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## Views and Opinions.

### Immortality and Waste.<sup>1</sup>

We have before commented on the fact that when it suits his case the religionist is not slow to depict this world as either the essence of perfection, or as being so faulty that another world is needed to make up for the imperfections of this one. We have already with one form of this argument; we have now to consider another. This takes the form of asserting that, unless there be another world, the development of character and of mind that takes place in this one is so much waste: To avoid this conclusion we are asked to believe that there is another life in which the progress that has been made here will be continued. Again, the statement is common to all believers, but we will take the form in which it is presented by Dr. Martineau:—

I do not know that there is anything in nature (unless, indeed, it be the reported blotting out of suns in the stellar heavens) which can be compared in wastefulness with the extinction of great minds; their gathered resources, their unshaken fact, their luminous insight, are not like instincts that can be handed down; they are absolutely personal and inalienable; grand conditions of future power, unavailable for the race, and perfect for an ulterior growth of the individual. If that growth is not to be, the most brilliant genius bursts and vanishes like a firework in the night.

The first comment to be made upon this is that the premises of Dr. Martineau's argument bear no relation to his conclusion. His plea is that genius, being personal, the race loses all benefits therefrom through the death of the individual. Having made the complaint, he believes that it is removed by assuming that the genius will go on living elsewhere. But in what way can the fact that a man will live again in another world remedy the fact that he is not living in this? If he leaves this world, it loses his presence, and the fact of his living in another world certainly does not restore him to this one. Whatever the next world is like, it is to be hoped that there is a greater regard for logic than many seem to have in this one.

<sup>1</sup> Previous "Views and Opinions" on the subject of "Immortality" appeared in the *Freethinker* for October 24, 31, November 14, 21, December 5 and 12, 1920.

### The Roots of Genius.

But assuming it to be quite true, and I shall presently give reasons for believing that the case is altogether wrongly stated, in order to arrive at a pre-determined judgment, is there anything in the fact of waste in connection with human life that should cause surprise, or demand a special explanation? Waste is certainly no exception in nature, it is rather the rule. A thousand seeds are produced for one that fructifies, a thousand forms of life for one that reaches maturity. Nay, if the aim of nature, or of God, is the production of a perfect form of human life, all the imperfect forms that have been, and are being produced, represent so much waste of time and material. We may wish, of course, that nature would adopt more economical methods with regard to human life than she does, but our business is the determination of facts, not to make our desires the measure of the necessities of existence. And if the qualities of genius are absolutely personal and inalienable, then departure from this life makes the loss absolute, and no existence elsewhere can make it good. But is it true that the qualities of genius are personal in the sense indicated by Dr. Martineau? It is quite true that the expression of those qualities which we indicate by the term genius are centred in an individual, but for that matter so are the qualities that go to make up an idiot. And any assumed over provision with regard to intelligence may be paralleled by an absence which other people suffer from. But as a matter of fact, there is not one of the qualities of genius that is not possessed by others, while the manifestation of their superior development does become a possession of the race. We have all heard of the Scotsman who professed admiration for Shakespeare because there were things that came into his head that never came into the head of his admirer. But these ideas having come into the skull of Shakespeare might afterwards come into the head of even a Bishop of London. And it is precisely because genius can impart some of its greatness to others that it is of such value to the species. Were it otherwise, the race would be doomed to remain intellectual paupers, forever dependent upon the scraps thrown them by a few favoured individuals, but without the capacity to lift itself higher. The world would indeed be poor did it not possess the quality of, so to speak, annexing the inspiration of its choicest minds.

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### The Capacity for Progress.

The essential confusion here, lies in the religionist claiming for the individual what belongs to the race, and crediting to the individual what springs from the corporate life of the group. When we say that man can achieve greater possibilities than those already realized, or is capable of indefinite development, we are making statements that are true, not of the individual, but of the race. For man is not, as an individual, capable of indefinite development. His whole organization, the operation of the normal laws of growth and decay, the fact of inevitable death, all combine to mark a point—however difficult it may be to precisely fix it—beyond which the development of

the individual cannot pass. Nor is the truth of this affected by the fact that a poet, a musician, or some other gifted person may, through some fault of the environment, never manifest all that might have been done by him under more favourable conditions. There is a substantial difference between the prevention of a quality expressing itself in its full strength, and an indefinite expansion of the same quality. A man may, from lack of nutrition, be unable to lift half-a-hundredweight, but it does not follow that with increased nutrition he can lift a couple of tons. To speak, therefore, of the indefinite development of the individual, can only refer to our ignorance of what the precise limits are in any special case. But as an individual, and no matter how much he is elevated above the mass of his fellows, man has only a limited capacity for development. It is not he that may perpetually progress, but the race. That this is so is shown by the fact that the individual all along depends for his own achievements upon the social heritage which awaits him. Language, literature, scientific discoveries, and social elaborations are the things which really determine how far even the greatest geniuses may travel. And these things are the products of the accumulated labours of the race. It is impossible to place any limit to development here, and we are, therefore, justified in speaking, in this connection, of indefinite development or of incalculable possibilities, because every generation adds to the means by which progress is effected. But the individual who is taken from the social matrix by death is as surely divorced from the possibilities of progress, as is the inhabitant of a desert island removed from the possibility of partaking of the advantages of national life.

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#### The Individual and the Race.

Progress is, therefore, not a fact of individual development, but of racial continuity. Progress is expressed through the individual, but it is achieved through the race. A developed humanity is built up from the life of humanity as a whole. It is by looking at the race as it was, and as it is, that we gain the notion of continuous progress; and it is by a mere trick of the imagination that we transfer the idea of unlimited progress from the race to the individual. And it is surely the most monstrous of egotisms to declare that unless an individual can exhaust all the good done by all preceding generations, and exhaust, too, the full consequences of any good done by himself, life must be considered a failure. It is when we subject religion—particularly the Christian religion—to a close analysis that we discover how monstrously egoistic and selfish it is. The old Greek comparison of life to a swift runner carrying a torch, and handing it, burning brightly, to his successor, expresses a far nobler and saner view of life than that which has become current under Christian influences. Necessarily, then, if one studies the capacities and possibilities of human nature from the point of view of the individual alone, there is found an unexplained residuum which the believer is not slow to hand over to the credit of a future life. But if human nature is studied in its twofold aspect, the theory of a future life becomes ridiculous. Being essentially a social animal, it would have been indeed strange if the development of man had not possessed this dual reference. We must study the life of the individual as a unit of racial life. And when this is done the theory of survival becomes both superfluous and ridiculous.

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#### Religion and Sociology.

The full significance of the argument we have been considering should now be apparent. It is one that goes to the root of the scientific case against religion. Many sociologists are taking up the position that

organized religion represents a synthesis of social ideals, and is thus being continuously modified by changes in the social structure. This view certainly contains a truth, even though the truth is not as usually stated. The fact is, that once the religious idea is fairly under way, it lives, in an increasing measure, by an exploitation of the social qualities. It is thus that loyalty, devotion to the tribe, etc., become associated in the minds of many with religion, and a casual connection finally mistaken for a causal one. The conditions of primitive life make this association inevitable, and later, vested interest strengthens the desire to perpetuate the control of life by religion. It is only by very slow degrees that some of the outlying departments of life throw off the religious control, but in spite of all opposition the reinterpretation of life in non-religious terms goes on. And so in the present instance, instead of seeing in man's desire for a larger life, and in the desire for progress, a body of feeling that has been developed by the corporate life of mankind, which has its legitimate sphere of satisfaction here, it is argued that this gives the sure indication of a life elsewhere. Theology is thus inevitably in conflict with a scientific interpretation of life. In self defence it is driven to obstruct the healthy working of the social forces, and under pretence of gratifying the desires of man, really hinders their rational expression.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Olive Schreiner: Freethinker.

## I.

#### HER LIFE AND CHARACTER.

As yet South Africa has produced but one transcendent genius. William Rodger Thomson, born at Balfour, Cape Colony, was of great promise, and gave to the world a few beautiful poems; but he died young. Thomas Pringle was a genuine though minor poet, but he was resident in the country only some six years, though most of his poems have a distinctly South African flavour about them. Olive Schreiner was a child of South Africa, born and bred in the country, and loyally devoted to it throughout her life; and by her death on Saturday, December 11, 1920, the literary world sustained an irreparable loss. By her first book, *The Story of an African Farm*, written in her teens, and published in 1883, in her twentieth year, she suddenly leapt into fame among book lovers throughout the English speaking world. Her father, the Rev. G. Schreiner, was a German, whom the Berlin Society recommended to the London Missionary Society, and whom the latter sent out, as its representative, to South Africa. Prior to leaving England, Mr. Schreiner married Miss Lyndall, of Cambridgeshire, who was a lady of remarkable intellectual and conversational gifts. Ultimately, they settled down in Basutoland, where Olive was born about the year 1862. She was one of a numerous family of brothers and sisters, all of whom were generously endowed by nature, William becoming a distinguished lawyer and Prime Minister of Cape Colony, Theodore a highly respected temperance reformer, and one of her sisters, Mrs. Lewis, a rescuer of the victims of drink and founder of a Home in Cape Town for unfortunate women. She was also an exceptionally powerful speaker, and exerted great influence at public assemblies.

As a child Olive was extremely precocious. Chapter one in part two of the *African Farm* gives a wonderfully original and vivid account of the psychological evolution of a child of genius brought up in a specially pious home. Regarding this intensely impressive chapter as almost wholly autobiographical, we learn that well-nigh from the very first there was going on in Olive's mind a fierce fight between natural perceptions and the supernatural beliefs instilled into

it by her parents. The first of the perceptions that came to her was that of the complete unity of the Universe. In a letter to myself, written in 1892, from which date it was my unspeakable privilege to be on terms of closest friendship with her, she said:—

The chief difference between your view and mine seems to be, that for you the universe is not so unified as it is for me. I have never been able to conceive of God and man and the material universe as distinct from one another. The laws of my mind do not allow of it. When I was a little child of five and sat alone among the tall weeds at the back of our house, this perception of the unity of all things, and that they were alive, and that I was part of them, was as clear and overpowering to me as it is to-day.

This direct perception was irreconcilable with what she was taught. For two or three years her one endeavour was to find some method of harmonizing the two. Fancy a child of five sitting among the weeds and looking up at the blue sky, and down at her own fat knees, and anxiously asking, "Who are we? This I, what is it?" At seven she could "read—read the Bible. Best of all we like the story of Elijah in his cave at Horeb, and the still, small voice." Then she read the Sermon on the Mount, and found it "a new gold mine." This was a startling discovery. Those at home "didn't know it was wicked to take your things again if someone took them, wicked to go to law, wicked to....." She was quite breathless when she got to the house to tell them she had found a chapter they had never heard of; but the old wise people told her they knew all about it. Her discovery was a mare's nest to them. But to her it was the pearl of great price. The Ten Commandments and the old "Thou shalt" she had heard about long enough, and didn't care about it; but this new law set her on fire. She would deny herself, keep quiet when the Kaffirs threw sand at her, conscientiously put the cracked teacup for herself, and take the burnt roaster-cake. She saved her money and bought three pence worth of tobacco for the Hottentot maid who called her names. She was exotically virtuous. At night she was profoundly religious; even the ticking watch said, "Eternity, eternity! Hell, hell, hell!" By and bye, unpleasantly shrewd questions began to assail her. For example, was it kind of God to create hell? All the questions were carried to the grown-up people, who said that it was kind of God to make hell, and very loving of him to send men there, and besides, he couldn't help himself. She believed them—more or less.

As time went on the questions grew more and more numerous, and more and more perplexing. The grown-up people answered them, and she was *not* satisfied. She had intervals of supreme felicity in believing, when, like the saints of old, she was lifted up above and beyond herself, and had moments of heavenly ecstasy; but they did not last long. Her tempting Devil went to sleep every now and then, and she enjoyed radiant peace; but he awoke again without fail, and became more troublesome each time. While the Devil slept, she was raised to the most exhilarating heights of emotional intoxication, exclaiming, "Oh Jesus Christ! through you, through you this joy!" In a short time, she was cast down again into the lowest depths of misery and despair. In the end the perception of the oneness of the universe won through, and she found herself without God in the world. In her first letter to me, already mentioned, the story ends thus:—

The agony of my childhood, especially from the time I was nine till I was fourteen, was the impossibility of reconciling this direct perception, from which I could not shake myself free, with what I was taught. When at fourteen or fifteen I began to study physical science, this agonizing disorganization ended for me. I was like a child walking about with

one half of a puzzle in its hand, into which nothing will fit, then I found the other half, and it fitted. Since then religion has been to me the one unending joy. If you ask me what my religion is, it is difficult for me to answer, because we human beings have not framed speech for the purpose of expressing such thoughts; but if I must put it into words I would say: "The universe is one, and it lives."

The only difference between the book and the letter, written some twelve years later, is that the story as told in the former is much more fully elaborated. There we learn that as a child she had had two different Gods, the God of her fathers whom she had always hated, and her own beautiful dream-God, whom she passionately adored; but now, at last, face to face with "new-made graves with the red sand flying about them; eyes that we love with the worms eating them; evil men walking sleek and fat; the whole terrible hurly-burly of the thing called life," she was forced to ask herself, "What do you think of these?" In her perplexity, she betook herself, in the dark in the fuel room, to her beautiful dream-God, saying, "'Oh, let us come near you, and lay our head against your feet. Now in our hour of need be near us!' But he is not there; he is gone away. The old questioning Devil is there" In her fourteenth year this was her confession:—

Now we have no God. We have had two: the God that our fathers handed down to us, that we hated, and never liked; the new one that we made for ourselves, that we loved; but now he has flitted away from us, and we see what he was made of—the shadow of our highest ideal, crowned and throned. Now we have no God.

At first, Atheism plunged her into a state of hateful restlessness, bordering on despair, with a tinge of resentment in it. Nothing mattered. All was emptiness. "The dirty little world full of confusion, and the blue rag, stretched overhead for a sky, is so low we could touch it with our hand." But this was merely a short-lived mood, and it soon gave place to a higher and nobler one. She now turned her attention to Nature round about her in the great silent Karroo, which almost immediately became vocal with precious messages from the lips of life—life that existed everywhere in an endless variety of beautiful forms; and her study of Nature by the aid of science revived and intensified her interest in and love for all living things: At nine years of age she lost a sister whom she dearly loved, whose grave lay in Basutoland. In the letter already quoted from, referring to that death and burial, she says:—

I used to sit for hours by her grave, and it was as impossible for me then, as it is impossible for me now, to accept the ordinary doctrine that she was living somewhere without a body. I felt then, as I have always felt since, when I have been brought face to face with death, that it is in a larger doctrine than that, that joy and beauty must be sought. I used to love the birds and animals and inanimate nature better after she was dead; the whole of existence seemed to me more beautiful because it had brought forth and taken back to itself such a beautiful thing as she was to me. Can you understand the feeling?

Kind and helpful to her fellow human beings, she was equally kind and helpful to all the so-called lower forms of life which swarmed about her in the Karroo. The object of her life was to be of service in all the directions she could. In this grand ministry she was actively and affectionately supported by her dear husband, Samuel C. Cronwright, the son of a neighbouring missionary, whom she married in 1894, and who was as ardent a Freethinker and as interested in social questions as herself. He added her surname to his own. He lovingly joined her and was of the utmost assistance to her in all her activities—a man in every respect of the most sterling character and lovable disposition.

J. T. LLOYD.

## A Cook's Excursion.

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,  
When neither is attended; and I think  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,  
When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.

—Shakespeare.

My parents for some time resided near the house in which Eliza Cook lived. As a boy I remember having the well-known writer pointed out to me. She was then at the meridian of her reputation, and I recall the awe with which I used to look at the ringleted lady whom I then regarded as being scarcely the inferior of Charles Dickens. The whirligig of time has brought its revenge. The great Eliza is now well-nigh forgotten, and some people, not wholly illiterate, have been known to admit that they could only regard her once tremendous reputation with a feeling akin to stupefaction. Their bewilderment is not inexcusable. The genius of Browning and Tennyson, as of Keats and Shelley before them, dawned slowly on the general reader. But Eliza Cook's books ran into new editions as swiftly as stories by Ethel Dell and the industrious author of *Tarzan of the Apes*.

To the Puritans poetry is, and ever has been, a vain thing and perilous. Their favourite conception of a poet is that of a dishevelled and generally inebriate destroyer of souls. But in Eliza Cook was found the writer for whom Philistia had waited so long. Her work was evidently poetry, for it was broken into separate lines, and the putism was sufficiently flavoured to suit the frequenters of suburban tabernacles. The folk who admired her writings must have been dead to verbal music and the magic of woven words. They liked sermons, and she supplied them. They liked optimism, pietistic platitudes, and sometimes they liked absolute nonsense. And all such things these worthy people found in the works of Eliza Cook.

The daughter of a rich Southwark merchant, Eliza Cook began when quite young to write for the press, including the *Weekly Dispatch*, founded by her uncle, Alderman Harmer. In her first volume of verse, she rent her readers' hearts with her story of *Melaia*, telling, in verse, or worse, how an elderly gentleman induced a haughty sculptor to fashion the likeness of his noble dog because the animal had been more faithful than his wife. It has a very tawdry ring to our ears to-day, but it was immensely popular then. With this came the romance of *Tracey de Vere and Hubert Gray*, the story of the rich young heir who formed a friendship for a labourer's son. Reading it now, one is struck with the stilted language which delighted a previous generation. It describes how:—

Tracey de Vere hath high-born mates  
Invited to share his play,  
But none are half so dear to him  
As the lowly Hubert Gray.

Another of great Eliza's songs was *Old Dobbin*, which stirred a large number of the hearts of middle-class England. It contained such lines as the following:—

Oh! we prized him like life, and a heart-breaking sob  
Ever burst when they threatened to sell our old Dob.

Songs addressed to birds and beasts, wild and tame, were popular then, and of these terrible Cook's excursions into natural history the *Song of the Ostrich* is surely remarkable. This bird was as garrulous as the present Bishop of London, and quite as patriotic. Admitting that he does not "warble in a foreign land," he calls for:—

A song for the bird whose feathers wave  
O'er the christening font and the fresh-made grave.

The *Song of the Carrion Crow*, in the same series, has in it a touch of Transpontine melodrama. With

all their drawbacks, Eliza Cook's verses attained great popularity. Some of her songs, such as *The Land of My Birth*, and that singular example of thoroughly sincere bathos, *The Old Arm Chair*, became as familiar as household words. For years a large public eagerly swallowed her poetic platitudes, and admired her command over the resources of doggerel. Few latter-day critics make mention of "great Eliza," though Matthew Arnold has a delightful gibe at "the poet of the Bourgeoise," whose songs "would give more delight to a Dissenting minister at the graveside than would the words of the Litany."

It must be said that she has passed out of the public mind for many a year, and survives only in second-hand copies as a guide to the serious student of the popular poetic literature of Victorian England. It would be unfair, however, to let her pass from us quite as a petty poetaster. When she threw aside her affected tragic vein, whither few modern readers might follow her, she could write with charm. A little poem, *When I Wore Red Shoes*, shows what she might have done had she known her real strength:—

When hair and sash-ends used to fly,  
And I wore red shoes.

At times she could be almost as Anacreontic as Tom Moore, who was a good man who wrote naughty verses:—

St. Patrick's Day! St. Patrick's Day!  
Oh! thou tormenting Irish lay,  
I've got thee buzzing in my brain  
And cannot turn thee out again.

There is a lilt too, in *Young Kathleen*, whose lover sighs:—

Soon, soon, will the green grass above me be springing.

These are much better examples of Eliza Cook's real ability than such didactic and gloomy songs as *The Spirit of Gold* and *The Spirit of Poverty*. But had she written nothing but these lighter verses, she would never have held the long ears of the frequenters of Exeter Hall, who would have voted her a mere trifler.

One thing can be said for Eliza Cook. She never claimed to be a great artist. She gushed and maundered without undue assumption to the end of her days. In the journal called by her name she even did something for humanism. She was a gentle, kind-hearted singer, with more sympathy than style, who sang for "the people," and for many a long day they listened to her voice. It was all she asked for.

MIMNERMUS.

### OPTIMISM.

WHAT will happen to the beggar, and the sinner, and the sad,  
And the drunk that drinks for sorrow, and the maimed,  
and the mad;  
What will happen to the starving, and the rebel run from  
drilling,  
Cowardly, afraid of fighting, and the child who stole a  
shilling?  
They shall go to prison black  
With a striped shirt on the back,  
Feast on bread and water there  
In a cell without a care.  
They shall learn at least their duty,  
Never tempted more of beauty—  
They shall walk in rows and praise the Lord,  
And one or two shall hang upon a cord—  
And two or three shall die of grief alone—  
(And this is well, for sinners should atone),  
And five or six shall curse the God that made them  
(And this is wicked, for the priests forbade them),  
And those that grew from dust shall go to dust  
Downtrodden. Saith the preacher: "God is just."  
—Iris Tree, "Wheels: An Anthology of Verse, 1917.

## Some Blue Thoughts.

BLUE is a chaste, coldly severe colour without any glow of warmth. It is the colour least affected by wild flowers, which trust little to its charms to attract their fertilizing visitors. That it has a depressing effect, compared with the rich, cheerful reds and yellows, is shown by the common phrase, "in the blues," to denote a melancholy mood.

Consequently it is appropriate that the proposed legislation in America to bring back the Puritan Sabbath should be termed "blue laws." Certainly such measures will be a powerful agency towards putting a whole nation "in the blues," for, if carried into effect, they would add another terror to a world already overtaken. Parents may even now shrink from the accusing gaze of their progeny, who find themselves condemned to a severe struggle to maintain a barely supportable life. Should the tedium of a Puritan Sabbath be added to the strain of an industrial week, the very capacity for joy would eventually wither and atrophy for want of use.

On the authority of the Rev. Dr. Harry Bowlby, general secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States, we have it that a campaign is launched to prohibit on Sunday all outdoor sports, cinema pictures, business of any nature, motoring, newspapers, dancing, or even a train service. The motive is frankly revealed. By eliminating amusements and occupations in general, a state of things would be brought about in which there would be nothing to do but go to church.

The clergy must be getting desperate indeed to resort to such measures. With characteristic blindness they assume that people would willingly come to church if they were not so weak as to be enticed away by the distractions of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But everyone knows that the reason people do not attend church is that they do not want to. It is unlikely these proposals will become law, but, should they do so, they would remain a dead letter. Puritanism succeeded in enforcing its sway in the seventeenth century, and laying its heavy blight on Merrie England because the people, even that section most bitterly opposed to its extreme doctrines, still had faith in Christianity. To Royalist and Roundhead alike, religion was a part of their lives. But where are the believers to-day? Promoters of prohibitive legislation might do worse than ponder the old saying, "You may take a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." Depriving Sunday of all outside attraction will help but little to fill the churches. There is no dire threat of hell-fire to hang over the heads of sinners. Spurgeon's most eloquent exhortations are only stage thunder now. "When thou diest," he cried, "thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be a hell for it; but at the Day of Judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood and thy body suffused with agony. In fire, exactly like that which we have on earth, thy body will be asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the Devil shall play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament." Such graphic descriptions merely make us smile. *The Scarlet Letter* can never be re-written under a Christian dispensation.

But what gives alarming significance to this priestly attempt to re-fasten old shackles on the American people is the light it throws on their mental attitude towards liberty. The theological jackals would never have summoned up courage to approach so close had not the camp fires of the army of freedom been near extinction. "Subjective fitness alone makes true freedom possible," was said by an American woman more than half a century ago. Where is her like heard

now? Slavish souls create tyrants. "The American people have meekly surrendered to the Puritan reaction. They have lost interest in individual rights and liberties" (*New York World*). The vastness of the American continent seems to be repeated in the characteristics of the people who inhabit it. They go to greater lengths than other nations. Witness the savage sentences passed on the pacifists during the war, and the panic-stricken measures against so-called Bolsheviks. Like the Greek democracy, they are

Forgetful of the growth of men to light;  
As creatures reared on Persian milk they bow.

Sixteen religious denominations throughout America are actively assisting in the "new movement to direct the morals and manners of America." These sects, which quarrel so bitterly among themselves, sink their differences to do some business. But their assumption that the Churches have a right to direct the morals and manners of a community is unwarranted by their history and composition. They have never initiated a reform, nor corrected an abuse, until outside pressure was exerted. They move only under protest. The soldiers in the army of liberation are sorely hampered by these hangers-on, who seek to appropriate the fruits of battle. From the days when the medicine-man invoked his magic to strike terror into the heart of the courageous savage who dared to innovate some reform, the rôle of the Church has always been the same—the custodian of what is, instead of the precursor of what shall be—the keeper of tradition, terrifying the non-conformist into, at least, outward obedience. Taking the word in its root sense of "mos," or custom, the clergy may have some justification for their claim to direct morals. But their record disproves any right for them to meddle with morality, used in its current sense of conduct.

The two most valuable basic qualities for character-building are courage and sincerity. Both of these the Churches are bound to discount. To keep their flock in leading-strings, it is essential that stress should be laid instead on obedience and humility. Founded as they are on a misreading of Nature and of man, the Churches dare not, in very self-preservation, encourage, or even allow, the wild, living intellect of men to expand. Their interference with the citizens' life can but engender a growth of gloomy hypocrisy.

As to manners, the Churches have done little to raise the social level of their followers, and have discouraged the amenities of life in which manners are nurtured. In practice, the manners fostered by parochial life are overweening arrogance on the part of the cleric, and for the parishioner the attitude inculcated in the words of their masters, "To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters, and to do my duty in that state of life into which it shall please God to call me."

There is a deep-seated connection between Militarism and religion, for Church and State had one representative of warrior-priest in the king of primitive times. Both are antagonistic to the higher development of the individual, and flourish on a low order of mentality. It is, therefore, scarcely a mere coincidence that the same Press which informs us of the movement towards a "Blue Sunday" in America issues a contemporary statement to the effect that the United States of America has formed a Chemical Warfare Service. The *New York* correspondent of the *Times* declares also that "the American Government has no intention of abolishing the use of poison-gas in its army. If the United States is involved in another war, every one of its soldiers will carry a package of poison-gas as part of his equipment." So the American youth are to be hustled to church on Sundays to have their heads muddled as a preliminary to the next conflict! The nations seem to have learnt nothing through the war. We are just as before 1914, with all the evils intensified. The same Church, but more impudently aggress-

sive; the same militarism, but infinitely more powerful and tyrannous; the same stupid multitude, apathetic towards freedom and unwilling to concentrate on the economic and financial problems, which, if left unsolved, will shortly involve them in slavery. Freethinkers may well bestir themselves, for never was the danger of economic, social, and mental slavery greater than it is to-day.

FRANCES PREWETT.

## Sin and Salvation.

Christian churches are big firms in the soul-saving business. The principal of all these firms is a person who is said to have established the trade nearly nineteen hundred years ago.—G. W. Foote.

Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian, or an ordinary man has.—Shakespeare, "Sir Andrew Ague-cheek" in "Twelfth Night."

AFTER the alleged "Fall of Man" in the Garden of Eden, Christians assert that the all-powerful and all-good God allowed four thousand years to elapse before he thought of sending his only begotten Son down on earth to die and blot out the sins of mankind. During that interval hundreds of millions of people were born and died without ever having heard the name of Christ, or even having heard that they had souls to save. Most of them were content to live on, to play their part on the great stage of life and disappear, like all the rest of the animal world, when the curtain rang down on the scene in which they ended their strange and fitful history. But when four thousand years had rolled by, the all-knowing God thought that it was time that man should be informed that he was "a miserable sinner," and that he could only get redemption from his sins by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent down on earth to die (although, being God, he could not die), and by his death to blot out the sins of mankind. Although God was all-mighty, he was unable to convey any information respecting this wonderful scheme except through his representatives on earth, the priests and the parsons, and they therefore became the founders of the soul-saving business. After they had been in the business for some time, they produced some books which they declared were divinely inspired—Gospels which they alleged contained a true and faithful account of the miraculous birth of Jesus, who, although he was the Son of God, was as old as his father, and was, indeed, part of the great God-head. These Gospels, they averred, contained the whole story of the life and teachings of Jesus, who had himself declared that his special mission on earth was to "save sinners." What from? "From the wrath to come." This wise and beneficent "heavenly father" had arranged that only those who believed in Jesus should be saved, and the rest of his children consigned to everlasting torment. This was the doctrine that was preached from thousands of pulpits by the priests and parsons of almost all denominations for hundreds of years, and drove thousands of weak-minded Christians to the verge of distraction and despair. In his autobiography John Stuart Mill tells how his father, James Mill, used to express his contempt for this teaching, and say to his son:—

Think of a God who would make a hell, and then create the human race, with the infallible foreknowledge, therefore with the intention, of incarcerating the majority in hell for ever, and then call that being good. Why, said the elder Mill, Christians have gone on age after age, adding trait after trait of wickedness to their God until they have reached the *ne plus ultra* of wickedness, and they call that good.

But of late years Christians have modified their belief. On account of the persistent manner in which Free-thought pioneers denounced this horrible teaching, Christians have become ashamed of it. They have discovered that hell does not mean what the authorized

version of the Bible said it did, viz., that it was a place of torment prepared by God "for the devil and his angels," which, of course, meant mankind. We are nevertheless to suffer punishment of some kind for our sins, and Christ alone can save us from everlasting perdition by the sacrifice he made for us on the cross at Calvary. What are these sins? Are they offences committed against God, or only against our fellow-men? If against God, how can the finite offend against the Infinite? If God is all-powerful, he can prevent man doing anything he does not want him to do; and, if he were all good, his very nature would prompt him to do so.

Nothing that man can do can hurt God; man therefore can only offend by his conduct his fellow-man. And if he does so offend, how can the death of the innocent atone for the sins of the guilty? If I sin against John Smith, how can the death of Joe Brown undo the offence I have committed?—No; it will not do. An offence once committed cannot be undone. Indeed, it is written indelibly upon the book of nature, from which no leaves can be torn and nothing can be expunged. So long as man has existed in this world he has been committing offences against his fellow-man. Many of them have been done through ignorance, or thoughtlessness, and many more through selfishness or malice, but how can the death or suffering of an innocent man or God alter that? The priests and parsons of every religion and of every creed have been preaching against the wickedness of sin for hundreds of years, but it is doubtful whether there is very much less sin in the world to-day than there was hundreds of years ago. The character of the offences may have changed, but the number and enormity of them seem to grow with the growth of population and the complexity of human society. As G. W. Foote finely says in one of his admirable pamphlets:—

Preaching appears to be of little avail. Didactic morality has always been barren. Many a boy has written "Honesty is the best policy" all down the length of his copy-book, and gone to the playground and sneaked another boy's marbles. Have all the billions of sermons from the pulpit had any appreciable effect on the morale of human society? But culture, wise conditions of life, examples of actual heroism, flashing utterances from the brooding depths of genius, an arresting picture, a pregnant poem, a story of love stronger than death, of virtue stronger than doom; these have improved and elevated men, and quickened the springs of goodness in millions of hearts.—(*Will Christ Save Us*, p. 4).

The diffusion of knowledge has done much, and the improvement in the social conditions of the people has done a great deal more. What was the good of teaching children to be truthful, and honest and kind to one another, while they were born of vicious parents, lived in a neighbourhood reeking in filth and squalor, and infested with thieves and liars and criminals of the worst type; what hope was there for children born under such conditions of becoming honest and useful citizens? And were not the sins they committed largely the result of the conditions in which they lived and moved, and had their being? And yet we used to be told that these people would assuredly be consigned to everlasting torment for their indifference to the claims of the Christian faith or their rejection of it; but we very rarely heard any great censure of the members of rich firms, who might happen to be Christians, who fattened and batted on the sweated labour of their poor employees. It is true that Dives, the rich man of the Gospels, is alleged to have been sent to hell for no other offence than that of being rich, and while in hell he lifted up his eyes and implored for water to cool his parched tongue (Luke xvi. 34), and yet this man was humane and considerate enough to let Lazarus eat of the crumbs that fell from his table, while the modern rich man, financier, or millionaire would probably send

for the police, and have him locked up or thrown into the gutter. And what of the bubble company promoters and other cunning swindlers? They would be sure to be professing Christians.—Unbelief would be a great impediment to them in their road to success. Listen to the burning words of the poet:—

Sweatem and Swindle and Co.,  
 With consciences schooled in guile,  
 Sat houses o'er a bubble they meant to blow,  
 And lived in princely style.  
 Sham, sham, sham!!!  
 Is a game which our Gods pursue,  
 As well might they palm on the world a flam,  
 As priests and patricians do,  
 But the wind was whisp'ring without the door,  
 Your bubbles and juggles make millions poor.  
 —"Night Scenes in the City," by J. M. Peacock.

But such persons, nay, even murderers, could get salvation by repenting at the last moment, for "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-nine that need no repentance." As the well-known hymn says:—

For while the lamp holds out to burn,  
 The vilest sinner may return.

Unbelievers, therefore, in the last resort, are the only people for whom damnation is assuredly reserved, if the Christian religion be true. But, thank goodness, through the persistent teaching of Freethought advocates, and the best of the clergy in the Church, and the bravest parsons among the Dissenters, the horrible doctrine of hell-fire has been gradually given up by the most enlightened among every section of the Christian community, and the belief in a personal devil has gone with it; consequently the whole scheme of Christian salvation will have to undergo revision.—Of this, however, we may be sure; in the long run the old superstition will have to go, to make room for truer, and therefore for better, teaching for the rising generations of mankind. To again quote from the good old Freethought poet, John Macleay Peacock, from his *Song of Freedom*:—

The fiend Superstition wha's lang warr'd wi' men,  
 Sae like a weird warlock, creeps back to his den,  
 An' tyrants in terror noo quake on their thrones,  
 For men gather knowledge in spite o' sic drones;  
 Lang tired o' the burdens begotten in crime,  
 Begin to sing sangs o' a happier time,  
 When nation an' nation as ane will agree,  
 An' the wide world resound wi' the sangs o' the free.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

MORS RIDIBUNDA.

Dead is Beaumarchais and rare  
 Shakespeare that could laugh so well,  
 Rabelais and sharp Voltaire,  
 Gay Cervantes and Molière—  
 Surely the gods have joy in hell!

Where is Geoffrey Chaucer, where  
 He whose attic jests compel  
 Stately pedants? He is there,  
 Jovial and young and fair—  
 Surely the gods have joy in hell!

Mirth Olympian, I swear,  
 From Plutonian shore doth swell;  
 Congreve and Boccaccio share  
 Dear Tom Hood set free from care—  
 Surely the gods have joy in hell!

What immortal stories dare  
 Villon and Sterne, uncensored, tell!  
 Scurron lisping from his chair,  
 "Motley is your only wear!"—  
 Surely the gods have joy in hell!

Prince, lest these good fellows stare  
 At our solemn passing bell,  
 Welcome jolly death, prepare  
 Smiles to greet that jocund air.  
 Surely the gods have joy in hell!

—Howard Mumford Jones, "The University of California Chronicle," July, 1920.

Acid Drops.

The New Year opens with the blackest of outlooks. There is unemployment everywhere, distress is acute, people are restless, and an unemployed body of men habituated to the use of brute force for nearly five years is not a pleasing sight for peace-loving people. It is, after all, what anyone but a fool might have expected. Look at the procession of events. First, the preparations for war by all the Christian nations of the world. Second, the bungling and incapacity of European statesmen (?) which landed the world in war. Third, the war, with governmental propagandist agencies, and hired pressmen, preaching the greatness of war and working hard at brutalizing the entire population. Fourth, the end of the war, and the drawing up of treaties and the pursuit of policies that sowed the seeds of new hatreds and condemned whole populations to starvation or anarchy. Fifth, stoppage of trade as a consequence of the policy pursued, with millions of people thrown out of employment. One stage follows on the other, and each is the inevitable consequence of the other. And throughout it all, the whole body of the Christian clergy, without a guiding voice in the direction of sanity and humanity.

Field Marshall Sir Henry Wood says that the two finest professions in the country are the Church and the Army. That well illustrates what we have so often said as to the manner in which religion and militarism run together. They are historic stable companions. They were the closest companions in the late German Empire, and they are bedfellows here. When we are really civilized we shall, perhaps, recognize that these two professions are a standing threat to all that is best in civilized society. The Church is quite unnecessary, and whatever may be said as to the army still being required, sensible people would treat it as one of the necessary evils that should be tolerated only so long as defective social conditions make its existence advisable. Until we regard the Army as a manifestation of backward conditions, much as we regard the presence of disease and the measures that are necessary to combat it, we shall not have made a commencement towards the removal of something that has in four or five years come near to wrecking the whole of civilized society.

Defenders of the benevolent Design Argument will find something to interest them in a recent issue of the *British Medical Journal*. Dr. Brimblecombe, of Burlescombe, Somerset, states that two children, a boy and a girl, each have the heart, spleen, and liver on the wrong side of the body.

Whilst waiting to attend a funeral, the Rev. T. E. James, of Selby, Yorkshire, fell dead. The finger of God cannot be traced in this unhappy business, but it would have been seen clearly had brother James been a Freethought advocate.

A discussion has been going on for some time in a London daily paper on "Sleeplessness." A large number of suggestions have been made to benefit sufferers, but no one, so far, has indicated the soporific qualities of the average sermon delivered by a parson who speaks as if he had a plum in his mouth.

Subscriptions to the Westminster Abbey fund have reached nearly £150,000. This sum ought to repair the roof, leave a bit over for a rainy day, and ensure a war-bonus for the choir, and church-officials.

"Jesting Pilate" is said to have asked the question, "What is Truth?" and one equally cynical might have replied that it is something everyone believes that other people should use. A genuine regard for truth is, perhaps, the rarest of virtues, or we had better say qualities, as there may be a difference of opinion, certainly in the pulpit and in government offices, as to whether it is really a virtue. In both these directions it certainly appears to be the accepted rule of practice that truth is the presentation of such pictures as may lead to the formation of desirable opinions, or to the performance of

desirable actions. Or, again, in courts of law we have the enforcement of a lie in order that the truth may be told. Thus we have a judge presiding over the administration of the oath to a witness who is desired to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But the oath is itself a living lie. God does not help the witness to tell the truth, or if he does, he makes a ghastlier mess of that than he does of other things. Judges do not place the slightest reliance upon the evidence of a witness merely because the oath has been told, and witnesses have no greater intention of telling the truth with the oath than they have without it. There are few exceptions to oath-taking in the divorce courts, and judges agree that there is more perjury there than elsewhere. So that when one is informed that the truth must be told, what it apparently means is "You must tell the truth to me so long as it is the kind of truth I wish to hear." But we agree that the value of truth is admitted by all. The proof is the extreme economy practised by those who dispense it.

There is no particular moral in the above its application is so general that a particular application would be out of place. If anyone knows of a department of life to which it does not apply, we should be pleased to hear from him. But we do not expect to be snowed under with letters.

The National Sunday League is making a gallant fight at Southend-on-Sea against Sabbatarians. The League's solicitor made a second application before the Bench asking for the Sunday opening of the Hippodrome for concerts. The Bench, which had once before refused the application, promised to reconsider the matter next February. By this time the winter will be half over, and the wicked Sunday League may hardly think it worth while to do anything until the following autumn. The fifty local clergymen ought to go on their knees and thank God that Southend's magistrates are high-minded Christian gentlemen, and not artful men-of-this-world.

A former monk, Mr. James C. Biddle, of Philadelphia, has left the Roman Catholic Church after thirty years in a monastery, and has married an American lady. The *Freethinker* staff wish the couple all happiness.

The age of miracles is not past. A daily paper states that "a son was born yesterday to Major General J. E. B. Seely at his London residence." We hope that the father and child are both doing well.

The Church Army, which bears the same relationship to the Salvation Army that margarine does to butter, is rivalling the original firm in its appeals to the public. The Church Army asks for money for the "fireless." In the old days the Church had plenty of fire in the next world, if not in this.

The clergy and unordained preachers have figured largely in the courts of late. It is, perhaps, an illustration of the "moral uplift" of the war of which the clergy told us so much while the war was on. They are now illustrating it in their own persons. The latest specimen of the class is a Scotch local preacher imprisoned for trying to poison his wife while philandering with another woman.

The choir at St. Gabriel's Church, Sunderland, has gone on strike. In the Ages of Faith, where there was a difference of opinion, all the striking was done by the clergy.

Captain Bairnsfather, writing of a New York Hotel, says "every device calculated to prove man's distance from the apes is here." Had the gallant Captain visited a real American revival meeting he would have found the distance considerably lessened.

At Westminster Cathedral ancient English music is a speciality. Still more ancient mummeries are also in every programme.

Jezeel's Temple, near Chatham, has been sold and will shortly be transformed into a preserve factory. "Jezeel's Jam" should be an excellent title for advertising.

The Bishop of Liverpool says that "the dream that men would return from the war more serious, God-fearing, and responsible has not been fulfilled. Not a few who six years ago were regular Churchgoers, Communicants, and even keen Christian workers, have come back alienated from Church and Bible Class." We do not believe that men are less serious than they were before the war; on the contrary, they are far more serious than they were, and the clergy do not like it. But they are decidedly less religious, and that is because they are taking *that* subject more seriously than they did, and the Bishop does not like it. Many of those who followed in the traditional ruts had their eyes opened by the shock of the war, and particularly by the attitude of the clergy, who, during the whole of the war, in both this and in other countries, gave the whole of their influence to filling men with the passion of blind hatred, and preached the taking of life as the highest duty. That was all the gospel of brotherhood came to in practice, and it was a fitting accompaniment to a God who could see that five years of slaughter and general brutalization going on, and did nothing to prevent it. After all, the clergy and their deity are well matched.

This is the way in which Mr. S. S. Severn writes in the *Sydney Bulletin* of missionary work in Maubiag, one of the Samoan Isles:—

There is a mission church, where four times on Sunday the islanders save their souls. Four times each Sabbath they prink in royal blue and buttercup, and hats most horrible, and stroll up the croton path to the little church under the coconuts to sing like seraphs. The Samoan preacher gets red in the face. He preaches hell, and exhorts them to fetch him more fish—how can man live by hens alone? And twice a year the islander, halting between two opinions, goes secretly to the back of the island, and worships his ancient idols.

We think it may be taken for granted that none of the missionary reports will cite Mr. Severn's article.

A Salvation Army Christmas Appeal states that it "solves social problems" by "getting men first right with God." This is unfortunate, for the deity appears to have very bazy notions concerning Trade Union rates of pay.

Mr. Clynes says that the next war will be so horrible that the last one will appear like a Christian adventure beside it. Mr. Clynes must be speaking sarcastically, or else he is wrongly reported. The last war was a Christian adventure. We had the authority of thousands of the clergy that we were fighting "God's battles," and if that did not make it a Christian adventure what did. And it is certain that our politicians and pressmen lied about it with a gusto that reminded one of the Christian Church in its palmiest days. There was no mistake about the Christian character of the war.

A correspondent writes us expressing surprise at the ineffectiveness of a great many of the Christian replies to the Freethought attack. We have often commented on it ourselves, and it does not argue conceit to say that any well-informed Freethought speaker or writer would be able to put the Christian case a great deal better than the Christian does himself. The reason for both these facts is not far to seek. One cannot have a good defence unless one is well acquainted with the nature of the attack. Armour plate may be an excellent defence against shell fire, but it is useless against the germ of typhoid. And the ordinary Christian has a very poor notion indeed of what the Freethinker has to say against him. When he wishes to find out, instead of going direct to the Freethinker to discover, he gets a volume of sermons against "infidelity" and then prides himself on knowing all about it. On the other hand, the Freethinker is usually acquainted with all that the Christian has to say, for the simple reason that he has himself occupied the Christian position. The Christian is dealing with a frame of mind that is quite foreign to him. The Freethinker is doing little more than describing one that he has himself outgrown.



## "Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

THE purpose of this Fund is to meet the deficit incurred owing to the excessive cost of printing and paper, and to provide a balance to meet fresh deficits until such time as prices approach a normal level. The sum of £1,000 is being asked for.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £666 5s. 2d. A Friend, £100; X. V. Z., £10; Anno Domini, £5; Working Journalist, £3; J. Lazarnick, £2 2s.; H. A. Lupton, 10s.; John's Grandpa, £1; J. H. Waters, £1; W. Clowes, 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 3s. 6d.; W. Clowes, 10s.; J. Shipp (second subscription), 10s.; John Thompson, 10s.; R. W. Blakely, £1 1s.; R. Sennett, F.G.S., £3 10s.; Lawrence and Jacob (second subscription), £1 10s.; A. Aldwinckle, 10s.; G. Alward, £3; A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.; R. Corkery, 2s. 6d.; G. B., 8s.; M. Blakeman, 10s.; J. F. W., 5s.; T. Protheroe, 5s.; Friend, £5; An Atheist, £1; E. G. Hirst, 5s.; J. Burrell, 2s. 6d.; Frank Hill, 5s.; George Burnett, 10s.; W. Stewart, 1s.; J. Williams, £1.

Per T. A. Batten (South Africa)—F. G. Foote, £5 5s.; H. Courlander, £1 1s.; A. Phillips, £1 1s.; S. Blumenthal, £1 1s.; Dr. Querney, £1 1s.; T. A. Batten, £1 1s.

Per E. Pinder—E. Haining, 2s. 6d.; E. Pinder (second subscription), 2s. 6d.; G. Martin (second subscription), 3s.; R. Wheatley (second subscription), 2s. 6d.

Total, £812 10s. 8d.

PROMISED, provided the total sum raised reaches £1,000, including the amounts promised:—"Medical," £25; "In Memory of the late Sir Hiram Maxim," £50; Mr. J. B. Middleton, £10; J. Morton, 10s.; R. Proctor, £1; National Secular Society, £25; F. Collins, 10s.; H. Black, £1 1s.; T. Sharpe, £1 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. S. Clowes, £1 1s.; J. Breese, £3; A. Davis, £2 2s.; J. W. Hudson, £1; Collette Jones, £5; T. C. Kirkman, £2.

Total £128 5s.

### C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 2, Friars Hall, Blackfriars Bridge Road; January 9, Manchester; January 16, Barnsley; January 23, Birmingham; January 30, Glasgow.

### To Correspondents.

Will those subscribers who have been receiving their paper in a green wrapper, the indication that their renewal is due, and who have not yet remitted, be good enough to inform us whether they wish us to continue sending or not. We do not like to discontinue without notice, but the cost of things at present compels us to be more careful in this matter than we might otherwise be.

E. G. ASH.—We were stupid enough to burn your address, and so are compelled to take this method of acknowledging your thoughtfulness. Many thanks. But we should like to have your address, if you would drop us a card.

JOHN'S GRANDPA.—Thanks for subscription and good wishes. The slowness with which the world moves must be taken as one of the facts of the situation. It was never otherwise, and the only conclusion is the need of more strenuous work on the part of those who see the right road.

M. W. R.—Such warm appreciation of the *Freethinker* from a fifty years' reader of Freethought papers is very gratifying. We hope to have you for one of our readers for many years yet.

CHEMIST (Chicago) writes:—"The Catholic Church is increasing in power in America. She supports unlimited immigration, as this admits Irish and Poles, who, of course, are Catholics. In education, despite the American Constitution which forbids it, religion is being slowly but surely introduced into the schools in the guise of the Bible as a moral teacher."

R. SENNET.—Thanks for your good opinion of the *Freethinker*. We will send you on the bound copy of the *Freethinker* so soon as the index is printed and the copies are delivered from the binders. We cannot give a date for this, but we shall hurry on the binders as much as we can, and notice will appear in the paper. You will see how we have allocated your cheque.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Next week.

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

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

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

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

*Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E. C. 4, and not to the Editor.*

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

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

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

*The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—*

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

*Foreign and Colonial.—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.*

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen commences the course of lectures at Friars Hall, Blackfriars Bridge Road, to-day (January 2). The hall is on the left-hand side of the road, after crossing the bridge—No. 236. Mr. Cohen's subject is "The Old Freethought in the New Year." The lecture commences at 7.30. We again ask the help of our friends in advertising these meetings. Some small slips have been printed, and may be had at the *Freethinker* office. An hour or so spent on Saturday in distributing them would be time well used.

A happy New Year to all our readers—and to all those who will become readers during 1921. We also beg that all who have written us during the holiday period wishing us success in our campaign will accept this as an acknowledgment and a reciprocation of their wishes. If only a part of all the good things that our friends have wished come true, 1921 will be one of the happiest in our life, and the most fortunate in the history of the *Freethinker*. So far as the last point is concerned, it will not be our fault if it is not so. The year does indeed look black enough at the moment; let us hope that it is the darkness which precedes the dawn.

The first thing in the new year is to get rid of the Sustentation Fund. We think that all will agree the response has been magnificent, and all that remains to be raised to complete the £1,000 is £59 4s. 4d. That should be accomplished during the next week or so, and before the end of the month the Fund should be over and done with. We shall have something more to say when the Fund is completed. As will be seen, some of the promises have already been redeemed, and the others will, no doubt, shortly be placed on the discharged list.

With the Fund out of the way, we should like to see a really good attempt being made during the month to see if a considerable increase cannot be made to the circulation of the *Freethinker*. Some years ago we asked for this to be done, and the result was a very substantial help in the very best way. We feel certain that this can be repeated if our readers will only give themselves to the work. In every town in the country there must be a large number who are not subscribers merely because the paper has never been brought to their notice. We should see to it

that they have this excuse no longer. If someone died and left the *Freethinker* a good thumping legacy everyone would say that it was a good endowment. But there is a better endowment still, and that is the provision of a large circulation. Everyone is not in a position to leave the *Freethinker* a legacy, but all can help to give it an endowment in the shape of a paying circulation. Let us take for our motto for 1921 "The best form of endowment is a larger circulation." Every new reader gained is a legacy that yields compound interest.

*Apropos* of the last paragraph, Mr. Horace Dawson writes:—

Mr. Breese's idea of getting a new reader is good, but it needs hinting to readers that getting may not always be keeping. I take six copies, my own, and one 'each for the five subscribers I have made.' If they don't call for them, I see that they get them, and have never lost a subscriber.

We are indebted to Mr. Dawson for his keen interest in the matter.

"Friend," whose pen-name veils a very well-known writer, in sending his cheque to the Fund says, "May you have a great fighting year and keep health and strength for your splendid work.....I do hope a week or two will see the £1,000 in your hands, and wish it were a million. When is a rich enthusiast coming along? Surely the law of averages ought to have produced one such man on our side by this time." Perhaps one day we shall see a paper such as the *Freethinker* well equipped, financially, for the fray; meanwhile, we must do the best we can with the cordial support of our warm-hearted—if less wealthy—friends.

In the list of subscriptions acknowledged from South Africa, many of our readers will be interested in knowing that the F. G. Foote therein named is the only son of our late editor. It is good to see that he still takes an interest in his father's old paper. He is, of course, a regular subscriber, and evidently an interested reader. Mr. T. Batten, in sending the ten guineas, sends also the united good wishes of the subscribers "In recognition of your gallant uphill fight for freedom of thought," and hopes that the financial side of the paper will be assured.

Mr. Cohen's new work *Theism or Atheism* is now on sale, and reference to the last page of this copy of the *Freethinker* will give those who are interested a fair notion of its scope. The usual review copies have been sent out, but it is unlikely that it will be very widely noticed in the ordinary press. It expresses no "reverence" for the idea of God, as the author is of opinion that what believers stand most in need of to-day is a merciless exposure of the true nature of their master superstition. That it gets that, no one who knows Mr. Cohen's methods will doubt. We venture to think that it is a work that none of our readers should miss. For our own part we should like to put it into the hands of every clergyman in Great Britain. The God idea shelters itself at present behind a mass of semi-philosophic verbiage, and when that is torn aside all that is left is the crude assumptions of the primitive savage. The sooner all are made to realize that, the better for the mental health of the community.

The Pioneer Press has acquired a limited number of two important works which it is offering at remainder prices. The first is *The Foundations of Normal and Abnormal Psychology*, by Dr. Boris Sidis. To those with a knowledge of the subject, there will be no need to point out that Dr. Sidis is one of our leading authorities on abnormal psychology, and in the absence of a study of that side of the subject, an adequate appreciation of normal psychology is impossible. The work forms a handsome volume of over 400 pages, and is being offered at 4s. 6d. It was published at 7s. 6d. net just before the war, and would now cost at least 15s. Postage 9d.

The second work is a study of native life by Mr. Dudley Kidd. The title is *Kafir Socialism, and the Dawn of*

*Individualism*. Although dealing specifically with the South African Kafir, the work is really a study in the psychology of the black race, and throws light upon many important and interesting sociological questions. This work was also published at 7s. 6d., and is being sold at 3s. 9d. Postage 9d. Only a limited number of each work is available.

The following reaches us from two of our old friends at Manchester, Mr. and Mrs. S. Pulman:—

Of all the season's good things  
We have wished you heretofore;  
Call to mind the best and choicest  
For we tender them once more;  
And should you think of others,  
Better, choicer, unexpressed,  
Kindly place them to our credit,  
For we wish you all the best.

S. AND T. PULMAN.

Freethought advocacy brings one much ill-will from those who do not matter, but it brings plenty of kindly thoughts from those who do.

We desire to call the attention of all members of the National Secular Society that their annual subscription is due on January 1. They will assist in decreasing the volume of work at the office, and economise in postage if they will take this as a reminder from the general secretary, and will remit as early as is convenient. She ought to be "snowed under" with cheques and postal orders during the next week or two.

## Christianity and Intellectual Progress.

It is by science alone, and not by vain contemplation, that we can comprehend existence.—*Ibn Rushd, vulg. Averroës (1126-98)*.

STUDENTS of classical antiquity are well aware what this so-called Christian civilization owes to the immense literary and scientific activities of the Greeks. They also know how much the Christian Church trampled on pagan culture, save what it could turn to the service of its own debased superstition. Indeed, it was not until the social pressure of the period of the Renaissance that Mother Church was compelled to hearken to that Pagan science and philosophy which she had suppressed for quite 500 years. Although some of the early Christian Fathers, and even some of the early Popes were favourable towards pagan culture, the Church, as a whole, viewed all external learning as its most formidable enemy. Many of the Fathers exhorted the faithful to avoid all contact with pagan learning for their very soul's sake. Councils and Synods heaped interdicts upon pagan books, and even went so far as to destroy them. The result was, as the ecclesiastic historians Jortin and Mosheim admit quite openly, that learning was considered destructive to true piety and godliness. The sciences especially were held in absolute contempt, as inconsistent with revealed truth. Lecky says that "the monks were too inflated with their imaginary knowledge to regard with any respect a pagan writer, and periodical panics about the approaching termination of the world continually checked any desire for secular learning." Buckle also testifies that

from the sixth to the tenth century there was not in all Europe more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves;.....The remaining part of society was, during these four centuries, sunk in the most degrading ignorance. Under these circumstances, the few who were able to read confined their studies to works which encouraged and strengthened their superstition, such as the legends of the saints and the homilies of the Fathers.

All learning, as meagre as it was in these days of prostration before the altar of the "pale Galilean," was

confined to the clergy. Even one of the most famous monasteries of the period, that of Monte Cassino, could scarcely boast of a classical author in its library. The few classics that had survived the general devastation of this super-Christian régime were looked upon by the clergy as useless, and the writings were often erased to make room for sermons or lives of the saints. "So gross and supine was the ignorance of the monks," says Hallam, "within whose walls these treasures were concealed, that it was impossible to ascertain, except by indefatigable researches, the extent of what had been saved out of the great shipwreck of antiquity."

And yet whilst Christian Europe was sunk in this deep barbarism, there was still one corner of the continent where the torch of culture and civilization was held aloft. That corner was the Spain of the Arabs. It was from these people that issued the influences of free-culture that directly brought about the Renaissance. It was the Arabs of Spain, and those of the East, who preserved all, or nearly all, that we have of the science and philosophy of ancient Greece. As Humboldt says, "If it had not been for them, and their love of translation, a great portion of that which the Greeks had either formed themselves, or derived from other nations, would have been lost" in the barbarian devastation of the Middle Ages.

This question of the vandalism of the Christian Church, although testified by the most eminent of historians, from the pious Jortin, Mosheim, Andres, and Tiraboschi, to the more liberal Eichorn, Libri, Hallam, Buckle, Lecky, Draper, was also testified by one of those very Pioneers of the Renaissance—the Arabs. He was an historian named Abu'l-Hasan Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali al-Mas'udi, commonly called Mas'udi, who died about the year 956-7. He was one of the great historians of the Arabs, and his *magnum opus* was a universal history in thirty volumes called the *Akhbar al-Zaman* ("History of the World"). An abridgement of this work, entitled the *Muruj al-Dhahab* ("Meadows of Gold"), has come down to us, and in this interesting work, Mas'udi places on record the vandalism of the Christian Church in the following remarkable passage<sup>1</sup>:—

In the days of the Ancient Greeks and in the first period of the kingdom of Byzantium, science was developed and scholars were honoured. Natural science was particularly studied, especially what applied to the body, the intellect, the soul, as well as the *quadrivium*, i.e., arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. These sciences were honoured by all, and made progress day by day. Then came the Christian religion, which became fatal to scientific knowledge, since it destroyed and blotted out the teachings of science. All that the ancient Greeks had placed before the world vanished, or were distorted. Among the noble sciences which were thrown aside with the advent of Christianity was the science of music.

What a commentary on the reams that have been written on the so-called beneficent influences of Christianity on culture, and especially on the claim of Naumann in his *History of Music* (I.203), whose fulsome praise makes the Church one of the main factors in the "progressive civilization" of the Middle Ages, by its conservation! (Heaven save the mark) of the treasures of Greek antiquity!

H. GEORGE FARMER.

The moment the expression of opinion is allowed in any department, progress begins. We are using our knowledge in every direction. The tendency is to test all opinions by the facts we know. All claims are put in the crucible of investigation—the object being to separate the true from the false. He who objects to having his opinions thus tested is regarded as a bigot.—*Ingersoll*.

<sup>1</sup> *De Meynard's Text*, Tome ii., pp. 320-21.

## At the "Old Vic."

REAL TRAGEDY AND CHRISTIANITY.

O Golden-tongued Romance with serene lute!  
Fair plumed Syren! Queen! if far away!  
Leave melodizing on this wintry day,  
Shut up thine olden volume, and be mute.

Keats.

Is our generation above or below tragedy? It is a delicate question, and one that we should force ourselves to answer. To be above tragedy—what a consummation! to be below it, what a descent! Yet, with Europe setting an example of force to the yellow and black races, it would seem that the tragic muse had been heard and forgotten by our statesmen. Unlike King Lear, they have given nothing, and their various titles now stand for forms devoid of substance. We may now test "Queen Mab's" claim to immortality; we may now seriously consider "Satanism" versus the commonsense of the people who restrain their rulers to the minimum of injustice. Is the adoption by the English of a French village a matter of tragedy? Is the export of missionaries a tragic event? Is the increase in Army and Navy estimates a matter of tragedy?

Below the level of tragedy our generation has sunk; the Calf of Gold is raised high in the country of professing Christians, and missionaries, John the Baptists of Finance, must be at some pains to keep their faces straight, for they are subjects of comedy and farce, and there can be nothing tragic in values that have the surety of everlasting life after death. Who could do anything but play a penny tin whistle at the heroics of Spiritualism versus Christianity? Both regressive movements are squabbling over unknown territory—and members of neither movement have shown any particular desire to take immediate possession. On top, our public men are below tragedy; lower down in society is real tragedy—men and women struggling with their Fate—the consequence of actions from above. Life is complicated enough, but to paraphrase Voltaire, our politicians are so clever that they can cause a man who cultivates corn for others to starve himself.

It was our pleasure to witness a performance of "King Lear" at the "Old Vic." In this tragedy, Shakespeare brings us near to the mystery of things. Fate lays unkind hands on the King who has "given all," and the striking feature of this play is the one fact that the Christian religion finds no place in it. Life is a conflict between Man and his Fate; when it ceases to be so, through the intrusion of Christian values, it loses its tragic greatness. Lear is happy when he and Cordelia are re-united in prison, and when she is dead, he utters the words that make our hearts break with pity.

Thou'lt come no more,  
Never, never, never, never, never.

This is the thing itself, as he has said earlier in the play of the disguised Edgar, and no sentimentalizing Christian values, hand in hand with ignorance and injustice, can pierce for us the mystery of things. Hear the voice of honest Kent when Lear dies:—

Vex not his ghost; O, let him pass! he hates him,  
That would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer.

With Hamlet, the rest is silence—no talk of reunions in heaven—the only thing that Christians give—because it costs nothing; no prayers—nothing—Lear has paid the penalty of life, and Fate continues to weave the shuttles of doom for all living things.

The religious sentiment in the play is pagan throughout. Jove and Jupiter are frequently mentioned, and for dramatic purposes they are equally as good as the names of Jehovah and God. Kent's blunt speech won much applause from the audience—a phenomenon to

cheer any pessimist who may think that our daily papers have demoralized the people. The Fool, sympathetically played by Mr. Andrew Leigh, was excellently conceived by this actor; it is a great part wherein Truth is masked in Folly. He loved Cordelia and knew her worth, and Lear loved him. "In, boy, go first." O Lear, Lear, thou almost tempts us to be a Royalist!

This drama is too big for the stage, is also too big for a short article. It cannot be understood at one reading; we will not express any opinion as to the number of times it must be read to gain final illumination. Many critics will have it that it is a drama of ingratitude. It is, and also, it is something more. Vivid flashes of truth dart from the mouths of the characters—a madman leads the blind—shades of our present generation—"the glass eyes of politicians" excite derision from the audience that forbodes the death of another superstition—quickly we hope; the fool has bitter words for the priest, and on the heath, there is no atmosphere for the sickly values of Christianity. The late G. W. Foote's judgment of Shakespeare as an ally of Freethought is amply substantiated by this presentation of a difficult drama by a theatre that produces Shakespeare—because its supporters want Shakespeare.

WILLIAM REPTON.

### Neither Votes nor Violence.

Most men labour under the superstition that nothing can be accomplished in human society except by voting or by violence. They think we must have statute laws to define what we may or must do, and violence to compel us to obey those laws. The idea that anything for the good of society can be done in a country like this without votes or violence is held by comparatively few persons. And yet this dependence upon the legislature the police and the soldiers is a pure and simple superstition: just as much so as the belief of the savage that his fetich helps him, or of the Christian that his man-like God is his daily strength and redeemer. Both are wholly imaginary beings but their worshippers think they follow them about and abide with them every day.

I use these superstitions as analogues of our equally popular political superstitions. The powers of the army, the police, the prison and the legislature are wholly imaginary. I mean their powers for good.

What powers they have are entirely for evil.

It is popularly believed that all this machinery of violence is absolutely necessary in our present state of development. Even those who believe that a time may come when it will be unnecessary, think that at present we cannot get on without it. But this, in my opinion, is pure superstition. I think that all our governmental violence, including the ballot, are a direct detriment to the development of society.

All progress is made in spite of statute law; all reformation comes notwithstanding gaolers and hangmen; all justice is done in spite of our courts; all international equity is obtained without armies; all goodness is acquired in opposition to the Church. The theory is, that by means of violence we force men to do right until they are educated enough to do right without force. This theory is false. Governmental force is useless to compel men to do right, but can and does protect some men in doing wrong. The reason why the human race is growing gentler and purer is not because they are being clubbed into virtue, but because by discussion and education we are coming more and more to a knowledge of virtue. Just so soon as men clearly understand what is right—what tends to their own greatest happiness—they incline to do it. It is commonly believed that violence is being less and less

used because its use has made men more virtuous. Not so. Men are becoming more enlightened through thought and reading, speaking and writing. And the more enlightened they come the less they will consent to use violence.

Not very long ago a man would take his child to a schoolmaster and tell him, in the presence of the child, that if the child did not behave properly he must be soundly flogged. But now if a teacher flogs a child, it gets into the newspapers, and the teacher has to defend himself before a more or less outraged public sentiment. Child-beating has not brought this salutary change. Constant thinking and speaking have brought it. Whether there is a law on the statute book against the flogging of children by teachers is of no consequence. If so, it was put there because some politician wanted to keep up with it. This flogging would stop just as completely without the law as with it. Now this particular case illustrates the whole subject. It is not of the least consequence whether there is a law on any given subject or not. If a large majority of the public want a thing done, it will be done. The law will neither help nor hinder the matter.

In New Jersey there is a law that a man must not drive more than a certain distance on Sunday. There are laws here against selling liquor during certain hours of the day. In some places there are laws against taking more than six per cent interest. And so on, almost interminably; but what do they all amount to? Some of them have been dead so long they have lost all offensive odour. Nobody takes the trouble even to have them repealed. Public opinion now decrees that people can drive on Sunday just as on week days, and that publicans can sell liquor in prohibited hours—if they keep the front door shut. And as for not taking more than six per cent interest—why, the good churchman gets around that law by charging you six per cent interest and ten per cent commission, and takes the bread and wine next Sunday as piously as an angel.

Most of the things we do are not because of statute law. The payment of gambling debts cannot be enforced by law, whereas trade debts can. Why then do men pay their gambling debts more readily than their trade debts? Why do they raise their hats to women, and give them their seats on tram cars? Why do women decorate themselves with feathers, thus causing the destruction and torture of millions of the most beautiful and useful birds? Why do men wear such ugly and uncomfortable absurdities as top hats? And why do we workers so tamely submit to the unjust exactions of the idle landlords, usurers and politicians? Because we conform to public opinion, which is infinitely more powerful than statute law; which, is indeed the real power that our laws are supposed to have.

When a great majority of the people come to think that selling liquor at certain hours is really a crime, the public houses will be honestly closed at that time. That will be bad for the police who get paid by the Government to enforce a law which most of the people don't want enforced, and get paid by the publicans not to enforce it.

Most people now believe that they have not the right to buy their goods wherever they please, that their government has a right to keep a gang of pickpockets all along the coast to rob consumers in order to enrich the big trusts. Talk about thieves. What do you call those men and women who break open your trunks and strip you to the skin in a custom house to rob you of what you have bought in some other country? If this isn't highway robbery then I don't know what is. But most of the people believe in it and like it. They agree with an otherwise intelligent woman who once told me that she liked being heavily taxed for the enrichment of millionaires because she liked living where there are millionaires. This form of theft will go on as long as public opinion sustains it. When the

public see through this little game, it will stop. It will not require votes or violence to stop it. It will be stopped by the increase of smuggling and the general contempt for the protective laws, which can then be no more enforced than you can now enforce the old blue laws against Quakers and Catholic priests.

The right and the best way to cure any social evil is first, to have nothing to do with it yourself, and second, to persuade other people to have nothing to do with it. This was the teaching of the abolitionists of negro slavery. They did not believe in violence, and they would not vote or take any part in a government that upheld slavery, and if the war had not come they would have peaceably swept away slavery, and the American public would not have been usury-ridden by a criminal national debt with a gang of fat bankers in the saddle. In the olden time with us, when men came to see that slavery was wrong they did not hesitate to free their slaves. And now, if we can get a man who owns a piece of vacant land to see that his neighbour is starving for need of it, there will be little trouble in getting him to set it free for use, quite apart from the fact that overwhelming pressure can be brought to bear upon him through the boycott. Nothing can stop the steady growth of the moral sense of the people and prevent the slow formation of the public opinion which righteously condemns the four great poverty producers—rent, interest, profits and taxes. The time will come when nobody will get anything but wages and gifts, and the Government will get nothing that is not voluntarily given to it. It may be delayed by voting or by violence, but when it comes it will stay, because it will have got here by the all powerful force of an educated public opinion.

What has dethroned the old bad God who used to sit on a great white throne? What has so largely turned the parsons and priests into common ordinary men? They may still wear their shovel hats and white chokers—but we know that they are no different from other people and of rather less than the average intelligence and morality, all the same. What has put out the fires of hell and rid the world of witch-craft? Not votes. Not violence. Not laws. All this has been done by thinking, by talking, by writing, and concerning Freedom, which will quickly follow the abolition of the monopoly of banking and of vacant land, people may be foolish enough to try to bring it about by violence or by votes, but if they are wise they will simply work and wait for it to come, as it can only rightly come, by the great majority wishing to enjoy its inestimable blessings.

G. O. W.

### Correspondence.

#### WHAT IS ATHEISM?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue for December 19, Athos Zeno refers to my letter of September 26 "regarding Mr. Bradlaugh's statement of the Atheist position."

He then goes on to say, "I think it is correct to say that, while Bradlaugh said that the word 'GOD' conveyed no meaning to his mind—and though he neither affirmed nor denied its existence—he *did* deny the existence of Jahveh, Holy Ghost, Jupiter, Osiris, Horus, Christ, or any other 'God,' defined and described."

But, let me quote Bradlaugh's own words from *A Plea for Atheism*:—

The Atheist does not say "There is no God," but he says: "I know not what you mean by God; I am without idea of God; the word "God" is to me a sound conveying no clear or distinct affirmation. I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception, and the conception of which, by its affirmer, is so imperfect that he is unable to define it to me. If, however, "God" is defined to mean an existence other than the existence of which I am a mode, then I deny "God," and affirm that it is impossible such "God" can be.

This, to my mind, with all due respect to Bradlaugh, is mere verbalism.

A man is not an Atheist because the term "God" has no meaning and no definition. He is an Atheist because he denies the existence of a being corresponding to any of the definitions given under the term "God," and is justified in saying "there is no God."

If the existence of every God as yet defined can be denied, why indulge in verbalism about "I know not what you mean by God," when your very denials imply that you do know what this and that Theist means by the term "God"?

It is quite in order to ask an opponent in debate for his definition of the term "God," but not because the term conveys no meaning. Rather because it conveys so many meanings and you desire to know which one your opponent is prepared to stand by.

Athos Zeno admits that Bradlaugh denied the existence of the Holy Ghost, but fails to see that, if Bradlaugh's position were sound, he had no more right to deny the existence of a "Holy Ghost" than that of a "God," without making the same reservations.

The term "Holy Ghost," as it stands, conveys no more meaning than the term "God" does. Or, to put it in another way, the term "God" calls up as many definitions as does the term "Holy Ghost," if not more.

If the reader thinks I am unjust to Bradlaugh, let him imagine the argument setting off with, "The Atheist does not say 'There is no Holy Ghost,'" etc., and I think he will realize that there is no philosophical necessity for men who deny, without hesitation, the existence of a "Holy Ghost," to make rings round the term "God."

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

#### A LITANY FOR THOSE MARTYRED BY CHRISTIANS.

Most High, for all the deeds of shame  
Which have exposed to evil fame  
The eternal glory of Thy name,  
Have mercy on us.

For all Thy words of love defied,  
For stern self-righteousness and pride,  
And for the deaths the Lollards died,  
Have mercy on us.

For wayward sheep cast out, and all  
On whom Thy Church's hand did fall,  
Good Shepherd, Who the lost did call,  
Have mercy on us.

For Luther excommunicate,  
Bartholomew's unchained hate,  
And constant Galileo's fate,  
Have mercy on us.

For all those whom the Spaniards slew  
In Mexico and in Peru,  
Because they held the faiths they knew,  
Have mercy on us.

For the last agonies untold  
Of them in England who made bold  
To burn for new belief or old,  
Have mercy on us.

Since where the heathen killed but ten,  
The Christians doomed a hundred men  
To sudden axe, or slow dark den,  
Have mercy on us.

For generations of abuse  
Of Thy despised kin, the Jews,  
By Thee made strong Thee to refuse,  
Have mercy on us.

And for to-day's contumely  
Of them who worship not as we,  
And that "Thou fool, abhorred of Thee,"  
Have mercy on us.

—C. J. B. Masefield, "Poems," 1919.

## 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.

FRIARS HALL (236 Blackfriars Road): 7, Mr. C. Cohen, "The Old Freethought in the New Year."

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7.30, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, Stratford, E.): Henry Spence, B.Sc., "The Physical Basis of Heredity."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

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

**AU PAIR.**—Gentlewoman required, willing to give First Lessons to a little girl (7½) and assist in light household duties; Maid kept. Richmond (Surrey). Possibly small salary later on.—Reply MRS. P., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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**CHAPMAN COHEN.**

*Secretary:*

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Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name.....

Address .....

Occupation .....

Dated this.....day of.....19.....

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