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Views and Opinions.

Atheism Again.

In one way or another the question of Atheism is always being brought up afresh for discussion. It cannot well be otherwise, and one is glad to note its recurrence. It is a proof that we cannot for ever avoid facing ultimate issues, however much we may feel inclined to do so. That Atheism or Theism is the ultimate issue was a point upon which two men so otherwise apart as Cardinal Newman and Charles Bradlaugh were quite agreed. It is true that Newman only had in mind Christian Theism, but that does not affect the issue. And if I may range myself alongside two so distinguished advocates, I fully endorse the statement. There is no other issue of vital importance. Between the belief in a God and a rejection of the belief as being no more than an elaborate delusion, there is nothing but a series of confusions, equivocations, and verbal timidities. It is not at all a question of suspended judgment, because there is, to one who understands the subject, nothing to suspend judgment about. The way in which the idea of God began is sufficiently known to enable anyone who will to be quite clear upon that point. We know that it rests upon no better foundation than the ignorance of our primitive ancestors, and that the belief in a God has no better basis than the belief in witches and warlocks. The most refined form of the belief in God is no more than an elaborated delusion.

Atheism and Vice.

The correspondence that has been going on in these columns, first in connection with an observation from Mr. H. G. Wells, and afterwards in a letter from Mr. Harding in last week's paper, makes it advisable to add a word or two to the discussion, particularly as Mr. Harding charges Atheists with being guilty of confused thinking. And against a charge of that kind we are not at all inclined to maintain silence. Mr. Harding quite repudiates the Christian identification of Atheism with vice, but he charges the Freethinker with confusing religion with delusion, and of my neglecting, in my analysis of religion, certain ethical and æsthetic qualities which he assumes to belong to religion. And first of the alleged connection of Atheism

and vice. That identification, one may as well speak plainly, can only be set up by a rogue or a fool. But, so far as the religious world is concerned, it has its uses, and therefore, to the Christian, its justification. It serves to warn people off. Nothing so terrifies the average Englishman as his being accused of holding an immoral doctrine. He has no such rooted fear of acting immorally, but to be accused of holding an opinion which would logically lead people to do as he himself may be doing, sends him into a cold sweat of moral indignation. And thus it happens that so many are anxious to repudiate the name of Atheism, and follow the Christian practice of calling a thing Atheistic when they only mean that it is immoral. Mr. Wells ought to have known better than to use the expression he did, but probably to be known as an Atheist or a supporter of Atheists would not do him much good with the British public. And to denounce the heresy of other people is a very old way of diverting attention from one's own unorthodoxy.

* * *

Religion and Delusion.

Now Mr. Harding declares that I am wrong in identifying religion with delusion. Well, will he please tell me what part of genuine and essential religion is not delusion? Is the belief in God anything but a delusion? Has it any better basis than the ignorant speculations of the savage? Was it something that grew out of our knowledge of the universe, or out of our ignorant speculations concerning it? And if the facts upon which man originally based his beliefs in gods are now known to be susceptible of a quite different explanation, what becomes of the original explanation that formed the belief in God? Can one have a logical right to retain a conclusion when the premises upon which that conclusion is based are admitted to be false? And what is true of the belief in a God is equally true of the belief in a soul. We know the history of that idea, and we know—not fancy, but know—that that also rests upon a mistaken interpretation of known facts. And I would really like to know how many generations it takes for a delusion to become a veritable reality? If you commence with a lie, by what logical process do you end with truth? And if, on the other hand, you admit the implications of facts that are as plain as daylight, what logical escape is there from Atheism? Do we not know, again, not merely fancy, that the idea of God, so long as we attach an intelligible meaning to the word, is non-sense, and can never be anything else but nonsense?

* * *

Religion and Life.

Mr. Harding thinks that I was wrong in my “analysis” of Christianity in referring only to such things as God, angels, virgin birth, etc. But I did not pretend to be giving a complete analysis of Christianity, although I did mention enough of it to illustrate my meaning. But the other things that Mr. Harding mentions do not properly belong to Christianity, because they are not specifically Christian. They are not even specifically religious. The endeavour after righteousness is not in the least degree essentially

Christian. The "change of heart" is not Christian; it is rather a religious presentation of a phenomenon that is common to human group life. All the other qualities mentioned by Mr. Harding come under the same criticism. They are human and social qualities that belong to group life. If Mr. Harding will apply the principle of elimination and difference to Christianity when contrasting it with other religions and with life in general he will find that he has no more right to call these things Christian or religious than I have to claim them as being the property of the National Secular Society. Their real significance in connection with religions is that so soon as we get beyond the savage stage religion can only maintain an existence by becoming identified with the social forces. And every strengthening of the social sense, every development in knowledge, throws religion more and more upon things that do not belong to it. Religions become adulterated in order to live. They strive to appear sensible in order to secure a longer tenure of existence. People once thought that they were permitted to live because the Gods allowed them to exist. To-day it is the other way about. The Gods are only suffered to continue through the subterfuge of becoming identified with moral and social qualities with which they have no real connection.

* * *

Are there Moral Forces in the Universe?

It is charged against the Freethinker that he has given some ground for the identification of Atheism with vice because "the majority of Atheists, even today, deny that in the universe, minus man, there are any moral forces at all." Well, for once I find myself on the side of the majority, even though it is only the majority of a minority. And I should really think little of the Atheist who believed that there were in the universe any moral forces apart from animal or human existence. I would suggest to him that his proper place is inside a church until he knows better. Moral forces are facts, but they have no more existence apart from man than has an Act of Parliament establishing free trade within the British Empire. Morality is the name for a set of relations existing, actually or ideally, between members of the same group of human beings, or, at most, of animals. But it has nothing whatever to do with the universe apart from man. Morality is only a part of the universe in the sense that the universe equals all, includes all. And in that sense immorality is also a part, and any conclusion favourable to Theism drawn from the universe, including morality, is immediately negated by the fact of the universe including its opposite. The forces that tend "to subdue the tiger" are also born of association; they have no other meaning, and their growth is no more a matter of mystery than is the operation of any other phase of natural or social selection.

* * *

A Heritage from the Savage.

The bottom truth is that this talk of moral forces in the universe, or of ends in nature, is no more than a heritage from the savage; it is an attenuated form of the God theory that is now so generally discredited. The crude anthropomorphism of the savage sees ends and purposes in nature, and in what are called the higher religions—as though there could be a higher and a lower, a better or worse, in connection with what is wholly absurd—we have the same thing expressed in a vaguer language. And even with many who have formally given up the belief in God, the old poison still rankles. It is quite a mistake to suppose that everyone is cured of his or her Theism merely because the formal belief in God has gone. Its influence still persists in the perpetuation of the Theistic attitude of mind when dealing with the world at large. Hence the desire to find some "purpose" in the operation of natural forces, the discerning of some plan in evolu-

tion. In this way Theism leaves behind it a residuum that in the case of many is fatal to clear and accurate thinking. And there are really no ends in nature such as we assume; there is no purpose in nature, save such as we invent. To nature the life of man is of no more consequence than that of a cockroach, and good and bad are mown down with an absolute disregard to man's wishes or necessities. Purpose, end, morality, right, and wrong are all human creations. They have no meaning and no purpose apart from human society. And it should be enough for us that they have their place there, and may be used to make a broader, deeper, and fuller life for men and women.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Pilgrim Fathers.

BOTH pulpit and Press have lately devoted much time and space to the party of seventy-four English Non-conformists and twenty-eight women, members of John Robinson's church at Leyden, who sailed in the *Mayflower* and another small vessel on September 6, 1620. Only the *Mayflower*, however, persisted in prosecuting its voyage, the other soon putting back. The *Mayflower* was a small bark of a hundred and eighty tons, and accommodated only forty-one emigrants and their families. They sailed from Plymouth and landed on the barren coast of Massachusetts at a spot to which they gave the name of Plymouth. They had been driven to Holland because they were Separatists; and they resolved to establish a new home in the wilds of the West. They were followed a few years later by a company of English Puritans, who founded and settled the Massachusetts Bay colony. Ere long the Plymouth colony and the Massachusetts Bay colony were united. Both parties had been cruelly persecuted in England, and both parties became persecutors in New England. They were brave people, and their voyage out was a stupendous adventure. To face a journey of three thousand miles in a tiny vessel of a hundred and eighty tons was a most courageous act. And yet it must be admitted that the Pilgrim Fathers were not, on the whole, beautiful characters. Dr. Jowett expressed strong disapproval of many of their deeds and of much of their legislation; but he greatly admires their spirit. Surely a man's deeds are but manifestations of his spirit. It is inconceivable that evil deeds should proceed from a beautiful spirit. The Puritans went out in search of religious liberty; but the liberty they craved was not a principle to the enjoyment of which all were entitled. It was freedom for Puritans alone that they desired. To differ from them was a crime that required to be severely punished, and punish it they did with a vengeance. Those who have studied the laws of New England know how intensely they savour of Puritanism. Non-attendance at church on Sunday was treated as an offence against the State. A man was not allowed to kiss his wife on the Lord's Day. No reader of the *Scarlet Letter*, would dream of pronouncing the Puritan character excellent. It was the very opposite of beautiful. And yet for weeks the religious world has had nothing but glowing admiration for the Pilgrim Fathers. Their voyage is described as the romance of faith. The Rev. J. R. Legge waxes eloquent in speaking of it. He says:—

The company of men and women happened to be greater than they knew. Over there in Holland and sweet and pleasant Leyden, where worth of freedom is learnt; and also the lesson is learnt of cutting loose from the things of the world. After that, the boundless Atlantic, with the two cockleshell boats, tossed, creaking, leaking, in the wild weather beyond Land's End. Last scene of all in this strange, eventful history, the haven of their hearts' desire in the lee of Cape Cod and the shelter of the bay, on whose rock

they lifted up, under wintry sky, their psalm of thankfulness to God. The romance of this historic adventure is enthralling and inseparable from the fabric of its life.

Mr. Legge agrees with Professor Rendel Harries, who says that "there is no story of the past more instinct with marks of the Divine leading, none that is likely to be more helpful at the present time." It is perfectly true that the story is profoundly interesting; but we fail to see how these "plain men worked together with God to the furtherance of the purpose of his eternal grace." A clergyman adopts that style of writing quite naturally, and it sounds well on the platform; but Nathaniel Hawthorne is nearer the truth when he says:—

It may not be too much to affirm, on the whole (the people being then in the first stages of joyless deportment, and the offspring of sires who had known how to be merry, in their day), that they would compare favourably, in point of holiday keeping, with their descendants, even at so long an interval as ourselves. Their immediate posterity, the generation next to the early emigrants, wore the blackest shade of Puritanism, and so darkened the national visage with it, that all the subsequent years have not sufficed to clear it up. We have yet to learn again the forgotten art of gaiety (*The Scarlet Letter*, p. 138).

Mr. Legge tells us that in the Virginia Company there "were associations of merchant adventurers"; but those merchants were men of God.

Those business adventurers had, say all of them, a vision of the kingdom of God as well as an eye to the main chance, so making the best of both worlds. Some of them had the vision, penetrating, lofty, unobscured. These merchant adventurers, in the proportion of their faith, drew up agreements, contracts, articles, and specifications.....What the Pilgrim Fathers could never have done out of their own resources, already shrunken, in the hardships of years of exile, this association in economic adventure with a group of God's Englishmen, diligent in business and serving the Lord, accomplished to the glory of God, the extension of his kingdom, and the immortal memory of the men of the *Mayflower*.

Even in New England Puritanism is now practically dead, though, as Hawthorne states, its effects are still visible. What did Puritanism stand for? For the establishment of a visible kingdom of God upon earth by means of the Church. The State was to be the servant of the Church, not the Church of the State. The ideal man was a Puritan, who was stern and grave. The English Parliament would employ no man "but such as the House shall be satisfied of his real godliness." There was a copy of the Bible on the table of the House of Commons. Piety was the highest of all the virtues. Of course, both in England and America, there are still people who call themselves Puritans. Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin spoke of themselves as the last Puritans in England. There are a few here and there who pride themselves upon their narrowness, intolerance, and otherworldliness, who are not ashamed to say that heretics ought to be put to death now. But as far as the overwhelming majority of people are concerned, Puritanism is a thing of the past, and there is no likelihood of its ever returning. Indeed, all forms of supernaturalism are passing away. Secularism is rapidly spreading. Even the Churches are being secularized. Reason's sway is being extended in all directions. Professor Leuba, of Bryn Mawr College, has demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt that the educated classes in the States are fast renouncing their belief in God and immortality.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Infidel" is a term of reproach which Christians and Mohammedans, in their modesty, agree to apply to those who differ from them.—*Thomas Huxley*.

An Innocent at Home.

The inapt use of words creates a wonderful obstruction to the mind.—*Francis Bacon*.

Fools do not understand what they read.—*La Bruyere*.

Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at Truth.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

FEW present-day writers write more pleasantly concerning books than does Sir Arthur Quiller Couch. His latest volume, *The Art of Reading*, has attracted considerable and deserved attention. The Press, religious and secular alike, has given the volume conspicuous and laudatory consideration. So far as the religious Press is concerned, this is hardly to be wondered at, for Sir Arthur, who is a popular novelist, has gone out of his way to laud the Jewish-Christian Bible in unmeasured terms. His book, be it remembered, is composed of lectures he delivered from a chair of English Literature at Cambridge University, and no less than three of these lectures deal with "Reading the Bible." Sir Arthur's concern is with the Bible as literature, and he compares the "sacred" and "God-inspired" volume with the *Arabian Nights* and with the plays of Shakespeare. He says that "Job" is a poem, and the "Song of Solomon" "the perfection of an Eastern love-poem." The world moves indeed. A popular novelist, mark you, can say these things today amid applause, but years ago such remarks would have cost him his liberty, and even his life.

Sir Arthur throws overboard many old-fashioned ideas, and, after speaking disrespectfully of the Old Testament deity as the God invoked by the unhappy Hohenzollern family, he says, or, rather, shouts, that the Bible is "as a literary achievement one of the greatest in our language; nay, with the possible exception of the complete works of Shakespeare, the very greatest." It is "the most majestic thing in our literature," and so forth, and so on, as if he were an American evangelist addressing an uninstructed audience in the wild and woolly West. Indeed, after such an outburst, there should have been an interval for light refreshment. While preachers and proselytes were content to point to the Holy Bible as the Church's "one foundation," they could claim at least attention. But when a sentimental writer of fiction insists that the Bible is, with one solitary exception, the greatest piece of literature in the world, assigning a place to it above Homer, Dante, Cervantes, and Goethe, then indeed it is high time to enter a strenuous, and, if possible, a serious protest.

When one studies the Bible purely as literature, one sees that though it occupies a special place on account of religious prejudice, it has no claim to unchallenged artistic supremacy. Its literary characteristics are not, in reality, different from any other sacred books of the East. It is the work of Orientals, and, further, it is not a single volume, but a collection of books. It is a very far cry from the simple, artless stories of a savage race to the passionate romance of the "Song of Songs," which is not Solomon's. There is an immense gulf between the plain, unvarnished, and often coarse, stories of the patriarchs and the prophets, and the involved, artful, transcendental romances of the Gospels. The books of the Hebrew Old Testament cover a period of centuries, and are filled with appropriated Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian ideas. In the Greek New Testament one finds books written in a comparatively modern language, when Rome held the sceptre of the world. Thus, in point of time, the work ranges from 1000 B.C. to at least as late as A.D. 200. In materials there is a corresponding variety. There are fragments of folk-songs of war, early legends, mythical history, scraps of laws, collections of proverbs, psalms of meditation and jubilation, chronologies, the euphemistic ingenuities of the Apocalypse,

the elaborate romances of the Gospels, and the dialectics of Paul.

The whole atmosphere is Oriental, and springs from the same fertile source as the *Arabian Nights*. In the New Testament, side by side with the riotous Eastern imagination, there is a new element in the attempt to graft philosophy on the elementary fictions of the Old Testament. If one remembers that the only other work with which English-speaking people are familiar, which comes from the same Eastern source as the Jewish-Christian Bible, is the *Thousand and One Nights*, one will realize better the enormous distance from us of this Biblical literature. Stevenson, for example, has pointed out that the characters of the *Arabian Nights* are mere puppets, and their stories are a mere succession of incident and event, unbroken by any attempt to characterize the people.

This is as true of the Jewish-Christian Bible as of the *Arabian Nights*. Compared to the great masters of speech, Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, to say nothing of Æschylus, Lucretius, or Milton, the anonymous authors of the Bible are poor of resource, limited of range, timid in execution. These neurotic Orientals mostly pour out floods of anger and piety, largely utter hoarse cries of fear, revenge, and worship.

Wit and humour were, as may be expected, closed books to these fanatics. From the first error in "Genesis" to the final absurdity in "Revelation," there is not a spark of humour. Much of their best work is only so much mellifluous prurience, presented in exotic forms of verse. At other times their verse is filled with the turmoil of battle, the champing of horses, the flashing and bickering of spears. Only on rare occasions does the still, sad voice of humanity make itself heard. The austere simplicity, which Sir A. Quiller Couch professes so much to admire, is easily paralleled in the *Vedas*, the *Zend-Avesta*, the *Koran*, and other Sacred Books, which should be in every university library.

Thus, in the last analysis, the Bible simply contains the ordinary stock-in-trade of almost all Oriental writers. Take Sir Arthur at his word and make comparison between the "God-inspired" and man-inspired volumes. Contrast Isaiah with Dante's *Divine Comedy*; compare the "Song of Solomon" with Shakespeare's *Othello*. Place the story of "Jonah" alongside Goethe's *Faust*. Confronted with the works of the masters, the books of the Bible are merely the work of minor writers.

Even the vigorous English of the Act of Parliament version of the Bible is but a happy accident of translation. Hebrew is, admittedly, a poor language, and the Greek of the New Testament has been described as "canine." When the "authorized" version of the Bible is compared with the deathless dreams of the acknowledged masters of literary art, it is at once seen that the barbaric and elementary fairy tales and lyrics of the "inspired" Oriental scribes are merely unimportant as literature. If they had not been associated with a heavily endowed system of religion, and been continuously praised and advertised by tens of thousands of priests, they would, centuries ago, have been consigned to the dustbin of forgotten things. Sir Arthur, being an instructed citizen of a civilized country, should know these things. His loudly protested ignorance is out of place in any university, for such innocence is only pardonable in the case of a schoolboy in an elementary school. Fortunately, Cambridge is not the "hub of the universe," and no great harm is done. A kick from a fly is not the same as a kick from an elephant. MIMNERMUS.

A Short History of the Art of Writing.

ALMOST every civilized people has had its legend in which the invention of the art of writing is attributed to a divine personage. Thoth, the Egyptian divinity whom the Greeks assimilated to their Hermes (identified by the Romans with their god Mercury), was the god of speech and hieroglyphics, and the source of wisdom: in Assyro-Babylonian mythology, Nebo, son of the chief deity, Marduk, is called the "creator of tablet-writing": Cadmus, a legendary king of Phœnicia, was the reputed founder of Thebes, and the introducer of the letters of the Greek alphabet into Europe: among the Scandinavian and Teutonic peoples, Odin, or Wodan, the god of culture, was the supposed inventor of runes, or letters: in Hindu legend, Brahma gives a knowledge of letters to mankind: and "Chinese tradition ascribes the invention of writing to the dragon-faced, four-eyed sage, Ts'ang Chien, who saw in the stars of heaven, the footprints of birds, and the marks on the back of the tortoise, the models on which he formed the written characters."

The development of writing may be conveniently divided into four stages:—(1) The mnemonic, or memory-aiding stage; (2) the pictorial stage, in which a picture suggests the object for which it stands; (3) the ideographic stage, in which the picture becomes conventionalised; (4) the phonetic stage, in which this conventional picture develops into a phonogram, *i.e.*, represents a vocal sound. This phonogram may be a sign for a whole word, for a syllable, or for a letter. In the last case we have alphabetic writing.

The first of these stages is best represented by the quipu, or knotted cord, which reached its most elaborate form among the ancient Peruvians.

It consists of a main cord, to which are fastened at given distances thinner cords of different colours, each cord being knotted in divers ways for special purposes, and each colour having its own significance. Red strands stood for soldiers, yellow for gold, white for silver, green for corn, and so forth, while a single knot meant ten, two single knots meant twenty, double knots one hundred, and two double knots two hundred. Such a simple device served manifold purposes. Besides their convenience in reckoning, they were used for keeping the annals of the empire of the Incas; for transmitting orders to outlying provinces; for registering details of the army; and even for preserving records of the dead, with whom the quipu was buried, as in old Egypt the biography or titles of the deceased were set forth in hieroglyph and deposited in the tomb.—Clodd, "Story of the Alphabet."

In every place of importance there was an official whose business it was to interpret quipus received from a distance, and to make quipus himself for despatch. If, however, the quipu received came from a great distance it was probably unintelligible without an oral commentary, or a statement as to whether it referred to war, tribute, census, etc.

Doubtless the knots originally only indicated numbers, and the elaborate quipu, above described, was slowly evolved as the knot-officers (Quipucamayocuna, they were called) grew ever more skilful in their art.

This use of knots as mnemonics (still represented in England by the rosary and the knot which the absent-minded person ties in his handkerchief) is found among the herdsmen of the Peruvian plateaux, who keep accounts of their cattle on knotted cords; whilst the natives of Ardrah, in West Africa, also use small knotted cords, each knot of which has its particular significance. Other African tribes, such as the Jebus, knot small objects into a piece of string, and so manage to convey a few simple ideas. For example, cowrie shells placed face to face denote friendship, and an arrow means war. Knot-reckoning in a primitive form was used by the North American Indians.

The man who does not carry the torch of Humour is always in danger of falling into the pit of Absurdity.—R. G. Ingersoll.

The quipu is also believed to have been employed by the Chinese and the Tibetans; and at one time the Hawaiian tax-gatherers kept their accounts on lines of cordage hundreds of feet in length.

Mention of the use of knots as mnemonics is made by Herodotus, who tells us that when Darius crossed the Ister in his campaign against the Scythians he left with the Ioanians guarding the floating bridge by which his army crossed the river, a thong in which he tied sixty knots, bidding them untie one knot every day, and to disperse to their homes if he had not returned when every knot was untied.

Another ancient memory-aiding device, the message-stick, is still in use among the aborigines of Australia. A branch of a tree is notched in the presence of the messenger, each cut standing for an instruction which is given to him as the cut is made. Thus, the notches are merely aids to memory, and not self-explanatory.

The message-stick is also found in Africa and Melanesia; and the American Indians reckoned by means of cuts on a stick, and kept records of such details as the number of days spent on an expedition, and the number of enemies slain, by a notched stick.

Like the quipu, the message-stick has its equivalent in England. Before the general use of writing in this country, it was customary among traders to have two sticks, one kept by the buyer and one by the seller, each scored with the amount of goods sold or the money due; and until comparatively recent times small publicans and milk vendors kept their accounts in this fashion. The English Exchequer also kept certain accounts by means of notched sticks, called tallies. The tally was a squared piece of well-seasoned wood (generally hazel or willow), on the sides of which the "writer of the tallies" cut notches of different breadths, indicating pounds, shillings, and pence, whereby the sum of money loaned to the Government was recorded. The amount in Roman numerals, together with the name of the lender and the date of the loan, were then cut on two of the other sides, after which the tally was cleft longitudinally into two parts, in such a manner that each part contained one half of each notch. One half was kept by the Exchequer, and the other handed to the lender, so that when the money fell due the lender's half might be surrendered for comparison with that half in possession of the Exchequer. If the two were found to "tally" the loan was repaid. Hence the modern practice with cheques, which, when returned, should "tally" with the counterfoil. Clumsy as this contrivance now seems, it was effectual in preventing forgery, and was not finally discontinued until 1834, when, through the over-heating of stoves in the burning of heaps of accumulated tally-sticks, the Houses of Parliament were destroyed.

Another rude method of keeping records, or of communicating with the absent, is by engraving marks or pictures on some hard substance, such as the flat surface of a bone. In the caves used as dwelling-places by prehistoric man, there are such paintings or engravings on the walls; whilst numerous fragments of bone and ivory, bearing remarkably well-executed engravings of such animals as reindeer, mammoths, and buffaloes, are found among the rubbish with which the floors are covered. And here we come to the pictographic stage of writing.

The alphabets of every civilized people have been developed out of pictographs. Pictography has left its mark all over the world, but it is in North America that it has been mostly widely developed (in the wampum belt), as a system lasting down to modern times. A wampum belt is made of beads or shells strung on pieces of bark, hemp, or deer-skin, and was used to record important events, to mark boundaries, and for communication between persons separated. In its most intricate form each colour had its peculiar significance, white beads indicating peace, and purple or

violet beads war. Sometimes a pattern was made with different coloured beads, as in the case of the famous Penn Belt, which tradition says was presented to William Penn in 1682 (probably on the making of a treaty with the Leni-Lenape chiefs). In the centre of this belt, which is composed of eighteen strings of white wampum, are two figures formed of dark-coloured beads, intended to represent Penn and an Indian shaking hands, thus signifying friendship or a treaty. Penn is given a hat to show that he is a European. Across the belt run three oblique bands, which are the symbol of the Indian federation responsible for the treaty (the Five Nations, as they are often called).

Simple pictures were drawn on bark, whereby the subjects of a song or recitation could be easily recalled. An account of sales was kept by representing by perpendicular strokes the number of items involved, and adding at the end of the series a picture of the objects to which the series referred. Thus, six lines, followed by a picture of a deer, would indicate that the hunter had sold that number of deer.

A good example of the use by the Indians of pictographs in letter-writing is a message which a group of tribes sent to the United States Congress regarding fishing rights in a number of small lakes near Lake Superior. Each tribe is represented by its totem (*i.e.*, token or emblem), and the letter shows a crane followed by three martens, a bear, a manfish, and a catfish. From the eye and heart of each of these animals runs a line connecting them with the eye and heart of the crane to show that they are all of one mind; and from the eye of the crane runs a line connecting it with a rough map of the lakes in which the tribes desired to fish, and another towards Congress.

W. H. MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

A Freethought Theatre.

The following note appeared originally in the *Freethinker* for March 5th, 1893. It is of special interest at the moment in view of the production of Mr. Maugham's play, "The Unknown." We have no knowledge of whether Mr. Beckwith's theatre is at present in existence. Perhaps some of our American readers can enlighten us.

WHILE the proselytizing benefactions of Christians are pretty widely advertised, the unostentatious liberality of Freethinkers is less widely known. Another instance, however, of Freethought liberality comes from the United States, which already possesses in the Lick Observatory and the Girard Institute two splendid specimens of generous Secularism. The town of Dowagiac, in Michigan, has 4,000 inhabitants; it has grown up around a large stove-works created by the late Mr. P. D. Beckwith, a staunch Freethinker. Before his death he desired to erect a first-class theatre for first-class performances, in which the money-making element should be absent. His son-in-law, Mr. Fred Lee, and his other heirs have faithfully carried out the purpose which death prevented him from accomplishing. The new theatre, just completed, will seat 600 people and cost 150,000 dollars, or £30,000. It is of red brick, and outside is a frieze consisting of portraits in terra-cotta, bas reliefs of eminent writers, philosophers, artists, and actors, special prominence being given in the selection to those who were Freethinkers. Shakespeare, Ingersoll, Voltaire, Paine, Susan B. Anthony, are among the portraits. The decorations inside are magnificent, the colouring starting with a delicate flesh colour on the floor of the house, blending with a sea-green at the top. Every chair is upholstered in silk plush of light fawn, and there are handsome stained glass windows. The stage is large, the scenery complete, and the building is lit by the electric light. All this in a town of 4,000 people has excited much interest in the States. Col. Robert Ingersoll is to formally open the theatre by a lecture on Shakespeare, and to dedicate the building as a memorial to P. D. Beckwith and free—or, as our American friends put it, liberal—thought.

The Forbidden Fruit.

A LARGE number of the clergy, and a still larger number of their credulous followers, have been shockingly disturbed in mind by the recent utterance of Canon Barnes, that the story of the alleged fall of man in the Garden of Eden, as narrated in the third chapter of Genesis, is not true, and can no longer be entertained by intelligent Christians. To put it in the language of the learned Canon, "Man was not specially created by God, as the Jews of old believed, and as is stated in the Book of Genesis. Man is, on the contrary, the final product of a vast process by which all life has evolved from primitive organisms." This latter doctrine Free-thinkers have been teaching for at least the last half-century, and it is only now that a leading Canon of the Church, who happens also to be a Doctor of Science, comes forward to declare that the old teaching of the Bible on this subject is absolutely untenable.

And although the necessary consequence of giving up the belief in the fall must lead inevitably to the rejection of the belief in the atonement by the death of Christ, the learned Canon nevertheless declares that the vital teachings of Christianity remain unimpaired, and whatsoever King may reign he can still be "the Vicar of Bray." Of course he can; how could anybody expect a Canon of the Church, with a reasonable prospect of becoming a Bishop, to throw over his living for a small matter of an avowed disbelief in one of the fundamental doctrines of his faith? But if instead of being a Canon of the Church, he had been an Old Bailey lawyer or even an ordinary Freethought lecturer, he would have discovered that the Bible story of Adam and Eve eating of "the forbidden fruit," under the temptation of the serpent, did not constitute a fall of man at all, but actually the rise of man from a state of ignorance to one of knowledge and understanding. The truth is that when the Church formulated its scheme of salvation it declared that the disobedience of our first parents constituted the fall from a state of purity and innocence to one of sin and degradation; that after that fatal step man became "inherently depraved"; and that the only way to get salvation was through the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God on the cross at Calvary. In other words, the Church founded its scheme of salvation on the teaching of St. Paul, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

But the story of the alleged fall of man in Genesis is not only a stupid legend, but if it were true, as narrated, it is a story of the rise of man, and therefore the whole scheme of the Christian religion is rotten at the foundation. Let us look for a few moments at the old story as it stands, without the aid of theological spectacles. The Bible says that out of the dust of the earth the Lord God formed man, and from a rib extracted from the side of man, he manufactured a woman. The man and woman were perfect productions. Indeed, the Lord God was proud of them, and sought to make them happy. He put them into a garden—a sort of zoological garden where all the animals were prowling about without even the regulation muzzle—surrounded them with trees containing luscious fruit, and bade them eat freely of the fruit, save of one tree, the tree "of the knowledge of good and evil," but in the day they ate thereof they would surely die. But this same God, Jahveh, put in the garden an insidious serpent, which "was more subtle than any beast of the field." This serpent, who had the power of speech and who apparently understood the exact dialect in which Adam and Eve spoke, came upon Eve unexpectedly in the garden, and told her that though God had said that in the day she ate of the fruit she would surely die, he (the serpent) knew a great deal better. On the contrary, he assured her that in the day

she ate of the fruit she would not die, but that her eyes would be opened, and she would become like unto the Gods and know the difference between good and evil. When Eve had tasted of the fruit she found it very nice, and, like the good woman she was, she gave unto her husband, and he did eat also; and the first effect of eating the fruit was that they discovered for the first time that they were not clothed, and they were decent enough to think that they ought to have some sort of raiment, so they covered themselves with fig leaves, though there was nobody in the world to see them but the Lord, and the serpent, and the wild animals, and I do not suppose they were very particular in such matters. But it is worthy of remark that one other thing happened, viz., the serpent's prediction was verified, and Adam and Eve became like unto the Gods to know the difference between good and evil, and the Lord God became so afraid that he turned the man and the woman out of the garden, lest they should eat of another tree and live for ever. Of course, the great pity is that they did not eat of this tree first, and then they would have spoilt the plan of old Jahveh altogether. Before, however, he turned them out of the garden he delivered himself of a terrible curse, like the heavy father in melodrama. He cursed the man that he should be an agricultural labourer for the rest of his life. He cursed the woman that she should be a perpetual breeder of sinners, for unto the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." He cursed the serpent that it should "go upon its belly" for the remainder of its career; what form of locomotion it had adopted before, Genesis does not say. Indeed, the Lord carried his rage so far that he cursed the earth; but, as in "The Jack-daw of Rheims":—

What gave rise to no little surprise
Nobody seemed one penny the worse.

For although the Lord God had said that in the day Adam and Eve ate of the fruit they would surely die, Adam had the temerity to live 930 years after, and was hale and hearty, and Eve became the mother of a very numerous family.

Now, this is really the Biblical story. In what sense can it be said to depict a fall of man? To say that man became inherently depraved as the result of such action is absurd, unless it be assumed that the Gods were "inherently depraved," which no Christian would concede for a moment. The fact is the Christians were always opposed to man daring to gain knowledge on his own account; and in this precious story it was the serpent who instigated man in this glorious enterprise. And so it may be said that Adam was *the man who took the wrong turning* according to the Christian scheme; and his progress, like that of natural man, has been upwards, and not downwards. But, of course, we now know that the Christian scheme of salvation is false from beginning to end; that the whole story in Genesis is mythical; that man was never created perfect, but that he has come up by a long and painful process from the lowest form of animal life until he has reached the position in which we find him to-day.

But now the masses of the people are beginning to understand and feel the weakness of their own faith, they will probably consider how long they will be able to believe in the alleged miracles of the New Testament, the Immaculate Conception, the Resurrection, and Ascension—as well as the smaller miracles of feeding five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two fishes, opening the eyes of the blind by sticking clay on them, walking on the sea without the aid of Boyton boots and in defiance of the law of gravitation, and Jesus calling Lazarus out of the grave "with a loud voice," because a soft one would be ineffective under the circumstances; and when they begin to

examine these and other matters in a serious and rational spirit their eyes, like those of Adam and Eve in the old story, will be open, and they will know the difference between common sense and theological nonsense, and the day of their emancipation will be at hand. And with the aid of Freethought they will be able to walk steadily but firmly along the narrow path of knowledge into the purer atmosphere of freedom and progress.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Tolerance.

I HAVE a growing pleasure in the clever writings of your new contributor, Mr. H. C. Mellor. He is a colour artist in words, and he is a fighter. Freethought has need of men with these qualifications. So much of praise. In criticism I think his drawing is faulty.

In his first paragraph under the above title, Mr. Mellor says, in effect, that if we are snubbed and have any self-respect, we quit the presence of the snubber faster than a cockroach when the light is turned on, feeling quite shrivelled up. We don't. If we have any self-respect we try to teach the snubber a lesson. We may not succeed, but we vindicate our self-respect better that way than by turning tail. The same rule holds good in the parallel he draws in accepting tolerance from a Christian Government. If we have self-respect, we fight on for an equality of civil rights. Every step we make to this end is a Freethought victory. There is no nobility in meekly "accepting crumbs from the table of the powerful"; but there is nobility in fighting for our rightful share of the food, and taking it bit by bit if we are unable to win it in one effort. Therefore we differ from Mr. Mellor. Freethought has accomplished something noteworthy, something noble. It has many substantial realities to point to as a reward for its efforts. Without enumerating, it is a long way from the faggot to the atrophied blasphemy laws. My prophetic vision—unlike Mr. Mellor's—is not long enough to see the Church become as powerful as of old, and I don't believe its eyes have ever been shut. The Church has fought every inch of the way with its eyes open—a losing fight. Short of a horde of barbarians arising and destroying every scrap of literature, Freethought will steadily pursue its victorious march.

Mr. Mellor says, "British Freethinkers are satisfied with thinking insularly instead of internationally." My acquaintance with any but English Freethought is not extensive, but I cordially agree the statement is true up to our boundaries. I am sorry that Scotch, Welsh, and Irish Freethought should be as hidebound. Insularity will break down under cheaper personal communication with other nations, and by the educative influence of the scientific film.

Jowett and Colenso did not come like unexpected comets. These two men may have stirred the Church from the inside more than Bradlaugh from the outside. But surely Mr. Mellor does not estimate the outside at its true value. Had there been no outside there would probably have been no Jowett or Colenso.

"The downfall of Christianity will be brought about by economic pressure," says Mr. Mellor, and he asks, "Must we remain dormant until that day." We are not dormant. There may not be as many actively engaged in its destruction as we could wish, and its extinction may not be realized in our time, but we must confess that the rate of its decay is not ill-pleasing to us. Nevertheless, we are prepared, along with Mr. Mellor, to welcome an efficient blasting powder. There is one more item in Mr. Mellor's article: "If we carry on the development of time-worn ideas and actions, are we anything but an offshoot of a dying species?" Development and dying are contradictory expressions. If we develop old ideas, we are bettering them. We are progressing. We are truly an offshoot, but the offshoot is alive. In the scale of development every step becomes a "new idea to light our age." Wanting to fly is good, but we needn't despise our legs because they only let us jump. Milton demanded "liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience above all liberties." I believe there is more liberty than takers. If all Freethinkers were wise and fearless—that sounds paradoxical—

Milton's plea in these days would be farcical. My complaint is not about lack of liberty. It is about lack of organization amongst Freethinkers to do battle against superstition, which I take it endorses what Mr. Mellor is driving at; and, further, against the stupidity of the masses. I am prepared to give large sample packets of Freethought to any I meet, but only one in a hundred can be found to display an intelligent interest in the goods. I take heart. If I did not find any at all; there would be the rub.

H. IRVING.

Acid Drops.

Wisdom takes many forms, and not the least curious of them are those it assumes in religious or semi-religious magazines. Thus a writer in the *Polytechnic Magazine* for September remarks that one great cause of the prevalence of scepticism is the failure of organized religion to grip the masses. Exactly. One great feature of the growth of unbelief in Christianity is that people do not believe in Christianity. That is one of those profound generalisations in which the religious mind delights, and its prevalence helps us to understand many things.

Profound also is the remark, by the same writer, that the greatest torture to a soul craving for comfort would be a copy of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Well, it all depends. To a soul craving for water whisky would not be acceptable, and to a soul craving for whisky, water would taste like poison. It all depends upon taste and education. To a writer like the one we are quoting, common sense would be a very unwelcome gift when he is looking for evangelical slops and ecclesiastical inanities. He should read the *Freethinker* regularly, his taste would improve, and he would no more look to a bundle of old wives' tales for comfort than a healthy palate flies to opium for strength.

A Blackpool woman died suddenly whilst punishing her pet dog for tearing pages out of her Bible. According to orthodox ideas, the dog should have "gone West," and not the lady.

According to the *Daily Graphic*, the Rev. Dinsdale Young, of the Central Hall, is "theologically simple enough" to talk about "bright heaven and blazing hell." It should have added that the congregation "was theologically simple enough" to listen to such talk.

A Calvary was consecrated at a Kentish Town church by the Bishop of Willesden. And this takes place, mark you, in the Metropolis of the British Empire in the twentieth century. As Shakespeare says, "An ounce of civet, good apothecary."

The Church of England is the wealthiest Christian Church in the world. Yet, Dean Phillips, speaking at Aldershot, declares that "some of the families of clergymen are literally in a state of starvation," and that "the infant daughter of a clergyman had died because her father could not provide nourishment." Doubtless, the story is "as true as the Gospels," but we should like fuller details.

In an article on "tramps," a London newspaper says "roughly sixty per cent. of the modern casuals are of the clerical class." This, of course, means commercial clerks, and not clerks in holy orders. The "starving" clergy seldom sink below a villa residence—and free invitations to dinner.

Four parsons took part in a funeral at Bulkington, Warwickshire. The deceased had a good send-off, whether he was bound for heaven or the other place.

The real goods in religion is something of a rarity, but the Rev. A. Bage, of Uxbridge, is an extraordinary sample. He says that "if man could make a submarine, God could make a fish to swallow Jonah." The reverend gentleman

ought not, however, to be so modest. He should have insisted that Jonah could have swallowed the whale.

Said the Clerk at the London Guildhall, "Great Peter Street, Westminster, is the abode of professional beggars." He might have said much the same of the Abbey, or the Cathedral.

At a revival meeting in a Western American town, an elderly man was asked by a lady evangelist if he "loved Jesus." The aged person replied, "I can't say that I know enough of him to love him, but I know nothing agin him."

There has been discussion in one of the daily papers concerning "original sin." A humourist characterised the discussion as waste of time. "All the sins have been done before," he said.

The Vicar of St. Jude's Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb, asks for a bath-chair for the elderly folk attending his gospel-shop. As a bath-chair is not a *clar-a-banc*, those aged Christians cannot be very numerous.

A Wiltshire parson, in the course of his parochial calls, was spoken to by a female parishioner, who said, "It is three years since my babe died, but I ought not to vex, for the doctors told me she would only have been a hopeless *infidel* if she had lived."

In the *New York Evening Journal* of September 21 Princess Hafffeh, of Egypt, makes a slashing attack on missionaries who go out to convert the Mohammedans. She says that:—

As a rule, they know nothing of our old civilization. They have no understanding of the history of our religion, ignore completely the background of Mohammedanism, and revel in their ignorance.....Missionaries may convert heathen savages, but they have little success in converting Mohammedans.....Being unable to convert us, the missionaries naturally feel resentment towards us. Every calumny spread by the ignorant is glorified by missionaries.....Apparently what would be a lie in another becomes purified by crossing a missionary's lips.

We do not think that anyone who really knows anything of missionaries and their work will be surprised at what the Princess says. Usually it is the more ignorant of our home clergy who take up with the work, and their home-made ignorance and impudence is intensified when they get away from here. And as they are not notorious for truth-telling at home, it is not to be expected that they will become more truthful when abroad. The following, too, will bear thinking over:—

Human nature must be very ideal, at bottom, since no nation can be stirred to war unless it believes it is fighting for a good cause. Tell an Englishman he is going to destroy Turkey in order to enrich British money kings and he will refuse to march. But tell him he is going to free his fellow-Christians in Armenia from the blood-curdling Turkish oppressor, and he will rush to the colours. European nations are indeed past masters in the art of exploiting Christianity.

The Yankee Brothers Wood are conducting an evangelistic campaign in London, and are hoping to repeat the success of the Moody and Sankey troupe of a generation ago. Times have changed, however. One influential newspaper says the evangelist is "long-winded," and the choruses lack "pep." This won't wake up the little village on the Thames.

A memorial at Maidstone Prison shows that 133 ex-prisoners served in the war from that gaol. As a fact, the only class in the nation which was exempted from military service was the clergy. There are 50,000 of them in the country, which ordinary folk imagine to be other than priest-ridden.

There is a journal of the Union of Post Office Workers called *The Post*, and the issue of October contains an article on "Labour and Religion." The writer is evidently religious, and is somewhat distressed that there is so

much irreligion among Labourists. He says that if one wished to meet Atheists and Agnostics one would go to a Labour club for them—which is about the best thing concerning Labour clubs that I have seen. He also says that the I.L.P. and the B.S.P. are "frankly Atheistical." This is certainly not true of the I.L.P., which is notoriously afraid of offending the religious authorities, although it may be true of the other organisation. Still, we have hopes of the I.L.P. One day its members will awaken to the fact that playing to religion does not pay, and then we daresay its leaders will follow, as is the custom of leaders in political movements. Leadership there consists mainly in knowing what one's followers are likely to ask for next, and being just five minutes before them in expressing their demands.

The curious discovery of the writer is that the lack of religion among Labour men and women is due to sheer mental laziness. Now, that is a noteworthy discovery. As is also the supplementary generalization that "it is easier to go through life an unbeliever." We don't know who the writer of this article, a Mr. A. Strawson, is, but, off-hand, we are inclined to venture the opinion that he confines his reading to the business pursuit of deciphering addresses. For really the religious people that we know never strike us as demons of intellectual restlessness and energy. And, on the other hand, it has never struck us that those who embraced Freethought did so because they were after a lazy or comfortable time. Still, one never knows. It might be that the Bishop of London would have had a better paid job and a more comfortable time had he never gone in for theology, and it may be that the Editor of the *Freethinker* would have got less money and would have worked harder had he gone in for preaching the "blood." But that is not the general impression. Still, we should be the last to assume that general impressions are infallible. So Mr. Strawson may be right after all.

This week, writes a correspondent, an educated woman told me that her difficulties in giving religious instruction led to this remark from her little boy: "Mother, don't tell me what you *think*. Tell me what you *know*." Again, a writer in the *Daily Dispatch* related how his little girl said to him: "Daddy, tell me what you *really* know about God." This reminds me that about a year ago a clergyman told me he had been visiting a clerical friend, who narrated something which impressed the party, whereupon his little daughter went up to him and said: "Daddy, is that true, or are you only preaching?"

Compulsory church rates are still paid by many districts in the London County Council areas, the sums varying from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 6d. in the pound. In most places the church rates have been commuted by the local authorities paying down a lump sum. The proposal is now being made by the Council that the whole of the Church rates should be commuted. We see no reason why they should not be abolished. It is infamous that when there is so much talk of freedom a particular church should be permitted to levy a rate upon the whole of the community for the maintenance of a particular set of religious teachings. We should like to see a very strong protest against the payment of a lump sum by the London rate-payers for any such purpose. It should be abolished. The fact that the Church has fleeced the public for so long should not be permitted to be made the ground for still another act of brigandage.

Public dissatisfaction is being everywhere expressed at the stupid films exhibited in many cinema theatres. So far, an American film of "Jonah," exhibiting a cardboard whale of appropriate size, has not been shown on this side of the Atlantic. When the cardboard whale film arrives here, the audiences should no longer be downhearted.

Mrs. Mary Fitzgerald, who died in May, 1919, at Rome, after providing for her relatives, left the residue of her estate, over £50,000, to the Roman Catholic Church. A large proportion of this money is for "Catholic education," which means, in plain English, education with a Roman Catholic bias. In this way is the rubbish of the Middle Ages perpetuated, and civilization retarded.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

THERE is no list of subscriptions to the Sustentation Fund, or towards the special £1,000 Fund, in this issue of the *Freethinker*. This is not because there is nothing to acknowledge, but because we are away in Scotland, and letters cannot be received and dealt with in time for publication this week. We could only deal with such sums as have been received up to Friday evening, and it is better to wait until next week, and so make the list accurate to date. For the same reason many letters must also stand over for the time being. Running a weekly paper single-handed and travelling about the country has its inconveniences, and we must all make the best of the situation. Anyway, the list will be all the larger next week. Luckily, Mr. Lloyd is available, and he is kindly seeing this issue of the paper through the press. CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

- A. D. CORRICK.—We also should like a larger number of subscribers to the Fund, even though the total did not advance. Still, each one must determine how far help is given. Our duty ends with pointing out the occasion. Glad you find the paper so helpful.
- F. BERMAN.—Yours is a very excellent way of helping the cause, and we must all use such means as present themselves.
- W. ALLAN.—We should be pleased to see a branch of the N. S. S. formed in Ayr, and would do all we could to help it. Pleased to learn that Freethought is growing in the town.
- IRVING LEVY.—G. W. Foote.
- D. CORRICK.—We are glad you find that our anniversary article is so encouraging. We hope that it will encourage all our readers to take a more active interest in "the best of causes."
- E. A. PHIPSON.—We do not admit the right to use the terms "higher" and "lower" when dealing with natural phenomena—apart from a convenient arrangement of our own. The conception of things as in themselves higher or lower is no more than a survival of Theism.
- MAC.—It is gratifying to learn that you found so much comfort in reading the *Freethinker* during your three and a half years' service abroad. We suppose we keep fresh in our writing because there is so much to write about and so much to do. And that is always a stimulus.
- F. W. LLOYD.—We have no intention at the moment of republishing. Too many other things demand precedence. You will note that all our recent publications do follow the lines you suggest.
- W. H. HICKS.—The warm endorsement of so old a reader as yourself is very gratifying. We have always done our best, as has everyone else connected with the paper.
- S. HAMPSON.—No need whatever to apologize. If every reader did as much we should be at an end of all worry.
- H. SPENCE.—The Education Act provides local option in the matter of religious instruction. There is nothing to prevent the electors in any area deciding that religious instruction shall not be given in the schools under its control.
- J. BREESE.—Received with thanks. We think you are right in looking for one result of our work in the gradual broadening of thought inside the churches, as well as in the manifestation of avowed Freethought outside. Glad to note that you are still busy with your press advocacy of our opinions. Shall hope to see you soon.
- C. M.—It does not matter a brass button to a sane materialism whether "matter" be a reality or not. The assumption that it does is due to some materialists taking their conception of materialism from their opponents, instead of seeking to understand in what it is that materialism really consists. Supernaturalism leaves an evil influence behind it, and affects, with many, even naturalism.
- MR. J. HUDSON writes that as "a journalist who has had experience in times long past of the delights of working for concerns that did not make financial ends meet, I can pay a very sympathetic tribute to the courage with which you have always faced the difficulties, and the infectious cheerfulness of your outlook. There is a great future before the paper, I feel sure, once the difficult ascent is made, and it gets into the less toilsome paths of the journey." We have never had any doubt as to the future of the paper. And it will not be our fault if we do not see that future arrive.

Mr. Hudson also suggests that local correspondents should make it their business to see that we are kept supplied with items of interest. Many of them already do so, and we are much obliged to them.

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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. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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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:—

The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

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Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 17) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester, afternoon at 3, evening at 6.30. This is the opening of the Manchester Branch's lecture season, and we hope that the local saints will do their best to see that the hall is filled on both occasions. There is nothing like a good send-off for the season's work.

To-day (October 17) Mr. Lloyd lectures in the Marsden Miners' Hall, South Shields. The lectures will be at 3 o'clock and 6.30, when it is expected there will be large audiences. Mr. Lloyd will also lecture on Thursday evening in the Co-op. Hall, Jarrow; and on Sunday, October 24, at Hebburn, of which particulars will appear in our next issue.

The Glasgow Branch made a good start with its season's lecturing on Sunday last with two meetings addressed by Mr. Cohen. The City Hall was quite filled for both the morning and evening lectures, and, judging from the applause and the close attention paid, the lectures were followed with the keenest appreciation. A striking feature of both meetings was the number of ladies and young men who were present. The branch has now succeeded in getting a hall for regular weekly meetings, and this will enable the branch to carry on its work in a more systematic manner than it has been able to do during the war period. The committee is full of enthusiasm for the work, and looks forward with every confidence to the future.

We received last week several letters on the controversy opened by Miss Prewett's article, which we were unable to publish, partly because they did not reach us till rather late, partly because of want of space. And perhaps their purpose will be met if we summarise their contents now. E. T. K. writes in reply to Dr. Dunlop's challenge that if a little time is given him he will certainly test the matter. Mr. Cutner writes that Miss Prewett is confusing Neo-Malthusianism with the mere checking of the birth rate, which it is not, but a reasoned social and economic doctrine. He also pays a deserved tribute to the courage of Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh in their fight to bring the public mind to a realization of the importance of the Neo-Malthusian question. Mr. Cutner says that Freethinkers have seen too much of "saviour" movements to be dazzled by this last one. Mr. Caldwell Hayes thinks that Miss Prewett's

articles show a deeper cleavage than ever between Free-thought and religion. He thinks it amounts to an apotheosis of pain in the name of Freethought instead of in the name of religion. Miss Prewett cannot complain that her article has not aroused interest, but, then, all her articles have that gracious quality. And a writer who arrests attention, whether the attention be friendly or hostile, is at least alive.

Messrs. Watts & Co. have added to their Life Stories of Famous Men *The Life of Robert Owen*, by Mr. Joseph McCabe (price, 3s. 6d., cloth). In the course of 120 pages Mr. McCabe gives a necessarily brief but satisfactory sketch of the great social reformer, whose greatest offence to the world of respectability was that he came to the rejection of all religious beliefs. Present-day folk who take any sort of an interest in social reform ought to make themselves acquainted with the main facts of the life of Owen, whom Mr. McCabe rightly claims to be one of the outstanding figures of the nineteenth century, to whom the present generation owes more than it is aware of. Mr. McCabe's sketch is not a critical study so much as a serviceable biography, and it should whet the appetite for more.

There are only two or three minor points on which a word of criticism may be offered. Mr. McCabe says that Owen would never have said that he was an Atheist. We do not think he ever did so, but there seems no reason for saying that "Owen was an Agnostic." The term did not exist in Owen's day, and as Place, Mill, and Bentham are properly called by Mr. McCabe Atheists, there seems no reason why an exception should be made in the case of Owen, particularly as Owen once declared that all the religions of the world were so many forms of geographical insanity. Further, it is not correct to say that Holyoake was driven by Christian bigotry into Agnosticism. He was "driven" into avowed Atheism, and, we should prefer to think, not by Christian intolerance, but by recognition of the logic of the Atheistic position. And it is surely fitting that the war-time anti-German feeling was allowed to subside sufficiently to make the sentence "a little kink in the brain of Friedrich Nietzsche gave the world the idea of the superman" unnecessary. But these are minor blemishes upon what is a very useful sketch of the life of a good man and a great reformer.

In his new life of Bradlaugh, Mr. J. M. Robertson claims, and we think rightly, that in his advocacy of Malthusianism Bradlaugh set up one of the most momentous changes in the social history of this country. It is certain that his conduct made a freer discussion possible, although many of those who take part in that discussion may be quite unaware to whom they owe their freedom. We are reminded of this by two books that reach us from Messrs. Putnam & Co. on the subject of "Birth Control," which appears to be an expression coined to disguise the fact that it is Malthusianism that is under discussion. (It seems almost impossible for writers in this country to be quite straightforward in intellectual matters.) The first is called *Radiant Motherhood*, by Dr. Marie Stopes, and contains some very sensible advice, along with a great deal of sentimental musings that have but small claim to come under the head of science. The book is published at 6s.

The other work is entitled *The Control of Parenthood* (7s. 6d.), and is made up of a number of essays by Dr. Arthur Thomson, Dean Inge, Dr. Scharlieb, Mr. Harold Cox, and others. Naturally, the essays vary in quality, and we have but little sympathy with the argument of Sir Rider Haggard that we must go on multiplying in order to hold our own against competitors. As other countries will take up the same position, it follows that we are to go on in a breeding competition, and that each country is to hold its own by breeding faster than any other country. That men can lay down a proposition of this kind shows what little real thinking they bring to bear upon things. Principal Garvie's essay might also have been well omitted in favour of distribution to a Mothers' Meeting. The essays by Professors Thomson and Hill and that of Mr. Harold Cox do form a serious discussion of the prob-

lem. And it is something for the question to have reached the stage when it can be discussed in this manner. And those who appreciate this might remember how much they owe to the Freethinkers in this connection.

For our own part what we should like to see is a little less of the conception of woman as a superior kind of rabbit, whose duty it is to go on producing children in order that we may have the power to "swarm" all over the earth for this or that purpose. Religious teaching is full of this kind of thing, and even non-religious folk—probably because they have not clearly thought out their own position—are apt tacitly to endorse it. The woman may well complain that it is the man's point of view that is being forced upon her, and resist it in the name of her own individuality. And some little attention might be paid to the consideration that, while the fundamental fact of sex can never be ruled out, later developments have the tendency, here as elsewhere, to subordinate the earlier facts to their own ends, so long as they do not entirely negate them. Even the Malthusian discussion has followed this line, for, beginning as a discussion on the purely economic plane, the tendency has been to discuss it from the standpoint of the reciprocal claims of men and women on each other, considered as individuals.

We have received from Messrs. Flatters, Milborne and McKechnie, of Manchester (at present advertising in these columns), some specimens of their microscopic and lantern slides, biological and botanical, with a number of their descriptive handbooks. So far as we have been able to test them, the slides are all that they should be, and we strongly commend them to all in need of such aids to knowledge. Catalogues will be sent on application, and we presume special requirements will be met. But the existing range of the firm is very wide, and most will, we feel certain, after glancing down the lists, find all that they need already prepared, either for lecturing or for lessons. And either biology or botany to-day without the microscope is not a very satisfactory affair.

The following letter has an application that induces us to give it as wide a publicity as we can. It is from one whom we know not to be in the habit of expressing wild opinions, or without weighing those he does express carefully. The cheque was acknowledged in last week's list:

I have the great pleasure to enclose herewith my cheque for £10 for the Sustentation Fund, and only wish I could afford to send you ten times as much. I read every word in the *Freethinker* every week, and, while I cannot agree with all the opinions expressed (including your own), I do admire the great work you are doing, and wish it every success. We are having a terrible time in Ireland. And we do feel that you people in England and Scotland are very apathetic about us. Here, we are living in the midst of daily murders and assassinations of the most ghastly kind, and yet the British public seem to live on in their own contented way, taking little or no notice. So long as your own lives and property are not at stake, you apparently take no trouble to save ours. The British Press is poisoned—by influence and money (no one knows that better than yourself). The real facts are never revealed, and all information given is distorted and false to an inconceivable degree. The situation at present calls urgently for immediate and very vigorous action on the part of the British public if we people in Ireland are to be saved from a great catastrophe. Indeed, I fear, it is too late to do much now. None of you seem to realize the situation in the faintest degree. In any case, you will get this £10, and if we are all murdered to-night, which is quite possible, the *Freethinker* will be none the worse for it.

We beg to differ. We should have lost a good friend, and any number of ten-pound notes would not make that loss good.

Calumny is the homage which dogmatism has ever paid to conscience. Even in the period when the guilt of heresy was universally believed, the spirit of intolerance was only sustained by the diffusion of countless libels against the misbeliever, and by the systematic concealment of his virtues.—William E. H. Lecky.

Plotinus, The Labourer, and Dean Inge.

II.

(Continued from p. 652.)

OUR own approach to Plotinus was made via Plato. Richard Jefferies is a lyrical reflection of Plotinus, and, on reading *The Story of My Heart* and his various nature works, we were reminded forcefully of what we considered to be the source. Similarly, *The Candle of Vision*, by "A. E.," also reminded us of the dynamic source of this Irish author's inspiration. Traherne, also, is of this company.

ON THE VIRTUES.

In the first essay of the volume mentioned, "On the Virtues," Plotinus writes: "For reason being present will be sufficient, which the inferior part will reverence, so as even to be itself indignant, if it is at all moved, in consequence of not being quiet when its master is present; and it will on this account blame its own imbecility." We accuse the Dean of allowing his "inferior part" to rule his speech and master his reason in his attack on the Labourer. His own reason should have told him that the lazy workman was copying the grand example of modern hucksters who manure land with fish—to keep up the price.¹ If the Dean desires to be a knight to storm the Castle Dangerous, let him attack the system which embraces his profession—for, in the language of the lecture-room, the whole is greater than the part—those who are denied the sweet food of academies express the same thing when they say, "You can't get a quart into a pint pot." This "inferior part" of the Dean (what is it but stupidity?) has mastered his reason and compels him to write "slush" that anyone can read in the *Daily Mail* or *John Bull*. Homer walking in Hades did not recognise his thousand commentators; we imagine that Plotinus will be just as perplexed. Is stupidity a necessary qualification for a prophet of woe?

AGAINST THE GNOSTICS.

"And this must everywhere be considered, that he who pursues our form of philosophy will, beside all other goods, genuinely exhibit simple and venerable manners, in conjunction with the possession of wisdom, and will not endeavour to become insolent and proud; but will possess confidence accompanied with reason, much security and caution, and great circumspection." The Dean has two volumes of lectures on Plotinus costing a guinea. As we have previously shown, he has not considered the cause that reduces a workman to indifference. His denunciatory language—street corner or Northcliffe Press abuse—rather tends to demonstrate that, either Plotinus is wrong, or the Dean has studied in vain. "Because, however, some persons are only philosophers in appearance, the addition of a true philosopher became necessary." Perhaps, in charity, my readers, we can only explain it by the "vogue"; a charming example of this was to be read in one of our newspapers a few days ago. Diamond bracelets for women's ankles were the "vogue" in Paris—the "vogue," my readers. We believe that this place (Paris) is famous for a little disturbance about "eating grass." Although we should like to think differently, we imagine that the Dean's lectures on Plotinus were considered "the thing"—but we shall not close the door to be convinced otherwise.

ON DIALECTIC.

If, my readers, you matriculate in the school of Plotinus, you will find in "On Dialectic" the follow-

¹ We have yet to hear that this is a criminal offence—in a nation progressing in "Aviation."
² "On Eternity and Time."

ing words:—"It likewise employs this division for the purpose of divining what a thing is, and in order to obtain a knowledge of the first genera of things, intellectually connecting that which results from these, till it has proceeded through the whole of an intelligible nature; and again, by an analytic process, it arrives at that to which it had proceeded from the first." Putting aside, as a bladder on the end of a stick, the saying that "we are all equal in the sight of God" (we have more effective weapons in our armoury), we expect that the above extract has been read by the Dean. Assuming that he has read this, how comes it that this shepherd turns on his sheep—for not acting like angels? We can imagine angels alone working harder to pay for a war in which they fought. And, to go to the "genera" of the question, we shall ask, how did our modern usurers come by their wealth which they lent to the nation—when by law they could not invest it abroad? The workman, if he were articulate, could give us valuable help on the subject. By no miraculous means, the Dean has £2,000 worth of purchasing power yearly in the community. Does this sum grow on trees? Can he wear it on his back? Can he eat it? And our workman, who cannot yet use his tongue, will one day tell this uncertain disciple of culture that, "with a knowledge of the first genera of things" he demands fair words and kindly speech from the class that is supposed to represent the highest phase of national life. To be explicit, I mean the philosopher class. Culture, as we comprehend its meaning and function, can be explained in simple language. Culture is the perfume of the rose—depending on the roots in the earth, the stem and branches in the air. Although we do not care to write it, the Dean's accusations are nothing more than blight talkative. Shall the caliban roots be vilified because the flowers are cut by the usurer? The roots are in rebellion; and we accuse the Dean of ignorance on the first genera of things. An expert on the Athanasian Creed should be able to understand economics without looking at them—or is that qualification an impediment?

ON MATTER.

"But that which possesses nothing, as being in poverty, or rather being poverty itself, is necessarily evil. For this is not the want of wealth or of strength, but it is the want of wisdom, and the want of virtue, of beauty, strength, morphe, form, and quality. How, therefore, is it possible it should not be deformed? How is it possible it should not be perfectly base? How is it possible it should not be perfectly evil?" A man may be well fed and well clad, but it is possible for him to be poor—to be ignorant—the worst kind of poverty. Shakespeare had no illusions on ignorance, and, as my readers can see, Plotinus had none. The history of the Church is painful reading if we only look at its attitude towards chimney-sweeps. Then it was apathy or arrogance; now, for workman, it is one of patronage—and, in the Dean's case, malice and spite. Without beating about the bush, when one knows what the Church stands for, it is seen to be a secondary tyranny, where once it occupied the first place, and doubtless it has hopes of returning to its former greatness. We imagine that the regulation service card, trite symbol of the last war, would just approximate to the intellectual level of society ruled by Dean Inge. If Plotinus can inspire him with no wider outlook of workmen, then it is time that he took to hewing coal. People who have not read themselves stupid do not expect the workman, an Ishmaelite of society, to behave as a saint; society is to blame, and if the workman's problem is not settled soon, then Samson will once again pull down the pillars which support one-eyed and bastard philosophy.

It would be impertinence on our part to suggest that Freethinkers cannot read. We have a twofold object

in asking our readers to make the acquaintance of Plotinus. Firstly, to examine Plotinus and note the amazing falling away of one of his commentators; secondly, to read him as an exercise in lofty polemic and beautiful discourse on the few things in life that matter. As with Montaigne, one cannot read him and not be influenced—we are speaking of the truly free, who do not taste truth only because it is sweet, and we do not mean those who bawled themselves hoarse in asking Christians to forget the sixth commandment. If Plotinus had no other recommendation, his insistence on reason would command our attention. In the concluding paper we shall try to define our conception of philosophy as a unity, and the relation of Free-thought to economics, whilst at the same time venturing to suggest a few valuable books, the knowledge of which will bring the reader to a spiritual level—in comparison with which the Christian concept of spiritual worth is paltry, narrow, and selfish—how can it be otherwise when the followers of Christianity demanded a scapegoat, a sacrifice, a salvation at another's expense, a creeping into heaven through blood sacrifice, with a vocabulary in many places akin to the slaughterhouse, and a sublime lack of humour, contented to sing harvest thanksgiving hymns, along with "O Paradise, O Paradise, 'tis wearing waiting here." We trust that no reader will accuse us of using such a word as "spiritual" in its base currency Christian sense. We believe, and we are prepared to demonstrate our belief, that man's nature is threefold. The "tainted vocabulary" of theology makes our task somewhat like that of trying to shave with a scythe, but we are of the opinion that the words matter, soul, and spirit may be legitimately used by the Freethinker. That is one truth we gathered in our study of Plotinus; another was that Plotinus despised the Gnostics (theosophical Christians), and yet another was that commentators on Plotinus like Dean Inge are to be suspected when they descend to hasty judgments of the workman. He is at the top of the system—the workman is at the bottom. Imagine Edison smashing or abusing one of his talking machines because it would not chop wood. The workman is one of the responsibilities of the Dean, as well as being a responsibility of every Freethinker worth his salt. The business of this reverend wielder of the verbal knout is to fit citizens for heaven; why should he waste energy on the clay carcase of the workman—born in sin and shapen in iniquity? Candidates for heaven on their own teaching can well afford to despise such gross material things as coal and houses, and no sane person looks for sound economics in the Bible. But the world at present could do with the master-builder whose activities are mentioned in Genesis—to clean up the Christian mess. The world could do with the food producer of the New Testament, and, with this evidence, Freethinkers would pack up their tents and silently steal away—England would be a land of lotus eaters, and the Labourer might be then regarded as a human being, instead of an object for the cynical depravity of Priests and Politicians.

WILLIAM REPTON.

(To be concluded.)

Calvinism was one and the same thing in Geneva, in Scotland, in Old and New England. If there was a wedding, they had a sermon; if a war, or small pox, or a comet, or cankerworms, or a deacon died—still a sermon. Nature was a pulpit; the churchwarden or tithing-man was a petty persecutor; the presbytery, a tyrant; and in many a house in country places the poor children found seven sabbaths in a week.—Emerson.

* My thanks to the Editor of the *Freethinker* for this expression.

The Dead Hand.

ON a glorious Saturday afternoon, the sun, lavish of his golden treasure, flung his rich rays over the countryside, gilding the waving grasses on the downs, and adding new lustre to the wealth of foliage in woodland and hedge. It shone over the city, and penetrated through the stained-glass window of a church, lighting up a curious scene.

Away from the wondrous panorama of wind-swept heath—away from the health-giving breeze borne from the dancing waves of the sea—away from the crowded vitality of the market and busy streets—the sunbeams, emasculated and robbed of their essential warmth, stole in that sanctuary of the past to witness an ancient ceremony.

Round the altar were ranged no fewer than seventeen clergymen in white robes, with scarlet hoods. Most of them were aged, and all wore a preternaturally solemn expression. The congregation resembled them. What should youth do in such surroundings, on which the dust of centuries lay, paralysing all thought and intellectual life?

Then one, even more ancient than the rest, bald and spectacled, with halting gait, stepped forward and placed himself in the centre of the chancel, sitting on a high carved chair. His fine lawn sleeves and gophered frills betokened the Bishop. He proceeded to induct one of the pastors of his flock into a fat living. In front of him stood the main actor in this solemn farce, declaring his assent to the mass of "clotted bosh" embodied in the Thirty-nine Articles, and swearing (in spite of the prohibition in their sacred book, "Swear not at all") that he would bear true allegiance to the King, and pay "true and canonical obedience to the Lord Bishop." He knelt in front of his patron, who invested him with "the cure and government of the souls of the parishioners"!

The comedy reached its height when a procession was formed, consisting of the verger carrying the keys of the church, representatives of the laity, representatives of the clergy, the new incumbent, the churchwardens, and the archdeacon. Down the aisle, through rows of stolid singers, they passed to the door, where the pastor turned out the meek representatives of the laity, and shut the door, locking it upon them. He then tolled the bell, "signifying thus to the parishioners his taking possession of the church, with all the rights, profits, and appurtenances thereto belonging."

And the solemn mummery continued! One looked round on the bovine faces and wondered how they could allow their "God-like reason to fust" in them unused. With downcast eyes and mock humility, the pastor was conducted round the edifice. Wherever a stop was made, the Archdeacon urged him to be diligent in each duty pertaining to that place. At the font, he affirmed that he would "be frequent in admonishing the people that they defer not the baptism of their children," and, further, that he would seek out and baptize and confirm his parishioners. At the lectern and pulpit, he avowed his intention to read the Scriptures and exhort the flock, and finally, at the communion table, he professed his willingness to continue the cannibalistic custom of eating and drinking the body and blood of his God, "that the people may be nourished with the Food of Life"! On what vast layers of ignorance and stupidity is thus reared the superstructure of the Church.

One of the parsons mounted the pulpit and discoursed on the importance of the preceding ceremony. The congregation were exhorted to support their new master in all things. The great French naturalist, Fabre, has described how a kind of wasp stings a grub so as to paralyse it, and thus provides fresh meat for its young when they issue from the egg. In such a

manner does the Church dope the people with false ideas, and then exploit their helplessness to extract a living for her priests out of them. Where is the Comic Spirit, so beloved of Meredith, whose "sword of common sense" would cleave through "structures vowed to permanence" and "probe all institutions and establishments

For what their worth, and questioningly prod
For why they stand upon a racing globe
Impeding blocks, less useful than the clod.

The curtain fell on the last act: The people fled out, and the church was deserted. The sunbeams, too, were fled. They had returned to life outside—to warm, glowing, palpitating life surging up in the myriad forms without. None of these, save humanity, is mad enough voluntarily to isolate itself in the cold, dead past and shut out the joy and light of new life. What, except mankind, has sick dreams of souls and sin and redemption? From the sepulchre of the dead past, the Church clutches with skeleton hand at youth with its vivid impulses to create life anew. "Thou shalt not!" she menaces with ancient thunder. But her power is finished. One hears only the death-rattle of a dying institution, from which steals a miasma whose power to stupefy is gradually waning before the ever-strengthening wind of reason.

FRANCES PREWETT.

Book Chat.

BOLSHEVISM, EMOTION, AND PREJUDICE.

Few people of average intelligence, I take it, have failed to notice the curious parallel between the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century and the Russian Revolution, which, by the same policy of blockade and the armed intervention of outside Powers, is now not unlikely to run a similar course. The Allies welded France into a superb military machine, and if they are not wiser now than they were a hundred years ago they will do the same for Russia, who may find a Napoleon sooner than we expect. But, alas, the lessons of history are lost upon the majority of our publicists and journalists, who bless or curse as the spirit or the interest moves them. It is encouraging, however, to come across a writer who honestly tries to see things as they are. Unprejudiced readers will hail this impartial spirit in Mrs. Philip Snowden's *Through Bolshevik Russia* (Cassell & Co., Ltd., 5s. net). These impressions were written with the object of promoting peace with Russia. She paid a six weeks' visit to that country as a member of a delegation chosen by the Executive Committee of the Labour Party and of the Trades Union Congress, in fulfilment of a resolution passed by a special Trade Union Congress held on December 10, 1919, which demanded of the British Government "the right to an independent and impartial inquiry into the industrial, economic, and political condition of Russia." The delegation left Newcastle April 27 of this year, and returned to England on June 30.

I have said that the spirit of these impressions is impartial; but this fairness is discounted to a certain extent by the preponderance of emotion over intellect in Mrs. Snowden's mental make-up. She is incorrigibly sentimental. When she reached Petrograd she was lodged in the palace of one of the late Tsar's mistresses. Is it credible that our good democrat could not sleep at nights because of the ghost of the poor dispossessed courtesan? She goes from place to place in the luxurious imperial automobile, and is worried all the time by thoughts of the unhappy little man and his foolish wife, whose fates at the hands of the revolutionary minority move her almost to tears. Her Bolshevik friends tell her to think, of the indescribable sufferings of the political martyrs of the thousands murdered in cold blood by a weak despot. She knows all these things, but yet sighs for a bloodless revolution against despotism. The wonder of it all, to my thinking, is that the present Government of Russia has made any headway against the awful odds. What could we in England have done if our trade had been cut off by a blockade, if we had been fighting enemies within and without? What would have been our condition? On Mrs. Snowden's own showing, Lenin and his supporters,

a mere handful of Communists, have done wonders. They need only peace and freedom of trade to put their country on a sure foundation of democracy. And there are some of us who hope that in the end they will get what they want.

In their short six weeks' tour Mrs. Snowden and her friends, naturally enough, could get only a superficial view of Russian affairs. They found the people fairly contented, the food not as scarce and bad as in Vienna, but a great scarcity of medical requisites and warm clothing. This means that when winter comes the people will die like flies, if counter-revolutionary Europe is still obdurate. This is inevitable, and the Bolsheviks are wise in concentrating their attention on the army, the Communist works, and the children. Mrs. Snowden was delighted to find how well and happy the youngsters were in their summer school colonies. It was not only kindness that prompted this, but also a rare political wisdom. Every child well treated is a recruit for Communism. In many instances Mrs. Snowden noted that the intelligent Jews who are at the head of the movement have nothing to learn from our Western politicians. They have mastered the art of propaganda by advertisement. They even turned the independent English deputation to a revolutionary purpose. They intuitively gasped the distinction made by Spinoza, Machiavelli, and Mr. Lloyd George between individual and political truth. Unlike so many English writers, Mrs. Snowden is quite fair to the Jew. She thinks that it is the activity and strength of his mind, and not necessarily a proclivity for Bolshevist theory, which is chiefly responsible for his commanding position in Russia. This, I imagine, is pretty near the truth; equality, paternity, Communism may be used as catch-words by the Jew, but they are not an important part of his social ideal, if, indeed, they enter into it at all. At heart he is an individualist, a conservative, an aristocrat. Mrs. Snowden notes, what we should have expected, that the weightiest arguments against Bolshevism were put forward to her by Jews. Her generalisation as to the nature of the Jewish mind (is there a Jewish mind?) is courageous, if not rash. She describes it as hard, logical, and dogmatic, and his temperament as artistic, but qualified by a utilitarian training. It would not be difficult to draw up a list of notable Jews who would seem to possess Celtic rather than Jewish minds. Theorising on national characteristics has ever been a pitfall for the journalistic type of mind.

As I remarked above, Mrs. Snowden's emotions prevented her from seeing the Russian position as it really is. She deplors the execution of Anarchists who returned to Russia from Europe to make trouble. But how is a nation at war to deal with enemies within the gate? And our Anarchist friends themselves are not remarkable for the persuasive gentleness in dealing with people they dislike. On one occasion Mrs. Snowden introduced to Trotsky an English conscientious objector who had suffered for his belief. The Russian statesman was polite, but hardly sympathetic. He had no use for such people, and yet Tehertkov and some of his Tolstoian friends are allowed to live peacefully, seemingly without doing any useful work, and, I suppose, quietly disseminating their ideas of non-resistance to evil. They are not quite as happy as they were here at Christchurch, and not as well fed, but there is no need for anyone to grow sentimental over their fate. There is not much to complain of, in a land under martial law, if you are allowed a reasonable amount of liberty. But your idealist is never satisfied.

The upshot is that Mrs. Snowden does not appreciate the blessings of Bolshevism, and does not think much of its future except in a greatly modified form. Her impressions, I notice, are hailed with delight by our Tory journalists as bolstering up their prejudices, while her Radical and Socialist friends find her superficial and sentimental. Anyhow, she is always readable, which is something to be thankful for in these dull days.

A complete contrast in tone and temper will be found in a little book by Mr. George Pitt-Rivers, *The World-Significance of the Russian Revolution* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2s. net). If Mrs. Snowden sees nothing lovable in Bolshevism, Mr. Pitt-Rivers is driven by it to insensate

fury. The whole thing is a vast international-communistic conspiracy to get the world back to barbarism. Bolshevism is a regime of forced labour, organized rape, the employment of Chinese torturers, wholesale executions without trial, compulsory Atheism; in fact, freedom for no one except a clique of alien adventurers, revolutionaries, and criminals. Lenin is the *neurotic* son of a public official and the brother of an assassin. This sounds pretty bad, but it is discounted when on another page we are told that Kropotkin, Bakounin, and Hertenzen must be regarded as neuropathic intellectuals. To those of us who remember Kropotkin the suggestion of nervous malady is laughably absurd. It is a mere expression of hatred, like the adjective *rank* when associated with *Atheism*.

Another awful bugbear for our Tory pamphleteer is the Russian Reign of Terror and what are called the Extraordinary Commissions for dealing with counter-revolutionaries, the employing, for this purpose, of "criminals, murderers, and low-class Chinese mercenaries." He has a bright little chapter on the psychological significance of the Terror, with sadism as a motive. The wicked Bolsheviks are not only Jews, aliens, neuropaths, intellectuals, Atheists, Communists, every sort of type a self-respecting English aristocrat *must* despise; but many of them are also tainted with sadism, a combination of lust and homicidal mania. It is an epidemic of this mental disease that accounts for the "wholesale horrors and bestialities committed in Red Russia." Mr. Pitt-Rivers finds it significant that Trotsky (another Jew) is a bilious and dyspeptic chemist, an epileptic, and violent in his speech. He may be all these, and yet a competent statesman, and Mrs. Snowden found him human enough. But when a Tory is faced with a violent upheaval of the strata of society he will not stick for abuse.

The most entertaining chapter is one on the "Jew as a Factor." He is a disturbing influence in a society that wants to go along quietly. He upset the Pagan world, he created modern Europe by the French Revolution (Mrs. Webster is our authority here), he gave us international capitalism, and an international social gospel, and now the menace of Bolshevism. The Jew has got the world into an awful mess, and only another, perhaps Jew, a Disraeli or a Stahl, can get it out. It may be, and Dr. Oscar Levy, who writes a witty preface to the book, is inclined that a solution may come to us in this way.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

Correspondence.

HOSTILITY TO RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Does not Mr. J. T. Lloyd, in his article on "Hostility to Religion" in your issue of October 3, misrepresent Rev. H. C. Law? The latter said, "If he (the Christian merchant) can win the world's riches to the glory of God and use them so, let him.....so we see that in the Church the end justifies the means." The words, "win riches to the glory of God," as well as "use them so," show that Mr. Lloyd has not grasped Mr. Law's meaning.

To act to the glory of God plainly means so to act as to make God better thought of. Such acts must conform to God's laws of love to Himself and to the man's neighbour. Such "means" do not require justifying. There is no law against love.

Further, the Protestant Churches are based upon the New Testament, which emphatically declares of all who say, "Let us do evil that good may come," that "their condemnation is just" (Rom., 3, 8).

THOS. F. ATKINSON.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

SIR,—The chief objection to the death penalty—for it certainly fulfils W. S. Gilbert's axiom that the punishment should fit the crime—is that no one knows what it involves. According to Christian theory, if the delinquent repents one minute before he is hanged, he goes direct to Abraham's bosom, in which case he is rewarded rather than penalized. Moreover, Major Warren's thesis that "two blacks do not make one white" would forbid all punishment whatever.

Well, it is already fairly light in civilized countries, imprisonment being described as merely "a rest cure," and flogging, even for the vilest of crimes, must not be thought of, as "degrading" to the assailant, so that practically real, *i.e.*, corporal, punishment is confined to our children, little innocent girls being thrashed by male teachers at their absolute caprice, as in the case of the child O'Keefe, who drowned herself rather than be tortured further. Let us begin by abolishing the flagellation of "these little ones" before giving immunity to brutal bullies and sadists.

EVACUSTES A. PHIPSON.

Obituary.

It is with regret that we have to record the death of Mrs. Black, of Glasgow, widow of the late Donald Black, both members of the Glasgow Branch N. S. S. Mrs. Black had been in ill-health for some years, and had therefore ceased to be the regular attendant at the meetings she once was. But she fully shared her husband's opinions, as did the rest of the family. The cremation took place in the Crematorium, Western Necropolis, on October 15. Mr. T. Robertson officiated, and delivered an address.

Another member of the Glasgow Branch passed away on October 8 in the person of Mr. W. Fitzpatrick, son-in-law to Mrs. Black, whose death has been noted above. Mr. Fitzpatrick had been an active member of the Glasgow Branch for many years, and was keenly interested in promoting Freethought through the Press and other channels. For some time he had been suffering from a very painful disease, which had become too far advanced to permit of an operation. He died at his home in Uddingstone, one of the suburbs of the city. He leaves behind him a widow and two sons. They lose a good husband and parent, and Freethought a sincere supporter. It is regrettable that one so full of enthusiasm and energy should decessate at the comparatively early age of forty-six. The body was cremated at the Western Necropolis on October 11, an address being delivered by Mr. Cohen.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7.30, Mr. Ratcliffe, "A Plea for the Bottom Dog."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH, N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. Albert C. White, "Mr. Chesterton's Apologetics."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9): 7, A Lecture.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Revolution by Consent."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "Should a Parent Tell?" A Lecture on Sex Physiology.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (Merseyside Branch): Thursday, October 21, J. Ostell, Esq., "Abraham Lincoln."

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

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

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. E. M. Forster, "The Egyptian Problem."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Small Hall, Downing Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "What is the Use of a Future Life?"; 6.30, "The Collapse of Christianity and the Peace of the World." (Silver Collection.)

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Plymouth Chambers, Old Town Street): Thursday, October 21, at 8, Mr. H. L. Darton, "The Book of Revelation." Members and friends are earnestly invited to attend.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Marsden Miners' Hall, Imeary Street): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Freedom: True and False"; 6.30, "Dream Life and Real Life."

JARROW (Co-operative Hall, Market Square): Thursday, October 21, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 7, "Dream Life and Real Life."

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