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Views and Opinions.

The Claims of Christianity.

I daresay that most of my readers are acquainted with the story which tells how Mr. Ford, the maker of the motor car of that name, took a friend for a run. After they had gone some distance the car stopped and the owner got out to investigate. Directly he lifted the bonnet he said, "Good Lord! the idiots have forgotten to put in the engine, and the car has gone twenty miles on its reputation." I have been reminded of this story by reading a volume of essays in praise of Christianity. The essays cover all the usual ground, they describe the way in which Christianity raised the status of labour, gave dignity to womanhood, presented freedom to the individual, and gave the ideal of human brotherhood to the world. Indeed, so much good and so much decency resulted from Christianity, that, looking at the amount of these qualities at present in circulation, a considerable quantity must have got somewhere mislaid, while the state of the world before Christianity appeared must have been too awful for contemplation. And that is a very poor compliment to pay the Deity. For after all, the world, pagan and Christian, is his world. And the type of man he made, and allowed to exist, until he bethought him and allowed one-third of himself to be hung up on a tree, probably to show how sorry he was for what he had done, and so introduced that miracle of perfection, the Christian, says little for his judgment or his goodness. For, really, every reason that existed at the time of the birth of Christ for the Deity to put himself to so much trouble to save mankind existed all along. And the worse the people were the greater the need for the interposition of God. If I may quote himself against himself, it is the sick, not the whole who needs a physician. And, if on the other hand, Jesus was sent because at that time the people were getting better, then it seems the Deity was only helping man to do what, if left alone, he would have done by himself. In that case the Deity behaves like the editor of one of our sensational journals, who having first found out what the Government intends to do, forthwith starts agitating for it so that it may claim the credit for having produced it.

* * *

The Benefits of Opposition.

Now I do not doubt that the writer of this particular volume really believes what he says. He has, I dare-

say, said it many times himself, and has heard it said many times by others, and if the voice of the multitude is not the voice of God, repetition is what most people accept as the equivalent of demonstrated truth. The passage of the Russian army across England, in the early days of the war, was accepted as truth solely because thousands of folk were telling each other that it was so. And reputations are made or damned on no better evidence than "Everybody says." To most, "They say" is the popular equivalent of the Euclidean Q.E.D. And when a story is not contradicted the demonstration is complete. In the case of the legends about the worth of Christianity we have these two conditions in excelsis. Everybody knows what a good thing Christianity is, because—well, because, everybody says so. And contradiction is precisely what the purveyor of the Christian legend seldom meets with. I do not mean that his statements are not contradicted. They are. But they are seldom met with that direct and deliberate contradiction which the legends deserve. Very often they are contradicted in a way that serves to perpetuate the delusion rather than to remove it. The contradictions which the average believer meets with are about as effective as one would be in attempting to cure one of the belief that he had seen a ghost by explaining that the ghost was not quite so substantial as he believed. So a contradiction of the claims of Christianity is either put forward with deplorable hesitancy, or it is accompanied with a mass of verbiage concerning the ethical value of Christianity, or some other piece of verbal tomfoolery which serves to leave the Christian more than ever convinced of the essential value of his religion. And all the time, what the Christian needs is a good, plain, wholesome statement that the Christian religion has been the greatest blight that Europe has ever known; that it has not dignified labour, or elevated woman, or helped the course of civilization. When these things are told the Christian in such a way that there will be no mistaking what is meant, he will begin to lose his cocksureness, and may be led to examine the validity of some of the statements he now unquestioningly accepts. And when a Christian begins to examine his religion with only a partly liberated mind he has taken the first step towards giving it up.

* * *

Making Sure of One's References.

The Christian religion has, like the Ford car in the story, been running on its reputation. But unlike the Ford car, its reputation has been created by itself. It has written all its own testimonials, and it has provided all its own credentials. It has not only written its own testimonials, but it has imprisoned and burned and damned anyone who had the effrontery to examine them. And a man or an institution that cannot get a splendid reputation in such circumstances is indeed to be pitied. But even then, outsiders have not been struck dumb with admiration when they have examined Christianity. The Mohammedan felt that he had nothing to learn on the score of sobriety, the Buddhist on that of toleration, or the Confucian on that of justice. Some years ago when the Japanese government sent

a deputation to study English life and manners, and see whether there was anything of profit to be learned, the Commission found that we were further advanced than they were in the art of scientific slaughter in connection with war, that we had a more developed cut-throat commercialism than they had, and that secular science was more developed than with themselves. But they were not at all impressed by our religion. And they, wisely, left our religion alone. They had more of their own than they knew what to do with. And while familiarity enabled the more thoughtful of the Japanese to keep a straight face in the presence of their native superstitions, the dumping down of a new batch would probably have been too much for their gravity. So the Christian goes on presenting these splendid testimonials to himself; they are very impressive until one asks, "Yes, but who wrote them?" And then he is bound to reply, "I did." So we come at once on the secret of their flawless excellence.

* * *

The Chance of the Church.

It is not merely that outsiders evince a lack of appreciation of the worth of Christianity. It is true in a growing measure of insiders. In a nominally Christian community, where religious organizations retain and exercise a tremendous control over the machinery of education and publicity, and where it is made distinctly unprofitable for writers to say anything that goes directly against Christian claims, there are a growing number of men and women who do not believe in this manufactured reputation of the Christian religion. And that is a circumstance of far greater significance than is usually perceived. For here it is not a case of Christianity finding it difficult to get the world to recognize its worth. Many a good man and many a worthy cause have failed to do that. The case here is the other way about. The tradition of the supreme value of Christianity was once one of the most firmly established traditions in the European world. It was placed before the people in a thousand and one ways, and for centuries it was more than one's life was worth to question it. It has had the command of enormous funds with which to advertise its virtues, and no firm ever had so great an army of advertising experts to boom its pretensions. It was established, and it is becoming disestablished. From being an article in universal use, it is sinking into comparative disuse. And so far as it is used, it is running on a reputation that was built up at a time when people were unable to criticize its pretensions. But that reputation is disintegrating just as rapidly as an educated mind is learning to bring its claims to the test of reality. And one day, I am convinced that the world will regard the belief that Christianity is a great civilizing force as one of the greatest advertising frauds it has ever known.

* * *

Christianity and Civilization.

Nearly sixteen centuries ago Christianity gained control in the midst of a highly civilized people. It inherited, in virtue of its conquest, an elaborate literature, a dignified jurisprudence, and a developed sense of civic life. In less than five centuries the literature only existed in fragments, the civic life had been forgotten, the jurisprudence had sunk into trial by ordeal, the civilized pagan world was swallowed up in the uncivilized world of mediæval Christianity. And in all this, Christianity felt that nothing of value was lost. For its mission in life was neither to save men's bodies nor to develop their civilization. Its mission was to save men's souls, and nothing else was worth consideration. Later, when, in spite of all that the Church could do to prevent it, the old pagan conception of life revived, and men and women began to pay some attention to the affairs of this world, the Church found it

to its interest to claim that it had acted as a civilizing agent. And because of the power it possessed it was able to see to it that history was written in such a manner that the unwary were easily misled by its claims. If a civilization was not Christian it was pictured as reeking with vice. If a man or woman contested the claims of the Church their characters were blackened. It stood guard over the printing press and saw that nothing that was inimical to it should, if it could help it, see the light. It watched the scientist to see that he taught nothing that ran contrary to its own foolish and insane dogmas. It threatened where it could, it bribed where it might, it punished where it could neither bribe nor bully. And the fear it put into men's minds was such that it became part of the social tradition to such an extent that even to-day people fear more the opposition of the religious world than they do aught else. Half our public men are afraid of it, and three parts of our writers are ever on their guard lest they should give it offence. It makes men and women neither more truthful, nor more tolerant, nor more honest, but it claims to do all these things. And the best comment on the claim is that the only ones who are impressed by it, and who make it, are Christians. The virtues of the saved are not so obvious to others. The Christian is still hawking round his home-made testimonials. And it needs but little examination to discover their fraudulent character.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Olive Schreiner: Freethinker.

II.

HER WRITINGS.

IN most obituary notices in the press, allusion was made to the smallness of Olive Schreiner's literary output, but few of the writers seemed to be aware of the cause. Sir William Robertson Nicoll went so far as to assert that "she could not bring her thoughts to birth"; and yet, when he met her she showed him "huge heaps of manuscript which she had written but had not published, because she was dissatisfied with what she had done." As a matter of fact, Olive Schreiner could and did "bring her thoughts to birth" with astonishing facility; but ill-health prevented her from preparing her work for the press. She lost her health as the result of getting wet on a day's journey in a mail cart. Asthma set in and brought on heart disease, and for the rest of her life she was a great sufferer. Writing to me in 1897 she said:—

I always used to think when I was a young girl that I should get well when I grew to be a woman of twenty, and when I was twenty I thought I would gain health when I got middle aged. Now my hopes are all fixed on some time when, perhaps on the top of the mountain at Gamra Hoek, I shall be well. I'm better to-day than I've been for months, so perhaps a time of work is coming. It's all my heart and the asthma—nothing new.

She had completed what she called "my big novel," which she adjudged her greatest work, but she was too ill to revise it. Publishers offered her high prices for it, but without careful revision she would not part with it. Describing it in a letter she said:—

That's the one thing I should be so sorry to destroy before I die, because the people in it are so real and so beloved to me, and I should feel as if I was killing them if I burnt it. Did I ever show you the Prelude to it called "The Child's Day"? Even that isn't quite ready to print. I want to revise it, so that I can be sure people will see exactly what I see. That prelude came on me all in a flash, like *Peter Halket*. I was sitting and writing an article on Hottentots and the shape of their skulls, and all of a sudden the whole thing, like a series of perfect pictures, unfolded

before me. Of course, then there is the bother of "painting" these pictures in words, so that other people can see what you see. If I have fifteen years to live, I would give them all, gladly, joyfully, to-night for one year's health, because then I could get my work done.

What Olive Schreiner lacked was not ability "to bring her thoughts to birth," but health to put them into forms sufficiently perfect to satisfy her aesthetic sense. She had one novel finally revised, except the last six pages. Publishers and friends did their utmost to persuade her to allow it to be printed, but she lent them all a deaf ear. Several really great works were almost ready for publication, but she died without giving the finishing touch to one of them. Our only hope now is that Mr. Havelock Ellis, who is in charge of all her papers, will be able to publish them.

It is not my intention to take any notice of her political writings, not even of *Trooper Peter Halket*. In politics she and her husband were on the unpopular side, and had to endure considerable persecution, especially during their residence at Kimberley, the headquarters of Cecil Rhodes. Her brother, the Right Hon. W. P. Schreiner, and she were politically in perfect harmony. They were also in complete agreement in their views on religion, while Mrs. Lewis and Theodore Schreiner were evangelical Christians. It is significant that nearly all the newspapers concealed the fact that Olive Schreiner was an unbeliever in the supernatural. One would infer from the *British Weekly* that she was almost a disciple of Spurgeon. "Like John Morley, she admired Spurgeon for his unction, and he had no small part in moulding her emotions, though not her thoughts." In a letter she declares that, personally, she owes nothing to the teaching of Jesus, and that even as a child, with the exception of Matthew v.—xvi., no part of his teaching morally ever touched her. Then she adds:—

From the time I was fourteen, when I ceased to read the Bible, or go to church, Christianity has been almost non-existent for me. I have lived, to an extent you would hardly understand, in quite another world, and the name so dear to you brings back to me nothing but sad and depressing memories.

In a highly eulogistic article the *Nation* for December 18, unhesitatingly characterizes *The Story of an African Farm* as a series of attacks upon accepted orthodoxies, such as the Protestant religion, the position of woman, and the conventional optimism of human life. It is quite true that it was the Protestant religion under which Olive Schreiner endured such unspeakable agonies during her childhood days; but it is not true that Protestantism is singled out for attack. It is supernatural religion, as such, that is discredited and condemned. When the story opens all the characters were conventionally religious. The Boer woman and her German overseer loyally observed the usual rites and ceremonies of religion, and services were held in the farmhouse on Sundays. The boy Waldo was at first wonderfully devout, spending much time in prayer, and regarding eternity and hell as awful realities. One day he offered his dinner as a sacrifice to God. He placed his mutton chop on the altar and prayed, saying:—

Oh, God, my Father, I have made thee a sacrifice. I have only two-pence, so I cannot buy a lamb. If the lambs were mine I would give thee one; but now I have only this meat, it is my dinner-meat. Please, My Father, send fire down from heaven to burn it. Thou hast said, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast into the sea, nothing doubting, it shall be done. I ask for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Fire came not down from heaven and the sacrifice was not burnt. Three times poor Waldo bowed himself with no result, and his heart was heavy. For

a whole year, after this, he carried a great secret in his heart. "He had not dared to look at it, he had not whispered it to himself; but for a year he had carried it." At last out it came. "I hate God!" Later, he said: "I love Jesus Christ, but I hate God." Waldo's religious experience was a tragically disastrous affair. No one could have suffered more than he did. By degrees, however, he renounced the faith so zealously and naively held and proclaimed by his father, the German. He read all the books he could get at, and sadly brooded over the dark problems of life. Before Lyndall, the chief character in the book, returned from her four years' residence at a boarding-school, Waldo had had a marvellous interview with a mysterious stranger, who succeeded in making him talk quite freely.

He spoke with that extreme gravity common to all very young things who feel deeply. It is not till twenty that we learn to be in deadly earnest and to laugh. The stranger nodded while the fellow sought for something more to relate. He would tell all to this man of his—all that he knew, all that he had felt, his most inmost, rarest thought. Suddenly the stranger turned upon him.

"Boy," he said, "you are happy to be here."

Waldo looked at him. Was his delightful one ridiculing him? How, with this brown earth and these low hills, while the rare, wonderful world lay all beyond. Fortunate to be here!

The stranger read his glance.

"Yes," he said, "here with the karroo-bushes and red sand. Do you wonder what I mean? To all who have been born in the old faith there comes a time of danger, when the old slips from us, and we have not yet planted our feet on the new. We hear the voice from Sinai thundering no more, and the still, small voice of reason is not yet heard. We have proved the religion our mothers fed us on to be a delusion; in our bewilderment we see no rule by which to guide our steps day by day, and yet every day we must step somewhere." The stranger leaned forward and spoke more quickly. "We have never once been taught by word or act to distinguish between religion and the moral laws on which it has artfully fastened itself, and from which it has sucked its vitality. When we have dragged down the weeds and creepers that covered the solid wall, and have found them to be rotten wood, we imagine the wall itself to be rotten wood too. We find it is solid and standing only when we fall headlong against it. We have been taught that all right and wrong originate in the will of an irresponsible being. It is sometime before we see how the inexorable 'Thou shalt and shalt not,' are carved into the nature of things. This is the time of danger. In the end, experience will inevitably teach us that the laws for a wise and noble life have a foundation infinitely deeper than the fiat of any being, God or man, even in the groundwork of human nature."

Surely that is extraordinary stuff to drop from the pen of a strip of a girl in her middle teens, a girl who had had but few educational and social advantages, and yet a girl who at eighteen knew the writings of John Stuart Mill almost by heart, as well as her Gibbon, Lecky, Hegel, and many others. Now, in Waldo there is much of Olive Schreiner herself, and in Lyndall, much more. Intellectually, Lyndall was immeasurably superior to Waldo, but the two were bosom friends, and the source of great comfort to each other. They had much in common, their attitude to Nature and to life being practically identical. One evening, on the occasion when the Boer woman took to herself a third husband, they were together watching the Southern stars. Suddenly Lyndall said:—

"Waldo, they are laughing at us!"

"Who?" he said, starting up.

"They, the stars!" she said, softly. "Do you not see? there is a little, white, mocking finger pointing down at us from each one of them! We are talking of to-morrow, and to-morrow, and our hearts are so strong; we are not thinking of something that can

touch us softly in the dark, and make us still for ever. They are laughing at us, Waldo."

Both sat looking upwards.

"Do you ever pray?" he asked her in a low voice.

"No."

"I never do."

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be continued.)

Carnegie's Crusades.

Christianity has never lost the instinct of universal dominion.

—British and Foreign Bible Society's Report.

Clericalism, behold the enemy!—Leon Gambetta.

Had the *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie* been published in less exciting times than the present, his amazing career would have received more attention. He was a man who was born very poor, and became very rich. So wealthy did he become that he actually gave away eighty million pounds in idealist schemes which he considered were for the betterment of his fellows. He was the author of the phrase, "To die rich is to die in disgrace," and he spent money as lavishly as he made it. He was the principal founder of Birmingham University, and he built a large number of libraries in this country, and also in the United States.

One of his pet schemes demands attention. A professed Freethinker, Carnegie's idea of free libraries for the people was actually meant to foster education. It is very doubtful if the libraries did a tenth part of what he expected them to do; but that was hardly his fault. Sixty per cent. output of works of fiction, and much of it absolute rubbish, was a poor result of his scheme. His endowment of colleges was of far greater benefit, and, probably, the most lasting of his great benefactions. An ardent lover of peace, he had great hopes of promoting disarmament among the nations, and he interviewed the Kaiser and other European sovereigns on the subject. The outbreak of the World War distressed him deeply, and his dignified silence on the matter spoke more eloquently than any words of the depth of his feelings.

Let us not judge Carnegie too harshly. Like so many idealists, he was often blind to realities, and it is almost pathetic to read of his meeting with the Kaiser. "He is not only an Emperor," he writes, "but something much higher, a man anxious to improve existing conditions, untiring in his efforts to promote temperance, prevent duelling, and, I believe, to secure international peace." Thus the Kaiser appeared "across the walnuts and the wine." Not until it was too late did Carnegie realize that under the velvet glove was hidden the steel gauntlet, and that after-dinner platitudes did not represent the entire schemes of the German General Staff, or affect the output of Krupp's factories.

Carnegie was a faithful friend, and he numbered among his acquaintances Robert Ingersoll and Mark Twain. He and Mark Twain had little in common, but they both had a real and lasting admiration for Colonel Bob. It is a thousand pities that Andrew Carnegie did not adopt the militant policy of Ingersoll, who, in the scant leisure of a busy lawyer's life, flamed Freethought over a continent. Carnegie meant well, but in trusting to the slower methods of evolution rather than revolution, he overlooked entirely the sinister opposition of the clergy and their satellites.

Let those who wonder at Carnegie's failure with his library scheme consider the case of Stephen Girard, the American Freethinker. At his death this large-hearted and broad-minded man left substantial bequests to charities, the principal being a munificent endowment of an orphanage. By express provision in his will no ecclesiastic or minister of religion was to

hold any connection with the institutions, or even to be admitted as a visitor. The staff was to instruct the pupils in secular morality, and leave them to adopt their own opinions. This will has been most shamefully perverted, for the officials have always been Christians, and, in order to keep within the letter of the law, only laymen are so employed. To-day the Girard Orphanage is pointed at as a proof of Christian philanthropy by the very men who taunt Freethinkers with their lack of humanism.

In promoting peace, Carnegie overlooked the great general staffs and the manufacturers of armaments. In his scheme for carrying instruction to the working classes, Carnegie forgot the tens of thousands of clergy. Free libraries are controlled by committees, usually composed of small (and ignorant) tradesmen, and the clergy, or their catspaws. These committees dictate what books shall be stocked in the libraries, and the librarians are their humble, obedient servants. The results are deplorable. Even so great a writer as George Meredith had his public recognition delayed for years by their action. His *Ordeal of Richard Feverel* was banned on account of its frank Paganism, and subsequent books of his were looked at askance. There have been library committees which have condemned Mrs. Gaskell's *Ruth*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, Thomas Hardy's *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure*, and H. G. Wells's *Anne Veronica* as unsuitable for general perusal. As for serious reading, this is scanned so carefully that Freethought works are almost as scarce in such places as snow in harvest.

The clergy are past masters at stifling or circumventing any movement likely to prove dangerous to them. The original Sunday-schools were initiated by laymen with the sole idea of imparting the rudiments of education to children on the one day of the week on which, prior to the passing of the Factory Acts, they were free to receive it. Nowadays, Sunday-schools are not concerned with other than purely theological instruction, and the average Sunday-school teacher cares as much for real education as a pigeon cares for hydrostatics.

Andrew Carnegie was not a fool. He had a very clear financial brain, he had imagination, he had business acumen. Possessed of extraordinary resources, he did his best to benefit his fellows. Like Stephen Girard, he failed. High-minded himself, he fondly imagined that the clergy were to be trusted. He never realized that, whilst prating of the Brotherhood of Man, the Christian clergy are working constantly for the degradation of democracy. Too many people trust the clergy. We feel about them as the old coloured woman after the earthquake felt when she moved from a brick house to a wooden one. She said she ought to trust the Lord, but she did not want to be made a fool of.

MIMNERMUS.

Idler, why lie down to die?

Better rub than rust:

Hark, the lark sings in the sky,

"Die when die thou must,

Day is waking, leaves are shaking—

Better rub than rust."

In the grave there's sleep enough—

"Better rub than rust":

Death, perhaps, is hunger-proof;

"Die, when die thou must:

Men are mowing, breezes blowing;

Better rub than rust."

He who will not work shall want;

Nought for nought is just;

Won't do, must do, when he can't:

"Better rub than rust;

Bees are flying—sloth is dying,

Better rub than rust."

—Ebenezer Elliot.

A Sociological Study of Religion.

I.

IN discussing the origin of primitive religion, anthropologists have differed as to the relative importance of the various elements that go to form early philosophic ideas. Some, like Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, and Grant Allen, *Evolution of the Idea of God*, have derived religion from the worship of the dead; others, like Mr. Andrew Lang, *The Making of Religion* and *Magic and Religion*, have supposed that belief in a supreme being came first in order of evolution, and was later thrust into the background of the consciousness by beliefs in ghosts and lesser divinities. Dr. Jevons found the primitive form in totemism.¹ *Introduction to the History of Religion*; Fraser regards religion as superimposed on an antecedent stage of magic; Dr. Tyler maintained that "Animism² is the ground-work of the Philosophy of Religion, from that of the savages up to civilized man." *Primitive Culture*; and Mr. Clodd also argued that:—

The universal instinct of the savage leads him to ascribe an indwelling life in everything that moves from the sun in heaven to the rustling leaves, and the stones that roll from the hillside across his path.

In *The Story of Creation*. Macculloch, *Religion: Its Origin and Forms*, considers that man had an original religious faculty which first made him theistic; then through animism or spirit worship caused the supreme divinity or conception of monotheism to recede, but not to disappear completely from the mind. Finally, Mr. H. G. Wells, in his useful *Outline of History*, says:—

Certain very fundamental things may have been in men's minds long before the coming of speech. Chief among them must have been the fear of the Old Man of the tribe. The young of the primitive squatting place grew up under that fear. Objects associated with him were probably forbidden. Every one was forbidden to touch his spear or to sit in his place, just as to-day little boys must not touch their father's pipe or sit in his chair.....The idea of *something forbidden*, the idea of things being, as it is called, tabu, not to be touched, not to be looked at, may thus have got well into the human mind at a very early stage indeed.....And the Old Man must have been an actor in many primordial nightmare. A disposition to propitiate him even after he was dead is quite understandable. One was not sure that he was dead. He might only be asleep or shamming. Long after an Old Man was dead, when there was nothing to represent him but a mound and a megalith, the women would convey to their children how awful and wonderful he was. And being still a terror to his own little tribe, it was easy to go on to hoping that he would be a terror to other and hostile people. In his life he had fought for his tribe.....Why not when he was dead? One sees that the Old Man idea was an idea very natural to the primitive mind and capable of great development.³

But amid this diversity of opinion, there is a fundamental agreement. Whether religion be defined as "the belief in spiritual beings" Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, or as a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to men who are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of man's life, these "powers" being "conscious or personal agents," Frazer, *Golden Bough*, anthropologists are unanimous in declaring that primi-

¹ Totemism is a belief in bloodkinship with or descent from an animal or plant. Totemism is undoubtedly at the bottom of much mythology, and accounts for such mythologic phenomena as the animal-headed gods of Egypt, which were simply anthropomorphic totems arrived at a high stage of evolution.

² Animism is the word used to denote the attribution of a soul to inanimate objects and natural phenomena.

³ A. E. Crawley in *The Tree of Life*, has called attention to other sources of religious impulse and emotion, particularly emphasizing sex as a cause of excitement.

tive religion had its origin in man's ignorance of natural laws, and consequent fear of natural processes. Macculloch might speak for them all, when he says, "The general form of religious beliefs is the same among Esquimaux and Africans, Red Indians and Ainos, Australian and Indian aborigines, Polynesians and Samoyedes," suggesting almost irresistibly that at an "early stage certain inevitable modes of thought, due to men's ignorance of science, and to their explanations of the universe and its forces resulting from that ignorance, gave rise to such beliefs."

But when we pass from anthropology to the newer science of sociology, and ask what is the social importance and function of religious beliefs, we meet with the utmost dissimilarity of views. Buckle (*History of Civilization*), says:—

Now, in the first place, it is evident that if a people were left entirely to themselves, their religion, their literature, and their government would be, not the causes of their civilization, but the effects of it. Out of a certain condition of society, certain results naturally follow.....looking at things upon a large scale the religion of mankind is the effect of their improvement, not the cause of it.

Spencer conceives religion as playing a necessary social role in supplying a supernatural basis for morality, until such time as humanity can substitute a rational one. "Speaking generally," he says (*First Principles*):—

the religion current in each age and among each people, has been as near an approximation to the truth as it was then and there possible for men to receive. The concrete forms in which it has embodied the truth, have been the means of making thinkable what would otherwise have been unthinkable; and so have, for the time being, served to increase its impressiveness.....During each stage of progress men must think in such terms of thought as they possess. While all the conspicuous changes, of which they can observe the origins, have men and animals as antecedents, they are unable to think of antecedents in general under any other shapes; and hence creative agencies are almost of necessity conceived by them in these shapes. If, during this phase, these concrete conceptions were taken from them and the attempt made to give them comparatively abstract conceptions, the result would be to leave their minds with none at all, since the substituted ones could not be mentally represented. Similarly with every successive stage of religious belief, down to the last.....Evils and benefits akin to those which the savage has personally felt, or learned from those who have felt them, are the only evils and benefits he can understand.....His deities must be imagined to have like motives and passions and methods with the beings around him; for motives and passions and methods of a higher character, being unknown to him, and in a great measure unthinkable by him, cannot be so represented in thought as to influence his deeds..... Few are as yet wholly fitted to dispense with such conceptions as are current. The highest abstractions take so great a mental power to realize with any vividness, and are so inoperative on conduct unless they are vividly realized, that their regulative effects must for a long period to come be appreciable on but a small minority. To see clearly how a right or wrong act generates consequences, internal and external, that go on branching out more widely as years progress, requires a rare power of analysis. And to estimate these consequences in their totality requires a grasp of thought possessed by none. Were it not that throughout the progress of the race, men's experiences of the effects of conduct have been slowly generalized into principles—were it not that these principles have been from generation to generation insisted on by parents, upheld by public opinion, sanctified by religion, and enforced by threats of eternal damnation for disobedience—were it not that under these potent influences habits have been modified, and the feelings proper to them made innate; disastrous results would follow the removal of

those strong and distinct motives which the current belief supplies. Even as it is, those who relinquish the faith in which they have been brought up..... may not uncommonly fail to act up to their convictions.....We must, therefore, recognize the resistance to a change of theological opinion, as in great measure salutary. Forms of religion, like forms of government, must be fit for those who live under them.....

Bagehot argues (*Physics and Politics*), that religion played a useful part in primitive society by helping to form a "cake of custom":—

The primary condition is the identity—not the union, but the sameness—of what we now call Church and State.....No division of power is then endurable without danger—probably without destruction; the priest must not teach one thing, and the king another; king must be priest, and prophet king; the two must say the same, because they are the same. The idea of difference between spiritual penalties and legal penalties must never be awakened.....The object of such organizations is to create what may be called a *cake* of custom. All the actions of life are to be submitted to a single rule for a single object; that gradually created the "hereditary drull" which science teaches to be essential, and which the early instinct of man saw to be essential, too. That the regime forbids freethought is not an evil; or rather, though an evil, it is the necessary basis for the greatest good; it is necessary for making the mould of civilization, and hardening the soft fibre of early man.....The customary discipline.....could only be imposed on any early men by terrible sanctions.....

For Karl Marx, "The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life"; and:—

In the social production which men carry on, they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political super-structures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness (*The Critique of Political Economy*).

Thus, religion is merely an effect of the economic form of society.

Ferri, the well-known Italian criminologist, in his studies of criminal psychology, has shown what little foundation there is for the pretended influence of religion on personal morality; and writing as a Socialist, *Socialism and Positive Science*; coolly brushes religion aside as of no interest to him, or to anyone holding similar views to his own.

Another Italian sociologist, Professor Loria, holds that religion is merely one of the agencies that a ruling class employs to keep a subject people in subordination:—

The reigning morality is always the product of existing economic conditions.....Religion.....does not of itself imply morality. Morality is a relation between man and man; religion is a relation between man and God; and these two relations may very well be disconnected and exist independently of each other.....But though religion is thus not necessarily accompanied with moral sanctions, it may, nevertheless, be made to serve as an excellent instrument of moral coercion. It is sufficient for this purpose that the performance of acts which are opposed to one's interests be represented as necessary in order to render the Divinity propitious, and avoid his anger and chastisement. The means of acquiring Divine favour have, in other words, simply to be extended as to include not merely man's acts of reverence to the Deity, but also a series of actions determined by the relationship of man to man. In this way, God becomes, as it were, the capitalist of heaven, crediting men with the good actions performed during their life-time, and paying them a proportional salary

either in this life or in the life to come. Thus, the fear of Divine punishment succeeds in doing violence to the egoism of the individual, deterring him from acting in conformity with his own interests, and impelling him to acts which are opposed to his own, but in conformity with the real egoism of his oppressors. (*Economic Foundations of Society*.)

For Dr. Marett: "A religion is the effort to face crisis, so far as that effort is organized by society in some particular way." (*Anthropology*.) And again:—

But savage life has few safeguards. Crisis is a frequent, if intermittent, element in it. Hunger, sickness and war are examples of crisis. Birth and death are crises. Marriage is usually regarded by humanity as a crisis. So is initiation—the turning-point in one's career, when one steps out into the world of men. Now what, in terms of mind, does crisis mean? It means that one is at one's wits' end; that the ordinary and expected has been replaced by the extraordinary and unexpected; that we are projected into the world of the unknown. And in that world of the unknown we must miserably abide until, somehow, confidence is restored. Psychologically regarded, then, the function of religion is to restore men's confidence when it is shaken by crisis. Men do not seek crises; they would always run away from it, if they could. Crisis seeks them; and, whereas the feeble folk are ready to succumb, the bolder spirits face it. Religion is the facing of the unknown. It is the courage in it that brings comfort.

Mr. A. M. Lewis, in his *Introduction to Sociology*, maintains that:—

The great and successful religious systems of Menu, Zoroaster, Confucius, Jesus, and Mohammed, make their appeal not to the intellect, but to the feelings. The consequence was that, while they were great successes in extending their influence over the actions of men, they were utter failures so far as the amelioration of the conditions of society is concerned. It is generally said that social energy with no progressive result is due to these great religious systems having stimulated only the non-progressive factors, the feelings, and not the intellectual factor, without the operation of which social progress is impossible.

Lester F. Ward, the celebrated American sociologist, while holding in his *Pure Sociology?* that "religion must have been primarily an advantageous social structure, otherwise it could not have come into existence," declares that:—

Whatever may be the benefits which supernatural beliefs have conferred and are to confer upon man in a future state of existence, they have not only conferred none upon him in the present state, but have demonstrably impeded his upward course throughout his entire career. (*Dynamic Sociology*.)

W. H. MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

SHELLEY.

HOLY and mighty poet of the spirit
That broods and breathes along the universe!
In the least portion of whose starry verse
Is the great breath the spheral heavens inherit—
No human song is eloquent as thine;
For by a reasoning instinct all divine
Thou feel'st the soul of things; and thereof singing,
With all the madness of a skylark, springing
From earth to heaven, the intenseness of thy strain,
Like the lark's music all around us ringing,
Laps us in God's own heart, and we regain
Our primal life ethereal! Men profane
Blaspheme thee: I have heard thee dreamer styled—
I've mused upon their wakefulness—and smiled.

—Thomas Wade.

Are we to think that we are become men of probity, because, by means of giving decent names to our vices, we have learned no longer to blush at them?—Rousseau.

The Churches' Advertisement.

A few years ago an admirable scheme was propounded for using the hoarding and the advertisement columns of the Daily Press for a carefully concerted campaign of Religious Propaganda, sympathetic laymen of all denominations were to be asked to found an adequate fund and the Churches would have reaped the benefit in common. Unfortunately, through lack of vision and cohesion the protest came to nothing.....To fulfil its mission the Church is bound to secure publicity for the spiriture treasures it can offer to the world. This necessity was emphatically endorsed by Our Lord Himself, when He told His Disciples "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to Me."—Extract from an article in the *Daily Mail*, "Should the Churches advertise?"

—Rev. G. Bourchier, M.A.

"SPIRITUAL wares of the Lord Most High,
Daily, we advertise—Who will buy?"
Eternal life in a Kingdom fair,
Far from the shadow of Earth's despair—
Mercy, and Love, Redemption from Sin—
These, are the treasures the Sanctified bring
To the Market Place
From the Heavenly King.

The Stench of unclean human flesh
Offends the nostrils;
The very bricks of the dirty little hovels
Huddled together in hideous uniformity,
Leer in mute and obscene protest
Against the degradation
Of their de-humanised occupants;
Garbage litters the pathways;
Half-naked children
Sprawl in the filth of the gutter;
The Heirs of Christendom,
Clad in coarse and filthy garments,
With mind and bodies
Muddled by this world's clay,
Drunken with the poisoned dregs of life,
And blind to their Holy Heritage—
Curse, with lewd oaths,
And bloody maledictions,
Their unclean progeny;
Slatternly women lounge in the doorways,
Gazing with tired eyes that mirror nothing,
At the dismal procession,
Of Unemployed,
Marching to the Workhouse;
On the hoardings and the walls,
Coloured posters proclaim
That it is the sacred duty
Of the working men
Who fought
In the name of the Prince of Peace,
For Liberty and Truth,
And a land fit for heroes,
To buy Heavenly Bread,
And Spiritual Housing Bonds—
Guaranteed by the Churches
To be a Safe
And Profitable investment.

"Spiritual wares of the Lord Most High—
A Safe Investment—Who will buy?
Eternal Life in a Kingdom fair,
Far from the shadow of Earth's despair—
Mercy, and Love, Redemption from Sin—
These, are the treasures the Sanctified bring
To the Market Place
From the Heavenly King."

Pity the Clergy—none will buy.

PERCY ALLOTT.

I am influenced at the present time by far higher considerations and by a nobler sense of duty than I ever was when I held the Evangelical belief.—George Eliot.

Acid Drops.

One doubter to a thousand believers. That is the eternal ratio in human society, always and everywhere. It is the safeguard of all superstition, the security of all churches, the bulwark of every tyranny. The ratio is constant because belief is passive, doubt is active, and passivity is always easier than activity. If all men have the capacity for doubting it is certain that only a few ever develop it. Or, we may say that doubt is singular and belongs to the individual mind. Belief is plural and is a quality of the mind of the crowd. Therefore, it is true that man doubts as a person, but believes as a member of the herd. And to the herd doubt is something perverted, monstrous, and threatens its coherence. The nine hundred and ninety-nine believers do not understand the one doubter, and what the ignorant mind does not understand it fears and desires to suppress. That is why it is the lot of the doubter to suffer. He creates for others a freedom he seldom is permitted to enjoy; he points to others a promised land he is not allowed to enter. Crucified by the people he lives to benefit, the doubter is the eternal martyr of humanity. The cause of progress, he enjoys its sweets only in the contemplation of its ultimate realization.

The Southend-on-Sea clergy have been making a very determined attempt to stop Sunday morning bands in the season. The clerical deputation, which waited on the Council, was headed by the Rev. E. N. Gowing (Anglican) and the Rev. D. E. James (Nonconformist). Happily the clergy were balked. A direct vote of the Council, for or against Sunday morning bands, resulting in nineteen for, and thirteen against.

The *Morning Post* enjoys the singular position of being the most anti-semitic paper published in this country. We hope the following paragraph will not shorten the life of the editor. It is taken from a daily paper: "Triplets were born at the Jewish Maternity Home, Underwood Street, London, E. They included two girls and a boy."

According to a London paper, a General Post Office official said that years ago many letters were posted to Santa Claus at Yuletide. This reminds us of the old story of a letter, written by a lunatic, addressed "God, Heaven," which was returned to the asylum by the conscientious officials endorsed, "addressee not known, return to sender."

The Bishop of Durham preached a New Year's sermon in York Minster and gave his contribution to a country in sore distress. This was, that things would never be better until men were "actuated by a consciousness of the Divine presence." "This," he added, "would be a guarantee of honesty in business." There is a little method in the Dean's madness, since he asks, "How can people call upon Germany for the faithful execution of the treaty of Versailles if they themselves could descend to violate good faith by lightning strikes and breaches of contract?" It is evident that the Dean thinks that nothing is to be done by flattering the working men any longer, and hopes that if they will only act with a consciousness of God's presence things will improve—for him and his class. And in that he is right. One of the true sayings that came out of the Russian revolution was that "religion is the dope of the people." That has always been its great recommendation to the governing class.

Observe the artfulness of this servant of the Lord. If the people will be obedient, he hints they may then call upon Germany to do all that the Treaty of Versailles demanded. He appeals to their greed in one direction in order to prevent the attempt to gratify it in another that may hurt him and his masters. And he does that in connection with a treaty that has, more than anything else, been responsible for the unrest, the starvation, and the turmoil of Europe two years after the war with Germany came to an end. That is the Dean's method of

loving his neighbour, of turning one cheek when the other is smitten, and of overcoming hatred with love. The smug humbug of it all gives one the sensation of crossing the channel with a rough sea running.

"The consciousness of the Divine presence would be a guarantee of honesty in business!" Why it isn't even a guarantee of honesty in the pulpit. How many of the clergy are really honest in their preaching and in their practice? Do they say all they know about religion to the dupes who come to them for instruction? Everyone knows they do not. And how much better is the layman with his consciousness of the "Divine Presence?" And, going further afield, a very powerful factor in keeping the East of Europe in a state of turmoil is this same Divine presence. Or nearer home, we have it in Ireland where the belief in the Divine presence is the principal reason why the country is divided into two warring camps. And where, finally, we have our Christian Government, with scarce a rest from its howls of indignation at the German treatment of Belgium, adopting the same methods of terrorism, turning, by proclamation, every man into a spy on every other man, and deliberately burning down the houses of people, not because they have been guilty of outrage, but because they might have known about it. And the Bishop says the "Divine presence" will make men honest!

Our pastors and masters!.....The rector of Rusper was bound over at Horsham for assaulting a parishioner..... Bishop Sumner Burch, of New York, died whilst he was visiting a widow near Riverside Park.....Enoch Reid, a Glasgow preacher, was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for attempting to murder his wife by poison.

The late Rev. R. Peck, rector of St. Magnus, Lower Thames Street, London, left £10,712.....The Rev. A. C. Ranger, of Bournemouth, left £10,278. As these unhappy men disobeyed their Master's injunctions concerning money, we fear that they have gone to the Red-hot Poker Department.

There has been an epidemic of earthquakes. At Lavallo, Argentine, 150 persons were killed and twenty injured. Eighteen persons were killed by the collapse of a mountain on the island of Sesena, Valona. Two thousand persons were killed by earthquake in the Kansu Province of China. Providence "doeth all things well."

As a means of combating the prevailing distress and the evil of unemployment, the Prime Minister, whose salary is to be raised from the starvation level of £5,000 to the subsistence one of £8,000, says that the only cure is emigration. That is all the wild promises of our fool-leaders during the war amounts to. The land that was to be fit for heroes is become a land that the heroes had better leave as speedily as possible. And the remedy is even worse than the disease. For what it means in effect is that the young, the healthy, the adventurous, all the best elements of our national life are encouraged to leave. We are left with the sick, the dependent, the old, the timid, and with all who have not the courage to make a stand against bad conditions and a fight for better ones. A wise people would hang on to the class that emigrates as their most valuable possession. But we are not a wise people. And the proof is that while we are about to encourage emigration to get rid of part of our population, we are at the same time shrieking for people to keep up and even increase the birth rate. No wonder that a foolish people have knavish leaders. The one is the complement of the other.

Mr. Donald Storrs, Governor of Jerusalem, refused to allow trams in or near the Holy City. The poor inhabitants will be free, presumably, to travel in the same style as Jesus Christ, although donkey-riding is no longer fashionable except at Hampstead Heath on Bank Holidays.

"My clergy played a part in the war which will bear comparison with that of any other class in the country," declares the Bishop of London. His lordship ought to take a course of Pelmanism. He has clean forgotten that parsons were exempted from military service.

Fined ten shillings at Old Street Police Court for twisting the vine-leaves in his hair, a man was stated to have knocked at an advertisement-boarding and told the policeman he lived there. Plenty of sober parsons tell people that they will have mansions in the sky—after they are dead. Nobody fines them.

Some years ago a book was published on *The Fatal Opulence of Bishops*. It created a storm in a teacup, as well it might. It appears, however, that bishops are not the only clerics who have their interiors "with good capon lined." A weekly society journal states that the Rev. A. G. Seymour has been presented to the Vicarage of Tong, near Bradford, which is worth £800 and a house to live in. His predecessor held this living for fifty-four years. Another paragraph informs us that the Rev. W. Mason has been presented to the living of St. Giles, Cambridge, which is worth £350, with a residence. Still another note contains the information that the retiring Bishop of Manchester is entitled to £2,000 a year pension.

We see that a Frenchman has invented a gun that will carry two hundred miles. We suggest that a fitting reward would be to fire the gun just once, and see that the inventor is placed in front of the muzzle. There is nothing like making the punishment fit the crime.

It depends on the point of view. William Oldfield, a Sunday-school teacher, was sentenced at Sheffield to three, and his wife to six months' imprisonment for neglecting their six children. The man had been married three times and was the father of sixteen children. Asked if he did not think he would have done better to have stayed at home instead of going to chapel, he replied that he had always done his duty first. It is not the first time in history that duty to God has meant neglect of duty to man. We have every confidence that Oldfield will be very attentive to the religious services which the Government, knowing the opinions of ninety per cent. of the inmates, provide for those who are in the country's jails.

Prebendary Monck died while attending Holy Communion at Ellesmere, Shropshire.....The Rev. A. Knox fell dead in the pulpit at Carlisle Road Methodist Church, Londonderry. The clerical profession bids fair to be classed as a dangerous trade.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Paris has had read in all the churches a warning against improper dresses and dances. A celibate priest ought to be a good judge of indecency.

The Great Silence.

THREE days the lowly Christ within the Tomb
Lay silent. Both old and new
Graves gave their ghosts, who, prowling thro' the streets
Bore witness to the power of a Jew.

Three days!—and all the noble Press lay mute,
No lies; no scandal; no divorce; no verse;
And no darkness! But a calm content.
"And no one seemed one penny the worse!"

Yet stay! wondering at their unwonted ease,
Like ghosts the scribes with moan and whine
Shivered at the thought of what might be
Were there no call for the "Great Head-Line."

What if the world felt not it's loss,
But found the truth—and sales grew less!
"Subs" shuddered—and with one accord
Acclaimed the Resurrection of the Press.

J. DRISCOLL.

"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. This Fund will close on January 31.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £812 10s. 8d. E. Oliver, £2 2s.; N. Richardson, £1; E. Wall, 10s.; H. Hughes, 10s.; T. Mosley, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Jackson (Birmingham), £1; C. Williams, 10s. 6d.; C. Rudd, £2 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. Kerslake, £1; Fellingside, £1, Robert Bell, 5s.; F. Lee, £5; D. Smith, 4s.; W. Thompson, 2s. 6d.; A. Thompson, 4s.; J. Thompson, 5s., F. Collins, 10s.; H. Black, £1 1s.; J. W. Colwyn Bay, 3s.; A. J. Sheppard, 10s.; C. Marsh Beadnell, 2s. 6d.; Arthur Evans, £1; H. Cutner, 5s.; H. O. H., 2s. 6d.; R. Roberts, 5s.; Mr. Hill, 2s. 6d.; G. Dixon, 10s.; W. J. W. E., £1; V. H. Smith, 10s.; R. N. T. F. (Greenock), £1 10s.; J. F., 10s.; M. W. R., £1; A. E. Thomas, 10s.

Total, £837 2s. 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.; T. Sharpe, £1 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Clowes, £1 1s.; J. Breese, £3; A. Davis, £2 2s.; J. W. Hudson, £1; Collette Jones, £5; T. C. Kirkman, £2; G. J. Dobson, £1.

Total £128 4s.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 9, Manchester; January 16, Barnsley; January 23, Birmingham; January 30, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

A. ALDWINCKLE.—We have sent papers, and also attended to other matter. Will let you know the result.

T. BAXTER.—Of course, all that occurs in the affairs of the world is, in one sense, the fault of humanity. But we do not agree with an interpretation of the New Testament which reads into the alleged sayings of Jesus an injunction to social reform or mere moral endeavour. The aim of the New Testament is wholly religious. It was to save men's souls, not to reorganise society.

NEWBRICK RICHARDSON.—We are pleased to hear from you, and should be still more pleased to meet you again. Perhaps some time in the New Year.

C. HARPUR.—We see nothing dogmatic in saying that an event which is in direct conflict with our established knowledge never occurred. It is only equal to saying that never at any time did twice two make five. And the man who declines to say that is not exhibiting scientific caution, he is behaving more or less like a fool.

E. A. PHIPSON.—What we meant is that there is no such thing as a Jewish nation. There are only Jews belonging to different nations, and apart from their religious beliefs, they show all the different characteristics belonging to the nations of the world. The belief that there is a Jewish nation is one of the superstitions that has been foisted on the world. A community in religious belief—and even that is questionable if we do not allow ourselves to be misled by mere words—is one thing. The possession of a group of characteristics that entitles the people manifesting them to be called a nation is another and a different thing. The Jews may possess the former, they certainly have not the latter.

C. RUDD.—Thanks for cheque and good wishes for the New Year. People often put off sending for no other reason than that they know they will send before they are too late.

M. W. R.—Sorry your subscription to the Fund did not appear in last week's list. We think we have it right this time.

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.

In spite of the terrible downfall of rain on Sunday last there was a good audience at the Friars Hall to listen to Mr. Cohen's New Year address. The size of the meeting augurs well for the rest of the course, and had the evening been a fine one there is no doubt but that the hall would have been crowded out. Mr. McLaren acted as chairman, and Mr. Samuels officiated at the bookstall. Special thanks are due to both gentlemen for coming out on such an evening. To-day (January 9), the lecturer is Mr. Lloyd, who speaks on "Mr. Wells, Mr. Rattenbury, and the Portrait of Jesus." We hope our friends will continue their good services in advertising the meetings among their acquaintances. The lecture starts at 7, not at 7.30 as announced in this column last week.

A social evening has been arranged by the National Secular Society's Executive to take place at South Place Institute on Tuesday, January 18. There will be dancing, music—instrumental and vocal—with, perhaps, a little speaking. We regret that it was not possible to give a longer notice, but we daresay the notice will be in time to prevent most of our friends booking the date elsewhere. The function will be open to members of the N. S. S. and their friends, and the price of the tickets will be 2s., which will include refreshments. Early application should be made for tickets as only a limited number are available. Address, Miss E. M. Vance, General Secretary, N. S. S., 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

To-day (January 9), Mr. Cohen lectures at 3 and 6.30 in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester. His subjects are *Freethought in the New Year*, and *The Physiology of Faith*. These are the opening lectures of a new session, and we hope that the meetings will be such as to give the course a good send-off.

Mr. F. Lonsdale, late Secretary of the Glasgow Branch, will lecture to-day (January 9), at the Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street, Glasgow, on "Robert Owen, the Man and his Work." Mr. Lonsdale has for years been a collector of material bearing on the life of Owen, and the lecture should prove interesting to all who attend, and we hope it will be a big "all."

Mr. F. J. Gould visits Birmingham to-day (January 9), on behalf of the local Branch, and will lecture at the

Bath's Assembly Room, Monument Road, on "Is Progress a Reality?" We hope to hear that a considerable portion of Birmingham inhabitants were progressing toward Monument Road about 7 o'clock. A good reward is certain to await them at the end.

On Sunday next (January 16) Mr. Cohen pays a visit to Barnsley. He will lecture in the Miner's Hall at 3 and 7, and we understand there is every prospect of large meetings. It is some years since there were any special lectures in the town, but some excellent spade work has been done by the local Branch, and this should bear its fruits at the meetings on the 16th. Barnsley may easily be reached from Leeds and other places, and there will doubtless be many visitors from various parts of the district. For their benefit arrangements are being made for the provision of refreshments during the day. Full particulars will be given in our next issue. Meanwhile, those who require provision being made for tea would do well to drop a card to Mr. H. Irving, 48 Sheffield Road, Barnsley, stating their requirements. This will give the Committee some idea as to the number to be catered for.

For many years there have been requests from some of our readers for a title page and index to the yearly volumes of the *Freethinker*. It has never been done hitherto, but we are making a start with the volume that has just closed. The index is a very elaborate one, and will extend to between sixteen and twenty columns. We think it will be found useful to those who file their copies of the paper. We shall only print a small number, as we have no means of testing how many will be required, so that those who wish for copies will do well to order the moment the price is announced. That will be fixed so as to cover cost of publication only.

We have also on hand a small number of bound volumes of the *Freethinker* for 1920. These are neatly bound in cloth, gilt-lettered, with title page and index. The price of the volume will be 18s., and that looking at the present cost of binding is really a bargain. Again, those who wish for volumes should order at once.

We cite the following from a reader, Mr. E. Wall, because it bears out what we have so often said as to the number of potential subscribers to the *Freethinker* waiting to be roped in:—

Enclosed please find a treasury note to the Sustentation Fund. It comes late, but not too late; it is little, and that's the rub, considering how much the paper means to me, a reader since accidentally finding a folded clean copy in the gorse on the Downs near Beachy Head over 15 years ago.

We dare swear that the copy was left there by someone for the purpose that it should fall into the hands of a stranger. And that stray copy has secured a fifteen years' subscription. We said last week that new subscribers are as good as a legacy. Mr. Wall's letter proves it.

Mr. Clifford Williams, in sending cheque to the Fund says he regards the response to the appeal as being "both a personal tribute 'to ourselves,' as well as a mark of interest in the Cause." Some of the other subscribers have written apologising for being so tardy in sending. We do not know that any apology is necessary; we always felt they would come in before the Fund closed. But now that the Fund is so near the end we think it as well that a closing date should be named, and we have, therefore, decided that the end of the present month would be a suitable time. That will give everyone ample time to send who wishes to do so, and it also means that those whose names appear in the closing list must write so that their letters reach us not later than the first post of January 25. And for ourselves, we shall be heartily glad to have done with what is never a pleasant task, however much it may be robbed of its unpleasantness by the ready response of our friends.

In citing from these columns a few lines from our criticism of Mr. Godfrey's *Memories and Other Sonnets*,

Mr. Grant Richards, in the course of one of his advertisements in the *Times Literary Supplement*, says: "The *Freethinker* is, I fancy, a paper which has always done its best to distinguish good books from bad, so I welcome what it has to say," etc. It will be also interesting to many of our readers to know that a very eminent firm of publishers wrote us the other day that from no other paper did they so much appreciate a review of their publications. They did us the honour, and we think the justice, of saying that they knew it was always a considered and an impartial opinion. We are conceited enough to think that the paper deserved the compliment paid it. We are little inclined to log-rolling, and obviously have no temptation to sell our judgment for the sake of advertisements.

The North London Branch re-opens its meetings at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., to-day (January 9), with a lecture from Mr. A. D. McLaren on "Eight years in Germany during Peace and War." The meeting commences at 7.30, and admission is free. Mr. McLaren will be speaking from his own personal experience, and that is something in these days. He is also an old contributor to the *Freethinker* and other Free-thought journals in the Colonies and elsewhere.

Man and His Superstitions.

MR. CARVETH READ will already be favourably known to readers of the *Freethinker* by his two able and interesting works, *The Metaphysics of Nature*, and *Natural and Social Morals*. To these he has now added a work of striking interest and ability, *The Origin of Man and of his Superstitions* (Cambridge Press, 18s. net). In this work Professor Read sets himself to the discussion of two questions—an elaboration of the theory that the hunting pack is the earliest form of human society, and, second, a discussion of the mental conditions under which the change from the hunting pack to the settled life of the tribe took place. The discussion of the last named question supplies us with an answer to a further question, which one may be permitted to fancy was the starting point of the enquiry, namely, "Why is the human mind everywhere befogged with ideas of magic and animism?"

The influence of the erect statue of man, and its importance in his further evolution, has quite recently been elaborately worked out by Professor Wood Jones in his *Arboreal Man*, and it has also been handled in special aspects by several other writers in monographs that have not yet been issued as general publications. Professor Read takes that for granted, and assumes that all the principal differences between man and his nearest animal relatives may be derived from one variation, the adoption of a flesh diet with the necessary development of the hunting habit in order to get food. It is true that the existing anthropoids are principally fruit eaters, but they do sometimes eat birds or bird's eggs, insects and the like. In any case, the departure is not so drastic as to forbid the assumption of a spontaneous variation having taken place, and that, once having occurred, it would, as Professor Read shows, carry so many advantages with it that it would represent a very potent factor in the struggle for existence. And once having established itself, the influences of this new factor would be very considerable. There would be, not alone, the consequences as shown in the structural character of this semi-human animal, but there would be also great mental modifications. Co-operation would be more fully developed, and a fresh value placed upon the inventive qualities. We agree with Professor Read that the change from the frugivorous, tree living animal, to a career that was spent on the ground in pursuit of prey, marks one of

the great turning points in the history of life. And, indeed, the essence of all this was pointed out, just on fifty years ago, in those wonderful third and fourth chapters of Darwin's *Descent of Man*.

One consequence of this change to the hunting pack was the establishment of what Professor Read calls the "wolf type" of man. We are inclined to differ somewhat from the following, mainly because it seems to make small allowance for the enormous educational influence that may be brought to bear on the adaptable nature of man. But it certainly embodies a truth, and one that is illustrated by the war with its recrudescence of savagery. There was, says Professor Read, abundant time, prior to Neolithic culture, for the complete adaptation of man to the hunting life, but since then not enough to allow for, the adaptation of man to the civilized state. He says:—

Natural Selection has probably had some civilizing influence; but any approach to complete adaptation has been impossible, not only for want of time, but also because of rapid changes in the structure of civilization, the social protection of some eccentricities, the persistence of the hunting life as a second resource or as a pastime, and by the frequent recurrence of warfare—that is to say, man-hunting.

The persistence of the relatively uncivilized nature of man as shown in hunting and war, with its bending of the many to the few, is nothing more than the price we pay for the first steps made by humanity in its move upward. That we should retain active manifestations of qualities long after they have passed their period of usefulness is a fact that is on all fours with what occurs elsewhere. It is an illustration of rudimentary feelings surviving as well as rudimentary structures. But although we still have war and the warrior as survivals of the lower types of social life—the persistence of the "wolf-man"—we do not think that the future is quite so gloomy as that depicted in the closing sentences of Professor Read's work.

We have but little space to deal with the second and larger part of Professor Read's work, that dealing with the superstitions of man, although it is quite as interesting as the first portion. The problem here is, in a sentence, this: there is a change that takes place from the type of the hunting pack, with its aggressive virtues and subordination to the leader of the pack, to the more settled social type, with its manifestations of individual independence, and development of wider and gentler qualities. But the cohesion of the tribe must still be maintained, in spite of the breaking down of some of the conditions that have up to now maintained it. In what way is this necessary step accomplished? Professor Read here follows Sir James Frazer in thinking that the superstitions of early man played an important part in safeguarding those institutions, and in securing the persistence of those forms of conduct upon which the security and progress of society depends. His discussion, although travelling over well trodden ground, is quite fresh and suggestive, but it leaves us unconvinced that there is here much more than a merely accidental association between superstitious beliefs and useful social practices. In early social states the whole of man's thinking is more or less dominated by superstitions. And as superstitious reasons are given for all he does, whether what he does is good or bad, it follows that the associations of the two are quite irrespective of their social utility. It is the survival of socially useful institutions, to which superstitions are attached, that procures the continuation of religious beliefs. It should be added that neither Sir James Frazer nor Professor Read draw from this theory of the uses of superstition the conclusion that it is of the slightest value to-day, or is worthy of respect to-day. It is merely a plea on behalf of a convicted prisoner, that in his past record some good may be detected.

We regret that space does not allow us to follow Professor Read through his interesting discussion of the nature of religion and magic and the relation of magic to science. He follows a sound line in tracing the many of the current notions of "force," and "matter," etc., as derivatives, from the primitive ghost theory, and we cordially agree with what he says, and hints, as to their injurious effect on the thought of many who pride themselves on being scientific thinkers and on being freed from superstition. The truth is that the really scientific thinker is still one of the rarest of persons. The mere repetition of facts which form the raw material of science is not science, it is not even the most valuable kind of knowledge. It can be acquired by anyone with the industriousness of a beaver and the intellect of a penny-a-liner. It is the perception of fundamental principles and their ready application to the facts of experience that is the most important part of science, and that quality seems to be more of natural endowment than aught else.

The only point on which we find ourselves seriously at issue with Professor Read is where he rejects the theory that primitive mankind was ignorant of the nature of paternity. It seems to us pretty clear that the real nature of birth and death stand in the history of the race as in the nature of discoveries, and prior to the discovery of their real nature there seems ample room for superstitions to have clustered round what must always have been very striking phenomena. We must conclude with thanks to Professor Read for having given us a suggestive and important work on one of the most important of subjects.

PHILIP SIDNEY.

Maurice Moscovitch.

MR. MAURICE MOSCOWITCH has arrived at last. Like Edmund Kean, he has known his strolling days, but he has now left the booth and the barn far behind him. He has achieved a reputation in three countries. His career at the Pavilion Theatre, Whitechapel, attracted many who were agreeably staggered by the discovery of a separate histrionic tradition existing in the vicinity of Petticoat Lane and the People's Palace. Here was a theatre with an unsophisticated audience, and an actor who could hold them by sheer power of personality and emotive force; an actor who was never embarrassed by the obvious disadvantages of his stage surroundings, or by the frequent interruptions from the region of the "Gods," where orange-sucking and nut-cracking processes only ceased in response to those breathless moments that constituted the kernel of the evening's entertainment and the guarantee of money's worth. East-end audiences have the true flair for theatrical enjoyment. They know that a good play has usually a good climax, and they are quick witted enough to be able to swallow the initial proceedings without an undue suspension of their own dramatic interests.

In order to understand Moscovitch it is necessary to have gripped the characteristics of that very vital audience at the Whitechapel Theatre. Not many West-end actors would care to brave that raw test of histrionic power as distinguished from the polite mummery that has become so much the fashion in the London Theatres. And to those among West-end playgoers who found their way to the native home of Moscovitch, the atmosphere in which he compelled the admiration of a mixed audience suggested an interesting anachronism. It was the atmosphere evoked by memories of Hazlitt and Charles Lamb, and the days when English audiences behaved with like unruliness, appreciative or otherwise; and the great actors of the day at once feared and strove to hold them. One of the greatest evils of the English stage to-day is that criticism of

this sort is practically dead; not only is the written criticism of those who still pose as dramatic critics, almost negligible, but the spoken and otherwise forcibly expressed opinion of the audience is a thing of the past. Good manners are often the death of good taste. West-end audiences are far too polite to say what they really think about the actors who command an unthinking respect. Nobody has ever thrown a rotten egg at Mr. Gerald du Maurier, and there is not the least possibility that such an inspiring incident will occur—even in a metaphorical sense. The reputations of such actors are unassailable, and their worst performances are accepted as a sort of social convention.

One likes to think that Mr. Moscowitch at least risked such a contingency as mentioned above, and that he would have ducked his head without the least loss of personal dignity. It is possible that he might have accepted the implied criticism, for a certain humility goes with the greatest genius. Actors are generally supposed to be vain creatures, but such a quality is more often than not induced in them by the soft appreciation of sentimental audiences and post card propaganda. The late Sir Herbert Tree was not a great actor, but he was a great man of the Theatre, and his personal vanity only expressed itself in his pride in the profession for which he did so much. As an actor, his behaviour always suggested his own astonishment at the mere fact of his being allowed to act. He never forgot that he was a distinguished amateur. We do not think that Mr. Moscowitch will ever forget that he is a born actor of the very highest stamp, whose training has strengthened in him all the most valuable histrionic gifts, and guarded him against the evils which have transformed so many of our promising actors into elocutionary puppets, with all the tricks of the trade at the ends of their neatly manicured finger-tips. We hope that if we had seen Mr. Moscowitch acting at a penny booth or at a street corner we should have found the courage to acclaim him as a great actor. We hope that he will be able to over-rule the strict observances of the modern realistic stage; that he will not find himself hampered by the exigencies of the drawing-room set; that he will continue to declare his passion crawling upon all fours, irrespective of the accommodation provided for less arduous methods of amorous approach. For the acting of Mr. Moscowitch at his best is something that cannot gain by elaborate surroundings. His essential requirements are an empty stage—and any audience. Add just the bare local necessities—a few chairs, some important central property, such as the inevitable stairs at the Whitechapel Theatre, and Mr. Moscowitch is rich beyond the seventh heaven of his and our delight. Go further, take the step that has robbed the English stage of much of its genuine tradition, burden the stage upon which Mr. Moscowitch acts with luxurious appurtenances, and we are afraid, not that the art of this great actor will be spoiled, but that his new audiences will be confused by the contrast between the native simplicity of the actor and the sophisticated quality of his surroundings. It is easier for an actor of Mr. Moscowitch's calibre to create an atmosphere out of nothing than to struggle against furniture by Oetzman and cigarettes by Abdulla.

But Mr. Moscowitch is not simply an anachronism. He stands alone to-day as a man of quite peculiar achievement, and an actor who fulfils all the demands placed upon him without dependence upon a single physical advantage or outstanding mannerism. It would be difficult to distinguish among his gifts. The histrionic faculty is distributed throughout the whole of a not too well formed or too nicely adjusted frame. He has not the wonderful hands of an Irving. He has not, indeed, wonderful hands at all, except when the moment arrives to use them. He then commands them to some delicate service, and it would not matter if he

lacked a finger or had one too many, the effect would be the same. Similarly, the possession of ungainly feet is a circumstance that would probably restrain many aspirants from setting them upon the stage; but who that has seen Mr. Moscowitch as Shylock, can forget his marvellous exit in the trial scene, his feet suddenly transformed into the instruments of a frail and tottering egression; his step as light as a ballet dancer, his whole body poised in breathless and broken uncertainty, upon the ends of his toes?

Nor is the general impression of Mr. Moscowitch in this character easily to be forgotten, his fidelity to the emotions expressed in the text, as apart from any attempt to offer a theoretical interpretation, his independence of all stage device in order to illustrate what could not be shown by means of voice, gesture and make-up. It has become the fashion to criticize actors rather upon the score of a particular reading of a part than for the actual manner of representation, and to dismiss as uninteresting, the interpretation which does not reveal some new conception in opposition to those preceding. It may be remarked that this is a serious error of dramatic criticism, and that Mr. Moscowitch has drawn attention to the fact by the unforced originality of his acting. His rendering of Shylock cannot be said to have added anything further to the rather futile controversy that has ranged around the enacting of this part. He simply revealed, by the magical gifts of facial expression, the transformations from joy to disgust, the hopes and fears, of the Jew as portrayed by Shakespeare. It would be impossible to select one passage or another of Mr. Moscowitch's delivery in order to indicate the key to his conception of the part. He grasped the emotion as it arose, and gave it its due emphasis. His dancing for joy over the downfall of Antonio did not, for instance, exhibit a quality peculiar to Shylock. It is what any man would have done in the same circumstances. The same may be remarked about his exit from the trial scene, which was as memorable as it was faithful. It did not definitely express the intellectual superiority of Shylock; it left much to the imagination of the audience; and it was the logical action of a man suffering from deep humiliation, struggling to maintain racial pride, and inevitably breaking down at the unbearable crisis.

Mr. Moscowitch acts with every nerve and tissue in his body. It is not generally realized to what a great extent acting is dependent upon an extraordinary physiological aptitude. There is something of the acrobat about the greatest tragic actor, a flexibility of muscle without which the biggest brain can do no more than suggest an effect. The actor's bodily organism is to the actor what paint is to the painter, or the written word to the writer. His material is not merely the spoken word; it is his own flesh and blood that he must ultimately rely upon in order to make that of the audience creep and curdle. Such a gift, accompanied as it is in the case of Mr. Moscowitch with intellectual flexibility, ought to make him one of the greatest tragic actors of the day.

Too much of the acting upon the modern stage is mere representation without force. It produces effect without the conviction of deep force. It works by the processes of elimination and restraint. The imagination of the modern actor expends itself in preparation and forethought. He may act at rehearsals (as the late Sir Herbert Tree used to, only inaudibly), but on the succeeding nights he, too often, merely rehearses. Acting is not a question of repeating carefully arranged movements night after night in exactly the same way. Every performance should be a fresh creation, a new poem written about the same theme, a new scene painted over the old canvas. Mr. Moscowitch does impress one with creative energy not to be confined within proscribed channels. It is, perhaps, too much to hope that our established actors will learn

from him what they do not want to know. It is hardly likely that Mr. Owen Nares will adopt the hands and knees style of love declaration, or that Mr. Arthur Bouchier will brave the terrors of the strait-jacket scene in *The Father*. But London audiences may slowly realize that Mr. Moscovitch is offering them something that they have not met with elsewhere. We hope such will be the case, and that this powerful actor will show by his versatility that he is not to be identified with any particular type of character, but with the gallery of impersonations associated with the names of Garrick, Kean and Henry Irving.

WILFRED CLAY.

Correspondence.

THE PRESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have been reading Upton Sinclair's *Brass Check* and your remarks *re* Lord Rothmere's campaign for economy. Making a demand to scrap education gives me a forcible reminder of the perilous position we are in in this country. Practically, we are ruled in this country by the Press, which in the main means a few men. It may be said the King reigns, but Lord Northcliffe and a few others govern. I don't want to introduce contentious politics into the *Freethinker*, so without attempting to specify what I consider his offence to be, I say the power of the Press must be broken in order that the dictation of a few men may be broken. They have alternately tried to get us into war with everyone of the Great Powers and unduly prolonged the late war. To-day, they are urging a course of naval expenditure on bankrupt Britain that would just as effectually ruin her as a war, whether successful or unsuccessful. As a matter of fact there is, perhaps, no such thing as a successful war. My idea is that there should be a Government, or rather I should say, a national newspaper on which should be elected persons representing all parties with a right to insert letters from all shades of opinion, or with the right of each party in the House of Commons numbering twelve persons to some of its space. The old *Echo*, done to death by unfair treatment, was a splendid paper. Major Warren and I are two of its surviving correspondents. It was killed by the distribution authorities very largely. This is a most important matter and should receive immediate and constant attention till a remedy be found.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

CHRISTIANITY AND LIFE.

SIR,—A supporter of your paper kindly forwards it to me each week. In your editorial you write as follows:—

What would the world be like without Christianity? is a question often asked of the *Freethinker*. May we not retort, what is the world like with it?

I presume you wish your readers to understand by this, that because the world is admittedly in a bad condition after 1900 years of Christian teaching, that, therefore, Christianity is a failure and ought to be scrapped and replaced by the teaching given in the *Freethinker*. I cannot accept such a conclusion. Let us put aside for the moment the questions concerning the Birth of Christ, His Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, and confine ourselves to his Ethical Teaching, which, as you know, is based upon "Love one another"; imagine this law in operation the world over, only say for the last ten years; there would have been no world war; kindly consideration of each other would be the order of the day—the soldier and the policeman would disappear—in a word, we should have Paradise. How can you blame Christianity if men deliberately refuse to obey its teaching? I would respectfully submit that you do not appear to me to be dealing fairly with this problem. Nominally, we are a Christian nation, but what proportion of men attend Church or Chapel? or even make any pretence to follow the Christian teaching, how then can you expect the teaching to be obeyed? I am as disappointed with the condition of the world as you are, but I plead for fair play. Please do not reply that God ought to intervene and prevent wars and

my finger from being burnt if I put it into the fire, because that is opening up a new line of thought about which pages could be written, and on this question, also, I am totally opposed to your views. Supposing Christianity were to disappear completely from the earth, which you are trying to bring about, and let us suppose that we became nominally Freethinkers as we are now nominally Christians, and after you and your followers had been preaching your Gospel for 2000 years and the world still remained as morally bad as it is to-day, what would you say if some editor were to write, Mr. Cohen's ideas are a complete failure. I think you would retort, and rightly so, that your ideas or teaching were all right, but the world refused to act up to them. I fear you have not much room for correspondence, but if you can find room for this letter I should be pleased, so that your readers may see both sides of the question.

EDWIN WORSNOP.

VOTES AND VIOLENCE.

SIR,—May I say, with reference to "Neither Votes nor Violence" in your issue of to-day, by G. O. W., that most people will agree with your contributor where he contends that "Men are becoming more enlightened through thought and reading, speaking and writing." But the trouble is, that very few people either think, read, speak or write with any degree of intelligence—and the few who do are not listened to by the great multitude. When G. O. W. can show us how this trouble can be remedied, he will render the world a great service and lay the foundations on which his theories may be successfully built.

AN IRISHMAN.

OATHS.

BRUTUS :

Give me your hands all over, one by one.

CASSIUS :

And let us swear our resolution.

BRUTUS :

No, not an oath—if not the face of men,
The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse;
If these be motives weak, break off betimes,
And every man hence to his idle bed :
So let high-sighted tyranny range on,
Till each man drop by lottery;—but if these,
As I am sure they do, bear fire enough
To kindle cowards, and to steel with valour
The melting spirits of women, they, countrymen,
What need we any spur, but our own cause,
To prick us to redress? What other bond
Than secret Romans that have spoke the word,
And will not palter? and what other oath,
Than honesty to honesty engaged,
That this shall be, or we will fall by it!
Swear priests and cowards, and such suffering souls,
That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear
Such creatures as men doubt; but do not stain
The even virtue of our enterprise,
Nor the insuppressive metal of our spirits,
To think, that, or our cause, or our performance,
Did need an oath.

—Wm. Shakespeare (of Stratford).

Obituary.

It is with deep regret we have to record the death on the 25th of December of Valerie Inkley Turner, the infant daughter of our friends and colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Turner, of 18 Darlington Road, Withington. The baby was their only child and was much cherished, and within two days of death supervening was in the best of health and spirits. The sad event is all the more lamentable because of the short and unexpected illness which ended fatally. The body was cremated at the Manchester Crematorium on December 28 in the presence of numerous friends, when a well chosen Secular Service was conducted in an able manner by Mr. Monks, the Branch President. We extend our sincere sympathy to the bereaved parents.—A. C. R.

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. J. T. Lloyd, "Mr. Wells, the Rev. M. Rattenbury, and the Portrait of Jesus." (Silver Collection.)

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH, N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. J. D. McLaren, "Eight Years in Germany during Peace and War."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9): 7, Mr. T. F. Palmer, "Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Dr. Marion Phillips, "What is the Woman's Point of View?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (Mersyside Branch): Wednesday, January 12, J. Mannus, Esq., "The Evolution of Society."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Baths Assembly Room, Monument Road): 7, Mr. F. J. Gould, "Is Conscience Divine or Human?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 12 noon, Frank Lonsdale, Esq., "Robert Owen: The Man and his Work."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 6.30, Mr. Schlater, "Modern Economics—The Douglas 'New Age' Scheme."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Small Hall, Downing Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Physiology of Faith; 6.30, "The Old Freethought in the New Year."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room 8, Plymouth Chambers, Old Town Street): Thursday, January 13, at 8. A meeting of members and friends to consider the future of the Branch.

GREETING and grateful thanks to the many who favoured us with Orders in 1920, wishing them and all true Freethinkers—in one word—HAPPINESS, all worth having in 1921.—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell.

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