

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. 49

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1919

PRICE TWOPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

A Martyr of Science.

For some days there have been appearing in the papers accounts of the illness of Dr. Lister, of Middlesex Hospital. For very many years Dr. Lister has given himself up to research work in the X-ray department of the above-named hospital. His experiments exposed him to great danger, and, in spite of a knowledge of this, he kept at his work, and was, says one newspaper account, often seen at work with his hands bandaged as a result of injuries acquired in the course of his labours. Some years ago he was diagnosed to have cancer, and it was clear that if he gave up his professional work, he might count himself as secure from further danger. This he declined to do. He kept to his work, offering himself for experiment after experiment, and probably trying more experiments than even his friends knew. And now the end has come, or is coming. He is lying ill, seriously ill, and little hopes appear to be entertained of his recovery. When the end does come, it may be prophesied that comparatively little note will be taken of his death. There will be a paragraph in the papers, a longer and more appreciative notice in the scientific journals, and then his name will be forgotten, except to those who study little-read histories of science and to the few who realize that the real good of the world is advanced by the men and women who pursue their work without ostentation, and in the satisfaction that comes from a knowledge that one's work is well done.

False Values.

Now, it in no way detracts from the value of Dr. Lister's example, or from the importance of his work, to express the opinion that the quiet heroism of his character may be paralleled over and over again in the history of science and in the records of social life. On the contrary, the fact emphasizes a truth that is of profound importance to all, but the recognition of which is partly hidden by our defective system of education. For five years we have had much talk of heroism in connection with the War. Much of this, we expect, was mere cant; but it was a useful cant, and so was given full scope. And there were two classes of people who made full use of the opportunity afforded by the War, as they made use of every opportunity to further the same end before the War commenced. These were the militarists and the Godites. The first told us that the courage of

our men was due to war, that a nation would decay without war, that war was a moral tonic to a people, and that the battlefield was a veritable seedplot of manly virtues. And the latter called high heaven to witness that but for the inspiration of religion, the soldier's devotion to duty, his courage, etc., would hardly exist. The politician said that our soldiers were all heroes, the parson said they were all saints—while the War was on; and between the two there is no wonder that the old and radically false and dangerous teaching that the military life led to the development of the "manly" virtues seemed to many a true one. Here and there a voice was raised in protest, but it was a feeble whisper amid such a volume of sound.

* * *

Social Heroes.

If our system of education were other than it is, it would be realized that the seedplot of our virtues is not the battlefield, but social life. When war comes, it does but use what has been previously developed elsewhere. The conquest of the air was achieved in times of peace, mainly by civilians, and only used during a time of war. In arctic travel and exploration, where a man takes his life in his hands and is all the time dependent upon the exertions of himself and his small band of companions, we have again courage of the very highest order. In the mine or at sea, or on shore in the case of a wreck, never is the call for volunteers made in vain. In the annals of medicine we have scores of cases of men who have given their lives in the pursuit of knowledge. In our social annals we have men and women who have faced imprisonment, and in earlier years death, in defence of an opinion. And in all these cases we have illustrations of courage of the very highest order. It is a courage that is exercised in quietude, and often in the face of social dispraise and censure. Sympathy, imagination, and a certain "nerve tone" seem the ingredients of courage, and when war does come, it can but make use of what the generations of social life has provided it with. And it uses this exactly as it uses the material savings of a country. That is, it dissipates them. War deteriorates men, as social life improves them. The very highest qualities of men are born in the fields of social life; there is no other place in which they could be born.

* * *

How We Act.

The recognition of this truth with all its important consequences, is, as we have said, a matter of education. As matters stand, and from our earliest years, we are taught to associate courage mainly with the soldier. Courage, when expressed mainly on its lower plane, is identified with courage as a whole. The soldier is made to monopolize the field, where, as a matter of fact, his presence is more or less accidental. A soldier who wins a battle against an enemy is loaded with honours, given a huge sum of money, and a large pension. The man who battles against disease, and who runs far greater risks than many a general is exposed to during a campaign, receives at most a small salary while living, small attention when dead, and in his old age may receive

£100 or £200 a year from the civil list—provided he has some friend who can pull the official strings. There is no Victoria Cross for a man such as Dr. Lister; his name will appear in no "honours list," and it would be considered lunacy to the mass of the people if it were even suggested that men of his stamp were of more consequence to the country than a field-marshal. We do not associate courage or heroism with social life because we are not trained to do so. We do not think of social life as the ground on which is reared whatever admirable qualities are displayed in war, because we really have no social training or education worthy of the name. And when we note how deficient our education is in this direction, there is really cause for surprise that our social sense is as active as it is.

The Choice Is Ours. * * *

For our own part we are convinced that the form of courage displayed by Dr. Lister is more common than most people are inclined to believe, and of immensely greater social significance than would appear at first glance. Dr. Lister's courage is a social product. So also is the soldier's courage as displayed on the battlefield. And whatever be their relative social value, both may be taken to express a sense of social duty. In the soldier's case it takes the form of risking his life on the battlefield. In the other case it takes the form of risking life in the battle against disease, or in saving life in the mine, or at sea, or the sacrifice involved in fighting for reforming ideas. The only point of social importance here is how to bring up the rising generation to a full recognition of the value of these latter efforts, and that, even while the soldier stands as a figure that is necessary, Militarism is to be discouraged, and that an expenditure of courage and energy in this direction should, in the interests of society, be reduced to as small an expression as possible. The courage represented by Dr. Lister is of a higher order, and its development to the utmost capacity is something that is of incalculable benefit to all mankind. It is here that the power of education comes in. We do not mean by education mere scholasticism, which we think has been greatly overvalued. What we have in mind is that larger education which society gives each of us, and which society alone can give. The greatest force that goes to the moulding of mankind is that represented by the stock of traditions, ideas, and ideals that meet each one of us at birth. It is this that so largely determines our aims in life, and the direction in which our capacities are to be expended. There is no reason whatever why the people should not only grow up with a very hearty appreciation of the type of courage displayed by men such as Dr. Lister, but the courage which is displayed in war and in the profession of the soldier should be made to flow into the more useful channels of research, experiment, and healthy adventure. As we pointed out a few weeks ago, human nature is so educable, so modifiable, that there is hardly anything that cannot be done with it, given the right knowledge and the right aim. If we will place the soldier, the representative of brute force, and the priest, the representative of primitive cunning, in the forefront of the picture, we have only ourselves to blame if the resultant is of an extremely unpleasant kind. Human nature has its roots in the earth, but it flowers towards the stars. It will function for gain at all times, but whether the gain is the material increment of the financier, the tinselled, bloodstained glory of the soldier, the intellectual satisfaction of the searcher after truth, or the moral and intellectual satisfaction of the social reformer, is a matter of social education. It is for society to set the standard of value. And it is for society to reap the results of its choice.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Giving God Time."

No demand can be fairer or more just than that God should be given plenty of time for self-justification. This is the subject discussed in the prophesy of Habakkuk, who flourished some six hundred years before Christ. The righteous suffered while the wicked prospered; and, what was worse still, the righteous were afflicted by the wicked. Curiously enough, the so-called righteous, Jehovah's chosen people, are represented as depraved and corrupt, as full of iniquity and perverseness, whilst the Chaldæans, "that bitter and hasty nation," are introduced as Jehovah's instruments whereby he will chastize his elect, and bring them to their senses. But the prophet dwells on the cruel and oppressive measures resorted to by the Chaldæans, and wonders why the Lord does not intervene and check their rapacious violence. In the leading article in the *British Weekly* for November 27, Dr. John A. Hutton undertakes to interpret for us what Habakkuk says on this point:—

Face to face with life, all good and believing men must say the same thing. What Habakkuk says and what we say is, "At the end it shall speak and not lie." It is as though we were saying, "Let us give God time."

According to the reverend gentleman, God is confronted with an infinitely complicated problem, which is to save men, to inspire them for their "moral ascent, their hearty choice of higher things." There is one feature of the problem, however, which Dr. Hutton does not face at all, namely, the amazing fact that men need salvation, or that they require external stimulus to make the ascent of life, or to choose higher things. It must not be forgotten that God is not a kind-hearted outsider who, pitying men's unfortunate, lost condition, becomes their Saviour, but their Maker, who is of necessity responsible for the deplorable state in which he finds them. They have gone astray simply because he bungled in creating them, or, as the divines aver, because he entrusted them with the perilous endowment of free-will. In any case, he must be held accountable for their sinfulness, with all the suffering and sorrow it entails. As Omar well puts it:—

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

Ignoring that aspect of the problem, Dr. Hutton concentrates on the continued existence of evil in the world, and comes to the conclusion that God has a stupendous task, and must be given time to execute it. Habakkuk said, "At the end it shall speak and not lie," by which he probably meant, "That though evil might seem to be having its free play for a season, later on God would intervene in a dramatic way, and vindicate himself." But has God ever done that since the world began? Is there on record an occasion on which he crushed the strong in defence of the weak, or miraculously caused the right to triumph over wrong? The prophets always speak of Israel as Jehovah's own people, chosen out of all the nations of the earth; but they could not disguise the fact that Heaven's favourites were subject to as many adversities, disasters, and calamities as others. The prophets refer to the Chaldæans and the Persians as Jehovah's instruments, whom he generally employed to wreak his vengeance upon Israel; but those mighty powers, unaware of their heavenly mission, had their own ambition to serve when they invaded Palestine or any other country, and it is a certainty that the Israelites did not benefit, nor were made any better by the numerous invasions of the land they loved. Judging by their history in Old Testament times and since, it would

not occur to anybody to infer that they were the objects of a Special Providence. Dr. Hutton seems to recognize this as a fact in the following passage:—

We see certain things in operation in this world; people living in a certain way, or certain communities giving themselves over to moral unbelief, to the low view of life and there is a sense in which we can say nothing or do nothing. For I hold that it is possible for a wave of sentiment or a moral fashion to have acquired such head and force that it is futile to argue with it; as futile as it is to sweep back the Atlantic with a broom. We can only stand by until the wave attains to its crisis and breaks and spends itself. It often happens that we have no resource except to bide our time until those who have launched themselves upon some perverse way of life rush against the hidden nature of things, and learn the truth upon those barriers and ramparts that defend the moral constitution of the world.

But what evidence is there of the existence and operation of anything beyond or above the Nature of Things? Is there any proof that the constitution of the world is either moral or immoral? In the seventy-third Psalm we learn that in this world the wicked fare far better than the righteous. It is the ambitious and violent people who inherit the earth, the meek having no chance whatever. Millions of our fellow-beings are self-seeking and have no moral scruples whatever. They grow rich and powerful by cleverly dishonest means, marching proudly over the heads of their weaker brethren, and their prosperity continues unchecked to the day of their death. Nor are we necessarily to think of them as unbelievers, the majority of them being fairly zealous professors of religion, who sing with rapture of "the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins," in which they claim to have had all their guilty stains washed away. The truth is that the constitution of the world is entirely non-moral, morality being purely a product of social life. That it is not a Christian product is evident from the fact that multitudes of Christians neither possess nor practise it. Only those in whom the social sense is well-developed, or whose gregarious instincts are strong and have free scope, live a high and disinterested moral life.

We are bidden to give God time to set the world right. That was what Habakkuk besought his contemporaries to do twenty-six centuries ago, and that is what Dr. Hutton is urging us to do to-day; and yet the world is scarcely any nearer the ideal state now than it was then. What has God been doing during the long interval? He has done so little during nigh three thousand years that it is laughably absurd to ask us to give him another chance to redeem his character. It is this consideration that makes Theism so impossible a creed, and that baffles the theologians in all their attempts to justify the ways of God with men. We give Dr. Hutton credit for accurately stating the problem in the following words:—

Habakkuk is dealing with the problem which the Old Testament, from the days of the Captivity, had been wrestling with—the problem, namely, which is still the problem—how this world can be what it is, and yet God be the ruler of it. Why does not God stretch forth his arm and smite all evil on the cheek-bone? one good man asks. Why does God hide himself, remaining in his pavilion? asks another.

That problem, it is frankly admitted, is still the problem, and those questions are still unanswered. Dr. Hutton's article evades the problem, and ignores the questions. All he wants us to do is to give God more time, which is nothing but a begging of the question. All we know about the world is that it is very slowly evolving, and that it is only in human society that the process dis-

plays the active presence of purpose, or will, or intelligence; nor can we close our eyes to the fact that the process is seriously retarded by several cross-purposes.

J. T. LLOYD.

Charles Southwell.

For proud and fiery and swift and bold—
Wine of life from heart of gold,
The blood of his heathen manhood rolled
Full-billowed through his veins.—*James Thomson.*

ONE of my most cherished possessions is a manuscript diary kept by my paternal grandfather during the years 1840-9, in which he noted his intellectual progress from orthodoxy to Freethought. A man of the strictest integrity, his diary reflected his mental pilgrimage with relentless accuracy. He mentions the preachers he sat under, summarizes the points of their sermons, and adds his own private comments. He searches the Scriptures diligently. Then, one day, a friend persuades him to attend a lecture by Charles Southwell on "The Day of Judgment," and from that time onward his views broaden until he finally leaves the Church of his fathers. At first, irritated by Southwell's views, he mentions him only by his initials in the diary; but, beneath the anger, there is a growing sense of responsibility, and he is impelled to reply to the Freethinker. Other lectures were listened to, and, slowly and almost imperceptibly, the conversion is affected until my grandfather became a complete Secularist. When he died, thirty years later, no religious service was held at his funeral, and upon his tombstone was engraved, by his own request, the dying words of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "The rest is silence." Nor is this all, for his son was brought up as a Freethinker, and, in turn, his son's family was reared under the same happy conditions, and the writer of these lines is not only the representative of a third generation of a Freethought family, but his children have been brought up without religious instruction. Those superior folk who gird at Secularist lecturers as the merest Iconoclasts might ponder this lesson, for here is a concrete example of practical good resulting from militant advocacy. Nor do I forget that Charles Watts, the silver-tongued orator of the Secularist movement, was another of Southwell's converts. Truly, Southwell must have been an apostle to reckon with.

Yet little is known of his life. During the period prior to the birth of an organized Freethought Party in England, Charles Southwell's personality loomed large in the forefront of the battle. His eloquence, ability, and courage attracted the "intellectuals," and drew on him the resentment of the orthodox. Living when he did, he performed a high and useful task. His keen bright sword played havoc with the ranks of the enemy, and he and his colleagues cleared a space with difficulty through which many have since passed with ease. There is an elusive character in Southwell's life-story. So much is vague that whole chapters of his life are blank. The few portraits of him have been described as unsatisfactory, and a biographer is reduced to inference. What is known, however, is as interesting as a novel.

Born in 1814, the year before the battle of Waterloo, Charles Southwell was the youngest of a large family of thirty-three children. His father was a militant Freethinker at a time when heresy was not child's play, and, when over seventy years of age, he married a handsome lass of twenty. Charles was the outcome of this marriage of May and December. In his schooldays young Southwell was remarkable for playing truant, and for possessing a wonderful memory. When he left school

at the age of twelve, he had assimilated sufficient knowledge to puzzle a professor, and yet was ignorant enough to disgrace a negro. Yet, if he knew little of the world of books, he soon learned the book of the world. His subsequent life was a great adventure. During his short career he was orator, soldier, actor, Socialist, Free-thought advocate, writer, editor, and prisoner for free speech. At one time he was a private in the Spanish Legion, and for two years he consorted with one of the prettiest company of gentlemen of fortune who ever cut throats for a living.

On his return to England he made a big reputation with his oratory, and he made history with the publication, in 1841, of the *Oracle of Reason*, which will always be remembered as the first Freethought paper. The dear clergy soon scented danger, and threatened Southwell with prison and other samples of Christian charity. Southwell had been used to fighting men, and not petticoated priests, and he at once carried the war into the enemy's camp. Threatened with prison for publishing literary and philosophical articles, Southwell met force with force, and the pages of his paper were laden with plain speaking. On the appearance of the fourth number of the *Oracle*, Southwell was arrested, tried, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, with a fine of £100.

The Freethinkers fought a forlorn hope, inch by inch. During the trial, Southwell's colleague, William Chilton, outwitted the enemy, who had seized all the copies of the *Oracle*. He printed and sold at a halfpenny copies of the warrant, a document that set out at length all the objectionable passages. Driven back by overwhelming numbers, the "intellectuals" did their best. During Southwell's imprisonment, Holyoake edited the paper. When he, in turn, went to prison, Thomas Paterson took his place. "Bulldog" Paterson, as he was affectionately called, was also sent to gaol, and Mr. and Mrs. George Adams stepped into the breach, and each was sent to prison. Chilton succeeded them, and kept the flag flying bravely until the end, which was hastened by the heavy costs of the law cases and the formidable fines imposed.

The *Oracle of Reason* lasted two stormy years, but, during its short and exciting career, it created a profound impression, which, in due time, led to the formation of a properly organized Freethought Party. After his release from prison, Southwell carried on a Freethought mission in many places, and ultimately settled in New Zealand, where he edited the *Auckland Examiner*. He died in 1860, at the early age of forty-six, worn-out and prematurely aged.

Southwell wrote much, but most of his work was simply journalism. His most lasting contribution is *The Confessions of a Freethinker*, published in 1845, a candid and fascinating piece of autobiography. To present-day Freethinkers, Charles Southwell is little more than a name, but those of an earlier generation recognized in this gifted and wayward man one of the most remarkable figures that has appeared in the Freethought Movement. Looking at the heavy and lowering stormclouds that are looming on our horizon, it may be that a glance at an heroic figure of other times will be acceptable and timely. Around the camp-fire, in the pauses of the battle, the soldiers of Liberty may well listen to a stirring story of the brave days of old.

MIMNERMUS.

A New Defence of Materialism.

I shall endeavour to show that the whole of the positive knowledge available to mankind can be embraced within the limits of a single materialistic system. The outlines of this system are not new; the main features of it, indeed, have been admittedly associated with scientific progress for centuries past. An age of science is necessarily an age of materialism; ours is a scientific age, and it may be said with truth that we are all materialists now.—Hugh Elliot, "*Modern Science and Materialism*," p. 138.

MANY of our readers will remember the publication, in 1912, of Mr. Hugh Elliot's book, *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*, a trenchant exposure of the French philosopher's shallow philosophy. The same author has just published another valuable work, entitled *Modern Science and Materialism*.

It consists of an Introduction and six chapters, which cut to the very heart of the questions that divide all thinking people into the hostile camps of Supernaturalism and Materialism. To give the titles of the chapters is enough to indicate the fundamental character of this important work. They are as follows: "The Universe as a Whole," "Matter and Energy," "Life and Consciousness," "The Fallacy of Vitalism," "Materialism," "Idealism."

Mr. Hugh Elliot has made a special study of all the sciences concerned, in their latest developments, a work of no small magnitude, and he has done the work well. All the problems of Life, Consciousness, and Thought are ably dealt with, and shown to be only explicable on a Materialistic basis.

Since the publication of Lang's great work on the *History of Materialism*, we are not aware of the publication of another book upon the subject, notwithstanding the access of many leading scientists who have given in their adhesion to the Materialistic philosophy, especially in the domain of Biology and Psychology, the two sciences which were once held to be impregnable fortresses of supernaturalism.

The fact is that Materialism has never been a popular philosophy; how could it be when every child is trained in spiritism and supernaturalism from the moment it begins to imbibe ideas? It is due to this cause that, as Mr. Hugh Elliot observes, "every materialistic advance has been met with the most vigorous opposition of the Church, the people, and often the civil government. The history of the progress of materialistic science is a history of persecution, and however we may account for it, the fact remains that the normal mind has a strong disinclination towards materialistic doctrines, or, in other words, a strong bias in favour of spiritualistic doctrines. It is this bias which causes vitalism still to be maintained and supported, notwithstanding the extreme discredit into which science and logic have brought it."¹

The scientific Materialist has considered it more profitable to concentrate upon observation and experience, instead of fighting against the stream of popular prejudice. For this reason the philosophy of Materialism has not been popularized, and it remains the creed of the scientist and philosopher. That is why the clergy, who are unacquainted with the advances of modern science—as illustrated by the new school of biology, of which Professor Loeb is the leader, and in the inorganic sciences by the researches of Professor Bose, Stephane Leduc, and many others, and take their ideas from the monthly and quarterly reviews which cater for the public—are really quite ignorant of the true position, and are continually announcing that Materialism and Atheism are dead, quite unaware that the old defences have been turned and their position rendered untenable.

¹ Hugh Elliot, *Modern Science and Materialism*, p. 118.

Without philosophers, without some few virtuous men who seem to be of a different nature from the rest of mankind, the worship of a wicked divinity would surely be established over every part of the earth.—Goldsmith.

Commenting upon the astonishing advances made in our knowledge of the constitution of matter, Mr. Hugh Elliot observes:—

These modern views are in every particular consonant with materialistic interpretations; they are in every particular irreconcilable with spiritualistic interpretations. Penetration into the secrets of atomic structure has opened up to us a vast new sphere of phenomena whose very existence was previously unsuspected, and which differ *toto caelo* from all kinds of phenomena with which we were previously acquainted. Yet throughout this new continent of knowledge we find the axioms of materialism as unquestioned as ever. The electrons and the positively charged nuclei of atoms have their unchangeable laws, and illustrate afresh the inviolable relation of cause and effect. Nor, as we approach the very foundations of existence, do we see any more signs than elsewhere of a *purpose* at the basis of the Universe.¹

"In all this new field of discovery there is no place for any kind of spiritual agency." As Mr. Elliot points out: "We know at length what is the basis of matter: it is not spirit, it is energy, a factor exclusively objective in character, and residing on the materialistic, not on the spiritualistic plane. It may be suggested that materialism is no longer a suitable name for a doctrine which dissolves away all matter into intangible energy. The contention cannot be upheld, however. Scientific materialism has never imagined matter to be as it seems to the unaided touch and vision, and into whatever factors it may be analysed, it remains matter in the only sense knowable by us.....Furthermore, one thing is certain. Whatever matter may ultimately be resolved into, it certainly cannot be resolved into spirit. The wildest speculator in science has never suggested *that* possibility. And the name materialism only has a meaning by contrast with the rival doctrine of spiritualism."—(p. 69).

Again, as the same writer remarks, we can only conceive of spirits by attributing to them material qualities, for: "If a spirit has neither visibility, nor tangibility, nor divisibility, nor position in space, nor any other property whatever, it is then identical with nothing."—(p. 206).

Of metaphysics—the attempt to think out the problems of existence without the aid of science—Mr. Elliot observes, when: "we compare the fertility of science with the barrenness of metaphysics during the last two or three thousand years, we cannot discern the smallest claim on the part of metaphysics to any recognition as a means for the discovery of truth. Metaphysics is like a house built upon the sand, its foundations are for ever shifting with every new exponent of the art. Science is like a house built upon a rock; so firm are its foundations that each generation of workers adds a new storey to the edifice. We cannot admit, therefore, that metaphysics is a rival method to science, but regard it rather as a study of the same order and validity as theology. Only by the methods of science can knowledge be attained."—(P. 135).

To the objection that by bringing everything within a mechanical system the materialist "knocks the very soul out of life and Nature," Mr. Elliot replies that it is not a question of whether it is satisfying or not, but whether it is true; and proceeds:—

I fail to see the slightest grain of accuracy in the criticism, however. We know what life is, with its art, its morality, its beauty and ugliness, its goodness and badness. All these things are just the same in fact, whatever may be the theories which we form of them. Nature is just the same Nature, whether our theories of it are materialistic or spiritualistic; and the purpose

of my theory is not to satisfy the emotions but to state the truth" (p. 208).

We have marked many more passages for quotation from Mr. Elliot's work, but space forbids. We can only advise our readers to go to the work itself. It is published by Longmans, Green & Co., at 7s. 6d.

The book appears at an auspicious time; never were people more inclined to listen to Freethought. We congratulate Mr. Elliot upon his able exposition, and hope the work will attain a large circulation.

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

At last the secret of the defeat of the German Army is out. And when we know the secret, we realize how unequal the combat was. Our informant is Mr. H. Church, who writes an article for the *Johannesburg Sunday Times* for October 10. This gentleman tells of a conversation he had with "a well-known London K.C.," who told him of the many proofs he had of communications with departed spirits. These proofs are as convincing as any we have seen; but we are only now concerned with the revelations concerning the winning of the War. A spirit who had often communicated with them, on February 8, 1918, told them that, with the British Army in France, there were Henry V., Richard I., Simon de Montfort, and the Chevalier Bayard, several of Napoleon's generals, Edward I. and II., Bruce, Wallace, Marlborough, Wolfe, Clive, Wellington, and Joan of Arc. Napoleon was very busy. He was constantly at work; organized a "spirit army." He was untiring in his "canvassing other spirits," and once this spirit accompanied Napoleon to the battlefield. Napoleon rode his grey war-horse, and his soldiers were untiring in their efforts to help the Allies. There is a lot more of the same kind of evidence, and we can only say that, with all the military geniuses of the world against them, the German effort deserves to be ranked as the greatest that the world has ever known. As the "control" explains, "all the good spirits" and "all the heroic souls of the past" were on the side of the Allies. No wonder the Germans were beaten. But what a pity that the slaughter was not confined to the spiritual armies!

The 1918 Nobel prize for physics has been awarded to a Berlin professor; the 1919 Nobel prize for physics to a Greifswald professor; and the 1918 Nobel prize for chemistry to another German scientist. Yet the yellow press will have it that the Germans are all savages.

The clergy are still "starving" on the incomes mentioned in *Crockford's Clerical Directory*. Bad cases reported in the press are those of the Rev. W. S. Green, Caherdaniel, Kerry, who left estate to the value of £5,480. The Rev. F. T. Wethered, of Hurley Vicarage, Berks, left £26,177. The Rev. T. M. Masoly, of Farringdon, Southampton, left £14,730.

One of the "new poor" has actually revolted. The Rev. H. C. Percival, Rector of Sedlescombe, Sussex, has resigned his position, declaring that he has not the wages of a labourer. The official figures of this hard case are given in the *Clerical Directory* as gross income £352, net £290 and house.

A Reuter's telegram, published in the papers for November 27, and describing our little war on the North-western Frontier of India, says that our airmen have bombed the principal town of the enemy, consisting of about 600 houses, that "the buildings were blown to dust, and by the time the airmen had finished, practically the whole town was in flames. Besides bombing, the airmen fired thousands of rounds from their Lewis guns." Somehow this item of news, not the first of its kind, does not appear to arouse any particular kind of comment. Of course, the women and children who are killed in these wholesale bombardments are coloured people, and that makes all the difference. Others will think

¹ Hugh Elliot, *Modern Science and Materialism*, p. 68.

that if this beastly business is to become a recognized part of our warfare there is more need than ever to rouse the world to the brutality, the infamy, of "civilized" war. Not long ago we were all shuddering at the "baby-killing" manœuvres of German airmen. By the time the next war arrives we shall have got over that stupid delicacy.

The "spirituality" of the clergy is sometimes very much like ordinary commercialism. The Archbishop of York, who is struggling against adversity on a paltry income of £10,000 yearly, urges the Welsh people to go "over the top" for a living wage for the clergy. With Iago, his grace might exclaim, "Thus do I ever make my fool my purse."

The Bishop of Salisbury, placing his hand where his heart should be, declares that he is the patron of about seventy so-called livings, a proportion of which deserved the name of "starvelings." Just so! But how do these seventy Men-of-God live? They do not take in each other's washing.

"I get such a small congregation at church that when anybody strange comes, I at once know all about it." This is not the utterance of the curate at Slopington-on-the-Snazle, but of Canon Masterman, the vicar of Bow Church, in the heart of London.

There is an unconsciously cruel sentence in a *Times* review of Mr. Bruce Glaiser's *The Meaning of Socialism*. The reviewer calls it "a view of Socialism that attracts Bishops, priests, and laymen of the Christian Churches." That, we should think, settles it. A Socialism that is attractive to Bishops and priests is one that any sensible Socialist can well afford to do without. Still, Mr. Glaiser will earn the reputation of a "good" man, and that is something.

"I do not believe," says Mr. Clarke Hall, the Old Street Magistrate, "that religious dogmas appeal to boys. I have two boys of my own, and I do not force them to go to church.....I was brought up in the old-fashioned way, but I am sure I am none the better for it. Let them have a high standard of right put before them, and leave them to learn for themselves later the use and beauty of religion." The trouble is, that if they don't get religion while they are young, they are not likely to get it when they get old. You can't get people to accept religion when they are old enough to understand what it is all about. Every Church in the world knows that. It looks as though Mr. Clarke Hall is trying to pull the leg of the Goddite.

Distracted by the screams of the "starving" clergy, the unfortunate laymen will be further harassed by the appeal of the Young Men's Christian Association for the very modest sum of £750,000 to enable the Society to "carry on." And, doubtless, the female Christians will shortly want a bit on account. Religion may be beyond price; it is certainly expensive.

Not to spare the rod is a Biblical injunction, and one that Miss Choate, Principal of the Methodist Girls' College, Ceylon, quite believes in. In a case before the Colombo Police Court she was charged with ill-treating one of the girls under her care. For some infraction of school discipline, a girl of eleven years of age was taken in front of the whole school, placed face downwards on the table, her clothes turned up, and given twenty-one cuts with a cane. In order to give the proceedings a proper religious flavour, the Doxology was sung afterwards, and prayers were said. Medical evidence was given that the girl was compelled to keep her bed for some days afterwards. The Rev. J. Noble supported the Principal in giving the punishment she did, but the magistrate fined the woman Rs. 25, or two weeks' imprisonment. In our opinion she should have had the imprisonment without the option of a fine. Care for the natives takes a peculiar form, and it is hard to divest the white man of his right to "wallop" a coloured one, whether the white be a missionary or a trader. Our report is taken from the *Ceylon Daily News* of October 22.

It is awe-inspiring to witness how the clergy sustain the burden of the blessings of poverty. The late Bishop of Meath left £10,907.

The clergy like to be regarded as a moral police force, and it is rare that there is police opposition to their action. At Frimley Green, however, the curate applied for a licence for a watch-dance at the Church Hall. The local police-superintendent opposed, and said that the hall was surrounded by trees, and this was not suitable for young people late at night. The curate won his application, so the dance should be a Victory one.

Speaking in the House of Commons on the Aliens Restriction Bill, Captain Wedgwood Benn said that "under this Bill Saint Augustine would, after landing in Kent, have been deported as an undesirable alien." He might have added that, if the twelve disciples had landed, they would have shared the same fate.

The letterpress of the daily papers always give cause for wonder, but the illustrations are a source of endless amusement—or despair. One wonders whether those responsible for their appearance are sly humourists, or whether they are convinced that we are a nation of idiots. Quite recently a lady had stolen, in the Strand, a valuable string of pearls. So the *Daily Herald* publishes a portrait of the lady who lost the pearls. Then we have in other papers Mr. Lloyd George walking down Whitehall, King George eating a sandwich at a railway station, the Prince of Wales looking at an aeroplane display, etc. Now, if the lady who lost the pearls had two necks, or if Lloyd George walked down Whitehall on his head, or the King ate sandwiches through his ears, one could appreciate the illustrations. As it is, one is left marvelling—and sorrowing—at the type of mind that can find satisfaction in illustrations that have neither artistic merit nor intellectual interest to commend them. They evidence a want of intelligence in the general public, and a readiness to exploit it on the part of newspapers that bodes ill for the future. It is a fashion that could be killed if some of our well-circulated papers set themselves to the task. Well-directed ridicule would do it.

The Head of Oxford House, Bethnal Green, sends out a circular appealing to men to come to their Sunday afternoon meetings. As an ex-Army Chaplain, he says that he is aware men are slow to enter churches; but he adds that this is not because they are irreligious (it would never do to give the game away), but because they might appear to be hypocrites. This strikes us as about the funniest excuse that we have yet seen. If the men believe in the service, what have they to appear hypocrites about? The man who feels that he is a hypocrite for going to church is plainly one who does not believe. But they are promised, if they will go, "nothing more than a half-hour's good sacred music, a straight talk from a good speaker (who is not always a parson), and a few prayers offered from the heart." Religion in Bethnal Green is evidently in a bad way.

The Bishop of Croydon is passing the hat round on behalf of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, an organization which aims at "bridging the gulf between the Church and Industry." The Society sends out "working-men agents" to preach the Gospel, in order to extend the Kingdom of Christ. In short, the Society's manifesto is a wonderful mixture of piety and piffle, which is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that its headquarters are situated at Church House, Westminster.

Whatever hard things the clergy may say concerning materialistic things, they have a very keen appreciation of the value of money. Discussing the question of a "living wage" for parsons, the Secretary of the London Branch of the Clergy Association declares indignantly that priests are paid on about the same scale as policemen. If this is not altered, the Church "might as well shut up shop at once." Evidently, the clergy would rather have their reward in cash on earth than harps in heaven.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 7, Sheffield; December 14, Liverpool; December 17 and 18, Belfast; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 7, Swansea; December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.
- MRS. C. M. RENTON.—The flogging of school children is, in our opinion, nearly always reprehensible, and the case in the Ceylonese missionary college is peculiarly bad. It is an illustration of how little genuine kindness often accompanies the professed care for people's souls.
- C. YOUNG.—In the new year, along with other changes that we have in view, we are hoping to make a special feature of notices of all new books that are of interest to Freethinkers. This may ultimately take the form of a special monthly supplement.
- F. GORDON.—We are flattered by your opinion, but we have not space for a discussion as to the form of government which we consider best. We can only say that any government that rested on a basis of justice and enlightenment would be fatal to the pretensions of religion, and the religionists know it.
- MR. A. E. STRINGER, in sending a subscription to our Sustentation Fund (he is writing from Ireland), says: "As a reader of your paper for over thirteen years, I wish to thank you for the pleasure I get from its perusal week after week. May it long continue its work. Ireland needs large doses of Freethought, North as well as South." That seems a general impression among our Irish readers, and we, of course, endorse it. But we must depend upon the help of those upon the spot. We are willing to help all we can by supplying literature for free distribution.
- AUTOLYCUS.—As we expected, the word is purely a local one. Thanks for inquiries. We are not surprised that the religious parties are trying to make the Labour Party pay for the alliance. Presently, the rank and file of the party will realize that the only policy that ultimately pays, is a straightforward one. The fight with religion must come, and nothing is gained by putting it off.
- J. THACKRAY.—You are right. If we haven't yet killed Christianity, it is evident that it has received its death-blow. And the coming generation is moving along the right lines. A very striking feature of all our meetings lately has been the large proportion of young men listeners. That heartens one for further work.
- C. M.—Send along and we will give our opinion on the matter. But you must not take it as any more than a bare opinion. It is a matter on which we cannot claim to be an authority.
- DESMOND FITZROY.—Received with thanks. Will not forget when we get to Belfast. Our only objection to Ireland is the sea between. We would forgive the Government not being able to manage the land if it would rule the water—and rule it—smooth.
- A. B. WHEELER.—Mr. Cohen's *God and Man* "discusses the subject of God and Evil, and would probably give you what you require. We hope to publish shortly a book on the whole question of Atheism and Theism which will go thoroughly into the subject.
- H. TRUCKELL.—Received and shall appear.
- C. M. BEADNELL.—We do not know of any translation of the Bible other than those in ordinary use. The rendering of several passages has been challenged by numerous scholars and critics, but these appear in various critical works, and in the course of the author's criticism. Thanks for appreciation of "Views and Opinions."
- W. JUDD.—Glad to hear of your having secured new converts. It is not unusual to have people thank one for introducing the *Freethinker* to their notice. Pleased this has been your experience. After all, there is only one *Freethinker*.
- MR. CLIFFORD WILLIAMS (Birmingham) writes:—"Please find note for Sustentation Fund. This is, of course, no indication of the appreciation I have for the indefatigable energy and patience you have displayed since the death of Mr. Foote. It may be said that no man could have undertaken such a task under worse conditions, and the fact that the "flag" is flying higher than ever is a tribute to you which a judicious friend would put forward rather than suppress."
- MRS. HAREWOOD.—Pleased to hear from an old friend.
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.
- 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.

To-day (December 7) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Builder's Exchange, Cross Burgess Street, at 3.15 and 6.30. His subject in the afternoon is "Religion and the Logic of Life," and in the evening on "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism." A gathering of Freethinkers from the district is expected, some arrangements, we understand, having already been made. On Sunday next Mr. Cohen visits Liverpool. He will go from there to Belfast, lecturing there on the 17th and 18th, and he returns to Manchester on the 21st. Then home for Christmas. And a few days' rest will be welcome. Tea is being provided for visitors from a distance.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (December 7), afternoon and evening, in the Docker's Hall, Swansea. The lecturer is at his best with a crowded audience.

We hope there will be a good gathering of Freethinkers and their friends, as well as of the general public, at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, this evening (December 7), when Mr. Clifford Williams will lecture on "Christianity, Old and New." Mr. Williams' lectures are much appreciated by local audiences, and he is so far a negation of the old proverb that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Moss had a good and "lively" audience for his lecture last week at Willesden on Sunday last. There are evidently a number of Freethinkers—unattached—in this locality who should be organized in order to do more effective work.

We are pleased to see that the new Secretary of the South Shields Branch, Mr. J. Fothergill, is making a frequent appearance in the local paper with letters dealing with various aspects of Freethought. This is an example that other secretaries might well follow. It is a capital plan of keeping the Society and its objects in front of the public, and ought to form a part of every secretary's work, provided that he or she has the time to give to it. One day we hope to see this side of our work properly organized.

The Pontypridd Freethinkers have now secured the use of the White Palace, Pontypridd, and intend holding meetings there. Mr. S. Holman, the Secretary of the Branch, will occupy the platform to-day (Dec. 7) at 7 o'clock. Subject, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

Mr. Dan Griffiths, of Llanelly, pays his first visit to Manchester for the Branch to-day (December 7). He will lecture in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, at 3 on "The Churches and Society," and at 6.30 on "Human Nature, Determinism and Free-will." We hope that Manchester friends will see to it that Mr. Griffiths will have a good meeting on this visit. The rest will depend upon himself, and we have no doubt but that he will attend to that.

The West Ham Branch of the N. S. S. is arranging a "Social," to be held at Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, E., on Saturday, December 6. There will be dances, games, musical selections, etc., and admission will be free. Forest Gate (G.E.R.) and Wanstead Park (M.R.) are the nearest stations; trams, etc., to the "Princess Alice" or Forest Gate Stations. All Freethinkers and their friends will be welcomed. The function will commence at 7 o'clock.

A few weeks ago the Glasgow Spiritualists approached the local Branch of the N. S. S. with a proposal to arrange a debate on Spiritualism. The Glasgow Branch accepted the invitation, and asked Mr. Cohen if he would represent them. Mr. Cohen agreed. The title has been decided, and the debate will come off some time in February next. One of the largest halls in Glasgow, the St. Andrew's Hall, seating about 4,000, has been engaged, and the proposed discussion is exciting considerable local interest. A very large audience is expected. Further particulars will be announced later.

It may have been a particular application or a mere general circular. But the other day we had a letter from one of our lecture agencies, offering to book lectures for us "on advantageous terms" in "Church Halls.....educational institutes," etc. We replied that we should be pleased to lecture whenever suitable in these places—particularly in Church Halls—but our purpose on the platform was to preach Freethought, and we had no time to devote to other subjects; and we were quite willing to lecture in any Church Hall in the country without any charge whatever. We regret to say that our offer has not been accepted. That is why we are repeating it here. There are a number of institutes connected with churches and chapels up and down the country, and we are willing to visit them "free, gratis, for nothing"—provided we are allowed to lecture in them on some subject connected with Freethought. But we don't expect to be overrun with applications.

When the decision of the Bowman case was announced, we were alone in pointing out that the real significance of the decision lay in its legalizing a bequest to a Secular Society, whether the Society was registered or not. It was surprising that the belief that non-registration was a bar to receiving a legacy should ever have grown up considering that it never was a disqualification at law. Soon after the Bowman decision a small legacy of £10 was paid over to the N. S. S.—which is at present an unregistered body—without demur. And now we have to announce that the National Secular Society has received notice from a firm of lawyers that by the will of Mr. Antonini the Society is entitled to a legacy of £1,000 which will be paid over in due course. We have had this information in our possession for several weeks, but waited for a meeting of the Executive before making anything like an official announcement. And it is good to know that after wandering in the outer darkness for so many years, a legacy to the National Secular Society is now absolutely secure. It is another step towards the N. S. S. assuming the public position in the country that it richly deserves.

In spite of very strong counter-attractions at Birmingham on Sunday last, there was a good audience at the Town Hall. Mr. Williams officiated as chairman, and there was a pleasing number of young, eager, and intelligent faces in the audience. That is one of the most pleasing features of our work at present.

The high price of clothing appears to have led to the burgling of a number of tailors' shops. One of the sufferers from this form of post-War activity is Mr. Harry Boulter, whose name will be known to many readers of this paper. His premises in the City Road were broken into, and the whole of the stock, including the implements of trade—the whole valued at £200—carried off. Nothing was insured, and the result is complete ruin. A Fund has now been started to enable Mr. Boulter to recommence business, and the Mayor of Shoreditch, Mr. H. Girling, of 15 Newton Street, Hoxton, London, N. 1, is acting as treasurer. All who care to assist should send their subscriptions direct to that gentleman.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Twelfth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £355 2s. J. Breese, £2. W. Saunders, 5s. Mr. Rowland (Rugby), 5s. Mr. Hayes (Rugby), 5s. W. Judd (Rugby), 10s. E. Lechmere, 10s. Constance, 5s. A. E. Stringer, £1. Clifford Williams, 10s. J. Reid, 2s. W. F. Ambrose, 2s. Swansea Branch N. S. S., £1. F. H. H., 2s. 6d. F. G. Margetson, jun., 7s. 6d. J. Williams, 2s. 6d. J. Cooper, 5s. T. Grinley, 5s. T. P., 9s. Mrs. Harewood, 5s. Total, £363 12s. 6d.

This Fund will close on December 14.

Darwin and Haeckel.

THE grotesque slanders which have been published in the British Press concerning Haeckel and his work are the outcome of hatred, ignorance, and prejudice. Those who circulate them are apparently so dense that they fail to see that they are merely provoking a *tu quoque*. If Germany has her great Materialists, so also has Britain. Recriminating charges and counter-charges are merely vulgar abuse, and lead nowhere.

Charles Darwin's son and biographer mentions that his father's friendship with Haeckel was not merely growth of correspondence, as was the case with some others—for instance, Fritz Muller. "Haeckel," he says, "paid more than one visit to Down, and these were thoroughly enjoyed by my father." Darwin's "strong feeling of regard" for Haeckel is emphasized—"a feeling which I have often heard him emphatically express, which was warmly returned." Huxley's admiration for Haeckel is also cited. In his *Evolution in Biology* Huxley wrote:—

Whatever hesitation may, not infrequently, be felt by less daring minds, in following Haeckel in many of his speculations, his attempt to systematize the doctrine of Evolution and to exhibit its influence as the central thought of modern biology cannot fail to have a far-reaching influence on the progress of science.

These two giants—Darwin and Haeckel—in several respects present an interesting contrast. Temperamentally, they appear to differ widely. Darwin shrinks from "exciting anger" and "making enemies." Writing to Haeckel from Down on May 21, 1867, he says:—

It never occurred to me for a moment to doubt that your work, with the whole subject so admirably and clearly arranged, as well as fortified by so many new facts and arguments, would not advance our common object in the highest degree. All that I think is that you will excite anger, and that anger so completely blinds everyone, that your arguments would have no chance of influencing those who are already opposed to our views. Moreover, I do not at all like that you, towards whom I feel so much friendship, should unnecessarily make enemies, and there is pain and vexation enough in the world without more being caused.The belief in the descent theory is slowly spreading in England, even amongst those who can give no reason for their belief. No body of men were at first so much opposed to my views as the members of the London Entomological Society; but now I am assured that, with the exception of two or three old men, all the members concur with me to a certain extent.

Perhaps, if Darwin had been a fighter and an ardent propagandist, he might not have been buried in Westminster Abbey, despite the representation of Sir John Lubbock and other distinguished men to the Dean of Westminster. It is interesting to note among the signatories to the representation, in addition to Lubbock's, such names as G. O. Trevelyan, Lyon Playfair, Charles W. Dilke, Henry Broadhurst, and H. Campbell-Bannerman. The date of that document is April 21, 1882. Darwin had breathed his last on the 19th of that month. He was buried on the 26th.

On November 19, 1868, Darwin pens a delightful letter:—

My dear Haeckel:—I must write to you again for two reasons. Firstly to thank you for your letter about your baby, which has quite charmed both me and my wife; I heartily congratulate you on its birth. I remember being surprised in my own case how soon the paternal instincts became developed.....I hope the large blue eyes and the principles of inheritance will make your child as good a

naturalist as you are; but judging from my own experience, you will be astonished to find how the whole mental disposition of your children changes with advancing years. A young child, and the same when nearly grown, sometimes differ almost as much as do a caterpillar and butterfly.

He then proceeds to congratulate Haeckel on a projected translation of his *Genevella Morphologie*, 1866, and goes on:—

I have been reading a good deal of your last book (*Die Natürliche Schöpfungs-Geschichte* translated in 1876 under the title *The History of Creation*) and the style is beautifully clear and easy to me.....Your chapter on the affinities and genealogy of the animal kingdom strike me as admirable and full of original thought. Your boldness however sometimes makes me tremble, but, as Huxley remarked, some one must be bold enough to make a beginning in drawing up tables of descent.

Of that work A. R. Wallace wrote in the *Academy*:—

If it had appeared before my Essay had been written, I should probably never have completed it. Almost all the conclusions at which I have arrived I find confirmed by this naturalist, whose knowledge on many points is much fuller than mine.

Haeckel was among the first to express appreciation of Darwin's *Descent of Man*. In acknowledging congratulations Darwin says:—"I cannot tell you how glad I am to find that I have expressed my high admiration of your labours with sufficient clearness; I am sure that I have not expressed it too strongly."

Writing to Haeckel on September 25, 1873, Darwin shortly raises one or two points. "Has the problem," he asks, "of the later stages of reduction of useless structures ever perplexed you? This problem has of late caused me much perplexity"; and further on, "I much wish this latter question (of spontaneous generation) could be settled; but I see no prospect of it. If it could be proved true, this would be most important to us."

As a birthday gift Darwin received from Germany in 1877 an album of photographs of 154 men of science with a dedicatory poem. To Haeckel he wrote regarding it:—

The album has just arrived quite safe. It is most superb. It is by far the greatest honour which I have ever received, and my satisfaction has been greatly enhanced by your most kind letter of February 9.....I thank you all from my heart. I have written by this post to Herr Rade, and I hope he will somehow manage to thank all my generous friends.

These few sidelights on the relationships of two great men are of particular charm when the survivor of them has just passed into the shadows. *Ave atque vale!*

IGNOTUS.

A Memory and a Meditation.

WHEN a man walks with God his voice shall be as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn—which is a very beautiful metaphor, and merely Emerson's more stately way of saying, When a man walks with Nature, etc.; *chacon a son gout*.

I had been a little unwell, and perhaps a little worried, as even the happiest of mortals may be at times, when one Sunday I remembered I had not been to church, my church, for a long time. It was October, and the summer almost gone, as with pack and staff for probable bramble picking, I sallied forth in the cool air and golden sunshine of a still and perfect autumn day, traversed the roads, skirted the woods, followed the paths, crossed the burns and fields I knew and loved so well,

now more than ever, and felt growing upon me an exceeding peace and healthfulness. In a wooded dell, enlivened by a plashing stream from the brown hills beyond it, I reached for brambles amid the scented pines and jagged thorns to the music of the rivulet and the occasional piping of a bird, disturbing not, but deepening by contrast, the breathing silence of the brake.

In four hours or so my pocks were filled; yet I kept craning my neck and looking for more with an experienced eye—so use doth breed a habit in a man, and so the labour he delights in physics pain. Outwith the wood, in a high hedge, poised above the busy brook, and where only the cutest bramble-hunter would think of looking, I found some long, richly-loaded tendrils depending, vine-like, from the hedge, some of which—with a little compunction for the sacrifice—I cut off and picked at leisure on the sward. Great was my greed, and yet it was merely a kind of religious zeal, a holy passion. I was alone in the wilderness, a modern John the Baptist, the faded glories of the summer, the peace and beauty of the world all about me; the lyart leaves of the hawthorn were massed in quiet eddies of the stream, forming a sweet mosaic on the surface of the dark water.

By the slap, or style, in the hedge corner, and mossy stones under the witching bouertree bush (elder), I rested long amidst the fallen leaves surveying the quiet lichened trees and the evergreen sward under its bleached tangle of leaf and windlestrae, and at my feet the soft mellifluous music of the burn as it carved its channel in grey sandstone (the old red) amid boulder, clay, and loam. The fallen tree, the first and last, most picturesque of bridges, spanned the stream. Dyke and hedge, the corner of the wood, the curving field, sloped, dipped into, and met in harmony in this happy hollow; aye, even as though each gentle natural object conspired with another to make for me this little heaven on earth.

I have seen dogroses in bloom here in November; campion and ragged robin are still to the fore; hips and haws are plentiful; even an odd wild raspberry, which, save for the wild strawberry (in its earlier season) has, to my rustic taste, the most delicate and delightful of flavours. The glossy and tempting but bitter sloe shining in its lichened, stunted blackthorn twig is also in evidence about this time, all of which may seem the most meagre menu for the monarch Pan; but to the true worshipper and "child of God" this faith is ascetic also; and so let the heathen rage and gorge themselves, I, like Burns' moosie—

Will get a blessin' wi' the lave,
An' never miss 't.

Sad and severe were some of the Sunday faces I met on my way home; but, as for me, the deep abiding tranquillity of soul I felt must have illumined my erstwhile Don Quixote visage; my tones must have sounded soft and tender as I spoke to friends, aye, even to mine enemies, gladly and forgivingly, as I kept murmuring within me the holy text I had proved so true!

ANDREW MILLAR.

Our second Social was a great success. Though the whist drive was absent on this occasion, we had plenty of songs and dancing, and a novelty in the form of a youthful choir, whose initial efforts on behalf of the Branch were much appreciated. All credit is due to Miss Williams for her work in this direction, and we wish the lady every success. Thanks are also due to Miss Bailey and Miss Mapp for their entertainment at the piano, and to Miss Keefe, Miss Everson, Mr. Bailey, and others, for their songs. Our next Social is on December 27, but on this occasion it is the children's turn.—H. BLACK, Hon Sec. Manchester Branch N. S. S.

Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT ON TYNESIDE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There are many unmistakable signs that there exists a strong desire among Freethinkers on Tyneside to become better organized. There is no claim here to define the boundary of Tyneside, but it is the stating of a calm truth that, after leaving the banks of the coaly river, one may travel a considerable distance in any direction without meeting with a profession of freedom of thought in a combined sense. On a recent Sunday (November 16) we had our worthy President in South Shields, where he gave two lectures. All things considered, the gatherings were eminently successful. A spell of our grand old North-East weather grimly forbade many to be with us; but there was a goodly company, a contemplation of which makes one dream things. Why should a lecturer come to this district for one day only? It ought to be well within the bounds of possibility that lecture tours should be provided in our immediate vicinity. When we call to mind the quiet encouragement that we have received from our visiting friends, we feel, out of deference to them, that we should make some continued effort. Freedom of thought is the greatest discovery of mankind. It calls for the utmost development of the understanding, and this brings with it the sweetest solace known to man. In far-off times there lived men who thought as we think—Reason was their guide; but the thunders of authority triumphed, enslaving the human mind to an almost incredible extent. But here and there giants arose. We enjoy comparative freedom to-day because of their labours. The burden of the fight, however, still largely rests upon individuals. Let us change all that. It is no doubt grand to watch the persistent work performed by the sentinels of freedom, but it would be far grander if we would all gather up our forces and help to consolidate the victories already secured. All around we see desperate attempts on the part of religion to retain its hold upon the thoughts of men. It would be unwise to view these efforts with equanimity. The fight may seem unequal, but there is much to show that vast numbers of people are actuated by the principles of liberty. There is an evident determination on the part of the masses to secure a better life in the future than has been possible in the past. Independent thinking will best provide for this, a little enquiry will make quite clear the fact that all progressive workers are considering our principles with a growing degree of favour. Our work is still enormous, but let us go back a few years and consider the rude treatment meted out to our forbears. Our atmosphere is congenial compared with theirs; but "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Thus, we would call to the Tyneside Freethinkers. Numerous branches might be formed at once, sleeping branches might rouse themselves. A resulting north eastern federation of Freethinkers would become a power in the land. The antiquated interpretation of the facts of life, eternally furthered by a huge army of religious propagandists, should be for ever questioned. But if it should happen that humanity fails to take full advantage of its splendid opportunities, at least, let Tyneside Freethought so impress itself upon history that men in future ages may look back to us for inspiration, as we look back to the Freethinkers of all bygone times. It is no vain-glorious ambition that moves us in this present instance. We would be glad to support any form of organization that would ensure the furthering of our principles. But as we cannot see any distinct effort being made anywhere in the district, might we respectfully invite all and sundry who agree as to the urgency of this matter to communicate with J. FOTHERGILL, 3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock, South Shields.

FREETHOUGHT IN IRELAND.

SIR,—I would draw the attention of Freethinkers in the North of Ireland to the forthcoming visit of our President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, to Belfast on December 17 and 18. No effort ought to be spared to have the hall crowded each

evening. The local Branch, owing to the expiry of a lease, has temporarily to forgo the weekly lectures which were so successful, and has difficulty in getting a suitable hall. Given enthusiastic meetings, however, at Mr. Cohen's lectures, we would be encouraged to bigger propaganda ventures, and we appeal for your support. Buy tickets yourselves and give to your Christian friends, or, better still, bring them with you. Mr. Cohen will do the rest.

Tickets in quantities may be had from the local Secretary, JOHN F. LESSELS, The City Studio, 3 High Street, Belfast.

HYGIENE AND SALVATION.

SIR,—I have read with interest Mr. Gould's article in this week's issue of the *Freethinker* on "Hygiene Better than Salvation," and I quite agree with him as to the place held by sanitation and hygiene in the development of a healthy body. I am somewhat puzzled to know, however, what he means by his cryptic addition, "and other agencies of Preventive Medicine." I suspect that he is here paying undeserved homage to the prophylactics which are now so much the craze (and the curse) of the medical profession. I should like therefore to emphasize my contention that, whilst I regard these prophylactics of extremely doubtful benefit to mankind, there can be no possibility of cavil that sanitation and hygiene are proven agencies in the development of a sound constitution. I should not look upon Ross as the best exemplar of this beneficial science. One might with more propriety cite Lord Roberts, whose experience of sanitary methods during the South African War led him to inaugurate the splendid sanitary corps which has done so much for the Army; but to the Japanese should be given pride of place for establishing this system on proper lines. During the Russo-Japanese War, they, eschewing inoculation, went all out for rigid sanitary methods, which met with instant and unparalleled success.

A careful inquiry will, I think, convince any impartial investigator, blessed with the ordinary modicum of intelligence, that prophylactics, and the methods of the medical profession generally, have as much to do with health creation as have the empty vapourings of the religionists in preserving sanity throughout the world.

There is a striking analogy between the Sanitarian and the Freethinker. The former aims at the removal of disease-polluting habits and the setting up of beneficial hygienic conditions for the development of a healthy body; whilst the latter is out to clear away the weeds of superstition from the mind of man, in order that the reasoning faculty may have full sway to develop intellectual advancement.

November 29, 1919.

H. C. HEBBES.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON NOV. 29.

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

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Financial Statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Manchester, North London, and South Shields Branches, and for the Parent Society; fifteen in all.

The Report of the Organization Committee was received, and their various recommendations adopted.

It was reported that the Society would shortly receive a bequest of £1,000 under the will of the late Chas. Antonini.

The deepest regret was expressed by the Executive at the report of the death of their old and greatly esteemed colleague, Dr. R. T. Nichols, one of the late Vice-Presidents of the Society. The Secretary was instructed to convey to the relatives the Executive's keen sense of the loss sustained by the Movement of which Dr. Nichols had been so devoted and liberal a supporter. It was resolved unanimously that the N. S. S. should be represented at the funeral by the President, Secretary, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, and other members of the Executive. It was intimated that the Secular Society, Ltd., would be represented also.

A donation of £5 was ordered to be paid to the Secular Education League.

Arrangements were concluded for a series of Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place Institute. It was agreed that no meeting be held in December, in consequence of the Christmas holidays.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to record the death of Dr. R. T. Nichols, of Ilford, at the age of eighty-two. Dr. Nichols had been for very many years a zealous supporter of the Freethought cause, and was a member of both the Secular Society, Limited, and of the National Secular Society. Of a simple and kindly disposition, he did much good in a quiet and unostentatious way, and one may assume from what is known of him that few appeals for help fell on deaf ears. One of the last cheques he drew was a donation to the Ilford Philanthropic Society, and his name was never absent from a subscription list in these columns. Interested in many reform movements, the Freethought cause stood nearest to his heart, and he was indefatigable in circulating its literature. The *Ilford Recorder* in noticing his death pays him a high and a well-deserved compliment both as to his character and his generosity. Dr. Nichols had been in poor health for some years, and his ailments increased rapidly of late. He was without family, and on November 24 retired to his room telling his housekeeper that he did not wish to be disturbed. Some time after he was found dead in his bed. At the inquest held on the following day the coroner remarked that the deceased felt that he was near his end and "thought it not worth while to live longer," returned a verdict that death was due to "Prussic acid poisoning, self-administered." In accordance with his wish, the body was cremated at the City of London Cemetery. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd both delivered short addresses, and Messrs. Quinton, Rosetti, Silverstein, Miss Kough, and Miss Vance represented the two Secular Societies to which he belonged. A representative was also present from the Liberal Club of which he had been President. No doubt many others would have been present had time permitted of a longer notice.

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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 not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Ernest Dales, "Contrasts."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Debate: "Is Prohibition Necessary?" Affirmative, A. Eagar; Negative, T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Open Debate: "The Housing Puzzle." Introduced by Mr. V. Roger.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Aylmer Maude, "The Russian Problem."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Baker, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. E. Clifford Williams, "Christianity: Old and New."

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Clarion Cafe, Gasgoine Street, Boar Lane, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "God, Freewill, and Immortality."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Small Hall, Downing Street): Mr. Dan Griffiths, 3, "The Churches and Society"; 6.30, "Human Nature: Determinism v. Freewill."

SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3.15, "Religion and the Logic of Life"; 6.30, "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (The Docker's Hall, Swansea): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Cannibalism and Religion"; 7, "The Lying Gospel."

BOOKS—interesting to Freethinkers—which are for Sale:—*Life of Charles Bradlaugh* (2 vols.), 15s.; *Flowers of Freethought* (2 vols.), 6s.; Vol. i. of *The Reasoner*, 5s.; *Supernatural Religion* (3 vols.), 10s.; *The Riddle of the Universe*, 5s.; *Freethought Magazine* (1 vol.), 5s.; *Life of Voltaire*, 4s.; *History of Civilization*, 10s.; *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, 5s.; *Half-Hours with Freethinkers*, 4s.; *Evolution of Man*, 2s. 6d.; *Three Trials of William Hone*, 5s.; *Life of James Thomson*, 5s.; *From Matter to Man*, 4s.; *Modern Science and the Illusions of Bergson*, 5s.; *Modern Thought and Modern Thinkers*, 3s.; *The Origin of the World*, 2s. 6d.; *Brimstone Ballads* (scarce), 2s. 6d.; *Penalties upon Opinion*, 1s.; *Determinism or Free-Will?* 1s.; *Prisoner for Blasphemy*, 1s.; *Life of Malthus*, 1s.; *The Population Question*, 1s.; *Blight of Respectability*, 5s.; *Sex Lore*, 7s. 6d.; *Married Love*, 6s.; *Wise Parenthood*, 2s. 6d.; *How to Prevent Pregnancy*, 2s. 6d.; *The Problem of Motherhood*, 1s.—**W. HARRISON**, 47 Jeffreys Road, Clapham, London, S.W. 4.

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