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Views and Opinions.

The Lambeth Conference.

For nearly a week we have been scanning eagerly the faces of the men and women that have passed us in the street. We have been seeking some indication of a sense of "awareness" of the stupendous event that is proceeding here in this City of London—some sign in the eye of spiritual exaltation, some outward and visible proof that man does not live by bread alone. But we have sought in vain. We have heard men discussing cricket, horses, the importance of taking the tax off beer instead of champagne, the shocking price of tobacco, and the likelihood of an increase of railway rates, but for what we were seeking not a trace. None seem aware that what was described as the greatest and most significant event in the recent history of the English Church is taking place in this country. They pass us apparently oblivious to the fact that 300 archbishops and bishops of the Church of England are attending the Lambeth Conference. They have come from the ends of the earth, and to the ends of the earth they will again return, doubtless telling their congregations of the spiritual benefits they have derived from their long sea trips and first class hotel accommodation, and of the good it does one to come into close contact with the people of London who are so concerned with the state of religion in the various parts of the English-speaking world. It is a most remarkable gathering—the largest assembly of bishops, says the *Daily Telegraph* that has ever been brought together in these islands. It has never happened before. Perhaps it will never happen again. Who knows? The darkest cloud may have a silver lining.

A Farcical Assembly. * * *

These three hundred bishops had, according to the programme, a very comprehensive week's work. They rolled up their episcopal sleeves and discussed such questions as morality, marriage, Spiritualism, industrial and social problems, etc., and were one not quite used to these gatherings one might imagine that they meant something. But we know beforehand all that the Church ought to say on these topics, and from experience all that they will say. All that they ought to say is contained in their sacred books and in their confessions of faith. They should tell the world of labour that it must obey the

powers that be or run the risk of damnation. They should tell the women that it is their duty to obey their husbands, as Sarah on a famous occasion obeyed her husband, that they must keep silence in the churches—and inferentially in Parliament, that man was not made for her, but she was made for man, and her place is that of a subordinate. And they ought to also tell the people that no amount of morality will save them, that "good works," unless "they proceed from a heart purified by grace" "are of the nature of sin." It is all there in the official declarations of the Church and in "God's" book. But what they will say is something entirely different. They will say that a more cordial spirit ought to exist between employer and employed, that the spirit of love ought to animate them, that women must be given some place in the ministry of the Church, that it is bad to do evil, and good to do right, and after a number of generalities and commonplaces that are not worth sixpence a bushel, will sail away, having had a rattling good time at the expense of their constituents, and in better spirits for keeping up the solemn game of humbug and religious hocus-pocus.

* * *

Religion and Barbarism.

The *Daily Telegraph* in a leading article on the Conference says: "There was a time, at the beginning of the War, when it seemed as if mankind, stunned by the enormity of its sufferings, would turn again to religion for comfort, inspiration, and sustaining power. These expectations were not realized. The War lasted too long." There is a considerable amount of truth in this, even though it is not quite the kind of truth which is indicated by the *Daily Telegraph*. In the first inrush of primitive feeling consequent on the outbreak of War, it might well have seemed to the ordinary person that there would follow a revival of the most primitive form of thinking such as finds expression in religion. But we were not dealing with a people who had been simply neglectful of religion; they had been that, but they had also become possessed of a mass of information concerning the nature of religion, and of knowledge that was directly inimical to its claims. The result of this was, not as the *Daily Telegraph* says, "folk turned their faces despairingly elsewhere," but that the War came as a forcible reminder to them that the day of religious rule was about over, or was, at least, nearing its end. Had there been real religious belief in the majority of people, the War would not have had the effect of weakening belief. When did brutality and barbarism have that effect? Religion which could stand unharmed the Inquisition, the slaughter of Waldensians, Bartholomew massacres, and the thousand and one brutalities of the Christian ages, was not likely to be hurt by the comparative trifling brutality of the European War. It is civilization and not barbarism that kills religion. What the War did was to drive in on many minds the reflection that in the name of civilization we were cherishing the most barbarous of beliefs, and perpetuating the most dangerous of institutions. But brutality and

barbarism is no more injurious to religion than dirt and darkness is fatal to tuberculosis.

* * *

Another Death of Atheism.

But while it is obvious that religion was never at a lower point than it is at present, the decline must not be admitted. Even though people will not attend church, and openly smile at religious claims and clerical pretensions, it must still be assumed that *real* religion is stronger than ever, although what this real religion is no one knows. Thus, to cite once more the *Daily Telegraph*, "It is not that the world is irreligious in the sense of being atheistic. The very contrary is the case. We doubt if there was ever more practical religion than there is to-day. Good works abound on every hand. Institutions for the relief of suffering and poverty, which were once found only in association with religion, are now regarded as primary social needs, to be provided out of the taxes or the rates." Now, this "we are not growing atheistic" has been so common of late that it rouses suspicion. Several times within the last few weeks we have printed passages from preachers which asserted the same thing. And that makes one dubious. For men do not protest so much without cause; and those who understand the workings of the religious mind, with its trickiness, shallow dogmatism, and superficiality of view, will see in the statement the exact opposite of what it is intended we shall see. Atheism is commoner to-day than ever it was in the world's history; even the various British forms of disguise are wearing thin. The policy of ignoring Atheism is far more effective—from the religious point of view—than this one of a reiterated assurance that it does not exist. And it is hardly worthy of the *D. T.* to assume that because there are many institutions for grappling with poverty, therefore we are quite religious and not atheistic, particularly when, in the same paragraph, we are told that it is now the rule to claim that these institutions shall be taken from religious control and placed under secular rule. Oh, these dear, simple-minded journalists! This claim has been urged by Freethinkers from the time of Paine onward, and the first decisive action was taken by the men of the great French Revolution, which papers such as the *D. T.* used to inform us was altogether atheistic in origin and temper. And what God has to do with the rates is a question that quite puzzles one. Putting an institution on the rates may be an example of the care of man for man; putting God on the rates may be an example of the care of man for him; but it may be taken for granted that if God had cared for man, or if he could even have looked after himself, neither of the two things would have happened.

* * *

Pomp and Circumstances.

Time was when a gathering of 300 Bishops and Archbishops would really have been an event of national—perhaps international—significance. To-day a meeting of a Trades Union is of far greater significance to the vast majority of people. The bishops, as with the clergy in general, are to the body politic what the second stomach is to the man—a rudimentary structure testifying to a more primitive state of things, although still capable of setting up disease and disorganization. And they are in this state to-day because human thought has in its more instructed aspects left religion hopelessly in the rear. It is idle for the *Daily Telegraph* to talk in apologetic language of a Deity that is "subject to evolutionary development." That is sheer verbiage. It is not God that develops, but man; and it is his development that is fatal to God. To-day three hundred of his representatives meet, and there is not a single subject on which they can speak with authority,

or on which they can claim to possess information that cannot be obtained by anyone of average intelligence without their assistance. The medicine-man of a savage tribe now exerts far more religious influence than all the bishops of the Established Church. Whatever influence they have is of the underground order. It comes from their skill in this or that byway of shady diplomacy, or in their readiness to serve this or that threatened interest. But their day as agent of the supernatural is dead or dying. They stand as the discredited representatives of an intellectually discredited creed. The day has passed when the world of men and women took their marching orders from the Church. It is the Church that is now ready to obey almost any order on the one condition that it is permitted to exist.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Forgiveness of Sins.

WHEN Secularists attack certain Christian dogmas the claim is often put forward by apologists that such dogmas are no longer held except by a few old fogies here and there; and in some instances that is perfectly true. The orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, for example, has been almost universally abandoned. Very few now believe in the piacular, expiatory, or substitutional theory, which was so frightfully common sixty or seventy years ago. It was maintained that had Christ not died in the sinner's place, salvation would have been eternally impossible. His death placated, or propitiated, Heaven, and became the objective ground of the Divine favour towards guilty sinners. And yet, although the majority of modern divines have discarded that theory, there are a few who still cherish and proclaim it, among whom, apparently, and occupying a prominent and influential position, is the Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett, of Westminster Chapel, London. This eminent preacher contributed an article, entitled "The Forgiveness of Sins," to the *Christian World* for June 24. Of course, Dr. Jowett is not a professional theologian, nor does he employ many purely theological terms. He commands a magnificent pulpit diction, his sentences being, as a rule, most mellifluous, while his voice is like silver bells in tune. But he still clings to orthodoxy and preaches what is eulogized as the simple old Gospel. He is distinctively an Old Theologian, and has no sympathy whatever with the so-called New Theology.

He declares that the Divine forgiveness "is often very cheaply thought about," the conception being almost immoral. He says:—

What is this cheap conception? Forgiveness is regarded as the mere erasure of a score which stands against us. The slate is written over and over with obligations. It is covered with records of indebtedness which we cannot discharge. And then there comes a gracious hand which wipes the slate with a sponge and leaves it clean. And that is all there is in it. But the completed work of forgiveness is infinitely more than this. This scarcely begins the wonderful story. If we take the erasure along with other things which follow in the Divine sequence, would not for one moment make light of the merciful deed. I have incurred too heavy a debt against my Lord not to know what it means to have the deadly obligation cancelled.

It is wholly immaterial to us, at present, what the completed work of forgiveness is, the only important point being that Dr. Jowett accepts and preaches the dogma of erasure. His teaching is that God's forgiveness "is infinitely more than this"; but he is firmly convinced that complete erasure does take place. Let us at once cite his definition of forgiveness:—

Divine forgiveness means much more than erasure or cancellation. What is it? It is the restoration of a

relationship, the major relationship in human life. Forgiveness is a work of reconciliation, and it sets a man back in his primary relation as a child and friend of God. Until this maladjustment is rectified nothing else can be really true.

We can now see clearly that Dr. Jowett believes, not only in the Atonement, but also in the Fall, which rendered the Atonement necessary. We frankly admit that his position is thoroughly scriptural. He is rooted and grounded in Paulinism; and as a preacher of the Christian Gospel all this is entirely in his favour. It is not with the preacher, therefore, whom in many respects we highly admire, that we find fault, but with his Gospel, which we are bound to condemn as fundamentally and absolutely false. We reject the Fall, we deny the sinfulness, or lost condition, of human nature, and we repudiate the divinity and even the historicity of the Gospel Jesus. In our estimation the Gospel is not only untrue but also morally injurious and degrading. To believe in it is to take a step downwards. Take this erasure or cancellation, which is described as at least a part of the work of forgiveness, and a moment's serious reflection will convince you how untrue and immoral it is. St. Paul at once teaches and contradicts it. In Romans viii. 1, he says: "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ made me free from the law of sin and death"; but in Galatians vi. 7, comes the contradiction: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is no possibility of reconciling those two verses. There can be no agreement between Grace and Nature. In fact, Grace pretends to be able to release us from Nature's dominion, and give us complete independence of her. This, however, is utterly impossible, and has, of course, never been accomplished. Sometimes a man grows weary and restless in Nature's hands, and yearns to rend himself from her; but—

He may entreat, aspire,
He may despair, and she has never heed.
She drinking his warm sweat will soothe his need,
Not his desire.
She prompts him to rejoice,
Yet scares him on the threshold with the shroud.
He deems her cherishing of her best-endowed
A wanton choice.

Nature holds us with an iron grip, and there is no conceivable escape from her control. This is her immutable, inexorable law: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The score that is against us, the obligations written over and over on the slate, the records of indebtedness that cover it, all these, in so far as they are real, are indelible. Grace cannot wipe the slate with a sponge and leave it clean. As old Omar so well puts it:—

The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

The present is a child of the past, and the connection between parent and offspring cannot be severed. If there is a God, he too must do Nature's bidding; and the curious thing is that the theologians call him God of Nature as well as God of Grace, thereby landing him in astounding self-contradiction. As God of Nature he is made to say: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; but as God of Grace these are the words that proceed out of his mouth: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." We find it wholly impossible to believe in either God, Nature being to us the only thing that is. We are her offspring; in her we live and move and have our being; to her alone are we respon-

sible and must answer for all we think and do. Recognizing her as our mother, we sit at her feet and nestle close to her heart, studying, honouring, obeying, and using her. The only sin is disregard of or rebellion against her laws, and this sin cannot be forgiven. Our supreme duty is to grow out of and crush it, while to one another we owe loving service. As Meredith says in *The Burden of Strength*:—

If that thou hast the gift of strength, then know
Thy part is to uplift the trodden low;
Else in a giant's grasp until the end
A hopeless wrestler shall thy soul contend.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Genius with a Great Heart.

Chief of thy generation born of men,
Whom English praise acclaimed as English born.
—A. C. Swinburne.

Dickens was entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written.
—John Ruskin.

CHARLES DICKENS died fifty years ago, and the newspapers have been discussing his merits and demerits, particularly his merits as a writer. Nearly all agree that he was a great humourist, but few admit that he was a most potent force for progress. As sturdy a Democrat as William Cobbett, Dickens looked upon literature as a tower from which to shoot the arrows of scorn at all things which he considered evil. And these evil things were very numerous and very powerful. Thus, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, he attacked the cheap boarding-schools. In *Bleak House* he showed the bad effect of the law's delays. In *Hard Times* he dealt with strikes, and in *Little Dorrit* the strangling of private persons by the red-tape of Government offices, and the evils of debtors' prisons. *Martin Chuzzlewit* is not only concerned with the murderous methods of the old-time monthly nurses, but also exposed the swindles associated with emigration. Even in the *Pickwick Papers* the most light-hearted and irresponsible of his books written on the threshold of his career, he lashes religious hypocrisy and the "kill-joys" of his time.

Although Charles Dickens was buried in Westminster Abbey by an astute priesthood anxious to secure the glamour of a great name, he was himself a heretic. He had a very strong aversion to dogmas, and described himself as "morally wide asunder from Rome," whilst of Puritanism he was an uncompromising opponent. For some years he attended a Unitarian Chapel. With mission work he was unfavourably impressed, as evidenced by his writing:—

So Exeter Hall holds us in moral submission to missionaries, who (Livingstone always excepted) are perfect nuisances, and leave every place worse than they found it.

Dickens was a very strong opponent of Sabbatarianism, and he denounced the "unco' guid" in his famous pamphlet, *Sunday Under Three Heads*. When that stalwart Freethinker, Robert Morrell, founded the National Sunday League, Dickens helped the movement with money, and also gave readings from his own works for its benefit. An amusing instance of the great novelist's playfulness with regard to religion was his naming a dummy book in his library, *Evidences of Christianity by Henry the Eighth*. That keen critic, Matthew Arnold, noticed the strong strain of Secularism in Dickens's writings, and in his unforgettable *Friendship's Garland*, he pictured himself taking his foreign friend, Arminius, to the House of Commons to hear Sir William Harcourt "develop a system of unsectarian religion from the life of Mr. Pickwick."

Mr. Gilbert Chesterton has sought to explain the great and enduring popularity of Dickens's characters by calling him "the last of the mythologists." It is precisely this mythological quality in Dickens's writings which is the secret of his strength. Working at his best, he was a master of characterization and humour. In that marvellously diverse and luxuriant genius of his, he embodies a large slice of the life of his own time. If his sentiment savours of the footlights, and his humour is so often farce, he knew where to stop. In spite of all adverse criticism, Dickens remains the first and most popular of English novelists, and the *Pickwick Papers* is the prime favourite. Rising to great heights of humour, it stands in the goodly company of *Don Quixote* and *Gil Blas*. By design a mere sporting novel, written to order, sheer genius made it the *Iliad* of humour.

What is surprising about Dickens is the fact that he, a young journalist, who awoke one morning and found himself famous, should have taken such pains to improve. From writing newspaper English he became a master of language. He who wrote the melodramatic *Sketches by Boz*, drew the portrait of "Samuel Pecksniff," the nineteenth century "Tartuffe." "Little Nell" and "Sydney Carton" scarcely seem to have a common origin. In humour Dickens was a master from the first. The inimitable trial scene, *Bardell versus Pickwick*, written at the outset of his great career, placed him at a bound at the side of the great humourists of the world. For word-painting, the second chapter of *Martin Chuzzlewit* is as fine writing as any novelist has given us, and the description of the storm in *David Copperfield* evoked the whole-hearted enthusiasm of no less a critic than John Ruskin.

Great reputations are treated with scant reverence in these days by young writers seeking a bubble reputation, but it is difficult to imagine a time when Dickens will cease to be regarded as a great master of literature. The creator of nearly two thousand characters, he has been called reproachfully "the Cockney Shakespeare." It is an unwilling compliment. Dickens, like Shakespeare, was always a superb artist, and not a dauber. Dickens's characters have seized upon the popular imagination, and worked themselves into the English language, which, be it remembered, is the foremost language in the world, and is used by the largest number of people. "Bumble" is to everyone who reads the representative of parochial pomposity; "Stiggins," the religious humbug; "Bill Sykes," the criminal; "Pecksniff," the arch-hypocrite; "Squeers," the tyrannical schoolmaster. Dickens's phrases, no less than his characters, have passed into everyday speech. To say a thing "in a Pickwickian sense"; "If there are two crowds, shout with the loudest"; "Put the bottle on the chimley-piece"; "King Charles's head in the memorial"; "When found, make a note of"; "Codlin's the friend, not Short"; "Prunes and prisms"; "Sly, devilish sly"; "Like *Oliver Twist* to ask for more"; and a hundred others. No more signal proof of Dickens's puissant genius can be given than that his creations and phrases have worked themselves into the fibre of the English language.

MINNEMUS.

SARCASM.

One day, when Eve, in joyful mirth,
Perambulated on this earth,
She gazed at Adam's scant array
Of fig-leaves—two or three, they say—
And said, as only woman can,
"Its a good thing clothes don't make the man."

—*Freethinker*, July 3, 1909.

Science and the Occult.

V.

(Continued from p. 438.)

Far be from me to decry the efforts of eminent scientists to forge their links with the world beyond by any means they choose.....To the scientist, a widow or a mother, is only a unit for the purpose of experiment and percentage. To the professional medium she represents so much bread and butter. Assuredly these bereaved ladies should be invited to attempt to communicate with their dead husbands and their dead sons! The more the merrier, and there is no time like the present. We have a million souls just "gone over" in the full flush of manhood. The fodder of last year's cannon is splendid manure for the psychic harvests of the years to come. Carry on! Spread the glad tidings! Our glorious dead are all waiting to move tables and push glasses, and scrawl with planchettes and speak through trumpets, and throw mediums into ugly trances—at a guinea a time. There they are, "on the other side," long ranks of them, fresh from the supreme sacrifice. They are waiting to do these things for us before they "go on" further, into the utter unknown. Hurry up! Walk up, ye widows, a guinea is little to pay for a last word from your dead husbands. Many of you would give your immortal souls for it! Walk up, before it is too late. You may find, to begin with, they are "a little confused by the passing over," a "little unskilled" at the handling of these uncouth instruments of expression—the table, the glass, the trance. But be patient. They only need practice and will improve with time. Go often enough to the mediums, preferably to the same medium, and your dead will learn to communicate. And above all, "have faith." It is the faithful believer who gets the most gratifying results. Ah, yes. We know that "faithful believer." He is apt to be stirred by his emotions, and a little careless in the framing of his questions. Death has ever had for me one strong consolation—it brings the "peace that passeth all understanding".....And is my peace, when it comes, to be marred by this task of shifting tables, and chairs, and glasses, Sir Oliver? Am I to be at the beck and call of some hysterical guinea-grabbing medium—a sort of telephone boy in Heaven or Hell?—*E. H. Jones*, "The Road to *En-dor*," 1920, pp 43-44.

THE book from which the above extract is taken should be read by all interested in Spiritualism. The author, a lieutenant in the Royal Air Force, was taken prisoner at General Townshend's surrender in Mesopotamia, and along with many other officers, sent to the detention camp at Yozgad in the heart of Turkey. While there, Lieutenant Jones received a card from a relative containing instructions for making a *Ouija* board, which is simply a board with the letters of the alphabet arranged in a circle, within which a glass is placed mouth downwards. Two persons now place a finger lightly on the glass, close their eyes, and make their minds blank, then the glass should begin to move about and touch the letters.

Having nothing better to do, Mr. Jones and his fellow-officers decided to make one of these spook boards, thinking it would pass a few idle hours away. It did.

At first the experimenters got nothing. Night after night they gathered round the board without success. It is true the glass moved to the letters, but the letters formed no intelligible words, simply such jumbles as D F P B J Q, or T H R S W V. It grew too monotonous even for prisoners of war. At the end of a fortnight only four investigators were left. After another week of failure it was decided if they got nothing that night they would give it up. They tried hard but got nothing. "One more shot," said the despondent Doctor, "One more shot," echoed Mr. Jones, and, as he said it, the Devil of Mischief whispered that the Doctor must not go empty away. At the very next attempt the word "Sally" came through, upon which the Doctor, much excited, asked if she had anything to tell us:—

Sally had quite a lot to tell us. She made love to Alec Matthews (much to his delight) in the most bare-faced way, and then coolly informed him that she

preferred sailor-boys. Price (of the Navy) beamed, and replied in fitting terms. She talked seriously to the Doc. (who had murmured—out of jealousy, I expect—that Sally seemed a brazen hussy), and warned us to be careful what we said in the presence of a lady. (That "presence of a lady" startled us—most of us hadn't seen a lady for nearly three years). She accused me of being unbecomingly dressed. (Pyjamas and a blanket—quite respectable for a prisoner). Then she complained of "feeling tired," made one or two most unladylike remarks when we pressed her to tell us more, and "went away."¹

Mr. Jones fully intended telling them that he had steered the glass with his eyes shut from his memory of the position of the letters, but they all seemed so happy with the excitement of the thing that it seemed a pity to undeceive them. They theorized "as to who Sally could be. Was she dead, or alive, or non-existent? Was the glass guided by a spook or by subconscious efforts? Then round again on to the old argument of why the glass moved at all. Was it the unconscious exercise of muscular force by one or both of the mediums, or was it some external power?" Others dropped in and gave extracts from their experience; tales of strange and unaccountable things were told:—

We talked, and we talked, and we talked, forgetting the war and the sentries outside and the monotony of imprisonment. And always the talk rounded back to Sally and the spook-glass that moved no one knew how. The others slipped away to bed, and we were left alone, Alec, Price, the Doc., and myself. I braced myself to confess the fraud, but Doc. raised his tin mug: "Here's to Sally and success, and many more happy evenings," said he. *Facilis descensus Averni!* I lifted my mug with the rest, and drank in silence. Little I guessed how much water was to flow under the bridges before I could make my confession, or under what strange conditions that confession was to be made.²

The next morning Mr. Jones awoke penitent and ashamed. His first impulse was to jump out of bed, run across, and tell them at once. They had all accepted the wonders of the previous night so uncritically, it was shameful to deceive them.

"Don't," said the Devil of Mischievous. "Stay where you are. It was only a rag. If you really want to tell them, any old time will do. Besides, it's beastly cold this morning, and you've got a headache. Stay in bed!"

"But it wasn't a rag. We were experimenting in earnest," said I. "That's why it was so mean." I got one foot out of bed.

"Stay where you are, I tell you," said the Devil. "You gave them a jolly good evening, and you can have plenty more."

I pulled my foot back under the blankets again. Yes, we had a jolly evening—the Doc. himself had said so. I would think it over a little longer.

I thought it over—and started up again. "You ass!" said the Devil. "They'll only laugh at you! The whole thing's a fraud, anyway. Let them find out for themselves. Oliver Lodge, Conan Doyle, and the rest of the precious crew are victims in the same way."³

Unfortunately for Mr. Jones' good resolutions, a brother officer was outside on the landing, doing Muller's exercises, and greeted him with,—

"Hello, Bones, you sly dog!" said he. "What's up, Wardie?" "Oh, you don't get at me with your larks," he said, grinning at me. "I know you, you old leg-puller!" I made to pass on. "You and your Sally," he chuckled....."How's it done?" "You've seen! You sit with your finger on a glass, and the glass moves about. "Yes, yes, it moves all right. But this Sally business? These answers?" "That's what everybody's trying to find out, Wardie." "I'll find out one of these

fine days, Bones, me boy!" He dug his thumb into my ribs and laughed at me. "Right-o, Wardie," said I, and went back into my room. My dander was up.¹

Mr. Jones now made up his mind to carry the game on for another evening or two, and then face the music and take his punishment.

When the evening came round, there were Alec, Doc., and Price waiting round the spook-board with their tongues out, wanting more "Sally." I sat down with the unholy joy of the small boy preparing a snowball in ambush for some huge and superior person of uncertain temper, and with not a little of his fear of being found out before the snowball gets home on the target. "Now Doc.," said I, trying to avert suspicion from myself, "don't you get laughing. I'm beginning to suspect you." "And I'm suspecting you," he laughed.

For some minutes nothing came but a series of unintelligible letters. The reason for this was simple; he had not the foggiest notion of what to say, and could only push the glass about indiscriminately. However, another officer, who had had previous experience with the *Ouija* board, now appeared, and ordered the spook to attend to business. He used his parade-ground voice, saying there was "no sense in being afraid of the blighter." The spook, however, told him to go to a warmer climate, and ordered him to go away, declining any more communications until he was gone. Thus was the spook's authority established once and for all.

And so the thing went on for several nights, to everybody's great amusement. Mr. Jones had no definite idea of building up the spook's reputation; but it grew, like the British Empire, by tackling each problem as it arose. He hugged himself with the idea of the punishment he would get when the "rag" was discovered, and fought his hardest to stave off the evil day. He says: "I would 'rag around a bit' and then withdraw as soon as circumstances permitted me to do so gracefully. But circumstances never permitted. One thing led to another, and my 'commitments' in the spook-world grew steadily, as those of our Empire have done in this."

So the thing went on. Says the author:—

Our *seances* began to be a popular form of evening entertainment. Quite a little crowd would gather round the board, and ask questions of the spook. For the most part, at this stage, the audiences were sceptical—they suspected a trick somewhere, though they could not imagine how it was done. Curiously enough, suspicion centred not on me, but on the perfectly innocent Doctor. The poor man was pestered continually to reveal the secret. He swore vehemently that he had nothing to do with it, but it was pointed out to him that the glass only wrote when he was there—a fact he could not deny.

Mr. Jones, it should be stated, never gave replies when experimenting with anybody but the Doctor. He nearly gave the game away at the start by commencing a reply in conjunction with another comrade, but the thought struck him just in time.

My readers will be thinking that this is all very trivial stuff, unworthy of attention; but I ask them to suspend their judgment until the end.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

A HOLY POPE.

When in 1474, the death of Sixtus IV. was received in Rome with a pæan of joy, people commented not so much upon his selling benefices to the highest bidder, and his other devices of extorting money, as upon the manner in which he rewarded the boys who served his unnatural lusts by granting to them rich bishoprics and archbishoprics.—H. C. Lea, "History of the Inquisition."

¹ E. H. Jones, *The Road to Endor*, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹ E. H. Jones, *The Road to Endor*, p. 8.

Criminals.

The real thieves of Europe, the real sources of deadly wars in it, are the people who live by percentages on the labour of others instead of by fair wages on their own.

—John Ruskin.

As long as the police and soldiers continue to prevent poor people from freely using vacant land, and compel them to use only the money manufactured and controlled for the benefit of usurers, there will be dangerous classes in the community.

For as long as it is very difficult to find employment at decent living wages, and comparatively easy to swindle and steal, there will be card-sharpers, pick-pockets, and burglars. And so long as women find starvation staring them in the face, and can escape only by the sacrifice of their chastity, there will be harlots.

So long as there are working men intelligent enough to know that they are being robbed of a large part of the wealth they produce by the enforced laws of the land, but not intelligent enough to know that such injustice cannot be righted by violence, there will always be men eager to try to overthrow one form of government by violence and set up another form of government by violence.

In short, so long as the Church, by stifling the mind, and the State, by enslaving both mind and body, through its laws that are so partial to the rich, continue to produce dunces, criminals, and paupers, in such large numbers and varieties, there will always be dangerous classes composed of those who are ignorant, impoverished, and ostracized, so that they have nothing to lose, either in property or reputation, and to whom social disorder is profitable.

Neither the Church nor the State objects in the least to robbery, prostitution, slavery, or murder. They only object to having them done in a manner forbidden by statute law. To break into a house and steal a few things is the wrong kind of robbery. To form a combine in sewing-cotton and rob the public of millions is the right kind of robbery. To make a money bargain with a man and omit any religious ceremony is the wrong kind of prostitution. To make such a bargain and include the ceremony is the right kind of prostitution. To kill a person with a knife or pistol is the wrong kind of murder. To blockade a country and starve millions of innocent people to death is the right kind of murder. To catch a man and hold him in personal bondage is the wrong kind of slavery. To prevent him from using vacant land and compel him to use only one kind of money, and thus starve him into submission is the right kind of slavery. I admit that all those who break the laws of the Church and the State for immoral purposes are dangerous people, but it would be waste of time to direct attention to them because it needs no brains to understand that they are criminals. Listen to the clergy, how they rail against drunkards, and harlots, and law breakers of every kind; hear them denounce the wrong kind of stealing, impurity, and murder. Christ did not do that, he kept company with the very kind of people his modern followers are for ever denouncing. He is very good to worship, but it would be downright insanity to imitate him, or even believe what he said, according to them. Listen to the judges on the bench, those embodiments of wisdom, justice, and goodness. Hear them lecture the poor fools who do not know the proper way to be impure, to steal, and kill. Read the writings of the honest and virtuous editors warning us against the Bolsheviks, each of whom is supposed to carry something concealed about his person that is liable to explode and blow up the Government.

With all this instruction and warning from the truly good about the truly bad, why waste time in repeating it? I want to call attention to some classes which seem to me far more dangerous than these paltry sinners. And I do not hesitate to assert that those who plunder, enslave, and murder their fellow-beings according to law, or who use political or monetary power to escape the penalty of the law, are more dangerous to the welfare of society than common criminals. Whole classes of people now hold vacant land out of use and control the currency, in strict accordance with law and with the whole "machinery of justice"—the courts, prisons, police, and soldiers—to enforce the wrong. Those who compose these classes are not all rich. Some of them are working people; for a working man who manages to save a few pounds is just as eager to speculate in land or to take advantage of the infamous money monopoly as anybody else. I say that such people are more dangerous than burglars; for a burglar can rob you of only a part of what you have earned, but a land or money monopolist can prevent you from earning anything at all and place you entirely at the mercy of the employing class.

Moreover, our wealthy and influential politicians care nothing for our principles of government. They obey the laws or not, just as suits their own interest or convenience. Did not Sir Edward Carson conspire with other leading Tories to defeat the Home Rule Act and make armed resistance to its provisions? Yet he shortly afterwards was raised to the Cabinet, and now presumes to lecture us on the sanctity of "law and order." And most of these dangerous men are members of the Church, and parade their piety. And the clergy defend them. You cannot find a prominent church of any denomination in which there are not some of these dangerous men who get rich by wronging others, and the pastor is their friend. At every banquet of wealthy monopolists and dishonest politicians you will find at least one well-fed parson to ask a blessing, or respond to a toast as the wine goes round.

The Church is hand in glove with every respectable social injustice. It is idle to deny it. Every despot is backed up by the Church. Every unjust monopoly—especially those of banking and land—has what is called the "moral support" of the Church. Every millionaire has his minister. Every plutocrat has his pastor. I do not say these godly men know what they are doing, but they are most certainly giving the sanction of religion to the conduct of the most unscrupulous and dangerous men on earth. It is useless to point to the hospitals and charitable societies, and say these are the glory of the Church. I point to our corrupt and dishonest politicians now in high office; to the secret bargains of our diplomats, financiers, and profiteers; to the palaces of the idle rich on the one hand and the crowded, insanitary slums of the industrious poor on the other, and say these are the shame of the Church, because she deceives the poor and fawns upon the rich.

We are in small danger from burglars and pickpockets and bomb-throwers. These are feeble folk. They steal a few valuables, or kill a man or two, at most. But what harm can they do that will compare with the crimes of the diplomats, financiers, and politicians who debauch the morals of a nation for their own sordid ends? Your man of fame who gets office by bribery and intrigue; your dishonest legislator; your scheming and cruel monopolist who uses the law for his own aggrandizement; your ignorant or hireling editor; your blind or cowardly priest—these make up our really dangerous classes. Our police are watching the resorts of foreign aliens, wherein they say ferocious Bolsheviks are planning to blow up the Government. They are

quite off the track. Let them rather watch the board-rooms of banks, combines, and syndicates—the fountains of militarism, the springs of political and social corruption. If they really wish to find the men who are poisoning Liberty and making happiness impossible, let them go to these high places, and let them not forget to go to church.

G. O. WARREN.

"The Complete Infidel."

Being a letter addressed to an ardent Plymouth Brother who had spent an exciting hour trying to convert me.

DEAR MR. S.,—In order to avoid mistakes when you come to relate your adventures among the unbelievers, I am setting down as shortly as possible an outline of my opinions for your guidance.

I believe that in the beginning there was no beginning. In other words, that matter and energy have always existed, just as they are admitted to be indestructible, and so will last for ever. I believe that worlds (stars and planets) develop, live, and decay as men do, and from their ruins ultimately arise new worlds, to pass through the same series of changes.

I believe that the claim of cause and effect is unbroken in all things, and that therefore all the causes existing to-day will give rise to all the effects existing to-morrow or a thousand years hence, including the men to come hereafter, and their nature, morals, and ideas which also necessarily arise from causes gone before.

I believe that the human race is developed from lower types, commencing with the single celled microscopic creatures of the ancient seas; which, in the first resort, were themselves produced by chemical or other natural action from non-living matter. The history of the human race has been one of continual, though slow, *rise* from brutedom to knowledge and power; which rise may, I hope, continue for thousands, perhaps millions of years. The race is already of great age, possibly mounting into millions, certainly into hundreds of thousands of years, though only for seven or eight thousand years has a point been reached at which it could leave intelligent traces of itself as "history."

As regards God, I believe that no such being exists or ever existed, except in the mistaken interpretations put by men on natural facts. I consider it ridiculous to think that a man-like being, with likes and dislikes, and who rather fancies hearing himself praised, is the creator of a universe possibly infinite, and certainly greater than any idea of God. I believe, moreover, that the facts of Nature, its utter carelessness of suffering; its whole system of one race living by devouring another; its earthquakes, fires, floods, famines, and diseases; its elaborate parasites; its production of monsters and imbeciles, prove that there is no moral purpose at the back of things.

Christ I consider to have been, at the most, a Jewish preacher like the rest, but one whose teaching contains absolutely nothing new, nothing which is not to be found in older religions and writings before his time. All the sacraments and doctrines of the Christian religion, moreover, are simply adopted or modified from older creeds.

I believe that the main purpose a man should set himself is to live a good life, and to obtain as deep a knowledge as possible of the world and of the universe before his individuality is for ever extinguished at death. Conscience and the struggles of the moral life are simply the outcome of the fact that civilized social life is a very new thing in race-history; and that the social instincts, the motives of morality, are as yet imperfectly developed, while the brutal instincts are only imperfectly weeded out. But as the race has gradually risen, so the individual can gradually rise, and in so doing co-operate in the development of a higher type of intelligence and a nobler type of humanity. Not only virtue, but also knowledge, is its own reward.

Immortality I consider to be an idle dream. I cannot say that I have any real desire for it, nor do I see anything terrible in the idea of extinction. When I am extinct, I shall neither be sorry for the fact nor aware of it. The human race has a great adventure before it in the ages after

we are gone; and if to this certainty we can add the hope (which seems to me probably correct) that not only on the earth but elsewhere, and through all time, Nature tends to develop intelligent life, we can lie down contentedly when our powers fail, knowing that the great experience, Life, does not end with us. We are part of Nature. In us Nature becomes self-conscious, criticises and corrects herself; and the death of our individual minds is as nothing while that great consciousness remains.

You can take my word for it that the acceptance of these views does not lead to moral degradation. I have seen in the lives of other Freethinkers, and experienced in my own, the severance of religion and morality without loss, and I really think with gain to the latter. I am not so sorry for you as you probably are for me, for I do not imagine that your opinions will be rewarded with "torture for ever and ever," such as you warned me to think of; nevertheless, I am very certain that your mind is full of illusions. So with best wishes, though somewhat slender hopes, for your speedy recovery.

I am, yours sincerely,

H. TRUCKELL.

Acid Drops.

New school accommodation is needed at Cudworth, Yorks, and the Roman Catholics propose building a school to accommodate some 200 children, leaving the cost of the upkeep of the school about £1,068 annually to the local authorities. The matter is at present before the Board of Education, which has just held an inquiry on the matter, and will presently give its decision. The two parties in the case are the local urban council and the Roman Catholics, and we hope that the Board will decide in favour of the former. It is a monstrous principle to work on, that because a body of sectarians decide they want something which a council school does not provide, that they are, therefore, entitled not to build a school of their own—that is a right which no one challenges, but that by providing a sum of money, in this case, £400, they can saddle the whole body of the rate-payers with an annual expenditure of nearly three times the amount for ever. It is a matter in which the State clearly gets the worst of the bargain financially, to say nothing of the educational disadvantage involved in the plan. It is time that the State learned to act with some amount of common sense and justice in the matter.

The Grocers' Federation held a Conference at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the Dean of Durham sent a special message pleading with them for "a high standard of honour." We wonder why? We venture to think that if the ordinary grocer adulterated the article he sells to the same extent that the clergy adulterate theirs, he would soon find himself in the police-court. The impudence of the clergy knows no limit. Dean Inge, with a better sense of the fitness of things said he did not feel moved to send a special message to grocers.

Most people would agree that buildings, such as Westminster Abbey, should be kept in a state of repair however much they may disagree with the uses to which they are at present put. But there is small reason why there should be an appeal for public charity for the unnecessary repairs to the Abbey. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have very ample resources, and the funds might well come from that source. That might mean paying the bishops and others less liberally, but there would be no great harm done in that. And while the Commissioners were on the task of repairing property, it would be well to inquire if all the house property, from which the Commissioners desire revenue, is also in a state of wholesome repair.

The Vicar of Leeds says that to ask the Church to celebrate the marriages of divorced persons is like asking an honourable man to tell lies. Really, the Vicar appears to have a very sensitive conscience—in some directions. If the Church had an equally strong objection to lies in all

directions, it would stand much higher in the public estimation. But perhaps the Vicar feels that to ask the Church to tell *more* lies is to add to a burden that is already sufficiently heavy.

Most reasonable and decent-minded people will feel inclined to congratulate the House of Commons on the conclusion it came to concerning the Amritsar massacre. To excuse the wholesale shooting of unarmed civilians on the ground that the military officer in charge thought it best to set an example is to hand the whole of the civil population over to the mercies of the military. But it is an illuminating fact that quite a number of General Dyer's champions on the spot have been clergymen and missionaries who were in India ostensibly for the benefit of the natives. The latest is a Miss Sherwood, a lady missionary, a letter from whom was read in the House during the debate, justifying the General's action because he had saved "India and us from the miseries and cruelties of the Mutiny." Miss Sherwood is evidently not quite of the stuff of which martyrs are made, and it is quite clear that she as well as others were suffering from a bad state of panic. The Secretary for War described the statement that India was saved from mutiny as rubbish.

The Secretary for India was almost quoting from a paragraph in this column of a week or so ago when he said there was a theory abroad that an Indian "is a person who is tolerable as long as he obeys your orders." That, we think, is the attitude of the white man generally towards the coloured races—black, brown, and yellow—all the world over. Nothing seems capable of convincing him that any man whose skin is not white can possibly be on the same level as himself. The coloured people exist as the natural food for the white ones. They may be treated kindly, but they must be kept under. We think anyone who talks to people who have come home will agree with that conclusion on the relations of the two peoples; and, as we have pointed out before, it is a phenomenon that is peculiarly a product of the Christian ages. The Christian interpretation of the brotherhood of man has never been allowed to interfere with it. And it is psychologically responsible for the maintenance of the missionary business; for there again it is the superior Christian dispensing to the inferior coloured man the benefits of the white man's Gospel.

"The Stranglehold of the Church" is the title of an article by Mr. Newman Flower in the *Evening Standard*. There is nothing in the article of special note save that it should appear where it does. It says in a very mild form some of the very mildest things that have been said in these columns for nearly forty years, but we suppose we ought to feel pleased that the ordinary press is within that distance of the *Freethinker*. One day we may expect them to get closer, but in the meantime it may be taken as a sign that the general breaking away from religion is so evident that the newspapers can no longer ignore the fact. Says Mr. Flower, "Congregations are dwindling everywhere. Women—the major portion of the average congregation—no longer attend as they did. Men, frock-coated and eminently respectable, who in the past years never missed a Sunday's attendance, are now the leading lights of golf-club Sabbaths." Everyone has known this for years, but when everyone knows a thing about religion, that is when our delightful press publishes it as an item of special information. It is a daredevil institution.

Mr. Flower notes how helpless the Church was during the War—which is not quite just to the Church. For it was not helpless; it was very helpful—for making war. None worked harder to keep the war fever alive than the Churches; none did more to disseminate the stupid "propaganda" stories that were afloat than the Churches. It is well to give the Churches their due, and to recognize the fact that there has never been a war to which the Churches as a whole have not given their cordial support. Without that support war might have been far more difficult than it has been.

We do not quite understand, therefore, what Mr. Flower means when he says that the Church was constructed for

war, not for peace. If Mr. Flower were not a newspaper writer, he would recognize that wars are made in times of peace, and that if the Churches had the right kind of influence during times of peace, wars would not occur. For the Church is an international institution; it is in all the countries that are the principal war-makers, and their influence might be decisive. Besides, Mr. Flower might ask himself what kind of influence the Churches have exerted since the Armistice in the direction of securing a durable peace? Are they doing anything to eliminate the spirit of militarism from the councils of the nations, or to bring up the new generation with a proper view of the evils of militarism, whether existing in Germany or elsewhere? Everyone knows that they are doing nothing. They are in peace what they are in war—mere opportunists; and that means a class of people who miss every opportunity for doing the right thing, and never miss an opportunity for doing the wrong one.

Nonconformists and Anglicans are joining hands in Leeds in an endeavour to evangelize the city. Open-air meetings are to be held, and also "group meetings," at which tramwaymen and others are to be talked to. Christianity is to be presented "irrespective of doctrinal interpretation or sectarian emphasis," which sounds like "For God's sake call yourself Christian, no matter what you mean by it!" For what on earth is a Christianity that hasn't any doctrine? At most it can only mean that Nonconformists and Anglicans are finding themselves in such desperate straits that they are beginning to realize that if they don't hang together, they stand a precious good chance of hauging separately.

The remarkable thing about the movement is its proof of the fact that these parsons are as far as ever from understanding the nature of the revolt against Christianity. They will insist in treating the one who rejects Christianity—particularly if he happens to be a working man—as doing so from sheer ignorance. The truth is that the ordinary man or woman who has given up Christianity knows far more of the relation of that creed to modern thought than does the ordinary parson. The air of superiority assumed by the parson is as ridiculous as was the pretension to supernatural illumination. And so these evangelists will find if they run up against the genuine Freethinker, whether he happens to be a "working man" or not.

We are sorry to see our contemporary, the *Star*, taking its information from Christian sources, without, apparently, checking it. Thus, one of the Bishops at the Lambeth Conference is the Bishop of the Mackenzie River district, known to his brother Bishops as the Bishop of the North Pole. There are many Eskimos in his district, and the *Star* goes on to say:—

The Eskimos, who have not yet come under Christian influence, are filthy and treacherous. They practice polygamy and infanticide, and they kill off the aged and infirm when they are unable to hunt. But the Christian Eskimos are clean and self-respecting, and 75 per cent. of them can read and write in their own language as translated by the missionaries.

Now, this is clearly taken from Christian sources, and we advise the *Star* writer, and others, to turn up a standard work such as Nansen's *Eskimo Folk*, and he will see how much injury has been done the natives in the attempt to "civilize" them, and also that someone has been practising the good old Christian game of "lying for the greater glory of God."

The first step towards a nation being a real nation is to annex something. The Zionists have been holding a Congress during the past week at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street. Lord Rothschild presided at the meeting on the 9th, and before leaving announced that someone had walked off with his umbrella. The question for discussion now will be, Was it an annexation or the exercise of a mandate?

A lunatic was found hiding in a church at Egham, Surrey. The choice of residence throws some little doubt on the alleged insanity. Perhaps he wanted to hear the sermon.

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.

J. BREESE.—Glad to learn that you made good use of back numbers. See "Acid Drops."

W. J.—Will take your hint; but we are not so optimistic as you are about converting the clergy. The majority will only be converted as they find their congregations leaving them. That is the one thing that has hitherto caused them to move. The *Review* seems quite a good one of its kind, but there was nothing in the issue sent that seemed to call for special treatment.

R. H. A.—Sorry we do not know the address you require.

E. LECHMERE.—A very interesting record, of which we hope to make use shortly.

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

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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. Vane, 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.

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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.

A few weeks ago we had an inquiry from several of our readers as to whether it would be possible to arrange for parties of Freethinkers to be conducted around the Egyptian section of the British Museum. We are now glad to say that Mr. F. W. Read, a very capable Egyptologist, has undertaken to act as guide to a party on the afternoon of Saturday, July 24. Those wishing to join the party will assemble under the portico of the Museum at 3 o'clock prompt. We hope that our readers will avail themselves of this offer. We are quite sure they will find the trip both enjoyable and instructive.

In a foreword to *Theism Found Wanting* (Watts & Co., 1s. 6d.), Mr. John M. Robertson gives his opinion that a fresh discussion of Theism is desirable, and with that we quite agree. And, so far as the scope of Mr. Godfrey's pamphlet will admit, he does, in the course of thirty-two

pages, give a closely-reasoned attack on the master superstition. The argument throughout is earnest in tone and serious in manner, and in a lengthy introduction Mr. Godfrey supplies what one may call a spiritual autobiography which adds to the attractiveness of his essay. Mr. Godfrey was originally himself a clergyman, and this adds force to his remarks, and to the personal testimony of the whole. For the evidential value of a man of the author's type, who is driven from Theism by the dual forces of intellectual and moral revolt, is far greater than the testimony of those who have persisted in the old ruts in spite of all that makes to the contrary. It is the testimony of a man who thought too highly, if we may paraphrase slightly his own words, of his own personal integrity to continue to profess belief in a deity when he found that such retention would involve a lowering of his ideals. There is always room for that type of mind in the world of Freethought, although there appears to be none in the Churches. Mr. Godfrey's indictment cannot be answered, so we feel safe in prophesying that it will be, by the religious world ignored.

An interesting little discussion has been going on at Barnes in connection with Sunday games. The question raised was whether games should be permitted on Barnes and Sheen Commons, and, as the result of meetings that were held, the Council decided that the games should not be permitted. So for the moment the bigots triumph, but it can only be a temporary victory. The rate of religious disillusioning is going on too rapidly for this particular example of British hypocrisy to stand for much longer in the way of a rational Sunday. We congratulate the Councillors who spoke at the meetings in favour of the Sunday games, and although defeated at the moment, they have every cause to regard themselves as the advance guard of victory.

On the Council itself the Richmond Civic Association had the impudence to invite the local Board of Guardians to be officially represented at a Church Service to be held on Richmond Green on Sunday, July 11. On this we are glad to see that Mr. Brenton moved that the invitation be not accepted, and properly objected to the Board taking any official part in so sectional a matter as a gathering of the Churches. We are glad to see that the Board had the sense to adopt the resolution, and we hope that other Boards of Guardians and public bodies will have the sense and the dignity to follow so excellent an example. The sooner these bodies cease to permit themselves to be dragged round at the tail of a religious procession, the better.

The *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, with perhaps an eye on its local circulation, is surprised that Mr. Brenton should have moved such a resolution, and says that he seems to have some quarrel with the Churches. We do not see that aspect of the matter arises. Mr. Brenton took the quite legitimate attitude that the Board, as a Board, had nothing to do with this particular religious gathering, and had therefore no right to appear in its collective capacity. A man who runs a public paper ought to have enough sense of justice to see this, and in connection with any subject other than religion would see it. But where religion is concerned, it is almost hopeless to expect a sense of fair play to prevail.

From a recent post we see that Mr. Percy Ward is still busy at Chicago. He appears to be holding a series of monthly discussions, in addition to his usual lectures, and one of his recent opponents was Mr. Frank Harris. The subject of the discussion was: "Has Life any Meaning?" which Mr. Ward took as the equivalent of pessimism and championed. The result was what one might have expected. A shower of words with very little in the way of positive results. After all, the final disproof of absolute pessimism is that life persists. And as the persistence of life implies a balance of pleasure-giving experiences, what Jane Hume Clapperton called Meliorism, always has the last and the triumphant word. Still, we are pleased to see that Mr. Ward is still at work and busy in the attack on the great superstition.

Mr. F. J. Gould has written a very useful eight-page pamphlet on *The League of Nations*, which is intended to serve as the basis for lessons or addresses to young persons. We can think of no better subject that could be utilized in this way, and in the art of putting a lesson so as to make it attractive Mr. Gould has few equals. The pamphlet will be sent gratis on receipt of postage, which we suppose would be about one penny.

"Is Christianity Played Out?"

The eclipse of Nonconformity is an eclipse of vital Christianity experienced by all Christian Churches.....and Church of England, Roman Catholicism, the Scottish Presbyterians, even the Salvation Army, are all to be equally included in the indictment. One asks, Is Christianity played out?—*Joseph King in "The Nation," June 19, 1920.*

THE enormous gap between the mentality of the present period, as illustrated in the above question, and that of the Victorian Age, was vividly brought home to the writer by picking up the *Nation*, immediately after perusing *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*. This noble philanthropist, whose name is indissolubly connected with the passing of the Factory Acts, in his efforts to alleviate the terribly inhuman conditions under which wealth was produced at the beginning of last century, was permeated with the most ardent piety. The copious diaries he kept, reveal the narrowing and distorting influence religion exercised over a mind otherwise so generous and sympathetic. His many activities rightly earned him the title of "The Workers' Friend," and yet his biographer (Edwin Hodder) notes that year after year, as fresh attempts were made to procure the openings of museums and places of amusement on Sunday, so Lord Shaftesbury was zealous in organizing fresh efforts of resistance. "For over forty years he kept up an unceasing warfare to advance the claims of the Day of Rest on the conscience and intelligence of the nation, and especially of the working classes." He had placed himself at the head of many societies for guarding against any encroachment on the sanctity of the Christian Sabbath, and thus he could at any time put in motion a vast system of religious machinery to resist the movements made by Secularists and others for "violating the Lord's Day." Foremost in the agitation against the introduction of Sunday bands into metropolitan parks in 1856, we find the aged peer has learnt nothing by the passing of time, and in his eighty-fourth year in 1885, he is equally strenuous against a motion in favour of opening the Natural History Museum at South Kensington on Sunday afternoons.

The blinkers fastened on the mind by theological bias are much in evidence in a description of Liverpool written in his diary:—

Surveyed the town, admired its buildings, commended its broad streets, and wondered at its wealth.....Ships, colonies, and commerce with a vengeance, and yet (I thank God for it) there seem to be more churches here than in any town I have seen. Thousands of the dirtiest, worst-clad children I ever saw through the streets, presenting a strange inconsistency with the signs of luxury all around.....But Liverpool is a town of good repute; though "her merchants are princes" they serve God with a portion of their wealth and raise temples to His name and worship.

With what *naïveté* does the earnest philanthropist here deliver himself into the hands of a satirist whose humorous arrows might soon make of him a second Saint Sebastian! That such an acute intellect should comment on the juxtaposition of churches and poverty without seizing on their inevitable connection of cause and effect, is a tribute to the effective cramping of the facul-

ties when one dawdles under the deadly Upas tree of religion. To the same cause must be attributed the loss of historic proportion when he declares in 1870 that to exclude by Act of Parliament religious teaching from schools founded and supported by rates was "an outrage upon the national feelings.....and the grossest violation of the rights of religious liberty that was ever perpetrated or even imagined, in the worst times by the bigotry of any Government whatever, foreign or domestic."

At the same time, in his continuous fight against the greed of employers, Lord Shaftesbury had occasion again and again to record the lack of support from the Christianity which he so strongly upheld. "I find," he writes, "that Evangelical religionists are not those on whom I can rely. The Factory question and every question for what is called 'humanity' receive as much support from the 'men of the world' as from the men who say they will have nothing to do with it!"

He complains that the vast multitudes of the people are surrendered almost without a struggle to the experimental philosophy of infidels and democrats. "To whom," he asks, "should I have naturally looked for chief aid? (on behalf of Children's Employment Commission). Why, undoubtedly to the clergy! Quite the reverse; from them I have received no support or next to none.....as a body they have done, are doing, and will do nothing. And this throughout my whole career!"

In 1848, the year of revolutions, he exclaims: "Talk of the dangerous classes, indeed! The dangerous classes in England are not the people! The dangerous classes are the lazy ecclesiastics of whom there are thousands, and the rich who do no good with their money! I fear them more than whole battalions of Chartists!"

Seeking to pilot the Vivisection Bill through Committee, he notes that only seven bishops put in an appearance, and those left early. "The Archbishop of York, the most noisy of all the Bench in favour of the Bill, had gone abroad. Gloucester and Bristol, more pretentious even than York, could not stay. Canterbury the same. Winchester the same. Of what use are the Bishops in the House of Lords?" he asks in despair.

Lord Shaftesbury's comments on contemporary statesmen throw some interesting sidelights on their characters. John Bright was ever his most malignant opponent, and Cobden was almost as determined. Gladstone would give no support to the Ten Hours' Bill. "He was the only member who endeavoured to delay the Bill which delivered children from the mines and pits; and never did he say a word on behalf of the factory children until when defending slavery in the West Indies, he taunted Buxton with indifference to slavery in England." Of Beaconsfield, on whom such fierce light is being shed in the Press, Lord Shaftesbury's opinion was not high. "D'Izzy is seeking everywhere for support," he writes in 1868. "He is all things to all men and nothing to anyone. He cannot make up his mind whether to be Evangelical, Neologian, or Ritualistic; he is waiting for the highest bidder."

On closing the volume, one feels that the issues which agitated our forefathers are no longer vital. The religion which they defended "against the encroachments of infidels" was to them alive and palpitating with truth. Its defence is now in the hands of those who are merely interested in keeping up the *status quo*. The churches are fast emptying, and to subscribe to their dogmas, in the face of latter-day knowledge, is an indication of ignorance or insincerity. The query, "Is Christianity played out?" may be answered truthfully in the affirmative.

FRANCES PREWETT.

An Epic and an Episode.

WHICH was the one and which the other I am not quite sure. The epic was concerned with a week abroad, the episode with an hour at home. Things remote in time and place, yet intimately connected, and throwing on each other a flood of light. For the episode and its consequences I am indebted to the noble anger of a lady Socialist, than whom—but I rather choose to wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you in any form of base ingratitude for oft-repeated countenance and kindly acts (note: only half of this sentence is Shakespeare's). The lady I admire, within her limits, even as I admire myself, within my own perhaps cruder, and possibly wider bounds. Let me pay those respects, explain, apologize, but never reproach, as in the form of a letter:—

Dear Madam,—I have just awakened from a very unpleasant dream, or rather, I but dream again after the brief reality of those grey and austere midnight hours of sere and sharp reflection. Those sensitive hours following the untoward but quite consequential episode, when the mind, solitary and self-accused, wanders on the far pale confines of reason, hope, and self-respect—on the utmost brink of annihilation and despair, the *ultima thule* and *ne plus ultra*, as it seems, of love and goodness, life, and happiness; when, as in Keats, one might say:—

— then on the shore

Of the wide world I stand alone and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

When, also, these poignant lines of Burns flash and burn themselves in upon the mind:—

Many and sharp the numerous ills inwoven with our frame;
More pointed still we make ourselves regret remorse and shame.

You will not, I fear, my dear lady, sympathize, because you will hardly understand. Let me show you where I stumbled, and whence, by that very fall, I have arisen higher than before. My calls at your house have been all friendly calls, some, if not all of them, even spiritual. I was never too proud to accept favours, rather always too poor and pressed to refuse them. You, on the other hand, and this is no reproach, were always too proud to accept material gifts from me, always, if quite unconsciously insisting, and rightly, on the vast culture gulf between us, of which more anon.

You and my equally good friend, your husband, have stooped to the democracy (blessed word). If the democracy degrades (which it does) or jostles you, do not be surprised or annoyed. It is the democracy you are bent on saving or establishing in its just inheritance. I am not reproaching now, and I am not "domineering" (that is differing in) the conversation. My speech, which stung you into "showing me the door," was rude and noisy, but sincere and enthusiastic, and at the moment I was criticizing myself, and trying, in my clumsy way, to establish a principle, and form a criterion of good speaking and writing. I was just "arriving" when you "damned up my intellectual flow," and I crept away with burning face and crushed heart, feeling a pariah and a leper, with all my sins remembered. Circumstances rather than my fault were the cause of your anger and my downfall. I was rude, I admit it; I was blind, but I was righteous at the moment, and Freethought, the *Freethinker*, and Freethinkers, were the real sand in the wheels, with other incidentals too numerous to mention. I have been your student, friend, and admirer, and I grasp the complete psychology of the situation. The head and front of my offending, however, was Freethought, or at least the introduction of it into anything so sacred as Socialism (the rudeness in your parlour always admitted and deplored) if it were not that I came with the hopelessly bad manners of the democracy you are out to save.

Writing maketh an exact man, and is not so noisy or so rude as speech. Yet I am impertinent still. I was about to advise you, and do it now. I suggest, perhaps ungratefully, it was a mistake of you and K. to step down from your select circle into the arena of Democracy—but not so deplorable after all; for mentally, and class-consciously, you are both prouder than ever before; but, like self-abnegating religious martyrs, you bear with the boorishness of the masses and the scorn of the classes. It is, on your parts, not so much an intellectual as a religious salvation-crusade, a duty you owe to society, and you will pay it, let the price be what it may. Morally and religiously this is wholly admirable; rationally and intellectually it is a more than doubtful good. The mob will accept unlimited flattery, and the praise of its pet prejudices; even, as in the churches, it will allow you to call it miserable sinners, and fools, and blind, etc., all in the hope and comfort of that blessed word "democracy."

Well, now, I have long been thinking over and grow more and more hopeless of this democracy in the lump; and, as I have told you, I have just found myself personally hovering ghost-like on the grey ashes of the utmost crater rim of annihilation's waste—a weird and awesome mental, moral, and physical Uttermost, from whence I could see and pity all the imposing "isms" and futilities of the earth; all moving here and there, backward and forward, but ever being swept onward by the shoreless, resistless river of humanity; with also, far in advance of all, a great company of the lonely pioneers of truth, reason, science, philosophy, etc., all the native pilots of the river of life.

And I saw also in my dream, and felt, the fall of Wolsey, and his chastened heart, chastened by affliction and a true humility, and heard him exclaim:—

Say Wolsey,—that once trod the ways of glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,—
Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in;
A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.

And so from the ashes I have arisen. I have been to England and the Freethought Conference (Freethought, Liberty, words without which all other words are vain), to England, less solemnly, sourly good than Scotland, where drinking is not a crime, where a man may drink and no' be drunk, where I mingled with Tories, Liberals, Labour men, Socialists, etc.—superficial accidentals of psychology—all, or nearly all, enough at least to content me of hope and satisfaction, were gentle, cultured, brave, kindly, beautiful human beings, all following closely according to their lights the master pilots of the river of time; amongst whom I was inspired and humbled, learning my true greatness and littleness, my real good and bad, shedding bigotries, prejudices, fanaticisms, and conceits; in a word, attaining at length to moral and intellectual clarity, dignity, and strength—culture. This may not be democracy, but it is the hope, the only hope, of the world.

And so, my dear lady, when in quenchless, pious hope, you are groping in the gutter for the lost souls of "sots and slaves and cowards," or amongst the decent but hopeless ignorant, mine will not be there! Or, on the other hand, should you, as I suggested, return to your proper social and artistic sphere, however high you soar, my soul, a risen spark from the ashes of actuality, will ever be above you. Either way, I claim not nor desire "equality"; for why, to my surprise, and sometimes alarm, I have been crowned by the godless classics of irreligion, and find myself "sitting there" where democracy, in the lump, dares not, or desires not, to soar.

I beg to remain, your sincere and grateful friend,

A. MILLAR.

Pages from Voltaire.

II.

THE HISTORY OF THE TRAVELS OF SACRAMENTADO
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

(1756).

(Concluded from p. 444.)

THE itch of travelling still possessed me. I had proposed to finish the tour of Europe with Turkey; and thither we now directed our course. I made a resolution never to give my opinion on any public festival I might witness. "These Turks," said I to my companions, "are a set of miscreants that have not been baptized, and consequently will be more cruel than the reverend fathers the inquisitors. Let us observe a profound silence while we are among the Mohammedans."

Accordingly we arrived among them. I was much surprised to see more Christian Churches in Turkey than in Candia. I even saw some companies of monks, who were allowed to pray to the Virgin Mary with great freedom, and to curse Mohammed; some in Greek, some in Latin, and others in Armenian. "What good-natured people are these Turks!" I exclaimed. The Greek Christians and the Latin Christians in Constantinople were mortal enemies. These slaves persecuted each other in much the same way as dogs fight in the streets, till their masters part them with a stick. The Grand Vizier at that time was the protector of the Greeks. The Greek Patriarch accused me of having had supper with the Latin Patriarch, and I was condemned in full divan to receive a hundred strokes on the soles of my feet or to pay a fine of five hundred sequins. Next day the Grand Vizier was strangled. The day following, his successor, who was for the Latin party, and who was not strangled till a month after, condemned me to suffer the same punishment for having had supper with the Greek Patriarch. Thus was I reduced to the sorrowful necessity of absenting myself entirely from the Greek and Latin Churches. In order to console myself for this loss, I took into keeping an extremely handsome Circassian. She was the most amiable lady I ever knew in a private relation, and the most devout at the mosque. One night, as she was embracing me in the sweet transports of love, she cried, "Alla, Illa Alla"; these are the sacramental words of the Turk. I imagined that they were the expressions of amorous passion, and therefore cried in my turn, "Alla, Illa, Alla." "Ah!" exclaimed the lady, "God be praised. Thou art, then, a Turk." I told her that I was praising God for giving me such excellent vigour, and that I thought myself extremely happy. In the morning an Iman came to circumcise me; and as I made some difficulty about undergoing the operation, the *cadi* of the district, a man of great loyalty, proposed to have me fastened down. I saved my skin by paying a fine of a thousand sequins, and then fled directly into Persia, resolved for the future never to hear Greek or Latin mass, nor to cry "Alla, Illa, Alla" in a love encounter.

On my arrival at Ispahan, the people asked me whether I was for white or for black mutton? I told them it was a matter of indifference to me provided it was tender. It must be observed that the Persian Empire was at that time split into two factions, those of the white mutton and that of the black. The two parties imagined that I was making a jest of them both; so I found myself engaged in a very troublesome affair at the gates of the city, and it cost me a great number of sequins to get rid of the white and the black mutton.

I proceeded as far as China, in company with an interpreter, who assured me that the country was the seat

of freedom and gaiety. The Tartars had made themselves masters of it, having destroyed everything with fire and sword. The reverend fathers the Jesuits on the one hand, and the reverend fathers the Dominicans on the other, alleged that they had gained many souls for God in that country, without anything being known of the matter. No more zealous converters were ever seen; they alternately persecuted one another; they sent to Rome whole volumes of slander, and treated each other as infidels and liars for the sake of one soul. But the most violent dispute among them was with regard to the manner of making a bow. The Jesuits would have the Chinese salute their parents in the fashion of China; the Dominicans would have them do it in the fashion of Rome. With my usual luck, I was taken by the Jesuits for a Dominican. They represented me to his Tartarian Majesty as one of the Pope's spies. The Supreme Council charged a grand mandarin, who ordered a serjeant, who commanded four shires of the country, to seize me and to bind me with great ceremony. In this manner I was brought before his Majesty, after having made about a hundred and forty genuflexions. He asked me if I was a spy of the Pope's, and if it was true that that prince was to come in person to dethrone him. I told him that the Pope was a priest of seventy years of age; that he lived at the distance of four thousand leagues from his sacred Tartar-Chinese Majesty; that he had about two thousand soldiers, who mounted guard with umbrellas; that he never dethroned anybody, and that his Majesty might sleep in perfect security. Of all the adventures of my life, this was the least calamitous. I was sent to Macao, where I took ship for Europe.

My ship required to be refitted on the coast of Golconda, and I took the opportunity to visit the court of the great Arung-Zeb, of whom such wonderful things have been related, and whose court was then held at Delhi. I had the pleasure to see him on the day of that pompous ceremony on which he receives the celestial present sent him by the Sherif of Mecca; this is the holy besom with which they had swept the holy house, the Caaba and the Beth Alla. It is a symbol which sweeps away all pollution from the soul. Arung-Zeb seemed to have no need of it; for he was the most pious man in all Hindostan. It is true that he had cut the throat of one of his brothers, and had poisoned his father. Twenty rajahs and as many omrahs had he put to death; but that was a trifle; nothing was talked of but his devoutness. No other king could be compared with him except his Sacred Majesty Muley Ismail, the Most Serene Emperor of Morocco, who cut off a few heads every Friday after prayers.

I spoke not a word. My travels had taught me to be wise. I saw that it was not for me to decide between these august sovereigns. A young Frenchman, indeed, a fellow-lodger of mine, was wanting in respect to the Emperor of the Indies, and to him of Morocco. He happened to say very imprudently that there were sovereigns in Europe who governed their dominions with great equity, and even went to church without killing fathers and brothers, or cutting off the heads of their subjects. This insulting remark of my young friend our interpreter translated into Hindustani. Instructed by former experience, I at once gave orders for my camels to be saddled, and set out with my Frenchman. I was afterwards informed that that very night the officers of the great Arung-Zeb, having come to seize me, found only the interpreter, who was executed in public; and all the courtiers declared without flattery that his punishment was extremely just.

I had now only Africa to visit in order to enjoy all the pleasures of our continent; and thither I went in all reality. The ship in which I had embarked was taken

by the negro corsairs. The master of the vessel complained loudly, and asked why they had violated the laws of nations. The captain of the negroes answered: "You have a long nose and we have a short one; your hair is straight and ours curled; and therefore we ought, by the sacred law of Nature, to be always at loggerheads. You buy us in the public markets on the coast of Guinea like beasts of burden, to make us labour in I don't know what kind of drudgery, equally hard and degrading, with the whip held over our heads; you make us dig in mountains for a kind of yellow earth, which in itself is good for nothing, and is not so valuable as the Egyptian onion. In like manner, whenever we meet you, and are superior to you in strength, we make you slaves, and oblige you to manure our fields, or, in case of refusal, cut off your nose and ears."

To such a learned discourse it was impossible to make any answer. I went to labour in the grounds of an old negress, in order to save my nose and ears. After continuing in slavery for a whole year, I was at last ransomed. I had now seen all that was rare, good, and beautiful on earth. I resolved for the future to see nothing but my own home. I took a wife, and was cuckolded; and found that of all conditions of life this was the happiest.

Translated by GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

Correspondence.

FLOGGING IN THE SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is quite refreshing to find a clergyman advocating humanism, but the Rev. Evacustes A. Phipson in last week's issue had quite a good case, though it might be much broader.

Quite right to condemn the corporal punishment of girls by men. But why that only, for it is getting uncommon? Is it any worse for boys to be caned or flogged either by men or by women, or girls by women? This issue should be made broader to demand the cessation of all corporal punishment, even by parents, much less by outsiders and officials.

We have got rid of flogging in the Army and Navy, together with many other brutal and barbarous punishments. Why should it be retained in the schools? And I gravely doubt the value of the lash for boy offenders, so-called "juvenile criminals."

It is notable that the abolition of physical and cruel punishments is always followed by a reduction in the crimes they were supposed to prevent, as evidenced by our criminal records of centuries.

The prevalence of punishment in schools is largely an historical, as well as a social, psychological, and educational question. The mediæval, monastic establishments, with their penances and flagellations, left their evil influence on our institutions. But, surely, if it was right to desist from whipping lunatics and women criminals it is monstrously indefensible to beat the tender bodies of innocent children eager only to live and know and be happy?

Mentally, the effect of corporal punishment is injurious to children and those who administer the stripes. The marks left on the body are as nothing to the rankling sense of injustice left in the memory. And nothing is more degrading to an adult than to inflict pain upon another. The person who inflicts bodily punishment with pleasure is a monster; he who does it reluctantly is a traitor to his better feelings. We need to excise from our teachers that feeling of superiority, dominance, and autocracy that obsesses them. Teachers should only be prompters, suggesters, and perhaps leaders.

A big question may be asked—Have we any right, on any grounds whatsoever, to use corporal compulsion towards children? I challenge any thinker with knowledge of childhood honestly to say Yes. The slightest experience of child life, of psychology, of social conditions, forbids it.

I think Mr. Phipson has overweighted the men teachers' moral attitude towards girls. And there is a similar position with the sexes reversed. With his strictures on school buildings all can agree. They are often vile in every respect.

It is only by outside pressure of public opinion that teachers will be brought into line with modern thought. Their organizations and journals are merely organs for mutual admiration.

This question of modernizing the schools, and especially of abolishing C.P., which is based on fear, which should be eliminated from child life, is of great importance, and I should like to see it discussed in your columns. Much more could be written on it. The above is only a fragment. Will Mr. Phipson broaden his attack?

A. R. WILLIAMS.

A GRAIN OF TRUTH.

SIR,—I am glad that Mr. Underwood has raised the question of the function of the *Times Literary Supplement*. There appears to me to be something inconsistent in a paper filled by scholars, yet, at the same time, this paper refuses an advertisement from the *Freethinker*. I do not suppose my remarks will reduce the number of subscribers by one, but there is no doubt that the present price will be more effective. The raising of a price is a business proposition; if you double your price and reduce your circulation by twenty-five per cent., it is good business. Is it in the interests of culture or Kudos that this change takes place?

There is a grain of truth in the charge brought against me, but I was indignant at the supercilious tone of the reviewer who, with an Englishman's arrogance, presumed sentiment to be exclusively his own. I neither love nor hate the Germans—having been in contact with them, perhaps, as close as this particular reviewer; what, Sir, would be your feelings, if you had seen some go mad under confinement, and others dive into mud, shin-deep, for the empty bully tins we threw away? This, in order to lick a little of the fat from the sides of the tins. The devil can quote Scripture, and a scholar can mask himself behind words, and this particular reviewer smelled of the *Daily Mail*.

The truth of "touching pitch" applies to scholars whose credentials I do not deny; let them produce a paper of their own for there is room for it. In the meantime, I am proud to state emphatically that I do prefer the literary principles of the *New Age* and the *Venture*. They are papers that have nothing to lose and nothing to fear, and are, therefore, in a position to tell the truth. I did not throw a brick; I gave a deliberate slash at the reviewer in the open with the broadsword of free speech. It is not my fault if Mr. Underwood has mistaken a part for the whole; after all, if the scholars deserted the paper, there would only be left the advertisements, Mr. Grant Richards burbling, and something about a "million sale." And this, Sir, would be suitable for the purpose mentioned, provided that there was any of the commodity left, now that the world is safe for democracy. I must thank Mr. Greenwood for breaking a friendly lance with me, and apologise for delay (caused by lack of time) in answering him.

As Freethought writers, we should be guilty of resting on our oars if we developed into a mutual admiration society.

WILLIAM REPTON.

FREETHOUGHT ON TYNE SIDE.

SIR,—The lecturing season will soon be upon us, and it ought to be a question of deep concern to all Freethinkers as to the amount of work that will be performed in that strenuous period. I might explain that the ground is in some little way prepared. There is a fair prospect that lectures will be given at Hebburn, New Herrington, and South Shields, by whoever may be arranged to come to this district. With the present high costs it would be very advantageous if we could carry our oral propaganda into as many places as possible when we have our lecturers with us. Will all who may be interested kindly communicate with me in order that we may inaugurate a stirring campaign.

J. FOTHERGILL, Hon. Sec.

3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock.

Obituary.

We deeply regret to announce the death of a well-known Tyneside Freethinker in the person of Mrs. Hutton, of West Benwell. Mrs. Hutton had been for many years an ardent member of the N. S. S. and worker in many other advanced movements. She was a woman of unflinching devotion to principle, and once having taken a decision, never seemed to understand the meaning of retreat or concession. Both before and during the War she was a very ardent worker in the Peace Movement, and even those who were bitterly opposed to her could not but admire the courage with which she carried out her principles in action. And how much courage it takes to run counter to public passion only those who have essayed it know. Her great love was freedom, and her desire to see it enjoyed by all. She was thus a Freethinker in the fullest sense of the word, and many will benefit by both her example and her work who will remain to the end oblivious to the name of their benefactor. The deepest sorrow of her life came with the death of her daughter, some years back. The daughter was a very talented girl, holding a B.Sc. degree, and Mrs. Hutton had, naturally, high hopes of her future. On the occasion of the daughter's death, Mrs. Hutton wrote a note for the guidance of others when her own end came. "Be sure and bury me as an Atheist, and I hope that neither of you will take up with Christianity." The letter was addressed to her remaining children, and we feel assured that her hopes will not be disappointed. She leaves to them the benefit of the example of a fine character and of rare devotion to principle. No woman ever held higher ideals than Mrs. Hutton or lived a more unselfish life in their application. We say this as a slight tribute to a brave and striking personality, and in the hope that a knowledge of the feelings she inspired in those who knew her will afford some consolation to her children in their bereavement.—C. C.

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INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "International Finance."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, A Lecture.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., 3.15, "God and Evil"; 6.30, "Charity—Christian and Non-Christian."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr H. Spence, B.Sc., A Lecture.

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.

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Room No. 7, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): Thursday, July 15, at 8, A Meeting of the Branch. Plymouth and District Freethinkers please note.

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

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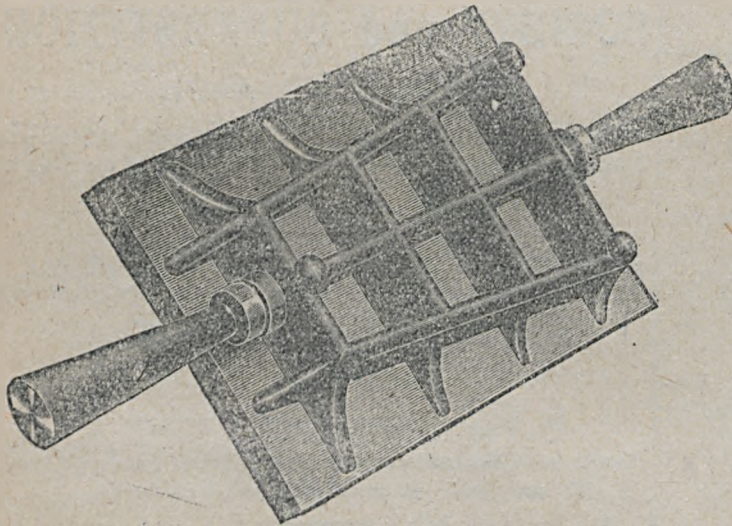
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