the Glasgow people were astonished to find how many of the nurses in one of their infirmaries were Papal Catholics.

A very appreciative notice of Mr. Mann's *Science and the Soul* appears in the *Manchester City News* of July 5. The writer marks the cumulative force of the authorities cited, and quotes some very telling sentences from the pamphlet. For our part we regard Mr. Mann's essay as shattering the case for a "Soul" beyond the possibility of repair.

The *Evening Standard* notes as an "extraordinary fact" that "an American Methodist, a Welsh Methodist, and a French Freethinker" should have combined to produce a League of Nations. We need only add that but for the work of other Freethinkers in the past, it would not be possible even now.

The *Daily News* says that "if anyone were to translate *Casanova*, or publish at a cheap price an unexpurgated edition of the *Arabian Nights*, the public would be frightened out of their respectable skins." We do not agree. The Bible contains worse things than *Casanova* or the *Arabian Nights*. It is sold "under cost," or given away, and the respectable folk still possess their skins.

A Ballad of Things As They Are.

WOULD you hear a strain, a *tres* modern strain,  
A song that's dreamy, or a song of wit,  
A song of loss, or a song of gain,  
A song that lacks any sense in it;  
A song that fails the target to hit?  
An Egyptian plague the *eleventh* is ta'en;  
Your ears to hand—my song I remit:  
The printed word and a half-fed brain.

Our Hulton, Bottomley, Northcliffe, and Newnes,  
Liver eaters of under-dog man,  
Different organs, all the same tunes,  
Each wrestles for pelf, catch as catch can.  
Since wisdom fled, and printing ink ran,  
Each dishes up garbage, again and again;  
Depending on it, they all will fan  
The printed word and a half-fed brain.

Sorrows of Satan! My grandfather's hat!  
Caxton and presses, and all tin Gods.  
Workers who beg, or stand on a mat,  
Or are gently stroked with Phillistia's rods!  
A curse on them all; 'gainst fearful odds,  
Conscience whispers: Is it not their bane  
This living plague (press-cultured clods)  
The printed word and a half-fed brain?

ENVOI.

Prince you will see, my song is now clear;  
How can we fire the enemy train  
Of those who live on vileness and fear,  
The printed word, and a half-fed brain?

WILLIAM REPTON.



## The Science of the Ultra-Material.

### III.

(Continued from p. 345.)

PASSING from a consideration of atoms to that of their chemical combinations in molecules, it is obvious that these latter present less stable forms of equilibrium than do the atoms of which they are composed, and it may not be improbable that the varying equilibria of molecular combinations are closely related to the varying equilibria of the atoms. While chemical compounds present many degrees of stability, we find that the highest degree of instability, and the most mobile form of equilibrium in the organic world, are reached in the colloidal form of matter, which is now regarded as in some respects intermediate between the inorganic and the organic worlds. The essential feature of the colloids is that they consist of large unstable molecules which unite with other molecules to form higher aggregates. The colloids, therefore, consist of a union of molecules forming compound molecules, and thus differ essentially from ordinary chemical compounds in which atoms unite to form simple molecules. And as atoms differ among themselves in their valencies and chemical affinities, so it has been found that the constituent molecules of a colloid differ in the numbers of unions which they can mutually form and in the intensities of those unions: thus repeating, as it were on a higher plane, the principle of atomic valency and affinity.

In the living colloids of protoplasm, where carbon and nitrogen—both elements of high valency—play the leading part, the equilibrium becomes still more unstable. Indeed, the instability here reaches, as it were, a breaking point, for the energies of living matter are held to consist essentially of a rhythmic breaking down and restoration (katabolism and anabolism) of the very unstable equilibria which it manifests.

Finally, we reach the summit of instability in psychoplasm—nerve and brain matter—which, besides containing the carbo-hydrates and proteins essential to all protoplasm, contains as a further necessary ingredient of sentient protoplasm, another very highly valent and unstable element, phosphorus. It is an interesting speculation as to whether the energy functions of psychoplasm, involving as they do such a high degree of instability, may not even implicate the intra-atomic energies themselves, leading to atomic dissociation. Might it not be that while non-sentient protoplasm functions by disruption of the molecule, sentient protoplasm, reaching the final stage of katabolism, functions by disruption of the atom, and that consciousness is a form of radio-activity? Certain chemical reactions are now believed to give rise to atomic dissociation. Le Bon seems firmly to hold this view, and makes special mention of dissociation during the oxidation of phosphorus, which he describes as "one of the bodies with the most intense radio-activity." It seems to be another significant fact that nerve action is always found to be associated with electric discharge, while electric discharge is an invariable accompaniment of atomic association.

Be this as it may, we have now reached a conception of evolution as interpretable in terms of energy equilibrium. Proto-material evolution, from the primordial energy of substance to the intra-atomic energy of matter, is expressible as a fall from complete instability to a relatively stable equilibrium; while material evolution is expressible as a rise from this stable condition, through ascending degrees of unstable equilibrium, to the extreme of instability manifested in the metabolic activities of sentient protoplasm.

The profound significance for science of this new conception of matter cannot be too emphatically pointed out. Though it has been long recognized that all matter is the seat of enormous and unceasing energies, yet, so long as the atom was regarded as the ultimate element of matter—as a real entity independent of energy—it was necessarily looked upon as merely the vehicle of that energy. The atom was regarded as inert unless it were supplied with energy from outside itself, and it could give back only the amount of energy with which it was supplied. The advance from this notion of the atom as the vehicle of energy to the notion that it is itself energy may well be expected to open up undreamed-of possibilities in physical science, and it must necessarily effect a unification in our conception of existence far transcending all previous unifications. Hitherto, science has recognized two ultimate existences: Matter and Energy; and the dual doctrine of the indestructibility of Matter and the conservation of Energy has expressed their co-equal and co-eternal supremacy. In the new view, Energy alone reigns supreme with undivided sway. Energy furnishes the sole origin and constitutes the entire content of the universe, and Monism attains its final and complete justification.

And so profound a change in our ultimate scientific conceptions cannot but effect a change in our philosophic conceptions. If Mind and Matter be alike but forms of energy equilibria, they must be in essential nature the same, and the age-long problem as to the supposed "impassable gap" between them must disappear. The relation between "Thoughts" and "Things" must become easier of elucidation when it is recognized that the "Thing" and the "Thought" are both modes or functions of one and the same energy, the one function being a stable equilibrium and the other an unstable equilibrium. There can be no room for the old philosophy of Dualism in the face of such a completely Monistic interpretation of existence as this.

(To be continued.) A. E. MADDOCK.

## The Twilight of the Gods.

Leave, then, the Cross, as ye have left carved gods.

—M. Arnold.

Is it not better that man should stand alone, unaided, self-secure, than that, cowering, mean, abject, he should seek refuge in some phantasmagorical apparition ignorance has called God?

The ages that men have spent on this muck-heap of deceased deities, refining, purifying, endeavouring to instil into the putrefying mass some beauty, have not been lost. A moral code of inestimable value has been evolved from the crude imaginings of scarcely rational beings. Purge away the last remnants of the dross, banish the idea of God, and the greatest step since man developed reason will have been made.

It is a world-wide fallacy that without a belief in some higher power, man would at once revert to a level with the beasts. A splendid view, this; it speaks eloquently for the Deist's belief in his fellow-men, well for his idea of God. This is reducing God to a Justice of the Peace. It means that man is a creature who does right simply because he is afraid to do wrong.

This is what one might look for in a religion which states that man is born with original sin—that is, is born evil.

Yet these people dare to look down upon Atheists as upon some vile animal; they have endeavoured to make our name synonymous with immorality. Let them ponder awhile. Let them look to their own religion; to



their omnipotent, omniscient Creator, who punishes the innocent for the sins of the guilty, who has so much in common with the incestuous deities of the higher and lower barbarisms. Let them look to some of the pages of their own history, the snow-white pages of the massacres of the Albigenses and Waldenses, of the persecutions of the Jews, of the Eve of St. Bartholomew; to the spotless annals of the Vatican, of the Inquisition, and of Tyburn. Then, if they can raise their head without a blush, let them talk of Atheistic immorality.

To be an Atheist demands a greater sacrifice than to be a member of any of the thousand-and-one brands of Deism. We cannot illustrate our prospectus with pictures of a glorious, golden, garden city in an after-life; we cannot show our fellow-men roasting in a huge theological bonfire; we cannot point to a hope of celestial reunion with old friends. We offer no prizes; there can be no disappointment.

And more; we bear here a load of obloquy. Christians would fain ignore us, but this is impossible, so they endeavour to despise us. We are a despicable set of creatures, who lay aside all moral views, who deny the existence of God, in order that we may enjoy a life of unbridled license.

Let all who may have any doubts on this point lay them aside. No man who wanted to have "a good time" would remain an Atheist for a week. He would find life much easier as a professed Christian. He would find his Christian friends melt away; he would find that advancement in the social world was almost impossible; he would be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows." The day of Christian suffering is over. The clergy hold the benefices, their people the benefits.

What, then, have Atheists to look to? *Truth!* Truth is our war-cry, and our gospel *Man*.

Many wonder how we who are called Materialists manage to exist without something ethereal to look to. I merely ask them to turn to Shelley and to Swinburne, two of the most ethereal poets England or the world has ever produced. Both were Atheists. And I, *un pauvre poète*, I see more glory in a landscape when I look at its beauty as the result of the struggles of each individual species than as the passive result of the work of one who knows not what God.

Atheists are thinkers. To be able to deny anything, one must have knowledge. A man may become a Spiritualist after an attack of the D.Ts., or a Salvationist, as the result of mental paralysis, but with us such wonders are impossible. A man can only become an Atheist after a stern bout of cold reasoning.

It has been doubted by Bacon and Dr. Arnold whether a *real* Atheist ever existed. Indeed, Addison does not hesitate to say that if a man should profess Atheism, he is an impudent liar. Well, I suppose a man is entitled to his opinion however outrageous it may be, and while Addison is entitled to his, I am entitled to mine.

It is the reticence of Atheists that has given rise to this belief in their non-existence—a belief which has led to the statement in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that Atheism is merging into Agnosticism.

Let Bacon and Addison rave as they will. I *dogmatically* assert that there is no God, and, more, that there is no room for a God in the order of things.

Science has proved the physical origin of such a multitude of things that the few left unexplained, where the mouldering evidence fades away, leave so little that could be attributed to a creator that we are asked to believe in an omnipotent, omniscient, protecting power who created a grain of sand and then fell asleep.

Let Deists, Theists, or whatever name believers in a greater power may call themselves, give me one fully

authenticated instance on which this power personally intervened in the affairs of man for his advancement, and I will join their creed to-morrow.

What, silent still and silent all?

Are we to take it that this deity, who is alleged to guide us, has developed with the development of man, or that he made his revelations by degrees? Are we to surmise that he, like man, has held various changing ideas of good and evil?

"The old view that the principles of right and wrong are immutable and eternal is no longer tenable. The moral world is as little exempt as the physical world from the law of ceaseless change, of eternal flux."<sup>1</sup>

Or are we to conclude that he leaves it to ourselves to find out what is right or wrong? Since there exist so many different ideas of what constitutes right and wrong, it is evident that he either doesn't care or doesn't know.

This is a pretty God to reverence.

Better lay aside this trumpery. Look at the universe as it is, not as irrational savages imagined it to be. You will think better of man if you cease to think so well of what is not.

Cast down then the gods. Cease selfishly to work for a paradise to be, and work for the advancement of man. Is it not sweeter for you to know that as the result of your life the earth will be a better place for another generation, than that you may rest after "doing business with the gods," as Socrates puts it, in the belief of a good time for yourself in some unimaginable "other world"?

I tell you there is no need for you to search the universe through for some tag on which to hang a God. Turn aside from this fruitless search, cease to imagine, and commence to be.

H. C. MELLOR.

### Book Chat.

ENGLISH disregard for pure science is notorious. Whether the War will effect a change in this direction is yet to be seen. One hopes for the best, even though the omens are none too favourable. Our fault here is due to no lack of quality in the British mind. What others can do, we can do. It has been shown during the War that every scientific devilry used by the Germans we were able to take up—and improve on. If we can do this for purposes of war, there seems no reason why we should not do the same in times of and for purposes of peace. For this reason, every attempt made to create a taste for scientific research deserves a welcome, the more so when the attempt made demands recognition on its own merits.

For both reasons, *Animal Life and Human Progress* (Constable & Co.; 10s. 6d.) is to be welcomed. We are all accustomed to the expression, "The Web of Life," and its significance is well illustrated in the nine lectures that make up the volume before us. These addresses are all by men of standing in their respective departments, and present just that mixture of theory and practicality likely to commend the book to a British audience. On the economic side, Professor Newstead writes a fascinating chapter on "Tsetse-Flies and Colonization," and with that may well go the address by Dr. Leiper on "Some Inhabitants of Man." While the study of these pests is of great importance on other grounds, it is interesting as showing the care with which "Providence," having first created man, displays quite an undesirable ingenuity in fashioning devices for his discomfort and destruction. Of one diabolical contrivance alone, the "hookworm," we are told that it "stands with malaria as worse than all the other pathogenic agencies in combination." And the—perhaps unintentional—moral of all the lectures is that in the economy of Nature man stands for no more than any other form of animal life. Nature cares for neither the type nor the individual. It is human egotism that sees care and forethought for man where none exist.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo*, Preface to 3rd Ed.



The lectures, which we think most of our readers will study with the greatest interest, are those on *The Educational and Moral Aspects of Zoology*, by Dr. Bourne; *The Science of Breeding*, by Professor Punnett, and *The Origin of Man*, by Professor Wood Jones. The two first named deal with the question of breeding, and both are to be complimented on the clear manner in which a most difficult subject is placed before the non-technical reader. It is not easy to place before the general reader an understandable account of the new science of Genetics, but the two first-named lectures do this with marked success.

Professor Wood Jones' lecture is a summary of the teaching contained in his striking work, *Aboreal Man*, published in 1916. And while disagreeing with his pessimistic estimate of the influence of Darwinism, it must be admitted that he makes out a striking case in favour of his theory that man has not descended from any of the existing order of Primates, but has originated from some more primitive mammalian stock. This, it should be added, in no way affects the general doctrine of evolution. It is a question of the character of the stages and of the evolutionary mechanism. The fact of evolution is beyond question to all informed minds. Professor Dendy, the editor, is to be congratulated on placing before the public so readable a volume.

In these days of costly printing, it is not often that one can speak of anything in the reading line as both good and cheap. But one can truthfully say this of *For Liberty* (C. W. Daniel). Just over 100 well-printed pages for sixpence makes one wonder how it is done. It must be a labour of love on someone's part. *For Liberty* is an anthology consisting of citations ranging from Marcus Aurelius to the *Manchester Guardian*, grouped under the heads of Government, law, democracy, freedom, society, etc. It is always easy to find fault with an anthology, so all we will say of this one is that the examples seem chosen with great catholicity, and that Freethinkers figure well on the list. Voltaire, Paine, and Ingersoll are, of course, represented. But we hardly think the Rev. R. J. Campbell will feel pleased at finding himself recorded as saying that "If we practised Christ's teaching we should all be Socialists or Anarchists."

Those who wish to know the case against Capitalism will find it summarized in *Fifty Points about Capitalism*, by Sir Leo Chiozza Money (Cecil Palmer & Hayward, 6d.). One page is devoted to each point, and the pamphlet can be used by those who wish to do so as a handy note-book. The articles originally appeared in the *Daily Herald*.

*Essays in Common-Sense Philosophy*, by C. E. M. Joad (Headley Brothers; 8s. 6d.), would, in our opinion, have better achieved its purpose had the author given more of a connected exposition of his own findings on the various points discussed rather than have spent so much time on discussing the views of other people. It is true that his handling of the various subjects dealt with is suggestive enough, and plainly enough expressed, but unless the reader is to some extent conversant with philosophical discussion, he is apt to lose sight of the question at issue. And Mr. Joad is writing for what he calls "the plain man." But philosophy generally would be much more enlightening than it is if writers paid less attention to the views of other people, and more to an exposition of their own. Philosophy, like other things, suffers from the weight of authority.

In his opening chapter on "Our Knowledge of Sensible Objects," Mr. Joad lays down the basis of his own Realism. But we do not think he makes his point. His claim is that "sensible objects exist independently, and that our knowledge of them given by our senses is not illusory; that they exist, in fact, very much as we know them." This is a daring proposition, and its substantiation will require much stronger proof than Mr. Joad offers. On the other hand, we are inclined to agree with the view that "Reality—i.e., existence—is not a synthesized whole, but an aggregate of different things without design." What requires to be elaborated here is the selective quality of the human mind, in which this unrelated aggregate is converted into a synthesized whole. There is a very wide and a very fertile field here for speculation.

Mr. Joad's chapters on *Monism and Recent Developments*, *The Meaning of Truth*, *Common Sense*, and *The Theory of the State*, are well done, but the last named does not, in our opinion, disprove what we have always understood to be Mr. Bernard Bosanquet's theory of the State. Still, Mr. Joad's criticism may be welcomed as a timely protest against the absolutist theory of the State, which our politicians denounce as "Prussian," even while they are busily engaged in adopting some of its worst features. The concluding chapter on *Thought and Temperament* might well have come as an introduction to the whole work. This, not because Mr. Joad deliberately favours temperament at the expense of reason so much as one cannot help feeling that some of the author's conclusions largely owe their being to the operation of this factor. He would probably urge in reply that without a temperamental bias towards this or that position in philosophy we should never get anywhere at all. From this point of view our temperaments act as selective factors, leaving it for our reason to justify the selection made.

P. S.

## Correspondence.

### EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE IDEA OF CREATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Lloyd's leading article in your columns for June 22 seems to me to suggest the following critical observations. The intellectual scepticism to which Mr. Lloyd refers was not only the attitude adopted by such men as Huxley and Herbert Spencer, it was started before them by certain heretical philosophers in the Middle Ages, whose teaching, being at variance with that of the Schoolmen, was naturally condemned by the Catholic Church. The dictum of these philosophers was *nil certum*, and even the existence of their fellow-men they held to be doubtful, because they questioned the veracity of all human sense-perceptions. There is something to be said for this view. In fact, the inquiring mind usually shows a marked tendency to call everything in question, if left to work out its own salvation without guidance. Doubt springs eternal, and a too refined and exhaustive analysis will in time explain anything away. Excessive reasoning might result in the negation of all knowledge, for in a sense we can never know anything with certainty. But we ought to remember that to make an act of indecision comes to us naturally, and can be done by any one, whereas it sometimes takes a man of real courage and intuition to make an act of Faith. Mr. Lloyd repudiates this view of the uncertainty of our sensitive faculties, but it is commonly resorted to by Freethinkers when confronted with phenomena like those which recently occurred at Lourdes, and which Christians believe to be miraculous. When the doctors fail to establish natural explanations, the Freethinker is driven to assert the unreliability of sense-perceptions as a means of arriving at the truth. The evidence of the senses of normal people is immediately held suspect. It is considered to be as faulty as that obtained by means of alleged spiritualistic agencies at a *seance*. Because he has never himself personally experienced a miraculous happening, he argues that such a happening has never taken place, and could not take place. This attitude, I maintain, is illogical.

Mr. Lloyd also thinks that God is a human creation. I venture to think that this view needs qualification. It is true that the idea of God was always changing among primitive people prior to the Christian Era just as it still changes now among savage tribes to whom the Gospel message has not been brought. But, on the other hand, it is the Christian contention that Christ by His recorded words and works taught a new and truer conception of Deity. Since the introduction of Christianity the evolution of the idea among Christians has not taken place, for the Christian conception has been once for all fixed and remains constant. A Perfect Being, unlimited, eternal, immutable, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, absolute—such is the God of Christian theology. This has been the predominant idea taught by Christians for nearly (two thousand) years. It was taught by Christ, by the Apostles, by the Early Church as it is still taught, by the modern Catholic Church,



and even by the Protestant Churches of the world to-day. To admit that the idea of God changed before the advent of Christianity in no way militates against the Christian religion as Mr. Lloyd appears to think. It might, on the contrary, be used as an argument in favour of Christianity; for, if the teaching of the Church on this important point had to change in order to be true, this would conclusively prove that it must have been false at some given time in its history. But its strength lies in the fact that, whether right or wrong, it is at least consistent. *Semper eadem*. In conclusion, I do not see why Mr. Lloyd thinks that the ideas of evolution and creation are necessarily incompatible. Some of the most eminent scientists the world has ever known have found no difficulty in accepting God and creation. True, the act of creation has been scientifically explained and interpreted, and the scientist's God may not always be the personal God of Scripture. Evolution, however, only means that things as we now know them have gradually been developed out of their primitive initial forms into more complete and perfect forms. But the fact that scientists are at present unable to trace right back to the first beginnings of things does not prove that, therefore, there could have been no beginnings. To argue thus would be unreasonable. And to be a professed Rationalist is not always to be reasonable, while one can equally be reasonable without being a professed Rationalist.

TREVOR T. BERRY.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND BIRTH CONTROL.

SIR,—I am directed by the Council of the Malthusian League to request you to be good enough to find space in your paper for the following Resolution, which, with the accompanying Preamble, was passed unanimously at the forty-first Annual General Meeting of members of the Malthusian League, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on June 27, 1919:—

The Malthusian League desires to point out that the proposed scheme for the League of Nations has neglected to take

account of the important questions of the pressure of population, which causes the great international economic competition and rivalry, and of the increase of population, which is put forward as a justification for claiming increase of territory. It therefore wishes to put on record its belief that the League of Nations will only be able to fulfil its aims when it adds a clause to the following effect:—

"That each Nation desiring to enter into the League of Nations shall pledge itself so to restrict its birth-rate that its people shall be able to live in comfort in their own dominions without need for territorial expansion, and that it shall recognize that increase of population shall not justify a demand either for increase of territory or for the compulsion of other Nations to admit its emigrants; so that when all Nations in the League have shown their ability to live on their own resources without international rivalry, they will be in a position to fuse into an international Federation, and territorial boundaries will then have little significance."

O. M. JOHNSON (Gen. Sec.).

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Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

**LONDON.****INDOOR.**

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY** (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Religion and Revolution."

**OUTDOOR.**

**BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.** (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Miss Kough, A Lecture.

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

**REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.:** 3.15, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "The Cost of Christianity"; and Mr. R. Norman.

**SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.** (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. F. Shaller, "Science *versus* Christ"; 6, Mrs. H. Rosetti, "Secular Education."

**WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.** (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. W. Thresh, A Lecture.

**HYDE PARK:** 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.30, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Saphin, Cutner, and Dales.

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