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Views and Opinions.

Religion and Labour.

We have often called attention to the ostentatious professions of religion by some of the Labour leaders in this country, and we feel sure that we shall have to do it many times more. For the evil seems very deeply rooted. Abroad the Labour Movements are tolerably free from this kind of thing. There a man does not seem to feel that he is under any compulsion to prove that his Labour policy is in line with the teachings of Jesus, or that he is acting in the spirit of true Christianity. It is only in this country that a man who is advocating the nationalization of the mines feels impelled to prove that this was part of the social programme laid down by Jesus Christ, or that the correct solution of the housing problem is to be found in reading the New Testament. Many of those who use vague phrases about Christianity are pretty well known to be speaking with their tongues in their cheek, but that does not lessen the evil that is done by such empty talk. For the Labour problem, like every other problem, will only be finally and profitably solved by clear and informed thinking, and it is a curious way to induce this by using language in one sense, knowing quite well that they who hear will understand it in another; and one feels impelled to say that it is often intended that they should understand it in a sense different from that which is in the speaker’s mind. All of us are more or less interested in the social question, and all of us that are intelligently interested realize that, although a little temporary advantage may be gained by playing to popular prejudice, in the long run we pay the price of a certain retrogression.

Prayer and Politics.

Dr. Salter is a well-known South London Socialist, and, addressing a P.S.A. audience the other day, he said that “a number of them” (we do not know who or what is covered by that expression) decided to meet once a week for thirty minutes, to say the Lord’s Prayer, and to spend the rest of the time in silent prayer for the purpose of bringing about “His Kingdom on earth.” The experiment cannot be said to be a howling success, since about thirty attended the last meeting; but among the odds and ends of Christians who attended it, Dr. Salter said there was one Agnostic, “who, after all, was

seeking to know the truth.” We should dearly like to know the name of the Agnostic who spent thirty minutes in silent prayer because he was “after all” desirous of knowing the truth. The “after all” is quite delicious. Presumably, it is a little surprising to find that an Agnostic should desire to know the truth. And one feels that the Agnostic is introduced for the express purpose of delicately hinting to the good Christians present that the Agnostic is not quite so clear, mentally, as the frequenters of the P.S.A.; but as he is desirous of getting at the truth, he may one day be found at the P.S.A. meeting singing the praises of Jesus Christ. Your good Christian seems incapable of talking about Freethinkers unless he depicts them as either rogues or fools. And, certainly, be he one or the other, he will never feel lonely in a Christian congregation.

* * *

Who Profits by Prayer?

At any rate, we know that Dr. Salter spends at least thirty minutes each week in praying that God’s Kingdom will be established on earth. How we would dearly like him to spend, say, half that time in saying what effect he thinks that thirty minutes has in bringing it about. Does he think that it has any? Does he imagine that the people to whom he is opposed are at all alarmed at finding that he is on his knees engaged in silent prayer? Would they not rather have him on his knees praying in silence than on his feet talking in a public meeting? Dr. Salter spends thirty minutes per week on his knees praying for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and he says that as though it were quite an original occupation. He announces it with all the pride of Einstein announcing his theory of relativity. But the Christian world has been offering up the same prayer for over nineteen centuries. And the exploiters of the people have never turned a hair. On the contrary, they have encouraged the people to keep at it. More, they have provided handsome buildings for them to pray in, and have seen that no one disturbed them at their prayers. There is no occupation in this country that is better endowed than that of praying. It was in full swing when women were at work half naked in the mines, when children of seven years of age were being killed in factories to fill Christian pockets, it is the one prayer that has always been in evidence; and Dr. Salter is still at it. It was Dod Grile who said that Christians resembled camels, inasmuch as both took their burdens kneeling. The comparison is a little unfair to the camel. For we have no proof that the camel is silly enough to thank his driver for putting the burden on his back.

* * *

God and His Kingdom.

But why pray at all that God’s kingdom may be established on earth? Who are they praying to? Presumably to God? And that only makes the matter more amusing. If Christians prayed to the Devil that he would permit the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth one could understand it. For, theologically, he is

interested in preventing it, and, again, speaking theologically, the honours of the game rest with him. Up to now he appears to have had it pretty well all his own way. One could, therefore, appreciate Christians praying to "Our governor which art in hell" to please let God have his innings. But Christians pray to God to establish his kingdom on earth. Well, if he wishes it established who is there that can prevent it? No Christian would complain if he did it—at least they say they would not. And, surely, no non-Christian could prevent God doing it if he made up his mind on the subject. And if God cannot do it, will Dr. Salter please inform us as to what is the good of praying to someone to do a thing that we know before hand he cannot do? It is really putting God in a false position. It is making him almost as ridiculous as his followers. It is too absurd for Dr. Salter to pretend that God wishes his kingdom to be established on earth, and it cannot be done because the dukes, and the mineowners, and the capitalists will not permit it. If there is a God he should do as he pleases. If he can only do as he pleases when someone else pleases to let him do as he pleases, it doesn't seem worth while bothering about him at all. We wonder whether Dr. Salter will sacrifice one of his weekly half hours to explain the situation. And although we have not attended his prayer-meeting, we really do want to understand the position.

* * *

A Call to Sanity.

Seriously, one wonders how long it will be before those who stand forward as the leaders of the people in this country cease the foolish game of playing to the religious prejudices of the crowd in the way in which they are doing. What do they hope to gain from it? If they are hoping for advancement for themselves well and good. It is probable they may achieve their purpose. But if they are earnestly hoping for the advancement of the people, then no policy could be more stupid or more unproductive of good results. No movement gains in real strength by the adherence of the unthinking or the wrong thinking. They may be with us to-day, but they are against us to-morrow. And while they are with us their influence generally acts on a progressive movement for the worse. They lower its ideals and they adulterate its teachings. One day the labour leaders of this country will have to make up their minds as to what is to be their attitude towards one of the most retrogressive religions that the world has known. If they do not face the issue, others will face it for them. For the interests which the Churches in this country represent are not to be fooled. They know their real enemies and their true friends. They indicate the one by their hatred of Freethought, and they exhibit the other by their friendliness towards all forms of superstition. Courage is all that is needed. The country is ready for a great movement forward. But the movement is not inevitable. The opportunity may easily be lost by those who are too timid to break with the outworn past, and so cannot fail to sacrifice the vital interests of the present and the future.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

It is difficult for those who have not lived among savages to realize perfectly their faith. When told that his gods do not exist, the savage merely laughs in mild wonder at such an extraordinary observation being made. It seems quite natural to him that his gods should be as his parents and grandparents have described; he believes as he breathes, without an effort; he feels that what he has been taught is true. His creed is in harmony with his intellect, and cannot be changed until his intellect is changed.

—Winwood Reade, "The Martyrdom of Man."

New Light on an Old Problem.

(Concluded from p. 147.)

NATURALLY both Determinism and Free-will are but theories of human nature, and the only question is which of the two is the more in harmony with the facts of life as they present themselves in experience. It is highly significant that two of the keenest intellects in the Christian Church, Thomas Aquinas and Jonathan Edwards, were firm Determinists, and that a third, Augustine, had strong leanings towards the same theory. The latter's view was that at his creation man was endowed with a perfectly free will, but lost it through the Fall, and has been the slave of sin ever since, so far as he himself, apart from supernatural interference, is concerned. As already indicated, advocates of Free-will treat man as a solitary exception in the Universe. Everywhere else the law of causation reigns supreme. But do the facts of human life justify such an isolation of man from the rest of living beings? Even theologians admit that the present is a child of the past, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, and that this natural and inevitable sequence can only be broken by a definite act of supernatural intervention. Curiously enough, however, assuming the actuality of such intervention, it follows that by means of it man is merely transferred from one state of bondage to another. Thus, theoretical consistency would impel every divine to adopt Determinism, as it did compel strong thinkers like Aquinas and Edwards, and to some extent Augustine. Unfortunately few theologians are logical, and so forgetting that, according to their own pet theory, man is by nature the slave of sin, and by grace the bond servant of Jesus Christ, they contend that Determinism makes for irresponsibility and justifies immorality. As preachers of the Gospel they describe the natural man as incapable of good choices until God seizes hold of him, performs a supernatural deed upon his personality, enters into him and takes complete possession of him by his Spirit. Here, again, consistency is far from them, for the Christian is represented as a being whose mind and heart are the theatre of a fierce conflict between the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness for the ultimate mastery over him. At any rate, neither before nor after the new-birth are man's actions determined by himself, but by the conditions under which he lives.

All this is, of course, a ludicrous travesty of the truth and of the law of causation, and yet an indirect, though unintentional, confirmation of the Determinist position. The main difference between the theologian and the scientific Determinist is that the former regards man as the possible subject of two supernatural laws in succession, namely, the law of sin under Satan before conversion and the law of grace under Christ after it. In *Determinism or Free-Will?* Mr. Chapman Cohen makes it perfectly clear that it is only the theory of Determinism which renders the conceptions of praise, and blame, and responsibility reasonably intelligible and commendable. According to the orthodox theological doctrines of the Fall and Redemption praise and blame are a mockery and rewards, and punishments undeserved and unjust. With flagrant inconsistency, therefore, most theologians pretend to be Indeterminists because they set a high educative value on praise and blame, whereas in their own essentially fatalistic theory both terms are robbed of all intelligible meaning. In the book under review the essential incompatibility between Indeterminism and Responsibility is set in the strongest possible light. There are Determinists here and there who boldly deny the fact of accountability, declaring that man, being the product of heredity and environment cannot

help what he is and does, and, therefore, cannot be held in any sense or degree responsible for his actions. There is profound truth in that statement, but it is in no sense the whole, or even the most important part of the truth on the subject. Of course, if our thoughts and actions are determined by a Supreme Will outside of us, the decrees of which are irrevocable, we have absolutely no responsibility whatever. As a matter of fact, however, the overwhelming majority of people are conscious of accountability for all they are and do. As our author says:—

Both the fact of responsibility and our consciousness of it call for explanation; and both require for an adequate explanation a larger area than is offered by individual psychology. Indeed so long as we restrict ourselves to the individual we cannot understand either the fact or the consciousness of responsibility. By limiting themselves in this manner some Determinists have been led to deny responsibility altogether. The individual, they have said, does not create either his own organism or its environment, and consequently all reasonable basis for responsibility disappears. To which there is the effective reply that the datum for responsibility is found in the nature of the organism and in the possibility of its being affected by certain social forces, and not in the absolute origination of its own impulses and actions. And to the Indeterminist attack, that if action is the expression of heredity, organism, and environment, there is no room for responsibility, there is the effective reply that it is precisely because the individual's actions are the expression of all the forces brought to bear upon him that he may be accounted responsible.

Conduct creates a social reaction, good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable, and the reacting judgment of society awakens in each of us a consciousness of responsibility, more or less acute, to society at large. The individual sees himself in the social mirror. His nature is fashioned by the social medium, his personal life becomes an expression of the social life (pp. 77, 79).

We are now in the very heart of the subject. The chapters entitled "Nature and Implications of Responsibility," "Determinism and Character," "A Problem in Determinism," and "Environment," are characterized by great lucidity and cogency, and no one can read and study them without experiencing an intellectual and ethical stimulus of the most delightful nature. Every reader may not share all the views expressed, but all will appreciate the courage with which difficult and highly debatable points are tackled, and the brilliant manner in which objections are disposed of. As an example of the latter we may take the answer to the objection that "a conviction of the causative character of human action would lead to a weakening of effort or to moral depression." The author asks:—

Why should it have this effect? It is curious that those who fear this result seem to have only in mind the tendencies to wrongdoing. But if it operates at all it must operate in all directions, and this would certainly strengthen good resolutions as well as bad ones. And even though no more were to be said, this would justify the assertion that merit and demerit would remain unaffected, and that any harm done in one direction would be compensated by good done in another. But another important consideration is to be added. This is that while a consciousness of the power of habit acts as a retarding influence on wrongdoing, it has an accelerating influence in the reverse direction—that is, unless we assume a character acting with the deliberate intention of cultivating an evil disposition (pp. 114-115).

The foregoing quotations, representing various aspects and stages of a cumulative argument, will, I hope, serve the purpose of whetting the reader's appetite for the rich intellectual feast provided for him in this closely reasoned but simply written and comparatively small volume.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Huxley's Luminous Intellect."

Him, not the tales of all the gods in heaven,
Nor the sky's lightnings, nor the menacing roar
Of thunder daunted.

—*Lucretius*.

"WHAT scientific question, what philosophic problem, is there which did not interest Huxley's luminous intellect, one of the broadest and most comprehensive that nineteenth-century England produced, fertile in great intellects as it was," says Henri Bergson. It is from this point of view, as the Freethinker, the man of unfettered intellect, many-sided, with keen interest in contemporary problems, that we prefer to write about him. His popularization of Darwinism, his advocacy of Freethought, his controversies with Gladstone and other reactionaries, all these we can only allude to. They are to be found in his writings, the perfect lucidity and beautiful English of which might make any author envious. For Huxley was the best writer among British men of science of any age. We shall discuss him not as a mere scientist, but as a great teacher who had for his proud object the liberation of the human intellect.

When Huxley was a boy his ambition was to be a parson. Think of that! A later desire of his was to be an engineer. He often wished to be what circumstances denied. Both he and his friend, John Tyndall, were at one and the same time candidates for professorships in Toronto University, but both were defeated. At an early stage in Huxley's career some of his friends thought he might probably spend his days as a navy-surgeon. For, like Charles Darwin, he served on a British man-of-war, and collected knowledge from remote seas and lands.

All his early education was acquired in London. He never imbibed knowledge from Cambridge dons, nor from the "monks of Oxford sunk in prejudice and port," as Edward Gibbon sarcastically called the Fellows by Isis. It was Huxley's work of discovery in the Southern Seas that won for him the envied distinction of a Fellowship of the Royal Society. His extraordinary versatility was in part due to the variety of his early experiences. His most successful and satisfactory work was that as an apostle of science. The "Saint Paul of Darwinism," someone dubbed him, and certainly his power of expounding and popularizing the theory of evolution was very remarkable.

It is to Huxley's lasting credit that he was one of the first to apply seriously the evolutionary theories to the current religious beliefs. He has told us that when he was a young man, "Geologists and biologists could hardly follow to the end any path of enquiry without finding the way blocked by Noah and his ark, or by the first chapter of Genesis; and it was a serious matter in this country, at any rate, for a man to be suspected of doubting the literal truth of the diluvial or any other Pentateuchal history." Fortunately, the "intellectuals" won the battle, and now, to quote Huxley again, "it is difficult to persuade serious scientific inquirers to occupy themselves in any way with the Noachian deluge. They look at you with a smile, and say they have more important matters to attend to than mere antiquarianism."

The clergy, who are such imaginative men, pictured Huxley as a matter-of-fact, dry-as-dust scientist. They have made thousands of mistakes, but they were never more mistaken. Few men have written more eloquently than doubting Thomas Huxley on the supreme importance of the cultivation of a sense of beauty. The loss

of the power of seeing beauty, he has told us, was enormous. Let us quote a sentence:—

The man who is all morality and intellect, although he may be good and even great, is, after all, only half a man. There is beauty in the moral world, and in the intellectual world; but there is also a beauty which is neither moral nor intellectual—the beauty of the world of art.

"I should like," he said, in his rectorial address to the students of a Northern University, "to see professors of the Fine Arts in every University; and instruction in some branch of their art made a part of the ordinary curriculum."

Huxley's writings literally teem with aphoristic sayings and brilliant epigrams, which range "from grave to gay, from lively to severe." Two opposite illustrations are well worth quotation. His fine jest that public opinion sometimes means publicans' opinion, fittingly precedes his emendation of Kant's statement that the three main questions for a man are, "What can I do? What ought I to do? What may I hope for?" Huxley's characteristic reply was, "Do what you can, do what you ought, and leave hoping and fearing alone."

Huxley turned the handles of many doors. His mind was receptive of impressions in art, science, history, literature, and, above all, life itself. Listen to this beautiful passage on the Renaissance, as attractive as anything that Walter Pater has ever written on this immortal subject. Writing of the effect of the classical revival upon the men of Mediæval Europe, he says:—

They were as men who had kissed the fairy-queen, and, wandering with her in the dim loveliness of the underworld, cared not to return to the familiar ways of home and fatherland, though they lay at arm's length overhead. Cardinals were more conversant with Virgil than Isaiah, and popes laboured with great success to repaganize Rome.

It is here that we find Huxley's ultimate claim upon the grateful recollection of democracy. If honest men and women to-day can speak their minds and write their thoughts in comparative security from popular abuse and clerical persecution, it is Huxley and the Freethinkers that they have to thank. Huxley, be it remembered, was in a difficult position with regard to Freethought, for he held Government appointments. It is to his credit that he never dissembled his love. He subscribed to the Leicester Secular Society, "in evidence of his full sympathy with the objects." To a request for permission to publish his letter, he replied, "You are quite at liberty to publish my note, and I shall be glad if it is of any service." Huxley's work, like that of the Freethinkers, will endure. When the Darwinian controversy is half forgotten, and when other theological controversies have faded into obscurity, it will be remembered that he fought for Liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

IF I WERE GOD.

Gin I were God sitting up there aboon,
Weariet, nae doot, noo a' my darg wis deen,
Deaved wi' the flocking angels hairse wi' singin',
To some cloud edge I'd daunder furth, an' feth,
Look owre an' see hoo things were gaun aneth,
Syne gin I saw hoo man I'd made masel'
Had started in to pooshan, shoot an' fell,
To reive an' rape an' fairly mak' a hell
O' my braw birling earth—a hale week's wark—
I'd cast my coat again, rowe up my sark,
An', or they'd time to lench a second Ark,
Tak' back my word an' send anither spate,
Droon oot the hale hypothec, dicht the sklata,
Own my mistak', and since I'd cleared the brod,
Start a' things owre again, gin I were God.

—Charles Murray, "Glasgow Evening News."

Spiritualism.

VI.

FRAUD.

Southey is once reported to have said that "man is a dupeable animal. Quacks in religion and quacks in politics know this, and act upon that knowledge. There is scarcely anyone who may not, like a trout, be taken by tickling."

How far this observation is true can be seen if we look around us. Never since the introduction of cheap printing have more lies stalked abroad than at the present time. The popular press, which might have been an instrument in the cause of truth and freedom is simply the servant of its moneyed proprietors, who, hand in hand with the financial magnates, control the lives and destinies of millions. The greatest experiment ever made in human government is denounced by the Fleet St. hacks as the work of barbarous murderers, whilst their masters walk arm in arm with those noble gentlemen whose removal from office has resulted in what we hope is the final destruction of the dungeons of Siberia. Fraud is everywhere, no less in politics than in religion. And yet people imagine that Spiritualism is a faith which has a monopoly of fraud. Nothing is further from the truth. Anglo-Catholicism, that strange fungus which is every trying to throttle the Church of England, is a case in point. Here is a faith brazenly posing as Catholic, claiming for its priests the most extravagant powers, and almost wholly built up on a tissue of verbal jugglery and misrepresentation that it would be hard to equal. Spiritualism is clean by the side of it. It is true that Spiritualism has its frauds like any other religion, but no mediums, as far as I know have ever claimed the ridiculous powers of the Christian priests, and many would not even go so far as to claim to *possess* any powers at all.

The fraudulent aspect of Spiritualism is seen principally on its phenomenal side. By this I mean the manifestations claimed by Spiritualists to be the work of spirits, such as raps, lights, levitations, materialisations, etc. In the early days which followed the Hydesville knockings, fraud was especially rampant in connection with the physical phenomena. At that time little was known as to the value of trickery for the purposes of entertainment, and would-be conjurors found a much more lucrative job in mediumship. Sir A. C. Doyle does not appear to think that fraud is really so very common, and "King's Counsel," another Spiritualist stalwart, writes: "Certain mediums may be open to the charge of fraud, although I believe this to be much more rare than is usually supposed." What a pity it is that these gentlemen do not read their own literature! Here is one writer's opinion, published about 1877. He is speaking of fraud during *séances*, and says "that the evil has assumed gigantic proportions," a statement which at the time was not far from the mark. Again, mentioning the miracles of the dark *séance*, he says that if "any scullery maid be one degree removed from helpless idiocy," he would teach her in a single hour to go through the usual repertory of dark *séance* tricks undetected by her masters. Perhaps the reader imagines that this is the opinion of some rabid sceptic or blatant anti-spiritualist. Nothing of the sort. These are the studied conclusions of Daniel D.

Home, Spiritualism's greatest exponent and the idol of the faithful, a man whom I would be the last to say shared in the trickery of those whom he condemned. If we turn over the pages of the *Spiritualist* about the year 1875, the most noticeable thing is the immense number of physical manifestations which are said to have been taking place. Such wonders as materialisations and *apports* seem to have been quite common at that time, whilst nowadays these phenomena are exceedingly rare. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle apparently believes that the new revelation is taking on a more refined aspect, and that the future will bring manifestations of a more spiritual nature, such as a great development of trance-mediumship and spirit communications. Personally I cannot help thinking that the invention of the electric torch has more to do with the disappearance of the advanced physical phenomena than anything else.

The next point that we must discuss is as to what fraud can actually accomplish, and concerning this there is a great deal of misconception. Some people have a sort of idea that conjurers can do anything, which may be very flattering to the magical profession, but is, unfortunately, wholly devoid of truth. To make this quite clear, I shall take a very simple example. Supposing I want to give a series of tests in what is called sealed letter reading, that is to say, becoming acquainted with the contents of an envelope which has been securely sealed down by the sitter. Now my method of obtaining this information would vary in very many different ways. It would depend upon the sitter himself, upon the rooms in which the test took place, and many other purely local conditions. But besides all this there are quite a number of ways in which I may obtain that information, which have no connection with the sitter at all, but merely depend upon the piece of apparatus or deceptive contrivance which I may choose to select. Now, supposing that, knowing as I do, all about these various methods, I came to a medium and asked for a test, I should find it very difficult to say *the first time* exactly what method he was using, but I should suspect very strongly that it was a trick method, because I know how many there are. Now let us turn to a second case. I am, we will imagine, present at a *séance* held in red light, in which a table floats in the air. Knowing how tables float by trick means, I should immediately make certain tests and discover almost at once whether trickery was employed or not. To make a table float one must either pull it or push it. Whether the pulling or pushing apparatus is visible does not concern us here. The main point to understand is that once you eliminate the two factors of pull and push you eliminate fraud, whilst in the first case you might eliminate a score of factors, and yet some might yet remain which had not been thought of. The public generally sees no difference between the two cases. To them it is just as easy to levitate a table as to read the contents of a sealed letter, indeed, the latter seems the more mysterious of the two. But to the conjurer the difference is very real as I have tried to show above, and that is why the presence of conjurers at physical *séances* is so exceedingly valuable. When I used to give a series of such tests in sealed letter reading as I have mentioned, many of my audience used to go away and describe to their friends what they had seen. As a matter of fact, it was what they *thought* they had

seen, as almost in every case they declared that their paper had never left their hands for an instant, which in the majority of cases was certainly very far from the truth. As described by the witnesses many of the phenomena associated with Home, Carancini, Eva C., Kathleen Goligher, etc., are quite beyond any explanation from the fraudulent point of view, but the public will be wise if it delays its decision as to the genuine character of those manifestations which are occurring at the present time, until they have been fully investigated by experts in trickery. The "phenomena" occurring in the presence of the writer of this article were quite inexplicable when one heard them described by the sitters, but as a matter of fact each test was performed by very simple means, the principle being to deceive the various senses of the respective sitters. Thus the sense of touch, especially when the medium is held by members of the circle, can very easily be deceived, and on many occasions their sense of smell was likewise duped through some device on the part of the "medium." Complicated and elaborate manifestations should always be regarded with suspicion. Thus the appearance of a materialised Queen of Egypt in crown and robes complete is almost certain not to be genuine, and *apports* such as flowers from foreign climes, gold nuggets, etc., are a pretty sure indication of trickery at work.

A few words on clairvoyant descriptions. During the many times that I have been present at these phenomena, some often conducted by London's most famous mediums, I have never heard one which, by the wildest stretch of the imagination could be called convincing. At least seventy per cent. of the descriptions have nothing whatever distinctive about them, and it is a very curious fact that in sensing the "spirit people," the medium can only very rarely get a surname, whilst if Christian names are obtained, these are almost always of an extremely common kind. The audience also strains at the slightest clue for identification, an old lady with white hair who was connected with a man called John being instantly recognised by some innocent Spiritualist, who does not seem to realize that there are many old ladies who knew men called John when they were living on the earth.

Generally speaking, the fraudulent side of Spiritualism is exaggerated. In the old days it was certainly very common, as it is still in parts of America and France to-day, but the advent of electric light and the spread of the knowledge of trick methods has made fraudulent mediumship on a large scale too risky a game to be played with impunity. Mediums have realised that a far safer and more easy course is to develop the faculties of trance speaking and the giving of clairvoyant descriptions, in which there is nothing actually to expose, and in which their imaginative powers can be employed to the full. Probably in the great number of cases they sincerely believe that they are either being controlled or influenced by spirits, and if so, they can no more be charged with fraud than the priests of other religions.

E. J. D.

This is true liberty, when freeborn men,
Having to advise the public, may speak free;
Which he who can, and will, deserve high praise;
Who neither can, nor will, may hold his peace.

—Milton (from "Euripides").

Poets Piety, and Pity.

We are the music-makers
And we are the dreamers of dreams.

Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

—O'Shaughnessy.

THE true poet is the true preacher. In poetry alone can be found the hidden stratum of the strivings of humanity; there only the full significance of the struggles of man. Words alone could never sing as all true poetry does. It is the fire that lighted them that burns all the ignoble meanness from them, and leaves the pure golden Æolian harp on which the breath of human hopes whispers its music. It has been so throughout the ages; in the Vedic Hymns, in Job, in "The Song of Solomon," in "Prometheus Bound," in "The Divine Comedy," in "Hamlet" in "Paradise Lost," and in "Prometheus Unbound."

The nobility of poetry is based on its truthfulness and in their search for truth poets have been compelled to throw theological quibbles on the bonfire of irrational irrelevancy.

How comes it that Dante was greatest in Hell, and Milton's Satan transcends in magnificence the Creator? When Dante trod the streets of Florence people pointed him out, saying, in awed whispers: "That man has been in Hell." Never did they say: "That man has been in Paradise." Why was it so? Because in Hell Dante could describe men, their nobility and their meanness, their hopes, their fears, their sins, and their weak endeavours to attain goodness.

In Paradise he could but describe what never was on land or sea, unspotted purity. His creations in this sphere bear, as they must, the stamp of the unreal, the unattainable. And so it is with Milton. Satan is but Mankind writ large.

What of Job? Is not Job the Man a nobler creation than the thunder-belching Yaweh or Satan, the shadow of an emasculated Ahri-man? It must ever be so. One cannot at once be true to God and Man. To praise the achievements of the one is to depreciate those of the other.

Look at the writers of religious poetry. Even Vaughan, of English religious poets perhaps the greatest, celebrates not so much an actual deity as a hope for higher things. Very few poets have written religious effusions. Of these three are worthy of especial note. They are Catullus, Herrick, and Verlaine. These men were great poets, and great lovers, and great drinkers. In moments of ecstasy they wrote great verse, but when they grew sober again they wrote religious effusions which their admirers vainly try to forget. There was one other great poet who wrote hymns—Cowper; but he, alas, was mad.

In the pages of great poets we search vainly for that obsequious piety which passes for morality. Shakespeare was too great to be bounded by a creed. *Hamlet* is Rationalist pure and simple. In the *Tempest* is he not a Freethinker who writes:—

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

His is that noble sympathy of a man for men, that true nobility of character that bears the misnomer "pity." How well has Paine said of that scion of Christian Brotherhood, Burke, "He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird." That deathless phrase embodies the epitome of Christian endeavour; it describes it and condemns. Did not Blake, most mystical of poets, that flail of Deists, did not even he see the thinness of the Philosophy of Pity that Christianity

holds up as the noblest result of ethical evolution? What else can these words mean?—

I heard an Angel singing
When the day was springing:
"Mercy, Pity, Peace,
Is the world's release."

I heard a Devil curse
Over the heath and the furse:
"Mercy could be no more
If there was nobody poor.
"And pity no more could be
If all were as happy as we."

Pity and piety go hand-in-hand; both are bred of a feeling of personal superiority over the common herd. Not piety but equality, not pity but sympathy, are the themes of the greatest singers. It has been so through the ages; it shall be so till the end. How could a great poet join in the mockery that is called piety?

It is well characterized by Thomson, of *The City of Dreadful Night*:—

Mary is going to chapel,
And what takes her there, do you guess?
Her sweet little duck of a bonnet,
And her new second-hand silk dress.
We went to church one Sunday,
But felt we had no right there;
For 'tis only a place for the grand folk
Who come in a carriage and pair.

Well may the churchgoer ask why great religious verse is not forthcoming? Can mockery make a poem? Can hypocrisy stand in the fierce glare of nobility? When these things can be, Christianity will take its place in the Pantheon of Poetry. Till then it must remain in the tin chapels of Poetasters. To whom may Christians look for poetic comfort? To Browning, *most Christian of poets*? Surely he who flouted *Omar Khayyam*, the fatalist, with the hopeful *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, is ours, they say. But surely he is a Rationalist-Evolutionist who calls man "A god, though in the germ." Cold comfort, O Christian! And little comfort is there for you in the pages of the great. Perhaps the sentimental slosh of Ella Wheeler Wilcox may be given you. If you wish it, you are welcome. But you who wish the great poetry of the latest age, take down your Meredith, your Landor, your Arnold. These mighty voices have trumpeted the aspirations of the multitude, not thrown them scraps of pity from their tables. Take down your Shelley; there you will find not Piety, but Progress, preached; not prayers to blind gods, but words of dreadful portent to those who would stay the upward sweep of Humanity. And when, out of the crowd of modern versifiers, the greater voice shall sound, his song shall be the Song of Man, and Pity and Piety shall find no place therein.

H. C. MELLOR.

IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH.

Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realize the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction; leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles, and repugnance to others. He with all his capacities, and aspirations, and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future; and that his thoughts are children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die.—*Herbert Spencer*.

Acid Drops.

It will have been noticed that we have for some time been trying to stir up Labour members of Councils and others to make some protest against the churches and chapels being relieved of payment of rates, and thus throwing a portion of their upkeep upon the general public. We are glad to say that this has had some results here and there, the latest being the following resolution, which was passed at a meeting of the Norbury London County Council Tenants Association:—

That having in mind that the Church Halls in Norbury are relieved from payment of rates, and are thus under an obligation to the public of Norbury, this meeting is of opinion that these halls should be regarded as to some extent public halls, and should, therefore, with due regard to the claims of the owners of the property, be at the service of the general public for the discussion of all forms of opinion, and for the holding of all kinds of public meetings and social gatherings, and that if this is not done, the said halls should bear their share of the financial burden of the borough, and so cease to throw a portion of their upkeep upon the general body of ratepayers.

We sincerely hope that others will keep the protest alive. There is no sense of justice in placing a portion of the upkeep of churches and chapels on the shoulders of people who have no belief in the teachings that are given therein. It is a form of endowment that ought to be stopped without delay.

The late Rev. C. B. Tyrwhitt, of Clifton, left estate of the value of £3,752; the Rev. T. W. F. Hayhurst, of Wilsie Hall, Doncaster, left £81,317, and his wife £58,000. It will be seen that "the new poor" has some shocking cases of martyrdom.

In a review of Mr. Edward Carpenter's new book, *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, a lady reviewer in the *Daily News* rebukes the author for his "misconceptions" and "hostility" to orthodoxy. The cream of the joke is that Mr. Carpenter does know something of the Christian religion, for he was formerly a clergyman of the Church of England.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr. Lloyd George said: "It is too often forgotten that we are the greatest Mohammedan Power in the world, and one-fourth of the British Empire is Mohammedan." He might have added that in the British Empire there are more non-Christians than Christians.

In the *Daily News* for March 3 Mr. Silas K. Hocking writes on the subject of fair play between the sexes, and repeats the old superstition that woman owes her subjection to man to the fact of her being the physically weaker animal. That is quite wrong, although probably the vast majority of both men and women would agree upon it as being correct. We have shown elsewhere that the root of the subjection of woman is to be found in early religious ideas concerning the nature and function of women. At a later stage other causes began to operate, but these would never have been so effective had the ground not been so well prepared by religion. When Christianity came along it revived and reinforced with tenfold power the primitive taboos, and so served to retard the social equality of the sexes for more than a thousand years.

We agree with Mr. Hocking when he says that "the Church (Catholic Episcopal and Free) has done its level best to keep women in subjection," but we would advise him to pay some little attention to the question of why this should be so. Everything has its cause, and there must be some adequate reason why the Church, more than any other institution, has been so powerfully instrumental in securing the subjection of one half the human race to the other half. If this is done, Mr. Hocking will discover that the causes lie deep in the nature of religion itself, and also that in this, as in so many other cases, our so-called reformers are divesting their efforts of a large part of the good that might result by their fear of attacking religion. Indeed, their very fear of religion is an evidence of its power for evil.

We are indebted to a correspondent of the *Woolwich Pioneer* for the implied compliment that "we have found higher moral principles propounded by Chapman Cohen, of the *Freethinker*, than we have from the pulpits of the so-called Christian Church." We take the compliment for what it is intended to be, although it is really faint praise to be told that one is better than the Christian Church. It requires little effort to achieve that distinction. Our only complaint is that people will still write and speak as though the Church *ought* to be better than it is. And we should really like to know what reasonable grounds there are for any such expectation? We know of none. It is idle and dangerous to go on paying the Church the compliment of assuming that it contains in itself the promise of better things. The Church is what it has always been.

The rubbish that is being published in the press at the moment in connection with Spiritualism almost passes belief. Anything that can be labelled "occult"—which is journalese for nonsense—can be sure of a good show. One woman buys a pair of slippers and has a very bad dream, which she attributes to the slippers, and an evening paper publishes a column on the magnetic influence that may reside in old clothes. Some half-dozen papers are publishing accounts of the next world, written by psychopaths, the only qualification for publication being—apparently—that the narratives must be irredeemably silly. Altogether, the haste that some of the papers are showing to secure a ghost specialist offers proof of how low the press of this country has sunk. It will play to any passion or bolster up any superstition the exploitation of which promises a larger circulation. In the face of this vulgar and barefaced exploitation of a wave of superstition, the way in which the same press exploited the War fever, worked the atrocity "stunt," while suppressing all that would make for a saner view of affairs, was a reputable performance.

There is something illustrative of the amount of common sense that is brought to bear on such subjects in the fact that a "psychic expert" finds something very interesting—many of those who wear the slippers have strange dreams. We dare wager that the same thing would accompany anything if some people only thought before hand, that they would have the visions. And, really, when so many appear to take seriously—we except the newspapers which are obviously on the make—a pair of haunted slippers, need we wonder at the vogue of such a thing as Spiritualism! It is a part of the same thing. Pretty much the same type of mind will do for both.

The war that was to end war being now at an end, our political lords and masters are taking care that we shall be well prepared for the next one when it arrives. It is being taken for granted by our own Militarists that when war does break out, the first efforts of the combatants will be directed against the civil population, which will be attacked with wholesale doses of poison gas, etc. Our war estimates are increased from twenty-nine millions to one hundred and twenty-five millions, and we have, so says the *Daily News*, over forty new war-vessels being built, and when this induces other nations to build and arm in their turn, we shall be faced with the old cry that national security demands that we shall be first in the race. We suggest that as a War Memorial to the fallen, it would not be at all a bad thing to erect a tablet showing the military expenditure of this country in 1913 and 1920. We should then be able to clearly realize what winning the war means, and how the world has been really made safe for democracy.

The thing that the public needs to grasp is that all this talk of war and preparation for war is the one thing that makes war inevitable. Like most other things in human society, war between peoples is very largely a question of psychology. War makers know this well enough, and when peace wishers are equally alive to it, war will be near its end. All modern wars are built up on misunderstandings between peoples, and of carefully fostered ill-feelings. During the war we saw how the struggle was maintained largely by the systematic campaign carried on by the governments engaged in it to paint

the enemy as all that was vile, and their own side as all that was heroic and pure. It is certainly not without significance that when Mr. Philip Gibbs (as narrated in his just issued *Realities of War*) wrote home an account of German stretcher-bearers carrying our wounded to a place of safety where they could be reached by their comrades, the statement was promptly suppressed by the censor. Truth will kill war, as it will kill all other shams and superstitions. And war, as Paine said, is one of the last of the superstitions of the world. The other one is religion. These two have flourished together, and one will not for long survive the other. At present they hang together for fear they will hang separately.

For some time there has been going on a very quiet but persistent Freethought propaganda in Weston-super-Mare, and it has had its effect. We have already given one or two examples. Here is the most recent. On the local Council, the other day, the Rector mentioned that he found the Apostles' Creed had been erased from the syllabus of one of the schools. Naturally, he wished it to be reinstated. One of the members warned the Rector that he might arouse a lot of opposition, "because there was a strong feeling against any religion being taught in schools. A lot of people who contributed to the upkeep of schools did not profess any religion, and therefore he anticipated trouble from them." The Rector thought that there were not many "of that kind of people." On that he was told there were many, "and influential in some quarters." The Rector has given notice that he will move for the reintroduction of the Creed, and we shall see what will happen. But this, along with other things, shows what may be done, under the most apparently hopeless conditions, by steady and persistent propaganda.

The Bishop of London has been at it again. According to the *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette* of March 3, he informed an audience at St. Anne's Church that those who read the letters of the soldiers' during the War were astonished at the religion in the men's hearts. That we can readily believe, because we know how full of religion were the soldiers' letters that all of us saw. And when they returned home we were equally impressed by the religious language that was in the mouths of the soldiers, and the way in which they crowded to Church. Had the Bishop stopped there we should not have felt inclined to make any comment. But he proceeds to say that "one of the censors—an Atheist—was converted by the letters he read to a belief in religion." And that, naturally, induces us to say things.

First of all, we should like to know the name of this Atheist censor who was converted to religion through reading the soldiers' letters. There can be no objection to making it public, for it would be helping religion to do so. In the next place, the Bishop has been at this game for many years. Many years ago we found him deliberately lying about the Secular meetings in Victoria Park, and we have not found him over careful about the truth since. When he left the East End and wandered westward, he spun some very wonderful yarns of the way in which he silenced the Freethought speakers in Victoria Park, when the limits of his silencing was to make two or three appearances in opposition to Mr. Cohen, and, as all know how easy it is to silence him, we need say nothing further on that. But Freethought was very much stronger in the East End after the Bishop left than it was when he came. There are many other stories of the Bishop's romantic imagination, but we should like to hear about this converted Atheist censor. Will the Bishop say who it is? Or is it to rank with the Atheist shoemaker of Hugh Price Hughes days? Candidly, we do not believe that any such person exists outside the Bishop's imagination.

Bishop Hulford, of Rockhampton, has announced his intention of giving up his post and living a life of poverty. If that is true, it proves that he is at least consistent, and his action contrasts with men like the Bishop of London, who, with a huge salary, is always whining about the poverty of the clergy. The man who believes in a religion which

preaches the blessings of poverty should be at least ready to carry it out in his own person. And it can be done so easily, if one wishes it. All men cannot make a thousand a year, but it is within the power of anyone not to make it. Still, we don't believe that Bishop Hulford will have many imitators.

There is a clause in the document governing Colwyn Bay County School which provides that there should be no religious opinion necessary for the governor, or head or assistant teachers. Most decent people will regard this as a very wise and proper arrangement; but at a meeting of the Committee the other day, the Rev. Paterson Morgan said they ought to make it impossible for any Atheist to be appointed. We are glad to see that the Committee rejected the suggestion, and that a lady member, Mrs. Malder, threatened to resign if the proposal was adopted. Really, we do not know why clergymen are placed on Education Committees at all. Every teacher knows that they are all more or less of a nuisance, and that for the most part their interest is not in education, but purely of a sectarian character. And an impertinent specimen like Mr. Morgan deserves to be suppressed as speedily as possible. It would make the district healthier.

The Rev. D. Hughes, who is announced as the prospective candidate for Colchester, is stated to be a fine actor, and to have played the part of Shylock successfully. So many parsons play the part of Shylock, but they do not advertise the matter in the press.

Bradlaugh once said that religions do not die, but they change. Hence it is interesting to read that a lady preacher occupied the pulpit recently at the Cambridge Synagogue. This is an extraordinary happening, for Jewish people are very conservative in matters of religion.

The *Times*, Los Angeles, reports the case of a divorce case against an ex-Episcopal minister, of whom the wife says he was the laziest man she ever saw. He would lie in bed half the day, and when he got up would sit before the fire and throw at his wife the things nearest to hand. His wife did all the housework, and had even to write his sermons. Although no longer in the pulpit, Mr. Evans, the minister in question, is now connected with Y.M.C.A. work.

The Vice-President of the Portsmouth Free Church Council has explained that the religion of the men in the Army during the War was "play the game." We have never heard that attitude before described as a religion, and if that is all the religion the Army possessed we are quite content with the news. And when religious leaders are driven to take one of the commonest forms of social feeling as all the religion that is existent, we feel that real religion must be in a very bad way indeed.

Apropos of the Christian cry that the Mosque of St. Sophia shall be given back to the Christians, a correspondent of *Common Sense* suggests that the Moslems might on the same grounds ask for the restoration of the Cathedral of Cordova to the Mohammedans. To that the retort is that there are no Mohammedans in Cordova, but there are plenty of Christians in Constantinople. And that is well met by the reply that if the Mohammedans had been as intolerant as the Spanish Christians, there would have been no Christians in Constantinople. But it has never been the policy of Mohammedan rulers to extirpate heresy. That has almost invariably been the policy of Christian ones, although the precise form it took was naturally determined by circumstances.

"Wales has an unenviable record for not paying a decent wage to its ministers," says Mr. J. Crowle Smith, a treasurer of the Wesleyan Conference Central Fund. Yet Wales is noted for its hymn-singing and psalm-smiting religionists.

The *Sunday Circle*, a journal for the (presumably) Christian home, has two novels running in its columns. As the Holy Bible is largely fiction, the Christian readers have plenty of imaginative literature provided for them.

O. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 14, Birmingham; March 21, Manchester; March 22 and 23, Leeds; March 28, Maesteg; April 11, Stratford Town Hall; April 18, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 21, Abertillery; March 28, Stratford Town Hall.

G. GARVIE.—The publisher of the translation of *Candide*, noticed in a recent issue of the *Freethinker*, is F. B. Neumayer, 70 Charing Cross Road, W.C.

PELMAN (R. J. C.).—The address of the Secretary of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. is Mr. F. Lonsdale, 256 Govanhill, Glasgow.

A FREETHINKER.—If you call any day at this office our Shop Manager would be pleased to allow you to inspect any volume of the *Freethinker* you wish to see.

J. GOULDING.—There are some things that are protected from reply by their very stupidity. The Rev. Vale Owen's writing appears to belong to this class. The purpose of the paper in publishing such rubbish is plain. They are exploiting a boom, and when the wave of credulity dies out they will cease to publish. The press knows its public.

J. Y. T. L.—You are quite correct; "Alienable personal possession" on p. 92 of Mr. Cohen's *Determinism* should read "inalienable personal possession." We hope that others will note the error.

THE Secretary of the Barnsley Branch N.S.S., Mr. H. Irving, of 48 Sheffield Road, desires to thank an unknown friend for the present of two volumes to the Branch library.

MISS DAY.—The figure of Christ by Epstein was on view in the Leicester Galleries.

P. ROBINSON.—It appears to have been a very stupid affair, but that is not surprising. A mixture of knavery and folly seems inseparable from the Missionary Movement.

DON PIP.—Thanks for verses, but hardly up to standard.

C. D.—Easy writing does not mean careless writing. And it means, if there is anything in it, very hard thinking. In nine cases out of ten, when a man cannot make himself clear to his hearers, it is because he has never been clear to himself.

E. BOWMAN.—Thanks for report. It is very like the Bishop of London. We really question whether even politicians are as untruthful as are the clergy. That is, where religion is concerned. When other things are before them, they will be about as truthful as other people. Introduce religion, and their ethical balance is at once upset.

W. McILWRAITH.—The reference deals with the latter part of Whitefield's life. Our own reference was to the earlier period. Naturally in a country where the majority of the people call themselves Christian, many of the good things done will be done by them. What the Christian has to do is to prove that these things followed from their Christianity. We note your reference to the poor lost child. What a pity it is that Spiritualists cannot do something in a case like that. That would certainly be something useful. Pamphlet has been sent.

E. PINDER.—Sorry we missed seeing you. Hope to be more fortunate next time.

H. M. CARDLE.—The reference you require for the statement on p. 42 of Mr. Cohen's *Christianity and the Slave Trade*, is p. 28 of *Liverpool and Slavery*, published in Liverpool, 1884.

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. Vano, 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, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

All Freethinkers will be glad to learn that the legacy of £1,000, less legacy duty, bequeathed to the National Secular Society by the late Mr. Antoniadi, has now been paid into the Society's funds. Quite apart from the purely financial aspect of the matter, there is an additional feature to this legacy that makes it of more than passing importance. When the decision in the Bowman case was reached we were alone in pointing out that the chief significance of the ruling was that *it made a bequest to any secular society absolutely legal*, and, therefore, unchallengeable. In some quarters our opinion was questioned, but we were quite convinced of its accuracy. And events proved that we were right. A small legacy of £10 was paid into the Society soon after the decision was given, and a legacy of £50 was paid to the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S., also without comment.

In the case of the Antoniadi legacy, added significance was given to the matter by the fact that the legacy was paid over by the Public Trustee. That should be enough to settle the doubts of anyone with regard to the validity of a bequest to the National Secular Society. And it means that the N.S.S. is at last reaping the reward of its long fight. For more than two generations the N.S.S. has made the running for Freethinkers in this country. Others have reaped where we have sown, which was inevitable and even desirable. At all events, it was fitting that the law which forbade a bequest to the N.S.S. should have been at last broken down by its late President, G. W. Foote. And now it should be clear to all who wish to benefit the movement represented by the N.S.S., that those who wish to aid its work by bequests may do so with absolute security. A bequest to the National Secular Society is now as secure as a bequest to the established Church or to the British Museum. We know that there are some who have already placed the N.S.S. in their wills, and we shall be greatly surprised if we do not hear of more before long. When we are able to meet the Churches on something like equal ground, their decline will go on with accelerated speed.

We congratulate the Leicester Secular Society on its celebration on Sunday last of the thirty-ninth anniversary of the opening of its hall. At the evening meeting, Mr. Sidney Gimson, who has been its President for thirty-two years, occupied the chair, and gave an encouraging account of the standing of the Society. The last year had been a record one in the matter of the enrolment of new members, and it was pleasing to hear that a large number of these were young men. The pity is that there are not more halls of this kind throughout the country. It is certain that the influence of such a building, with its continuous propaganda of advanced opinion must have a tonic effect on the life of the town. Mr. Cohen and Mr. F. J. Gould also gave brief addresses during the course of the proceedings. All we need add is that the hall is situated in one of the central streets of the town, and could not be better placed.

To-day (March 14) Mr. Cohen will visit Birmingham. Two meetings will be held in the Repertory Theatre, afternoon and evening. In the afternoon, at 3 o'clock, the gathering will take the form of a demonstration, at which the speakers will be Mr. F. E. Willis, Mr. Clifford Williams, and Mr. Cohen. In the evening, at 7, Mr. Cohen will lecture on "God, Man, and the World." The theatre ought to be well packed on both occasions.

The Moncure Conway Memorial lecture will this year be delivered by Dr. Ivor Li. Tuckett at South Place Institute on Thursday, March 18. His subject is "Mysticism and the Way Out," and will commence at 7.30 prompt. Those who have read Dr. Tuckett's writings on this subject will, we are sure, not miss being present on this occasion.

A special meeting of Freethinkers will be held in the Plymouth Chambers on Thursday (March 18) at 8 o'clock, in order to inaugurate the Plymouth and District Branch of

the N. S. S. We hope that all who are willing to help the new Branch in any way will not fail to be present.

We have had prepared a number of small slips advertising the *Freethinker*, and we beg the assistance of our readers in getting them into circulation. We are again engaged in the interesting occupation of having a race with increasing prices, and, as these are still mounting, the only adequate way of overtaking them is by increasing the circulation of this journal. There must be a pause in the process some day, and meanwhile we beg all our well-wishers to bear in mind that every new reader counts. Unless we become as silly and as time-serving as some other papers that we might name, we can never hope to count our readers by the hundred of thousand; but there is no real reason why we should not have a sufficient circulation to relieve us of all financial anxiety. If we had the funds to advertise, we would guarantee that circulation inside of a year. As it is, we must rely upon the good offices of our friends. The slips will be sent to anyone who will trouble to write for them.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Dan Griffiths had very good audiences at his meetings in Manchester on Sunday last, and that his lectures were very much enjoyed. We should like to see Mr. Griffiths busier than he is in South Wales, where he resides. We do not mean that we do not desire him to be busier elsewhere, but only that we should like to see more being done in the principality.

We print in another column a letter from Sir W. W. Strickland concerning the non-receipt of his copies of the *Freethinker*. It is monstrous that a man should not be allowed to receive the copies that are sent from this office, but we are powerless in the matter. We have complained to our postal authorities, but they place the blame on the Italians. That may or may not be the case: but we feel certain that if the postal people here cared to make a protest against an English paper being held up in this way, it would have its effect. We have tried sending the paper as an ordinary letter, but that has also failed. We do not think that the authorities are aiming at the *Freethinker*; it seems to be something in the nature of a personal vendetta. But all round, we are afraid that the powers that be have got so used to censorship and suppression that all of them are loath to give up the pastime. We have won the War, and now we have evidently to re-win our liberties and our right to a free press.

We are asked to again draw attention to the Social of the West Ham Branch, which takes place in No. 7 Room of Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, on the 13th. The function commences at 7 o'clock, and the visitors can reach it from either Forest Gate station (G.E.R.) or Wanstead Park (M.R.), trams and buses to the Princess Alice. Admission is free. The West Ham Branch has also taken a hall belonging to the Stratford Engineers' Institute for regular Sunday evening meetings. The hall is at 167 Romford Road, and we hope that East End Freethinkers will give the experiment their fullest support, and will do their best to bring their enquiring friends along with them. There are enough Freethinkers in the locality to crowd a hall ten times the size.

The Freethinker of a literary turn, whose tastes run in the direction of curiosities of literature, will do well to add to his collection Mr. George Bedborough's poem, *The Atheist* (Garden City Press, 1s. net.) There is nothing quite like it in modern verse. As a serious contribution to free prosody, it has no parallel outside the pages of our Futurist magazines. It is a sort of account of the mental development of an earnest-minded young Atheist who has had a calling to social service. The worst of it is our young friend is not real—for us at least—perhaps because he has not a single vice to redeem his many and monotonous virtues. He mistakes, as so many reformers do, his preferences for principles, and has a poor opinion of those who are not Pacifists, who find whisky more agreeable than cocoa, and find roast beef more nourishing than lentils. We trust

Mr. Bedborough's earnest young friend, if he is not a mere abstraction, will speedily get the better of his ethical green-sickness, and, if he takes our advice, he will read a good deal less and think a good deal more.

We have in the press a pamphlet by Mr. Robert Arch on *Society and Superstition: A Common-Sense View of Religion*, which we hope to publish shortly. Those who know the writings of Mr. Arch in these columns will, we are sure, look forward to his study of the effects of superstition with considerable interest.

The Calculus of Causality.

II.

(Concluded from p. 158.)

Suppose now that a slightly more extended observation were made, resulting in the discovery that even on the clearest nights dew was only found on grass, leaves, or flowers, while bare ground, dead tree trunks, and certain other surfaces were free of dew. The previous conclusion that dew fell from the stars would now have to be abandoned, and a new generalization covering all the observations would have to be made. This might be to the effect that though bright and cloudless nights were still instrumental in the formation of dew, it was not derived from the stars, but consisted of moisture exuded by growing vegetation under these particular atmospheric conditions. This amended theory would correspond to the amended formula $y=12x$ in our numerical illustration. But just as the formula would fail to account for the value of y when x assumed some other value than 4, so the new theory of dew would fail to account for its appearance under some other conditions, such as, for instance, its occurrence on metallic surfaces, etc.

Thus we see that the causal function and the mathematical function are closely analogous in the fact that no mere examination of individual cases of sequence, however constant such cases may be, can ever be depended on to reveal the true law of the function, but may in both classes of investigation lead to conclusions very far from the truth. In both cases a scientific method of induction is necessary.

Let us now consider how, in the first place, a mathematician, and in the second place, a physicist, would proceed to deduce the unknown relationship between the respective variables with which their investigations are concerned. The mathematician, recognising that a function governing a whole series of changes can never be deduced from the observation of one or two terms of the series, would proceed to apply some mathematical principle or method to a number of successive terms in order to elucidate the unknown law. In the case of simple series such as that just given, he would adopt a well-known mathematical process which it is impossible to describe here, but of which it may be briefly stated that it consists in taking the differences of successive terms of the series, and making these the terms of a second series. From this second series a third is similarly formed, and so on till there is finally obtained a series of which the law is known. It is then possible to deduce a law or function governing the original series with absolute certitude throughout the successive terms which have been compared. In the case which we have given as an example this

method could be employed, and the function would be found to consist of the simple relationship that the value of y is always the difference between the cube and the square of x , or, expressed as an equation, $y = x^3 - x^2$. And this law would cover the entire series without exception.

In a similar way the scientist would apply to a series of sequences of physical phenomena the well known inductive process called the Method of Agreement, which consists essentially in comparing a number of these different sequences to determine in what circumstance they all agree, the element common to all the antecedents being thus revealed as the "cause" of the phenomena, and the mode of its operation as the "causal law" or function.

And the analogy can be carried further still. The mathematician recognises that the process just described can never give him the law of the series with absolute certitude. It can only give him the simplest law to which the known terms of the series conform. Similarly the physicist recognises that the Method of Agreement can never reveal a causal law with absolute certitude, for, owing to the principle of the Plurality of Causes, there may always be some other law governing the phenomenon which the Method of Agreement is incompetent to reveal. This Method can only give the simplest and most obvious law to which the phenomenon conforms so far as it has been subjected to observation.

Now as there is at the command of the scientist a more potent instrument of induction in the Method of Difference, whereby it is often possible to deduce a causal law by one or two carefully performed experiments instead of by an extended series of observations, so there is at the command of the mathematician a powerful instrument of investigation furnished by the Infinitesimal Calculus, whereby it is often possible to deduce a function by a careful analysis of its graph or curve through a number of contiguous points. This might be described as the Method of Differentiation, for it consists in examining the gradient of the curve at the contiguous points, representing these values as a second curve—the "derivative curve"—and continuing this process till we arrive at some simple curve, or perhaps a straight line, of which the function can be readily determined. Then, by successively integrating from this function, we can work back to the function of which we are in search. Here the mathematical process of reducing the complex graph by successive differentiations to the simplest possible graph may be regarded as analogous to the physicist's process of making a crucial experiment by securing the simplest possible manifestation of the phenomenon to the exclusion of all disturbing factors. And the mathematician's converse process of integrating back to the original function may be considered analogous to that train of purely deductive reasoning with which the physicist has always to supplement and complete his inductive investigation. But, of course, it must be remembered that, however theoretically accurate these methods of investigation may be, both the mathematician and the scientist are often confronted by serious difficulties in practically applying them. Thus, as the former can never be absolutely sure that his derivative curve is quite accurately plotted, so the latter can never be absolutely sure that his crucial experiment has excluded all disturbing agencies. And hence it follows that in both cases the results must always

be subjected to careful verification before they can be accepted with complete confidence.

So far we have been dealing with the simplest kind of functions—those which mathematicians call Rational Integral Functions—but it must be pointed out that there are others of a more complex character to which the methods of analysis just described are quite inapplicable, for these functions when expressed as series, may not be reducible to known series, nor perhaps would their derivatives be reducible to curves of which the laws could be determined. Such are the Logarithmic, Trigonometrical, Hyperbolic and other functions, generally named by mathematicians the Transcendental Functions. Moreover, a function may depend not on one only, but on two or more variables, and in such cases very complicated methods of analysis may be necessary, or it may even be found that no method of analysis yet devised can effect a complete solution. This being so, it may be thought that our analogy between mathematical and causal relationships here breaks down, but so far from this, it gains an added strength from such limitations of mathematical analysis, for closely similar limitations are imposed on scientific investigation. Thus the laws of purely physical causation may be likened to the Rational Integral Functions of the mathematician, while the laws of vital phenomena and the still more complicated laws of mental phenomena may be likened to the Transcendental Functions. In the investigation of such laws the ordinary inductive processes afford little or no help, just as in the more recondite investigations of mathematics such elementary methods as have been described above may prove wholly ineffective.

Another very striking analogy is brought out by a consideration of the mathematical distinction between "continuous" and "discontinuous" functions. It is impossible to express this distinction quite accurately in non-technical language, but perhaps some idea of it may be conveyed by stating that when a function is continuous the dependent variable bears a quantitative relationship to the independent variable, a small change in the latter bringing about a correspondingly small change in the former. A discontinuous function, on the other hand, is one in which the quantitative relationship may at some point disappear, and the dependent variable exhibit a change out of all proportion to the change in the independent variable, sometimes, for instance, rising to an infinite value on a very minute change in the latter, or as suddenly falling from a large positive to a large negative value with an apparent capriciousness in defiance of all law. And the fact that while the Rational Integral Functions are continuous, the Transcendental Functions often become discontinuous, affords a curious parallel to the fact that while physical phenomena mainly exhibit an orderly and predictable sequence, vital and mental phenomena mainly exhibit an apparent irregularity which often makes the generalization of their laws a seemingly hopeless task. But to the scientific thinker this capriciousness is as much an illusion in the latter case as in the former. For as the discontinuity of a function is clearly seen to be the necessary consequence of the nature of that function, so the most inexplicable of vital or mental phenomena should be regarded as the outcome of certain causal laws, and their seeming capriciousness as merely due to our ignorance of those laws.

Hence, just as a Transcendental Function is to the mathematician as much a definite and invariable mathematical law as the simplest Algebraic Function, so must a vital or mental phenomenon be regarded as an expression of a definite and invariable causal law by the scientist and the philosopher—a consideration which throws some useful light on the old controversy, now being revived in some quarters, as to "Mechanism" and "Vitalism." The laws of mental and vital phenomena are no more comparable with those of physical phenomena than, say, a Logarithmic, a Trigonometrical, or an Exponential Function is comparable with a simple Algebraic Function, but they are *causal laws* just as truly. Much obscurity and confusion of thought might therefore be avoided if, while duly recognising the distinction between physical, vital, and mental laws, we also recognised their essential unity as causal laws, that is, as expressions of the fundamental energy function of substance.

At the outset of this article, it was observed that, although analogies prove nothing, they may yet help us towards clearer and more settled notions in the obscurer regions of speculation, and may serve as guides to point out the directions in which research may be profitably carried. With regard to the remarkable analogies here treated of, perhaps enough has been said to illustrate the great truth that causal laws are as precise, as rigid, and as little liable to exception or violation as the laws of pure mathematics. Such a notion precludes for ever the possibility of the "supernatural" or the "miraculous," for on such a view these terms become absolutely meaningless. A "supernatural" event would be an event outside the causal process, and to conceive of such an event would be no easier than to conceive of a dependent variable changing in some way independently of the function governing it, which is a contradiction in terms. Effects are the persistent and necessary functions of their causes, and the entire order of nature is a vast complex of functions having for their ultimate integral that energy which underlies all existence.

A. E. MADDOCK.

The Ethical Code.

All communities or societies of man are subjected to an ethical rule for the conduct of their individual lives both in relation with each other and the community. With different peoples this ethical rule differs very widely, and even within large communities there are very considerable variations in the idea of the correct rule of life. And though there are the sages of different places of origin and time whose dicta are regarded as the general possession of mankind, rather than that of a specific people, even these differ among themselves, be it ever so slightly, so that there does not seem to be any golden rule applicable to the whole of the race of man.

The underlying principle of all these varying codes is the same. The main object is to inculcate uniformity of conduct, which shall be accepted as of right, in order that the life of the community may be assured. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the variety of teaching does not really permit such uniformity except in the most narrow sense, since each

teacher possesses the outlook of his nation or tribe, and is concerned primarily with the regulation of that small portion of mankind. The growth of the ideal of a world race in place of the nations of man, though not yet completely general in the common thought, will possibly supply this want by providing a different conception to work from.

Nevertheless, there are ideas common to all modes of ethical thought, and these are roughly the fundamental principles upon which modern civilised society is founded. One such idea is that of the sanctity of property. From the times of the earliest historical empires this idea has been embodied and emphasised in all codes, and to-day it is more strongly held than ever, especially, and most rationally, by the possessing classes. It is a little difficult to extract from the mass of literary and other ethical statement made in a modern community, the expression of the common authority upon morals, but in the case of Great Britain the "duty to my neighbour" is, perhaps, the most concrete expression of moral authority which is possessed. It certainly is that most commonly inculcated in the early and formative period of youth.

The "duty" is quasi-medieval in conception, and it shows its origin very clearly. It demands the acceptance of authoritative statement, and it allows no provision for examination of that statement. It indicates that the state of society is not explicable, that it is static, and that it must not be questioned. And it promises material and mental rewards for obedience to its precepts. Happiness shall be the lot of those who act in accordance with its teaching, and that in spite of the docility with which they accept the meagre share of life which is so often their lot. More than happiness they shall sometimes reap a material reward, and the things of this world shall be added unto them. The latter is, perhaps, somewhat rare, and it is the result of the extra-moral quality of thrift, but it is nevertheless held out as one of the conditions and advantages of obedience.

Now, nothing could be more useful to the rulers of a community than that each member of the ruled in that community should be guided in his actions by a specific ethical code. Such conduct would obviously render the task of rule very simple. There would be small need of laws, and little necessity for repression. As soon as the generality of men in any community begin to question the ethical authority of their rulers, repression becomes essential if the rulers are to retain their place, but more than the simplicity of rule, which such acceptance would connote, would be the advantage to the rulers of having made the code, and knowing just how far they themselves intended to follow its injunctions.

It is true that they regard property as sacred, and if any man endeavours to take from another by direct means, he is a criminal, inasmuch as he has infringed an injunction of the ethical code. But the more subtle methods of those who rule, who make the laws, who know how they can be twisted and the penalties avoided, are above the law. They do not use the direct method, but the indirect, and it would be banal in these days to specify examples. Everyone knows the subtlety of the "wangle."

By means of half keeping the law and always quoting it, the actions of the rulers have all the appearance of being most moral. By means of precision of payment—it matters not whether the amount of the payment is just or unjust—a reputa-

tion for honesty can be maintained. And the resultant gains, illicit though they may largely be, consolidate the position, for the possession of currency wealth enables its owners to create circumstances which will enable them to retain their power.

At the other end of the scale the pressure of poverty is so great that it seems impossible to the sufferer to extricate himself from the web of that very circumstance. He practices all the virtues. He denies himself the things he cannot afford, and he can emulate Longfellow's smith, who feared not any man, but for all that he is forced by the ethical code, to which he unquestioningly subscribes, to abnegate the graces of life. He cannot well do otherwise. He has no force at his disposal. His desire is quenched in the demand for effort, which the desire to maintain even the poor quality of life he possesses, implies, and it is a demand for exhaustive effort. He did not comprehend the factitious quality of the many impediments in the way of a change in circumstances, but he is beginning to do so.

Following this comprehension of the methods of those who rule, and who are above the law, comes the acceptance of their standard in place of the formerly held ethical code. Action inevitably follows conviction, and slowly downward in society is percolating the motion of the rulers who are above the law. It is becoming increasingly obvious that methods of chicane are those which reap the greatest reward, and a lesson of this kind is easy to learn. It is so easy that its precepts are adopted subterranously throughout the commercial system. Each individual is engaged in the pleasant task of feathering his own nest, and that with feathers not from his own breast if it can by any means be avoided.

The increase of the disregard for the commonly accepted ethical rule is simply due to the force of example, and in its result it has bound the heavy fetters of the monstrous and iniquitous system of chicane, which is called modern commerce, on the limbs of man. And its ramifications are so subtle, but so stupendous, that scarcely a member of modern society is not involved to some extent. If not actually engaged in the practice of chicane, at least most individuals have adopted a mental attitude which would not prohibit them from indulging in fraud should the opportunity offer. The mental outlook, indeed, has become so queer that while the profiteers are condemned, almost in the same breath their operations and rewards are envied.

At the same time, while the administrative and commercial class are becoming increasingly dishonest, there is a growing feeling amongst organised labour that the only moral code is one that secures to it the exact and just reward of its services in the State, whoever else may consider themselves injured by the loss of their power and privilege which such precision would entail. It desires to take the place of the present rulers, and in similar fashion to them to impose upon the balance of society an ethical code which shall make its rule easy and simple. Whether organised labour should or should not rule the State is not in question. Although that is its demand, the basis of the demand is that it is ultimately moral, and cannot be denied.

This view is the subject of limitations similar to those of the existing rulers, whose actions lead to the judgment that they think the ethical code an excellent thing for the purpose of rendering their rule more simple than it would otherwise be, but of

little service in guiding their own actions. The demand of labour that they shall dominate the state, though they conceive it a moral demand, equally secures one class only, and as soon as they were raised to power it is possible that they would regard ethical rule in the same light as do those now ruling. For it seems that any class whose power is ultimate in the community, have little desire to be just to the balance of the people; they wish to secure their power and to rule as they desire.

But the demands of labour do not cease at the boundaries of any one state; it wishes to bring about a world community. The ethical code which could rule such a world state would not be one limited to any single class, for that implies the use of force to impose its dicta upon the remainder of the peoples. Thus it seems that in order to be of service to mankind, a true ethical rule must be accepted of all without exception, and must be obeyed of will rather than of submission. Until such a will to obey commonly accepted rules becomes general, the ethical code will remain what it is to-day, a weapon in the hands which wield power to assist them to retain that power.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Correspondence.

FREE SPEECH AND THE POST-OFFICE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am writing to protest publicly against the disgraceful theft of every number of the *Freethinker*, since the new subscription towards the end of last year, by the post-bag and letter-box autolyci of the stye and their Anglo-Italo Post. There ought surely to be some means of putting a stop to the nuisance. One of my lawyers says he believes the P.O. reserves to itself the right to steal any paper sent by it which its infallible wisdom decides to contain "contentious matter" injurious to the public weal. All I can say is, that if the British public tolerates such a state of things, it is perfectly insane.

These autolyci of the post seem to persuade themselves into taking any person's letters they dislike, under the impression they are handkerchiefs stretched to dry on hedge-rows. To be logical and coherent, they ought to steal *all* the copies of the *Freethinker* entrusted to their Scotland Yard Postal Department, or suppress the paper altogether. If they are allowed to vent their spite against individuals in this way, this *will* be the next step; and when the railways become "State ones," "agitators," *i.e.*, anybody the bourgeoisie has a spite against, will not be allowed to travel by them. It is the "coming slavery" of Herbert Spencer in process of realization.

W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A.

Hotel Milan, via Balbi, Genoa, Italia.

DARWIN AND EVOLUTION.

SIR,—In an article on *Man's Ancestry*, by Mr. Henry Spence, which appeared in the *Freethinker* for February 29, there is the following statement:—

More than fifty years have passed since *Man's Place in Nature*, and almost a quarter of a century since Haeckel's *The Evolution of Man* saw the light of day, so it is no wonder if the views set forth by these two great thinkers are now largely out of date.

This is a sweeping statement, although it is probably the fashion to discredit Darwin, Huxley, and Haeckel. It is a statement likely to do harm to the cause of Freethought, as far as many new Freethinkers are concerned, because it may easily give the impression that the foundations of the doctrine of evolution are rather unstable.

Now, although many details in the works of the above-mentioned biologists may call for correction, it seems to me only just to point out that their works are still worth reading

for their exposition of the doctrine of evolution in its broad outlines. It must be remembered that some details in the exposition of so vast a doctrine as that of evolution may be wrong without the doctrine being seriously discredited.

Not only so, biologists are evidently not quite agreed that the new evidence for man's ancestry is of a very substantial nature, at least, so far as the tarsier is concerned.

In an article on *The New Heresy of Man's Descent* ("Conquest," No. 4, February, 1920), R. J. Pocock, F.R.S., makes the following statement:—

As a type which in a measure points out the passage from the beast-like lemur to the man-like monkey, the tarsier is of great evolutionary interest; but the idea that this creature has a direct bearing on the question of the immediate ancestry of man is not seriously entertained by most zoologists, and the theory of our origin stands very much where it did half a century ago.

Yet Mr. Spence makes much of the tarsier.

In view of this, it seems better to use a little more caution concerning the views of Darwin, Huxley, and Haeckel. If, on certain points, they have been proved to be inaccurate, it is right to say so. But it is hardly fair to sweep aside almost the whole of their work while the evidence for new theories is as yet unsatisfactory.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

"JOHN KNOX AND REFORM."

SIR,—In reply to Mr. A. Gritti-Cusse's letter in your issue of the 22nd ult., I wish only to state that in saying that John Knox was not a social reformer I had no intention to convey the impression that he was not a good man, or that he did not work for what he believed to be the highest welfare of society. What I meant was that Knox was an ecclesiastical and theological reformer. His supreme mission was to enthroned Protestantism in Scotland. He was the sworn enemy of Catholicism and all the fine arts associated with it, and did his full share in getting rid of them. Of course, I know well M'Crie's *Life* and Buckle's account of him in the third volume of his *Civilization*, as well as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* article. There was much in John Knox which I greatly admire—his unflinching courage, for example.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Birth of Christ.

ACCORDING TO MESSRS. MATTHEW AND LUKE.

LUKE never heard about the star
That led three wise men from afar.
But Matthew did, and did not fail
To lengthen out the childish tale.
Luke talks about a heavenly host,
Of Simon and the Holy Ghost;
But Matthew hasn't said a word,
Perhaps he thought it too absurd.
Yet both are said to be inspired,
Both by the Holy Ghost were hired
To chronicle a special fact
And yet they failed to use due tact.
So Matthew tells us of the flight
To Egypt in a single night.
While Luke, with just as pious breath,
Says that they dwelt in Nazareth.
Now both accounts cannot be true,
To credit both will never do.
Which one to credit, which discard,
'Tis hard to tell when both lie hard.
Says Matthew, Herod murdered all
The babes to satisfy his gall.
But Luke, who was there all the time,
Knew nothing of this God-like crime.
Did Herod infants really slay?
And did they let him have his way!
Did Cæsar never hear of it?
And did he deem such conduct fit?
Why, Herod at a later date
Tried hard to save Christ from his fate.
If he was mocked now by wise men
Why did he try to save him then?

Will some "inspired" minister,
Please tell me what I'm to infer
From contradictions such as these,
That take the milk out of the cheese?
Scribe Matthew says that Christ was born
While Herod sat upon the throne.
But Luke, "inspired" too, tells us
The ruler was Cyrenius!
From Roman history we learn
Cyrenius was, in his turn,
Appointed ruler in the place
Of Herod, who had run his race.
Ten years was Herod dead before
Augustus taxed the land, we know.
We also know, if Luke be right,
That Joseph did a midnight flight
And from the wrath of Herod fled,
Just ten years "after" he was dead!
If Luke and Matthew both are true,
Christ went to Egypt ten years, too,
Before his birth! But never mind
Discrepancies of such a kind.
Don't let them lessen your belief,
Ten years (said quick) is mighty brief.

L. S. LOVE.

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. William Heaford, "The Freethought Gospel."

NORTE LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. A. Eagar, "Socialism and State Regulations."

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, Mr. C. Ratcliffe, "Why has Christianity Failed?" Music from 6.30 to 7.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Dangers of Spiritualism."

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): 3, A Demonstration, Speakers—C. Cohen, F. E. Willis, and E. Clifford Williams; 7, Mr. C. Cohen, "God, Man, and the World."

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "Life in Ancient Rome." (Lantern Illustrations.)

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S.—A Special Inaugural Meeting will be held in the Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, on Thursday, March 18, at 8 p.m. New and Prospective Members are earnestly requested to attend.

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (4 St. Catherine Street, Pontypridd): 2.30, Freethinkers kindly invited.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road): 6.30, A Branch Meeting.

INFORMATION eagerly sought which might lead to the recovery of a Volume of Shelley's Poems, antelope bound, fac-simile Shelley's signature in gold on cover, verses written by hand in ink on interleaf, may have been acquired in Sale of Household Effects at 17 Kingston Road, Oxford, on September 19, 1917. Suitable recompense for restitution.—Write A. ALDWINKLE, 69 Avenue Bosquet, Paris.

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