

The

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## Views and Opinions.

### The Religious Outlook.

Just about a month ago we were dealing with the statement of the Moderator of the Church of Scotland to the effect that there were fewer Atheists now than there were in Tyndall's day. And more recently we noted that the Rev. Dr. Guttery went one better, and declared that there were no Atheists at all. They were all dead. We said at the time that whether the clergy told us that Atheism was everywhere or that it was pure myth depended entirely upon the circumstances of the moment. And we have not had long to wait for an illustration of the truth of what was then said. True, we have not had precisely a declaration that Atheists are plentiful, but we have had what one may call official assurance that religion is in a very bad way, and that, at least, is presumptive evidence that there may be a deal of Atheism about. Speaking at the Anglo-Catholic Congress the other day, the Bishop of Salisbury referred to the general "contempt" into which religion had fallen in this country, a statement that the experience of almost anyone will confirm. And in the *Daily News* for July 2, the Rev. R. W. Cummings, Vicar of Ashton-under-Lyne, says some very hard things about the state of religion, *apropos* of the Lambeth Conference, which is drawing its members from all parts of the English-speaking world. When the Lambeth Conference met in 1910, says Mr. Cummings, the outlook "was perplexing. In 1920 it is appalling." That, at any rate, forms some sort of a comment upon the alleged revival of religion, and upon the scarcity of Atheism in the country.

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### Facing Reality.

Mr. Cummings says that the "most disquieting thing about this gathering is that it dare not face reality." But is that a peculiarity of the Lambeth Conference? Is it not rather a feature of the whole official Christian world, including Mr. Cummings himself? Mr. Cummings tells us, quite correctly, that "It is no longer in the remoter regions of physical science that the Church's position is being challenged. That attack has long since passed into the more critical, more vital regions of the social, mental, and moral sciences—philosophy, law, history, economics; laying in the dust much of the dim guesswork upon which Church tradition has been

founded." But having told us this, we do not see that Mr. Cummings faces reality, any more than do the bishops of whom he complains. For the reality is not that people have lost faith in a particular form of Church government, or in a particular body of bishops, but that they are losing faith—as a very large number have already lost faith—in those basic conceptions of the religion upon which both the bishops and Mr. Cummings build. For Mr. Cummings still harps upon that elysium of hazy intellects, "the religion of Jesus," and still retains his position in a Church which teaches doctrines that are being given the lie by the clearer and more educated thought of to-day. And it is quite useless telling us that the working classes regard current morality and current law and the State as so many instruments used for the benefit of a class, with religion drugging the people into acquiescence, as though that represented the whole of the matter, and as though all required was a different body of parsons to the one we possess.

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### Playing with the Truth.

Now, that is not facing reality; it is only helping to prevent people facing it. To pretend that people are merely dissatisfied with Church government or with the character of the clergy, when the truth is that they are losing faith in nearly everything for which the Churches and the clergy stand, is to hide from observation the real issue. "The religion of Jesus," whatever else it may stand for, certainly stands for the belief in God and the Devil, for belief in heaven and hell, for belief in miracles in both the moral and the physical sphere. And a very large number of educated men and women, with many thousands who are not, in the technical sense, educated, not only have no faith in these things, they know that they are false. They know that when they hear these things that they are moving in the region of myth, and that when they are asked to believe in them they are being invited to return to a state of things that is as far removed, mentally, from the present as is the feudal system from our existing industrial world. And Mr. Cummings either does or does not believe in these things. If he does, what ground has he for claiming that he is facing reality? And if he does not, by what reasoning does he justify his remaining in a Church where they are still taught? One gets just a little tired of these clergymen who strive for the reputation of being up to date in their opinions, and whose sole claim appears to be that they complain of the backwardness of other parsons while still remaining in a Church where all these belated doctrines are taught. One would think more of them if they threw up the Church at the same time as they disowned its teachings.

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### The Chloroform of Religion.

Over the gate of the Kremlin, says Mr. Cummings, is the inscription: "Religion is the chloroform of the workers." We do not know if it is so or not—one has had such a stream of lies poured out concerning Russia, and both press and Government see that so little of the

truth shall be heard that it is safer to disbelieve than to believe. But we are certain, that whether that inscription is over the Kremlin or not, it is no more than the truth. Religion is the chloroform of the workers, and not only of the workers, but of others also. For half the rascality in the civilized world would be impossible were it not for the prevalence of religion. And this is not because religion deliberately teaches wrong, but that it finds so many reasons for doing it, and so many justifications for it when it is done. No one who studies the case of a man such as the late Kaiser, or the Czar, can doubt but that much of what they did was made possible by their deep and genuine belief in religion. We have a similar illustration in the fact of persecution, where we have men and women, otherwise well up to the average of moral behaviour, yet doing the most damnable of things under the impulse of religion. In these cases we have illustrations of the direct distortion of the moral sense by religious beliefs, and other examples will be familiar to everyone. But there is another and a more subtle way in which religion acts as an ill influence. It can hardly be by accident or by chance that men who are assisting at grave social outrage are so often to be found with their mouths full of religious phraseology. The explanation that this is sheer hypocrisy will not do. Human nature is not quite so simple a thing as that theory would assume. The truth here, we take it, is that religion serves as a blind not so much to others as to the man himself. Just as when the evils of the factory system were at their worst, the men responsible for them were busily engaged in planning and carrying out huge evangelical enterprises, so, at all times, we find religion providing a kind of moral anodyne for the social rascality that is perpetuated. In this way religion not only acts as a drug to the people who suffer from certain social arrangements. It also drugs the moral sense of those who gain by their existence. Without it men would be more likely to be brought face to face with their actions and their consequences. Religion has always prevented this, and just as during the Mediæval period the dying baron might atone for a life of wrong by giving a part of his plunder to the Church, so in more recent times devotion to religion plays the same part. In this respect the influence of Protestantism had been even worse than that of Catholicism. That at least left the man face to face with the fact that he was living a sinner even though he died a saint. Protestantism hid the fact of villainy from him throughout the whole of his life.

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#### A Hopeful Sign.

Can one wonder, then, at the Bishop of Salisbury's complaint that religion is held in contempt, or that of Mr. Cummings, that the outlook is appalling? People see the clergy holding on to dogmas which are branded as false by the educated intelligence of to-day. They see them the servants, avowedly or tacitly, of all the sinister interests in the country. They see that the only time when the Churches speak in a clear and decisive voice is when they are championing retrogression or petty tyranny. They can make a noise when it is a question of Sunday closing, of preventing reasonable facility for divorce, of legitimatizing the innocent offspring of unmarried parents, or can stump the country and shriek their loudest when it is a question of keeping the war fever at its highest. But when it is a question of inculcating a humanitarianism that will help to heal the wounds which war has made, then they are dumb fish. There was one thing that might have helped the world to abolish the cult of war—the League of Nations, and the clergy stand quietly by while it is being wrecked. They could assist the Governments of

the Allies in using it as a blind, but when the time came that it might be translated into a reality, they were assiduous only in not saying anything that would prevent the policy of assassination becoming an accomplished fact. And then we have the complaint that people are beginning to hold the whole in contempt! What else can one expect? What else could any decent person hope for? What else *ought* one to hope for? The best thing in the world to-day is that religion is losing its hold on the people. For that in itself is an indispensable condition of seeing the problems of life from the right angles and solving them in the right manner. Heine said that Christianity was a capital religion for cripples, and the satire was fully justified. A more or less crippled intellect is an indispensable condition of its supremacy, and a returning sense of health and strength in the human intellect is one of the surest indications of Christianity's decay.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Do the Meek Inherit the Earth?

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

—Matt. v. 5.

BISHOP GORE, in his able treatise, *The Sermon on the Mount*, says that by the "meek" we are to understand "those who are ready to be put upon as far as they themselves are concerned." He points out that the Gospel Jesus was one who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." His lordship is quite right, for the Greek word, *præis*, signifies gentle, soft, mild, lenient, and the form of the word used in the text has precisely the same meaning. The meek are people characterized by the entire absence of self-assertion. Such folk, the Bishop assures us, "can make no claim on the world which God will not at the last substantiate." He adds:—

If we go about the world making claims on society which God does not authorize, refusing to bear what God will have us bear, the day will come when the true Master appears, and we shall be exposed to shame. We have made claims which he did not authorize; we have asserted ourselves where he gave us no right or title to assert ourselves; we shall be ousted (pp. 33-4).

In the Correspondence Column of the *British Weekly* for June 24, "Seeker" says: "There is one saying of our Lord's which has hitherto been puzzling me: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' Now, we know from experience that it is just the meek who do not inherit the earth." Professor David Smith, in his reply, ingeniously evades the real difficulty, and deals out ancient platitudes which have no actual bearing on the subject. Much of what he writes is true enough in itself, but in its application it is positively meaningless. He admits that the saying is taken from Psalm xxxvii. 11, and asserts that if we take a long view, the words will appear to us as absolutely true. "Every page of history attests it," he declares, "proclaiming that violence is an impotent thing and wrong is suicidal." Dr. Smith reminds us that one after another the ancient tyrannies perished, but he conveniently ignores the fact that they were succeeded by other and in some instances worse tyrannies. Is he not aware that even the Church won its way to power, not by self-effacement, but by atrociously cruel self-assertion and totally merciless persecution of all opponents? To every honest student of history this is beyond dispute. And what is true of the Church is at least equally true of every Christian State. The Professor draws his only illustrations from the legendary history of a far-off past.

His grand example of meekness is Moses, whose historicity is seriously doubted by many modern Biblical critics, prominent among whom was the late Rev. Professor Cheyne, of Oxford, as his article on Moses in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* abundantly shows. Is Dr. Smith prepared to accept the persecution of the Jews as an example of Christian meekness? In the article on the Jews in Schaff's *Theological Encyclopædia*, we find the following statement:—

Bishops did not hesitate to resort to violence to compel the Jews to become Christians. Bishop Avitus of Claremont Ferrand, having preached to the Jews without any results, the Christians destroyed the synagogues.

In this persecution Church and State were wholly united, popes and emperors being completely of one mind. Does Professor Smith regard the indiscriminate massacre of the Jews by the Crusaders as an instance of the operation of meekness? Anti-Semitism has raged in Christendom throughout the ages, and is horribly active to-day. The Crusades were prompted by the Church. It was Pope Urban II., at the Council of Clermont, in 1094, and Peter the Hermit, who roused Christendom to a fiery indignation against the Mohammedans, but it was kings and emperors who undertook the fiendish work. The passion of hatred of the Unbeliever was stirred to its utmost depths, and the mandate went forth, "Kill without mercy both Saracens and Jews." We know to-day what disastrous failures all the Crusades were, involving the wicked waste of many millions of precious lives. Undertaken in the name and for the sake of Christ, they stand out as among the blackest crimes perpetrated by a highly criminal Church.

Dr. Smith informs us that the ancient tyrannies which perished are "remembered with abhorrence." Then he proceeds thus:—

And in modern times every nation which has trodden the ancient path has incurred the ancient doom. Where is now the Kaiser's "mailed fist"? The strength of our British Empire is our British instinct for justice and faith in liberty, and of the problems which vex us at this hour every one is the bitter fruit of some ancient wrong, the lingering memory of "old, unhappy, far-off things." Violence may devastate the earth, but it has never inherited, nor will it ever inherit, it.

We shall indulge in no comment on the alleged "British instinct for justice and faith in liberty," concerning both of which there may be some doubt, nor is it the province of this article to pronounce moral judgments, our present concern being alone with facts. British possessions are to be found in all quarters of the globe, and the question that naturally arises is, Were they all acquired by the exercise of the beautiful grace of self-effacement? What about India? Did that vast country become a British dependency as the outcome of the practice of Christian meekness? Read Macaulay's essays—*Lord Clive* and *Warren Hastings*, together with the third volume of his *History of England*, and you will find the answer somewhat startling. The East Indies were discovered by the Portuguese in 1498, in 1500 a second expedition went out, and in 1502 the King of Portugal, by a bull from Pope Alexander VI., was constituted "lord of the navigation, conquests, and trade of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India." Then followed Dutch Settlements, and in 1603 the formation of the Dutch East India Company. The Dutch thus broke through the Portuguese monopoly; but curiously enough the merchants of London, forming themselves into what was called the London East India Company, succeeded in 1600 in obtaining a royal charter for the exclusive privilege of trading in all parts of Asia. Indeed, the Company advanced a loan to

the State of £3,190,000 in gratitude for the exclusive privilege to trade between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan. From 1600 to 1612, this Company made twelve "separate voyages," and, as the result of each voyage, commercial relations with India were extended. Factory after factory was established in different parts of the country. By this time the French had commercial interests in India, and Duplex conceived the brilliant notion of founding a French empire on the ruins of that of the Great Mogul. He was an extremely clever man and equally unscrupulous. It was then that the French and the British came into collision in India. A war ensued which eventuated in the triumph of the British, and the establishment of what is now known as the great Indian Empire under direct British administration. The point is, however, that the British went to India to benefit themselves rather than the Indians. We have control in that land, not because of our meekness, but because we conquered the French and keep the native tribes in subjection by our military strength. Every now and then a tribe rebels against the yoke, and is subdued by brute force.

What is true of India is true of Canada and all our colonies. We won them by conquest, and in each there is an army to prevent insurrections, and to put them down by force if any occur. As Dr. Smith's correspondent well says: "we know from experience that it is just the meek who do not inherit the earth." From a Christian point of view, the British as inheritors of the earth have never possessed and practiced the Christian virtue of meekness, and what is true of the British is equally true of all other inheritors of the earth.

In national and international relationships it is self-assertion, not self-effacement, which is the great historical characteristic. Reflecting upon this fact even as a school-boy Shelley wept bitterly and grew calm only when he came to the following brave resolution:—

I will be wise,  
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power, for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize  
Without reproach or check.

After industrialism arose, as long as the workers remained meek chiefly through ignorance and weakness, they were but "hands" utilized or exploited for the enrichment of their employers. For the degree of justice accorded to them now they are indebted to their own self-assertiveness. Had they continued meek, soft, and mild, they would have been slaves to this day. Industrial warfare, it appears, is the sole condition of obtaining industrial justice and fairplay.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Footnote as an Apostle.

The sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed  
To death Imposture through the armour joints.

Robert Browning.

GEORGE WILLIAM FOOTE was one of the ablest of English Freethinkers, and one who left his mark in contemporary history. His two greatest achievements were the founding of the Secular Society, Limited, and the editing of the *Freethinker*. The former legalized the endowment of Freethought; and the latter, into which he put thirty-five strenuous years of his life, was only kept going at the expense of his liberty. Three times he faced the ermined defenders of the faith on the judgment seat, and who can forget the splendid note of defiance he flung at the man who sentenced him to a year's imprisonment—"Thank you, my lord, the sentence is worthy of your creed."

The petition for release was signed by a long list of eminent men, including Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Ray Lankester, Leslie Stephen, Romanes, Edward Clodd, and a host of others. The petition failed to mitigate the savage sentence, but it roused the public conscience. And when Foote was tried later before the Lord Chief Justice this was quite noticeable. For this time the prisoner was given a patient hearing, and Lord Coleridge referred to "the striking and able speech which you have just heard from the defendant." The compliment was not an idle one, for Foote's carefully calculated speech led to Coleridge's famous ruling that the fundamentals of the Christian religion might be attacked, provided the decencies of controversy were maintained. Foote, in his defence, asked with apparent artlessness, why Matthew Arnold and Swinburne, and other blasphemers, were not in the dock beside him. Was it, he asked, because he was a poor man and they were not? The Lord Chief Justice replied to this in his summing-up by saying that everything depended upon the manner of attack. And, as this important ruling deprived the Blasphemy Laws of half their value, the prisoner in the dock had won a famous victory, and could afford a smile.

Few persons, except Foote's intimates, knew that the popular style he used in speaking and writing was adopted deliberately in order to gain the greatest possible number of adherents for Freethought. He realized that if he spoke and wrote over the heads of the people, his audience would be small and of little effect. He had no wish to address only "the dozen superior persons scattered throughout the universe," so he used the plainest language to attack the Christian superstition. His earlier articles in the *National Reformer*, *Liberal*, and other publications prove this clearly. In those far-off days he wrote as an earnest student who was mainly concerned with an intellectual difference with his opponents. The Bradlaugh struggle caused the great change. When he saw one of the ablest men of his time deprived of his seat in the British Parliament as the elected representative of an important constituency simply on account of his Freethought opinions, he realized that it was not an intellectual debate but a long and stern fight. He sharpened his sword and made the bigots feel the point of it. For this purpose he made a close study of Cobbett, Defoe, Paine, and Swift, in order to gain the secret of their literary power. That he succeeded is proved by the fact that his works circulated wherever the English language is spoken. Thousands of men and women who could never have read a page of Darwin or Spencer, and to whom scientific writings were as unknown as cuneiform inscriptions, were familiarized with the teaching of the masters in the brightly written articles and pamphlets by Foote. The message of Freethought was carried far and wide by the man who sacrificed deliberately the applause of cultured "intellectuals" in order to educate the less fortunate of his fellow-men.

So great was Foote's love for Freethought that he sacrificed everything to it. In the early "seventies," when he was working for the old Republican League, he attracted the attention of politicians, and his political speeches at the Northampton election, in support of Bradlaugh's candidature, brought him many offers of political advancement. He would, however, have none of it. He was fighting for Bradlaugh and Freethought, and not for the Nonconformist Liberals. Years later, whilst in America, he had most tempting offers to take to the lecture platform, but he refused, thinking that he was needed more at home. With his rare literary gifts he could easily have made a name, but he put the idea aside because it would have encroached upon the time devoted to propaganda. The articles he did write in

the monthly reviews were all in furtherance of Freethought, and often he allowed other men to take the credit because he thought it would better advance the cause he had at heart. Once, when he was asked by a purse-proud contributor what he had done for Freethought, Foote quietly replied, "I have given my life." It was a splendid retort, and it was true.

As a controversialist, Foote wielded a very sharp sword. In his library one saw the whetstone which gave keenness to its edge. His library was comprehensive, and ranged from old folios of the sixteenth century to the latest publications which he considered to be of use for his purpose. Although a scholar, he was never a pedant, and he carried his weight of learning lightly. The notes to his *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances* show something of the extent of his reading, and he was most punctilious in his references. Even in such pamphlets as *Blasphemy No Crime*, or *Bible and Beer*, there was little for others to glean after him.

A man is known by his friends. Foote corresponded with George Meredith for thirty years. Indeed, the good, grey poet sent Foote, when in Holloway Gaol, a copy of his poems. This tribute of admiration from the greatest writer of our generation was one of his proudest possessions. Foote also corresponded with Thomas Hardy, Bernard Shaw, and John Davidson. Very intimate was his association with James Thomson, the shy genius who enriched English literature with his *City of Dreadful Night*.

As our readers know, he succeeded Charles Bradlaugh as President of the National Secular Society. That was a recognition of which Foote was always proud, and it was well earned. "Who may that be?" asked an American visitor to whom Foote was showing his treasures, pointing to a life-like portrait of Bradlaugh. "That," said the host, "is one of the bravest men who ever lived." And the courageous soldier who said it was a fit comrade-in-arms to the puissant personality with which his own name is inextricably linked in the pages of English history.

MIMNERMUS.

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## Science and the Occult.

### IV.

(Continued from p. 122).

Evidence, if it be very plain, may be accepted by an educated person, but the convert will be quickly brought back by his unconscious self to his original conceptions. See him again after the lapse of a few days and he will put forward afresh his old arguments in exactly the same terms. He is in reality under the influence of anterior ideas, that have become sentiments, and it is such ideas alone that influence the more recondite motives of our acts and utterances.—*Gustave le Bon*, "The Crowd," 1903, p. 72.

THE fact should never be lost sight of that the soil is ready prepared for the teachings of Spiritualism. The vast majority of the children of this country are taught, as soon as they can be taught anything, to believe in a future life in a spiritual world, and that there are spirits of good and spirits of evil. Most people carry the superstitions, implanted in their minds before their reasoning powers have developed, to the grave, and even when the particular faith, Catholic, Wesleyan, Calvinistic, or Church of England, has been cast out, the roots of these supernatural beliefs often remain behind ready to spring up under some new form.

This accounts for the present boom in Spiritualism, people are forsaking the old faiths; it is no longer possible for the modern mind to believe in the orthodox manner, and most people are too honest to wangle their creed into conformity with modern thought as our

fashionable preachers endeavour to do. So they take refuge in Spiritualism, which caters for the old spiritual ideas implanted during childhood, guarantees a future existence, and does not—best of all—worry people about God, who had become a bit of a nuisance with his insatiable demand for prayer and praise, and nasty habit of prying into our private affairs. As the little girl remarked, when informed that God watched all her actions: "I don't think it is very gentlemanly of him." The Spiritualists have stopped all that, they have removed the great white throne so many spheres away, that, for all practical purposes, God is non-existent. Some of the spirits profess to have seen the Son, but even he seems rather nebulous, and by no means so communicative as he was during his earthly career. Perhaps the disastrous effects of his first venture have discouraged any further effort in this direction.

It is all very well for Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge to protest that they came to the study of Spiritualism with open minds, that their position was Agnostic. Their Agnosticism was the result of the teaching of modern science which discards supernaturalism in all its forms and disguises. The so-called facts of modern Spiritualism provided an escape from the materialism of science back to the fairyland of the supernatural and the miraculous dear to their early childhood but unknown to any scientific gazetteer or astronomical atlas.

All the while the children are trained in these supernatural beliefs there will always be superstition. It matters not that the particular beliefs they were trained in are exploded, and the devils cast out, there will always be other superstitions to occupy the vacant throne. The beliefs taught in childhood are the most tenacious we possess; look at the millions of Catholics, Protestants, Mohammedans, and others, who have been trained in their beliefs, and live and die without doubting them, each, with the exception of a few cultured half-believers, regarding the beliefs of the others as abominable superstitions.

If the child were allowed to attain to manhood before being taught religion he would never accept it. The clergy know this well enough; that is why they are straining every nerve to keep religion in the schools. It is there the soil is prepared. As Gambetta declared: "Clericalism, there is the enemy." They prepare the soil for the poison weeds of superstition, so that every thing inexplicable or strange is at once put down to the supernatural.

There are many people who believe that they have received information through spiritual mediums, and are ready to vouch for the fact that the mediums could not have known by normal means the facts they have revealed. How the mediums produce this belief is well known to those who have studied the matter; but the great majority of people have neither the time nor the opportunity to investigate the subject. Added to which, as we have pointed out, there is the natural bias implanted during childhood to believe in the supernatural and spiritual, so that most people do not wish for any natural explanation. They believe and they do not wish to be undeceived.

We are constantly having it impressed upon us that there is some basis of fact in the phenomena of Spiritualism that all mediums—some are unpaid—are not frauds. That the phenomenon of double consciousness exhibited by people suffering from brain trouble caused by injury or otherwise, by which they seem to be two different persons at different times, quite unconscious of each other's existence, quite well accounts for the phenomena of trance—mediumship. That when the medium goes into a trance she is not possessed by a spirit, neither is she a fraud; she is merely a case of "double-conscious-

ness." For our part, we hold that if Spiritualism relied entirely upon the natural phenomena, without the fraud, it would collapse like a pricked air-ball.

Moreover, it is the mystery and sensationalism that attracts the people; the hope of getting knowledge without the toil and drudgery of scientific methods; to obtain access to knowledge and help from spiritual forces far superior to those known to science. Such is the bait that allures the multitude. They are the modern equivalent of the searchers for the "Elixir of Life" and the "Philosophers' Stone" of the Middle Ages, and their labour is equally vain.

Mr. David Abbott, of America, who probably had a better inner knowledge of mediumship than any other man, tells us, in his enlightening book, *Behind the Scenes with the Mediums*, how the mediums work the oracle.

A lady friend of his enlarged upon the wonderful powers of a lady medium she had visited. Mr. Abbott arranged for a sitting with this medium. The method employed was to trick the inquirer into providing information while appearing to be making a statement of fact. This is easily done. For instance, you say to a friend, "You went to such and such a place this morning." In print it is a definite statement; but you can speak it so that it becomes a question: "You went to such and such a place this morning?" This was the method adopted by the medium. Mr. Abbott observes:—

I must confess that my natural impulse was to reply to her statements, *which she gave me with such a rising inflection, as to be really asking me a question*; although the mere words indicated a positive statement on her part instead of a question. I was familiar with this manner of "fishing," and of course did not respond..... Had I not been versed in trickery, I can readily see how much information I would have given her, for I had to continually guard my own tongue; as her questions, or more correctly *her statements with a rising inflection*, were worded so adroitly and came so rapidly.<sup>1</sup>

"Sometimes," says Mr. Abbott, "I decided to humour her"; whereupon:—

I found that the raps would answer so quickly, with me, or rather after me, as to appear to be simultaneous with me. However, I saw plainly that they followed my own answers; but so very quickly that to the uninitiated they would have appeared to be simultaneous with, or even ahead of, one's own answers. This effect is due to the way the answers attract the attention so strongly, coming in such a mysterious manner, that I was tempted to forget I had answered the questions. I am sure persons in general would have forgotten this fact, for they would have been so much more impressed with the performance and startled, that they would have been labouring under strong excitement; whereas I was perfectly cool, knowing it was a trick. There is much difference in the effect when one knows such a thing is a trick, and does not think some supernatural agency is at work.<sup>2</sup>

As the same writer further remarks:—

I saw how effective her system of "pumping" was, and I saw how most people would have received much better results than I did, by talking more and by unguarded exclamations. Systems of "pumping" or "fishing" are an art with the mediums, and they grow very expert at it, and do it so naturally that it takes an expert to detect that he himself is giving the medium the information. Most persons would have regarded this information as most wonderful, and would have quickly forgotten the little failures she made. In fact, with most, she would not have carried her failures so far; for they would most naturally have stopped her when wrong, instead of allowing her to mislead herself,

<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *Behind the Scenes with the Mediums*; 1909; pp. 60-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

as I did. How many of my readers have ever blind-folded themselves and tried to find a hidden article by touching the tips of the fingers of a person who intently thinks of the article and its hiding-place? Those who have done this will remember the swaying motions of the body in the different directions in the endeavour to find the direction by first discovering the "line of least resistance"; how the subject resists when the operator is wrong; and while they do not lead one, how they quickly encourage him by not resisting when he starts right. This same principle applies to the art of "fishing." The medium mentions many things on many subjects, and the sitter resists or overlooks the one on the "wrong track"; and while not intending to lead the medium, shows by encouragement when the medium is on the "right track."<sup>1</sup>

This medium also produced spectral lights. This was done by means of extremely fine silk fabrics treated with luminous paint, which could be folded up into the hand, or spread out to form a luminous cloud. In a conversation Mr. Abbott had with the medium after the *seance* was over, he remarked that he knew the secret of how the lights were produced, which the medium did not deny. But, further remarked Mr. Abbott:—

"I am puzzled as to how you handled these lights. Mrs. C— tells me that you floated a luminous letter C into her lap, telling her this was the initial of her name." The medium replied, "Did she say that?" I replied that she did. The medium then said, "That shows what a person's imagination will do. I had no luminous letters. I merely moved the luminous cloth so as to describe a letter, after discovering her name." She said that when she gave tests to anyone, the stories they told afterwards continually grew, and always grew to her advantage. That they grew so that when they came back to her she could hardly recognize her own work. She said, "It is a fact that believers are so anxious for tests, that they always help one out; and they invariably help out, if they be believers, in the way that the medium desires they should."<sup>2</sup>

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

## The Vandal.

THE light downy clouds fled swiftly over the sky, driven by the high clear wind of summer. The shadows chased each other across the wide expanse of wild heath upland. Bush and heather, gorse and broom, were alternately dark and light. Red and purple flashed as the sun struck and glanced. Gold and green shone and died away on the furze bushes, changing to bronze and almost black.

The wind was high but playful. There was no shadow of a threat in its note. All was clear and strong and beautifully harmonious. The perfection of Nature.

Away in the northern sky the black shapes of rooks flew in and out the tree tops. Far to the eastward a shepherd and his dog were slowly driving a flock along the yellow gravel road.

The heath was difficult walking as it grew in tufts, hard and wiry, leaving hollows between, but we pushed on dreaming idly, and being touched by the quiet and peace, sure handiwork of good.

Human blood ran in us more boisterously when the wind swept by, pushing and roystering like a playful giant who knows his strength, but would not dare to harm the joyful child on his knee.

It was only a few hundred feet high and a few hundred acres broad, but sublime on that day. Lovely,

graceful, pure, and holy. All the glad forces of Dame Nature were at play then, none of them had been kept back to work in the kitchen while the sluts played a devil's tattoo.

Sunlight and shadow all around danced madly. Hours could have fled by in the changing glory of light. All was tranquil, but filled with a sense of an abiding deep-seated jocularity. Offence seemed impossible in such surroundings, but the Vandal was guilty.

I suppose all Vandals are the same. Must they always break the chain? This one was a cheerful youth, large of body, heavy of mind, but a perfect companion for a walking day. He did not know how to talk. Yet he is a Vandal of the worst type, and there's no curing him.

Amid the freedom and barbaric glory a gipsy camp had been. Old dead ash told its own history of depredation, and of careless disregard for the safety of that lovely waste. Here had been a tent, there a waggon. Horse's feet had left little impression, but close cropped earth proved the stable of a night and the feeding while shackled.

A tin can was left behind as it was empty, and that proved the Vandal's undoing. I don't think he meant any harm, but before he saw that can, all was right. Immediately he spotted it, up went his stick, and a second after a doleful clang fractured the time of Nature's song. It was as if a player had struck a harsh, discordant chord on a tin kettle in the middle of the "Marche Funebre."

Away flew the drums, all was untuned; but in a moment the sound of noise was borne away, and Nature reigned again supreme. He had hurt his stick, thank God!

From the heath we went down a steep road into the green meadows below. Hedgerows, sprinkled with tiny oaks and gorgeous, with clumps of wild roses, bounded the meadows. Honeysuckle grew and blossomed in these hedges. Huge trees flung shade upon the road of gravel grit, their leaves tunefully rustling in the breeze, more musically than the silks of a great lady's skirts as she walks across the ballroom.

The clouds had left the sky now, and it was deepest blue, with a golden sun seeking its western home. All the trees and hedges were gliding, and the meadows were scarlet with fire, when, hidden amongst the thickest trees, we found a snug church.

Its weathercock was golden, its grey walls were whitened, its leaden roof was shining, and the colours of the ancient windows were all deepening in the setting sun when we entered it. Sunset is a holy time in the world of fields and trees, but in that house of an olden time, chastened by the feet and prayers of many generations, it was sublime. Power of deep association gripped us, and the Vandal even was subdued.

Men's works are feeble; but hoary with age, bearing the life of a village for centuries, the little church was almost too much to bear.

Throughout the livelong day beauty had held us, but it was blithe beauty. Now was its culmination, in the gloomy coolness and sanctity of quiet lit by the glory of the setting sun, overpowering.

At the entry, life was so vigorous; inside, so weak and vanquished. Joyous we passed the door; peaceful sadness gripped us inside, and on the lids of the Vandal glistened two silver tears as he stepped once more into the sunlight.

Thus was the Vandal reprov'd for his nature.

A refined humanity constitutes the character of a gentleman.—Hazlitt.

<sup>1</sup> *Behind the Scenes with the Mediums*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

## Acid Drops.

Prognostications are rife that we are in for a bad winter. We are threatened with a trade slump, and a considerable amount of unemployment, with the necessaries of life very scarce and dear. We hope things will not be so bad as we are promised they will be, but we would ask believers in Providence to consider the position. During the War wages were high, work was plentiful, there was no unemployment, and, if Providence rules all things, they ought to be managed so that there would be the least possible incentive not to be at war. After the War has ceased and Peace, of a kind, has arrived, things will begin to get harder and harder. We know we shall be told that this is because of the War, and we are now paying the price for our dissipation. That is quite true—from a naturalistic point of view, but how does it fit the belief in Providence? All the evils of war should, on that theory, occur when people are at war. They would get the lesson at the right moment. But to let that period pass as it does, and save the trouble which war brings until peace has arrived, is to perpetuate the time-hallowed fallacy that people grow strong in war and weak in peace. And it is to make a war period attractive to millions by surrounding it with memories of comforts which they will not have during peace.

"When the Armistice came we made the great mistake of thinking that the new spirit would come merely for the wishing of it," says the Archbishop of Canterbury. Unfortunately, the "new spirit" was so much under proof.

At the West London Mission the following subjects were used for Sunday services: "The Microbe in the Beer," and "The Coal Smoke Curse." There does not appear to be much Orthodoxy in these subjects, unless the latter refers to the place so often mentioned in sermons.

Essex lunatics cost 3s. 5d. a week each to maintain. Thirty-nine bishops, who consider that they are entitled to peculiar reverence, cost £180,700 yearly.

In playful mood, Providence blew Edgar Falconer, of Coulsdon, over the cliffs near Deal. He fell three hundred feet, and was picked up dead.

The latest wills include the following: The Rev. P. H. Kempthorne, of Wellington College, £6,333.

A deaf mute of Bordeaux has been admitted to the Roman Catholic clergy. We wish all the rest of them were deaf and dumb.

The Rev. Adam Hamilton, of Dundee, is an optimist with a vengeance. Preaching the other day he exclaimed: "This is the grandest day in the history of the world, and Christ is coming again among the sons of men." The Rev. J. B. Meyer said precisely the same thing upwards of ten years ago; and to all appearance England is less Christlike to-day than ever. Mr. Hamilton is a red-hot fanatic, who translates his wishes into deeds. The signs of the times are wholly against him. Instead of *coming* Christ is rapidly *going*; and the generality of people are not in mourning, while many are rejoicing.

At the Primitive Methodist Conference, recently held at Hull, the tone of many of the speeches was pessimistic. Instead of being the grandest day in history, the present was depicted in sombre colours as a Pagan, materialistic, pleasure-seeking, and money-getting age. There is certainly firmer ground for the Methodist pessimism than for Mr. Hamilton's optimism.

Rev. Charles E. Luton, Baptist minister, of Abertillery, was charged by the Ministry of Pensions with converting to his own use over £1,400. He had purchased a house with the proceeds, and had obtained the money by keeping a

number of people on the pay-sheet after they had left the district, and forging their receipt. He was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. The prisoner said he had tried to help the widow and the fatherless. The Court was of a different opinion; hence the sentence.

The Bishop of Manchester says that the Sunday morning congregations in his diocese are very small, and what "has to be discovered is some means of restoring the obligation to public worship." We suggest that the only means of doing this is to restore people's faith in Christianity. How the Bishop is going to do that is a bit of a puzzle. It is like restoring people's belief in fairies and hobgoblins. We agree with the Bishop that "mere devices to make services easier or pleasant will not carry us far." They only attract while the novelty of finding a service in church interesting draws attention. The bottom fact in the situation is that the belief in Christianity is rapidly dying, and the clergy find themselves with a stock in a market where there is a diminishing demand for it.

Although the clergy pretend that Christ and the twelve disciples were all Labour leaders, it is surprising that the ecclesiastics should oppose progressive measures in so public a manner. Referring to the scene at the passing of Lord Buckmaster's Divorce Bill in the House of Lords, a London paper said: "In the public galleries were many women and clergymen. It was the biggest gathering of bishops the House has seen for many years."

In order to exclude doggerel from tombstones, the Buckingham Burial Board now insist on inscriptions being chosen from the Bible or "standard Christian authors." It sounds plausible, but we doubt if it could be enforced. If a grave is a freehold property, no Burial Board could prevent a suitable inscription being used, even if it were from other than a "standard Christian author."

"We want live music with more 'bite' in our Churches," declares a London organist. Perhaps the distinguished composer of "The Bells of Hell Go Ting-a-ling-a-ling" will oblige his Christian brother.

"We do not want offers of beds simply from large houses," says the Bishop of Chelmsford, in an appeal for free lodgings for the clergy at the forthcoming Church Congress at Southend-on-Sea. There are dangers in the mission-field, however. Just think of the Bishop of Upper Vesuvius, temporarily lodged in a seaside boarding-house, and contemplating some lively little insects on the counterpane in the wee sma' hours! The powerful language of the cursing psalm would be the only high explosive permitted by clerical etiquette.

The Churches' League, which claims to be "representative of 580 players of vigorous young manhood," and which hails from Portsmouth, protests against Sunday sports. The protest was passed by the Committee, and not by the 580 players; but if they all agreed, we do not know that it would make much difference. No one wants that particular 580 to play on Sunday, although they might be doing much worse. The trouble is that they wish to spend their Sunday in preventing other people enjoying theirs. And while quite a Christian way of spending one's time, is, in plain English, making yourself a confounded nuisance—which also is quite a Christian thing to do. We expect that when these Christians get to heaven they will never rest until they get passing resolutions taking away from the denizens of the other place every comfort they possess; for no Christian will be happy unless he is engaged in making other people unhappy.

It used to be said that you cannot serve God and mammon. The authorities at St. Benetfink Church, Tottenham, to raise funds, are issuing debentures at ten shillings and upwards, bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. A cynic might say that there was more interest than principle in this matter.

The clergy are past-masters at begging. In view of the forthcoming Church Congress at Southend-on-Sea, the Bishop of Chelmsford is asking for free lodgings for the parsons, even, to quote his lordship's own touching words: "if it causes temporary alterations in home life." Fancy a Christian gentleman and his wife occupying the bath-room whilst the Bishop of the North Pole and some minor clergy sleep the sleep of the just in the best bedroom!

Mrs. General Booth is visiting Germany, Finland, and Sweden in connection with Salvation Army affairs. The founder of the first Salvation Army only had one excursion, and that was a donkey-ride.

The Church Lads' Brigade sends out an appeal for funds in which it says that of the boys who leave the elementary schools, 50 per cent. escape all religious influences. We do not think that the statement is true, although we wish it were. Probably what is meant is that the number do not definitely belong to any Church, but there are other forms of Christian influence, and they are not of the healthiest. And if the lads who stick to the Church were compared with those who do not, with any degree of carefulness, we think it would be found that those who had escaped had nothing to lament.

One ground of the appeal for funds is that the Church Lads' Brigade has "always furnished a steady supply of recruits to the volunteer or territorial forces as well as to the Army and Navy." We are pleased to see admitted as true what we have so often pointed out, namely, that one reason for these semi-military organizations is to feed militarism. And the further proof is that the Allies have made it a condition of the Peace Treaty that no military drill or organization in military form is to be allowed in connection with any school or civil organization in Germany. It was giving the game away with regard to these organizations in our own country, but the moral is plain. Those who really wish to see the world freed from militarism will do their best to begin at the right end. And it is a comment upon the tendencies of the Christian Church that such an appeal as the one before us should be backed by the reasons given. There are many forms of humbug in the world, but we doubt if there is one to beat the Christian variety.

The Church of St. George at Oxford, which has been disused, has been transformed into a Labour Exchange. This is a conversion which will be ignored by those who profess and call themselves Christian.

Twenty churches have by deputation protested against Sunday games at Fulham. Working people must be taught that enjoyment of any kind is taboo on the Sabbath.

Thirty London clergymen have resolved heroically to refuse to re-marry divorced persons. The Metropolitan civil registrars of marriage will smile broadly.

We hold no brief for the Mohammedan religion, any more than for any other form of that complaint. Our opposition to religion is catholic in its extent, and we are without qualification in our condemnation. All the same, it is advisable to put in a plea for the Mohammedans as against the Christians, now that our Christian peace-makers have managed to stir up another Eastern war; and when Christian zeal gets on the warpath, it knows no zeal with regard to its antagonist. The Greek is now being acclaimed by Christian papers, because they hope to see their sectarian ends served; whereas there is not an independent authority alive who would not prefer the Turk, both in morals and manners, to the Christian Greek. Ancient Greece was one thing; modern Greece is a very different story. And the distance between the two is a measure of the degradation Christianity can bring upon a people.

One paper, in hoping that the rule of the Turk over other peoples will be ended, brings out the good old Christian chestnut that Islam is a religion of the sword. (There is a

very telling chapter in Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress* on this topic, and we advise all our readers to see that it is well circulated.) The truth is that Christianity has relied far more upon the sword than has Islam; has been the cause of more wars, and has pursued them with greater ferocity and greed. But when Christian nations can embark on a War like that of 1914-18, and can continue to prate of their religion as a creed of love and brotherhood, one need not be surprised at anything.

Northwood Council has stopped the building of a chapel on the ground that it is a "luxury." Excellent!

A record of the sufferings of the penurious clergy would be as painful reading as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Some of the latest horrors include the presentation of £7,000 for the purpose of ensuring comfort in the later years of Prebendary Carlile and his wife; and a bequest of £500 to the Rev. A. J. Campbell, formerly of the City Temple.

A working man at Harrow has bought a small chapel and converted it into a dwelling-house. The building should be more usefully employed in the service of man than in the service of an imaginary deity. We presume that the converted house of God will now be liable for rates.

Oh those suffering clergy! In one day the press recorded the following wills of parsons: Bishop Diggle, £29,929; Canon Lambert, £133,560; and the Rev. J. W. Pickance, £10,120. Is it not too deep for tears?

Speaking at the Albert Hall on June 30, the Bishop of Zanzibar said that he went once to a farm, dressed in his episcopal clothing, and a boy there said to his father, "Who is that?" The father said, "That is the Bishop." "What is the use of him?" asked the boy. And the father replied, "I am damned if I know." A great many of us would answer in the same way if we replied honestly. The Bishop did not give a reply to the question, and we should much like to see the question made the subject of a competition. What is the use of a Bishop? We might absolve the sender of the best reply from attendance at church for the next year.

Says the *Daily News*: "Perhaps the graceless person who has written to the Rector of Louth to declare that the flood was a punishment for sin, will turn his attention to the case of the child killed by a tram on her way to Sunday-school?" Whatever is the *Daily News* coming to? We shall be quite certain, if this sort of thing goes on, that the *Freethinker* is well read in the *Daily News* office.

Dr. Orchard has re-discovered Christianity, and, as a result, he may either go over to Rome or he may join the Salvation Army. The only thing he is quite sure about is that what the world has thought about Christianity has all been wrong. It is only Dr. Orchard, of King's Weigh House Church, London, and those who think with him, know what Christianity is. He has been through every stage of negation and denial; he has adopted all forms of semi-Christianity and demi-semi-Christianity, and at last he has found the real thing. Judging him by his past history, we may safely foretell that a few years hence he will be preaching another Christianity still, quite different from the brand he now affects. All this merely shows that Christianity is simply a creation of the imagination, and outside Rome may be anything any clever parson wishes.

From the *Glasgow Times* of June 26:—

"A big, strong man like you should be working instead of being a meenister" is the remark a lady in a car hurled the other day at a stranger who looked like a clergyman.

Not quite a flattering remark to make concerning the Lord's anointed. Time when in Scotland such a remark would have meant trouble to the man who was daring enough to make it.



## SPECIAL.

Until the end of July, and in order to bring the "Freethinker" into contact with a larger number of people, we are prepared to send this paper for thirteen weeks, post free, for 2s. 9d., on receiving names and addresses from any of our present subscribers. Subscribers are not limited to sending one address; they may send as many as they please. This offer applies only to those who are already subscribers, and is part of a general advertising scheme, having for its object the creation of a larger circulation and a more extended sphere of service. New readers who receive the paper for thirteen weeks are not likely to drop it afterwards.

## To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—T. S. Holmes, 5s.

C. M. (Darford).—There is a movement of accommodation going on in many Churches, and, so far, it represents a broadening. The danger of it is that it often satisfies many, and without being thorough it stops the more advanced movement. It is what is known in the political field as "Dishing the Whigs," and it consists in openly giving up what can no longer be retained with profit, and so preserving much that would otherwise have to be surrendered.

F. SMITH.—We are afraid we are not sufficiently acquainted with the literature of Freemasonry to advise as to which is the best book. There are a number about, but we can't say as to their reliability. Why not enquire of a Mason?

W. C. DODD.—Our great need now is to get the paper widely known. If a few friends in each town would take the matter up, we should soon be paying our way on sales, in spite of the steadily increasing cost of production.

C. MORTON.—Yes. Holt's *Freudian Wish* is quite a sound piece of work. So, by the way, is the same author's *Concept of Consciousness*. The psychology which ignores the Freudian view is certain to be more or less unsatisfactory. At least, that is our view of the matter, and we think we may say without conceit that we are not ignorant of the subject on which we are expressing an opinion.

J. R. WILLIAMS.—You have gone to a deal of trouble, which we appreciate; but the verses are well known, and have often been printed as a leaflet for general distribution.

A. R. WILLIAMS.—Next week.

Mrs. J. WRIGHT.—Many thanks for help. We are out of slips at the moment, so are sending on a small parcel of back numbers, which you may be able to use.

W. J.—The paper goes weekly to the party you name.

N. CRITCHLEY.—Thanks for addresses. Papers will be sent.

We have a letter at this office for Mr. Robert Harding. If he will send on his address we shall be pleased to forward.

Mrs. E. TAYLOR.—Pleased to hear from you and to know that you are well. We do not purpose opening a Sustentation Fund for several months yet.

A. ENGLAND.—Pleased to learn that the Barnsley Public Library was so appreciative of a copy of Mr. Cohen's *Religion and Sex*. Will write you on other matter. Please call when you are in London.

D. STECHELLS.—(1) There is a very strong note of pessimism in Christianity. (2) We do not think that the Shakespeare plays have been bowdlerized in the way you suggest; at least, we know of no evidence that would justify such a conclusion. (3) You are not alone in admiring the veracity of William Repton's articles on the War. Others of our readers have expressed similar sentiments to your own. One day they may be reprinted.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted. Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

## Sugar Plums.

It would be difficult to name a more central or more public spot in London than Charing Cross Post Office, fronting Trafalgar Square. Our friends will, therefore, be pleased to learn that we have made arrangements for the constant display of a *Freethinker* poster on the news stand outside the post office, and for the sale of the paper there. We are on the look out for other likely places. The paper *must* get more widely known than is at present the case.

The International Freethought Congress will be held this year in Prague. From some points of view the Congress will be more interesting than the one held in Rome some years back. The city is more intimately connected with the fight for freedom in religion than in Rome, and it is the capital of the new Checko-Slovakian Republic. The President of the Republic is himself a Freethinker, and the Congress bids fair to assume something of a national character. The N.S.S. Executive is considering the question of sending a delegation, in accordance with a resolution passed at the Annual Conference, but it promises to be rather a costly affair. There is, however, time between now and September.

We are asked to inform East London Freethinkers that the West Ham Branch Ramblers will leave Plaistow Station at 9.58 to-day (July 11), and that Mr. H. Spence will meet the party at Upminster, and will act as guide, philosopher, and friend during the walk to Warley. Tea will be served at the latter place—1s. 3d. each person. With fine weather, the day should be an enjoyable one. The outgoing train calls at Upton Park and East Ham. Travellers will book to Upminster only.

Mr. C. F. Glass writes from S. Africa:—

As a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, I wish to place on record my appreciation of the excellent work done by that paper in freeing men's minds of superstitious beliefs the world over.

Speaking from personal experience, I can testify to the most valuable work done in this direction in South Africa, where your paper is widely read.

From everyday observation, it is evident that religion, which up till now has kept minds in ignorance, is fast dying out, and that the dawn of enlightenment and truth is approaching.

The *A. S. E. Monthly Journal and Report* gives over a half-page to a sketch of Thomas Paine, written by Tom Mann, paying a high tribute to the work done by Paine in the cause of general freedom. We are very pleased to see such an article in such a place.

Glasgow, we are glad to see, is keeping up its Sunday bands, and the music is not all of the "Sacred" variety. The programme before us is varied and good, and we are quite sure the thousands who listen to the band will be spending their time in a much healthier manner than they would be doing if they went to Church.

Do not ask who said this or that, but mark what is spoken.

—Landor.

## The Crusades.

If there is any more monumental folly associated with Christianity than the military excursions known in history as the Crusades, the writer is at a loss to know what it is. Time and again the scum of Christian Europe was gathered together by the egregious paladins of Christian chivalry (egged on by the self-styled official representatives of the meek and gentle Jesus), and hurled at the Turk in a vain effort to wrest permanently from the hands of the "Infidel" the so-called Holy Land. Rivers of blood flowed, numerous towns were destroyed, vast tracts of country were laid waste, the most atrocious crimes were committed, and thousands died of famine and disease under the glorious banner of the Cross.

The story of the Crusades as told even in the staid and stately language of Mosheim and Gibbon is truly an appalling one. There may have been an excuse for the first Crusade, as being an adventure without precedent, and entered upon with high expectations; but how the Papacy could sanction successive attempts to recover the "Sacred" places with the record before it of the disastrous circumstances attaching to the first expedition is difficult of understanding. Yet to the student of history, who notes how ready the nations have ever been (and even in modern times) to plunge afresh into carnage as soon as the memory of the previous devastation had become less vivid, it is not so surprising that the Palestinian madness was frequently repeated. Doubtless, also, in this matter of the Crusades—as in various other matters—the shepherds of the Roman Catholic Church found it no easy task to control the fighting rams of their flock; and, on the whole, thought it better the "Chivalry" of Europe should slaughter the Turks rather than that they should slaughter one another. Only, as events resulted, it was mainly the Christians who were slaughtered in the Crusades.

No doubt some of the ecclesiastical instigators and advocates of the Holy War were animated by the best intentions. They burned with zeal to purge the holy places of the contamination of Moslem occupation. The strange thing is, that the all-powerful Jesus in heaven seems never to have interested himself much in the efforts of his devoted followers to redeem the places made eternally memorable by his earthly pilgrimage. Save for a period of ninety years, during which the Christians retained a precarious hold of the district—after the establishment of the "Kingdom of Jerusalem" under Godfrey, as a result of the first Crusade—the followers of Mahomet have been in possession of the land of promise from the seventh century down to our own day.

Though, as has been already remarked, many of the clergy were actuated purely by religious zeal in promoting the Crusades, there can be little doubt that not a few of the hierarchy of the Church were prompted by more Machiavelian motives in supporting the several expeditions. There were Machiavelians before Machiavelli. The engagement of such a considerable turbulent element on the futile errand of the liberation of Palestine afforded a much needed respite to many sorely tried districts in the Western world; and, incidentally, the absence of so many powerful temporal lords allowed the Church to obtain a firmer grip of place and power throughout the countries of Europe.

The aggrandisement of the Church in Europe was materially assisted by the Crusades, however little was achieved of their ostensible purpose. Much land and property belonging to prominent Crusaders passed into the hands of the Church in return for the necessary funds to finance the campaigns. No doubt these valiant

gentry hoped to recoup themselves handsomely. Probably the majority of them were out for plunder. There were a great many cities in the East worth sacking. More than a suspicion exists that many of the kings and princes of Europe, as well as the potentates of the Church, encouraged the Crusades in order to get rid of their powerful and troublesome subjects, and to obtain possession of their lands and estates. The custom of paying tithes owes its inception in the Christian Church to the Crusades. Originally intended as a temporary expedient to meet the expense of these disastrous adventures, the practice, as Gibbon caustically observes, was too lucrative to expire with the occasion, and the payment of tithes became a permanent institution in the Church.

It is curious that neither Mosheim nor Gibbon are disposed to credit the Papacy and the princes with any subtlety of policy in the promotion of the Crusades. In this they surely minimize unduly the almost proverbial astuteness of the Roman Church. Mosheim argues that the Roman Pontiffs could not foresee that so many princes and people of every class would march away from Europe to Palestine; neither could they discover beforehand that these expeditions would be so beneficial to themselves. But this objection, if applicable at all, applies only in relation to the *first* Crusade. It is only of the first Crusade that it could be asserted that its consequences were unforeseen. The advantage accruing to the Papacy, as a result of the first Crusade, was sufficiently obvious and tangible to induce the Church to encourage a repetition of the project. Indeed, Mosheim himself admits practically all that is needed when he remarks that "afterwards when the Pontiffs, as well as the kings and princes, learned by experience the great advantages resulting to them from these wars, new and additional motives for encouraging them undoubtedly occurred to them."

One or two abortive attempts were made to organize expeditions for the relief of Palestine before anything serious was achieved. In the tenth century Pope Sylvester II. favoured one which came to nothing, and in the following century Gregory VII. proposed personally leading a host for the capture of Jerusalem. The pride and ambition of this latter prelate, however, involved him in so much European embroilment that he was constrained to abandon his projected Eastern pilgrimage. It was not till Peter the Hermit appeared upon the scene, near the close of the eleventh century, that the matter was taken up in earnest. Peter was one of those dangerous fanatics who thoroughly believed in the divinity of their particular mission. In the preaching tour which he inaugurated for the purpose of enlisting support for the first Crusade, he carried about with him a letter which he alleged had been sent from heaven authorizing the campaign. To the credulous multitude of that age such testimony in his favour was indisputable. Thousands flocked to the Standard of the Cross. Mosheim's description of the crusading horde that followed the leadership of Peter is illuminative. "It was composed chiefly of monks, mechanics, farmers, persons tired of their stated occupations, spendthrifts, speculators, prostitutes, boys, girls, servants, malefactors, and the lowest dregs of the idle populace who hoped to make their fortune." This choice array was collected from France and Lorraine.

A similar rabble was gathered from Germany by another monkish fanatic named Godescal, whose eloquence, according to Gibbon, swept away thousands from the villages. These were closely followed by a herd of two hundred thousand of what the historian characterises as the most stupid and savage refuse of the people, "who mingled with their devotion a brutal

licence of rapine, prostitution, and drunkenness." Truly a fitting crew to redeem the Holy Land. There can be small wonder that these undisciplined mobs never saw Palestine. On their march through Europe they indulged themselves in a massacre of the Jews, and afterwards fell amongst Hungarians and Bulgarians, who almost annihilated them. Those who followed the footsteps of the men of God had indeed a rough time of it. The more disciplined forces under Godfrey, Baldwin, Robert of Normandy, and others, fared better; but even as regards these, the frightful losses suffered may be gauged from the statement that of the 600,000 Crusaders who had assembled at Nice, only 40,000 survived to complete the enterprise by the capture of Jerusalem.

Broadly speaking, the story of the first Crusade is the story of them all. In fact, the subsequent attempts were even more calamitous for the Christians. Mosheim estimates that the combined effect of the seven Crusades was to deprive Europe of more than half its population. A splendid record for the Church militant!

GEORGE SCOTT.

### Pages from Voltaire.

THE HISTORY OF THE TRAVELS OF SACRAMENTADO  
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.  
(1756).

I WAS born in Candia in the year 1600, my father being governor of the city; and I can remember that a second-rate poet with a most unmusical ear, whose name was Iro, wrote a set of verses in my praise, in which he made me descend in a direct line from Minos; but my father being afterwards disgraced, he wrote some other verses, in which he derived my pedigree from no nobler an origin than the amours of Pasiphæ and her gallant. This Iro was a mischievous rogue; indeed, he was one of the most troublesome fellows in the island.

My father sent me at the age of fifteen to pursue my studies at Rome. I arrived there with every hope of learning all kinds of truth; for I had hitherto been taught quite the reverse, according to the custom of this sublunary world from China to the Alps. Monsignor Profond, to whom I had been recommended, was a man of very singular character, and one of the most terrible scholars in the world. He was for teaching me the categories of Aristotle, and was just about to place me in the category of his catamites, a fate I luckily managed to escape. I saw processions, exorcisms, and a few robberies. It was commonly said, but without any foundation, that the *Signora Olimpia*, a lady of great prudence, sold several things that ought not to be sold. I was then of age to relish these comical adventures. A young lady of great sweetness of temper, called the *Signora Faleto*, thought proper to fall in love with me; she was courted by the reverend father *Poignardini*, and by the reverend father *Aconiti*,<sup>1</sup> young monks of an order which is now extinct; and she reconciled the two rivals by granting her favours to me; but, at the same time, I ran the risk of being excommunicated and poisoned. I left Rome highly pleased with the architecture of St. Peter's.

I travelled to France; it was during the reign of Louis the First. The first question put to me was, whether I would like to breakfast on a slice of the Marshall D'Ancre,<sup>2</sup> whose flesh the people had roasted, and were distributing liberally to those who wished to taste it.

<sup>1</sup> The names of the reverend fathers indicate the two Roman methods of getting rid of people who knew too much—by the dagger or by poison.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the massacre of the Protestants on the eve of Saint Bartholomew.

This kingdom was continually engaged in civil warfare, sometimes for a place at court, sometimes for two pages of theological controversy. The fire, which at one time lay hidden under the ashes, and, at another burst into great flames, had desolated these beautiful provinces for over sixty years. The excuse was the defending the liberties of the Gallican Church. "Alas"! said I, "these people are nevertheless born with a gentle disposition; what can have drawn them so far from their natural character? They joke and keep holy days. Happy the time when they shall do nothing but joke.

I went over to England where the same disputes gave rise to the same barbarous conduct. Some pious Catholics had resolved, for the good of Holy Church, to blow up with gunpowder, the king, the royal family, and the whole parliament, and thus to deliver England from all these heretics at one blow. They showed me the place where Queen Mary of blessed memory, the daughter of Henry VIII., had caused more than five hundred of her subjects to be burnt. An Irish priest assured me that it was a very praiseworthy action; first, because those who were burnt were Englishmen; secondly, because they did not make use of holy water, or believe in St. Patrick's Purgatory. He seemed much surprised that Queen Mary was not yet canonized; but he hoped she would receive that honour as soon as the cardinal nephew should be a little more at leisure.

From there I went over to Holland, where I hoped to find more tranquility among a people of a colder and more phlegmatic temperament. Just as I arrived at the Hague, the people were cutting off the head of a venerable old man. It was the bald head of the prime minister Barneveldt; a man who ought to have had better treatment from the Republic. Touched with pity at this affecting scene, I asked what was his crime, and whether he had betrayed the State. "He had done far worse," replied a preacher in a black cloak, "he believed that men could be saved by good works just as well as by faith. You can understand," he went on, "that if such opinions were to gain ground, a republic could not exist; and that there must be some laws to suppress such scandalous and horrid blasphemies." A profound politician remarked to me with a sigh, "Alas! sir, this happy time will not be for long; it is only by chance that the people are so zealous; they are by nature inclined to the abominable doctrine of toleration, and they are certain to grant it in the end." This sad reflection made him groan. For my own part, in expectation of that fatal period when moderation and indulgence should take place, I instantly quitted a country where severity was not softened by any gentleness, and embarked for Spain.

The court was then at Seville; the galleons were just come in, and everything breathed plenty and gladness in the loveliest season of the year. I noticed at the end of an alley of orange and lemon trees, a kind of large ring, surrounded by steps covered with rich and costly cloth. Here the king, the queen, the infants, and the infantas were seated under a superb canopy. Opposite the royal family was another throne, raised higher than that on which his majesty sat. I said to one of my fellow-travellers: "Unless this throne be reserved for God, I don't see what purpose it can serve." This unguarded expression of mine was overheard by a grave Spaniard, and I had to pay for it. Meanwhile, I had an idea that we were to have a festival, or a bull-fight. Then the grand inquisitor made his appearance in that elevated throne, from which he blessed the king and the people.

Then came an army of monks who filed off in pairs, white, black, grey, shod, unshod, bearded, beardless

with pointed cowls, without cowls; next came the hangman; and last of all I could see, in the midst of the guards and grandees, about forty persons garbed in sackcloth, on which were painted the figures of flames and devils. Some of these were Jews, who could not be prevailed upon to renounce Moses altogether; others were Christians who had married a woman with whom they had stood sponsors to a child; or who had not adored our Lady of Atocha, or who had refused to part with their money in favour of the Hieronymite brothers. Some charming prayers were sung with much devotion, and then the criminals were burnt at a slow fire, a ceremony which the royal family seemed to find both amusing and edifying.

As I was about to go to bed that evening, two members of the inquisition came to my lodging carrying a small statue of Saint Hermudad. They saluted me with great tenderness, and led me in solemn silence to a well-aired prison, furnished with a mattress and a beautiful crucifix. I remained there for six weeks, at the end of which the reverend father, the Inquisitor, sent for me. He pressed me in his arms for some time with paternal affection, and assured me that he was sorry to hear that I had been so badly lodged, but that all the apartments of the house were full, and he hoped I should be better accommodated next time. He then asked me with great amiability if I knew for what reason I was imprisoned; I told the reverend father that it was evidently for my sins. "Very well," says he, "my dear child, but for what particular sin? Speak freely." I racked my brain with conjectures but could not possibly guess. He then charitably dismissed me.

At last I remembered my unguarded expression. I escaped with a little bodily correction, and a fine of thirty thousand reals. I was conducted to make my obeisance to the Grand Inquisitor, who was a man of great politeness. He asked me how I liked his little feast, I told him that it was a most delightful one, and then went to press my companions to leave the country—beautiful though it was. They had found time to inform themselves of all the great things the Spaniards had done for religion. They had read the memoirs of the famous bishop of Chiapa, by which it appears that they had massacred, or burnt, or drowned, some ten millions of infidels in America in order to convert them. I believe the accounts of the bishop are a little exaggerated; but suppose we reduce the number of victims to five millions, it would still be a most glorious achievement.

(To be concluded.)

Translated by GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

## The Curse of "God."

The well intentioned Grocer  
Has a temple made of tin,  
And the ruin of good innkeepers  
Is loudly urged therein;  
But now the sands are running out  
From sugar of a sort,  
The Grocer trembles; for his time,  
Just like his weight, is short.

—G. K. Chesterton.

It is an instructive and harmless amusement to pay an occasional visit to a church, a chapel, or a tin tabernacle. I did so a short time ago. I'm glad I did. The parson harped on one string the whole time. "The Church has not failed; it has not had a chance"; and again, "Give the Church a chance!"

Did you ever hear such blatant hypocrisy? *Never had a chance!* I'd like to know what the last fifteen hundred years show. It hasn't had a chance—it's had a monopoly. And what has it made of it all? Apart

from sundry massacres, all that can be laid to its credit is the fact that it has made a lucrative profession for second sons of noble families and others of infinitesimal intelligence. The Church has been the one barricade between man and a rational civilization. Those tin-pot gods who have battened on the offerings of ignorance have ever stood in the way of enlightenment. They have, in their wisdom, marked off a forbidden ground, whereon one treads with danger. In them, self-preservation bulks largely. Each step towards truth marks an inroad into their preserves.

Each one who seeks truth through reason, in their humane outlook becomes a lost soul. They have barred the door to knowledge with the double bars of "God" and "the unknowable." God! What is God that we should bow down before him—the offspring of a savage misconception. And shall this thing daunt us? Shall it hide from us what we demand to know? Too long this shadow of divinity has clouded the bright sun of knowledge; too long the anathema of his priests has blasted the high hopes of scientists.

The day has come when we must lay aside our trembling and cease to ask for toleration. We must demand the right which is ours, the right to be. One after another the martyrs of our Cause have fallen, and the light of their deeds has been allowed to go out in utter forgetfulness. Too long have we been silent, too long hidden our light under a bushel. The day of sanctimonious fooling is past. We live in a world of action, and only by deeds can we be recognized.

No one is worthy of the high name of Freethinker who can rest content while enthroned Religion throws its baleful influence over all the spheres of human activity. Say what you will, rest on your laurels as you may in the pleasing assurance that the struggle is ended and the battle won, but the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock you. Banish these thoughts. The battle is only beginning; how long it will last depends on you. Fierce and short, or dawdling and long drawn-out. Do not for a moment forget this fact: Religion holds the reins, and until *you* knock it off the box, you will be carried where it drives you, not whither you desire. You must act. If you cannot go out into the highways of publicity, there are yet the byeways. Only by concerted and strenuous action shall the curse of God be rendered innocuous. We are caged in by the immortality that doth hedge a dream.

Shall we who have seen clearly again close our eyes and conceive in the misty darkness of our minds a more shadowy deity without function and without reality. This may satisfy those who boast the *respectable* names of Agnostic, or Pantheist, or Deist, but we who are apparently not *respectable*, shall we not rather, with Swinburne, say:—

By thy name that in hell-fire is written and burned at the point of thy sword,  
Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art smitten, thy death is upon thee, O Lord;  
And the love-song of earth as thou diest, is borne on the wind of her wings;  
Glory to Man in the highest, for Man is the master of things.

A Russian has said that *God shall be banished from Russia*. The Church has stigmatized this as *ominous*. It is ominous—and encouraging. To hide our aims under phantom pretences is worse than to have no aims at all. We have played with fire too long. We must crush it under foot or be burned. "Crush the Infamous!" Off with the kid gloves. What's the use of arguing whether this, that, and the other may or may not have been responsible for the origin of the idea of God. We are not concerned with the original idea. Sufficient for us that we came here without asking. If

the God who is supposed to be responsible for our appearance here is worth his salt, he will be so manifest that it will not be possible to doubt his existence. Such is not the case, and we are fools if we go out of our way to search for him.

The sooner we lay aside our foolish reverence for other people's opinions the better. They show no respect for ours, and our chivalry is looked upon as weakness. In our struggle for existence, strength alone counts, and even the semblance of wavering gives heart to our opponents. We are hemmed in by all sorts and conditions of foes. What matters it!—

I was a fighter ever,  
So one fight more,  
The last and the best.

The struggle will be hard. Some men falter, leave the ranks, but those who are left are the ones who count. In the ranks of Freethought there is no place for waverers. We must be all in all or not at all.

We shall march prospering—not through his presence;  
Songs shall inspire us—not from his lyre;  
Deeds will be done—while he boasts his quiescence,  
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire;  
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,  
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod.

Let it be; we shall go forward united and conquering until the last brick of the last citadel of religion crumbles into dust before the fiery onslaught of Reason and of Truth.

H. C. MELLOR.

### Correspondence.

#### BRADLAUGH AND HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—*Re Freethinker* of July 4, page 423, left column, may I point out, with reference to Mr. Hugh Price Hughes's challenge to Mr. Bradlaugh, that Freethinkers do not want to be "saved," except by themselves?

Our people are not, as a rule, converted drunkards or respited murderers, but sober and peaceful folk, whose fight is for justice and whose efforts are for Freethought.

Hampstead. TAB CAN.

#### A DISEASED IMAGINATION.

SIR,—The letter from Mr. E. A. Phipson headed "The (Protestant) Confessional Unmasked" must not be allowed to pass without protest. The logical conclusion to be drawn from such fears as beset the imagination of Mr. Phipson is that girls from the school age upwards should be taught that all men have lascivious designs on them; that they should be locked in harems, or, at least, never allowed outside the premises unaccompanied by a female chaperon to keep satyrs at a distance.

The second paragraph is a most exaggerated caricature of the schoolmaster's position. When it is stated that because children are forbidden to "tell tales" the schoolmaster can safely do what he likes, the matter is reduced to an absurdity.

That schoolmasters are empowered to ply pupils "with the most intimate questions" is manifestly untrue. All that is true in this statement is that questions may be conceived which the schoolmaster may legitimately ask in his official capacity which would be more or less impertinent from others.

The character of the schoolmaster is backed by exactly the same guarantees as that of any other professional man. His title to respect is that he has never been found out. The clergyman has an additional guarantee that he subscribes to a belief in certain doctrines that he knows to be untrue. I put it to your readers whether he is the more to be respected on that account.

Schoolmasters are watched with a suspicious eye by hundreds of anxious parents, and very slight want of tact

may at any time ruin their career, which is not one where second chances are given in serious matters.

Finally, when it is said that no one knows what goes on in schoolrooms except other schoolmasters and mistresses and the children, the extraordinary difficulties in the way of the suggested career of crime are manifest to anyone who knows how inquisitive and observant children are.

The assertion that boys are allowed freely to use filthy language, let alone to girls, may pass for what it is worth. I don't believe it.

J. LATHAM.

### Branch News.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—The Manchester Branch N.S.S. have arranged for a Ramble to Marple on Sunday, July 11. Train leaves London Road Station for Marple at 1.45 pm. Tea will be provided at 4.30, at Marshall's Tea Rooms, Flood Gate, Marple. Full tea from 1s. 6d. each (tea only 7d. each). Members and friends are cordially invited to join in the Ramble. A most magnificent view of the High Peak district can be seen by the energetic walkers, whilst for the less strenuous a glorious country side is at hand without effort. It is hoped that a large number of Manchester Freethinkers will be present.—A. C. ROSETTI.

REGENT'S PARK,—On Sunday, in weather conditions that would have given pause to most enthusiasts, Mrs. Rosetti bravely stood up to deliver her promised lecture. Her subject was, "Christian Burial Grounds: a Collection of Ancient Relics." Starting from zero the crowd steadily increased, and the lady had the satisfaction of addressing a very considerable and most appreciative audience. The subject was handled in a manner worthy of Grant Allen. Mrs. Rosetti showed how Christian burial customs were allied to those of barbarous tribes all over the world, and pointed the moral incisively but without offence.—J. L.

### Obituary.

We record with the deepest regret the death of Miss Georgiana Leancy, after an illness of only four days' duration. Miss Leancy had been for over twenty years a close and much-valued friend of Miss Vance, with whom she lived, and her death has brought with it a great sorrow to all who knew her and appreciated her character. Quiet and unobtrusive in manner, unselfish in disposition, she was an ardent Freethinker to the end. She had also taken part in many advanced movements, and was one of the advocates of the emancipation of women when the advocacy was not so popular as it is to-day. She leaves behind her an only sister, who is, unfortunately, not in the best of health, and to whom we tender our sincere sympathy. Mr. J. T. Lloyd officiated at the cremation ceremony at Golder's Green.

And I will have my careless season  
Spite of melancholy reason,  
Will walk through life in such a way  
That, when time brings on decay,  
Now and then I may possess  
Hours of perfect gladness.  
Pleased by any random toy;  
By a kitten's busy joy,  
Or an infant's laughing eye  
Sharing in the ecstasy;  
I would fare like that or this,  
Find my wisdom in my bliss;  
Keep the sprightly soul awake,  
And have faculties to take,  
Even from things by sorrow wrought,  
Matter for a jocund thought,  
Spite of care, and spite of grief,  
To gambol with Life's falling leaf.

—Wordsworth.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

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

OUTDOOR.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain) : 6.30, J. J. Darby; 7.30, A. D. Maclaren.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park) : 3.15 and 6.30, Mr. H. Johnson.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.—No Lecture. Ramble from Upminster to Warley. Train 9.58 a.m. from Plaistow to Upminster. Single fare 9d.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Baker, Dales, and Ratcliffe. Every Wednesday, 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds) : Every Sunday at 6.30.

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PECULIAR PEOPLE.—Will any Reader kindly inform me of the names and addresses of some of the leaders of this Religious Body?—J. M., c/o Freethinker Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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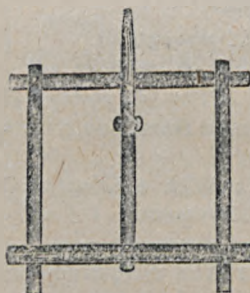
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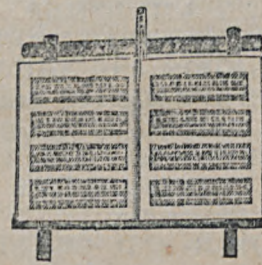
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