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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

Dean Inge and Jesus Christ.

To his brother parsons Dean Inge must be something in the nature of a problem. They can afford to get on without him, and they can do very little with him. In these days when the quality of the average parson arouses the sympathy of the pious and the laughter of the ungodly, a man of ability in the pulpit is something to grab at. But having got him the problem is what to do with him. For a man of ability simply cannot swallow the customary stupidities in the way that a mediocrity such as, say, the Bishop of London can. Out of sheer self-respect he is driven now and again to kick over the traces, then he is apt to say something about Christianity that has some semblance to common-sense, and for a parson to do that nowadays is enough to claim public attention. To the newspapers it is as good copy as an authentic picture of the sea-serpent in the dull season.

Speaking before the Wesleyan Conference on July 18, the Dean said that it was not part of the teaching of the New Testament to give us a gospel of social reform. "The idea of a Christianized world advancing towards a social order in which the kingdom of God might be established on earth is quite foreign to the Catholic Church until recent times." That is perfectly true, but it will come with a nasty jar to those who are busy preaching that all sorts of social movements, from bathing in the Serpentine to a "Safety First" crusade, is following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. And what will become of some of our labour politicians if they are deprived of the privilege of appealing to chapel audiences with pictures of Jesus Christ as a forerunner of the I.L.P.? Political speakers, who so largely live on phrases, will be robbed of the strongest phrase of all if they can no longer veil the impressive incapacity of their arguments with an appeal to "Our Lord."

Christianity and Reform.

Lest English readers mistake the meaning of the word "Catholic," as used by Dean Inge, it should be pointed out that he does not mean by it Roman Catholic, but uses it in its strict sense of "universal." And this makes his statement absolutely correct. The last thing that the New Testament, or Jesus, or the early generations of Christians dreamed of was the establishment of a new social order. They were dealing with a world which all expected would shortly come to an end, and the gospel of Christianity was essentially one of providing a way out by means of correct belief in a god-incarnated saviour. But the world did not come to an end, Jesus did not return in all his glory, and so either the whole thing had to be given up as a delusion, or another interpretation had to be found. There was another important circumstance that deserves consideration. The gross absurdity of a belief when confined to a few does not militate against its acceptance. But place it in a position of power and responsibility, spread it over a sufficiently large number of people, and compromise and re-interpretation is inevitable. So it was that, as Christianity became a controlling force in life social forces compelled it to become more human, and less grossly absurd. This process of humanization went on most rapidly during the nineteenth century, until today with a great many the supernatural aspect, its only genuine and vital one, is dropped altogether.

But it would not be quite true to say that the New Testament is without teachings that bear upon social questions. It touches them at many points. It definitely asserts the subordination of woman to man. It teaches that slaves must be obedient to their masters whether the masters be good or bad, and that submission to bad ones is more praiseworthy than is submission to good ones. It orders believers to obey the powers that be, under threat of eternal damnation. It teaches dependence upon a heavenly power who will care for man as he cares for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. It teaches that all disease is the outcome of demoniacal action, and may be cured by faith. Certainly, Christianity has a deal to say that touches on social affairs, but what it does say is not quite to the liking of sentimental Christian Socialists and the like.

And, on the negative side. Consider what the New Testament does *not* provide for one who goes to it thinking he can find something to help him in his sociological and general studies. He will find nothing about science, nothing about art, nothing about the family, nothing about education, nothing about the State, nothing about any one of the definitely important things of life. Any two or three selected Platonic dialogues will tell him more about these subjects than will the whole of the New Testament. Nothing better illustrates the paralysing character of the Christian teaching than that men should still talk

of going to the New Testament to find guidance in the midst of the troubles and struggles of our everyday world.

* * *

The Old and the New Jesus.

If the New Testament does not give us a message of social reform what does it give? Well, according to the Dean it gives "a message of moral and spiritual regeneration." But what does that mean? Does Dean Inge really believe that the position of Jesus Christ in the World is due to his having uttered a number of moral commonplaces that were perfectly familiar to everyone who is supposed to have listened to him. It has been pointed out over and over again that all that is put into the mouth of the New Testament Jesus in the shape of moral teaching was being expressed in the shape of everyday moral maxims long before the date given for his existence. Considered as moral teaching these are neither original enough, nor profound enough to disturb anyone or anything. They do not penetrate to the nature of morality, nor to the conditions that make a healthy morality possible. If Dean Inge is under the impression that notable moral teaching, one that will lead to regeneration, results from the mouthing of such sayings as "love one another," or spiritual regeneration from being told to trust in God, then it is high time he paid more serious attention to his subject. He is quite right when he says that Jesus the teacher of social reform is a late creation, born of the need to capture an ignorant vote-wielding electorate, but Jesus the teacher of morals is hardly of greater antiquity. I challenge Dean Inge to prove that this conception of Jesus ever played a part worth troubling about in the minds of Christians before the secularizing of life forced it upon them. Naturally they thought of such things as love to one another, but these were the ordinary terms on which men associated together for any purpose whatever. And there should hardly be need to remind Dean Inge that one cardinal tenet of the Christian Churches through the ages has been the uselessness of "mere morality" to save man, and another that man could be saved, not because he had been morally regenerated, but because he believed in Jesus.

* * *

Ethics and Sociology.

What I am curious to discover is how Dean Inge imagines he is going to get moral regeneration without social reform? He is surely not in the stage when one believes that mere moral preaching will effect social reform? The Christian Church has always talked brotherhood and love, and kindness, and charity, and when it preached them most ardently the world went steadily from bad to worse. If Christianity was established to secure faith in Jesus Christ, so that man might be saved in a future state, then so far as mere belief is concerned, it may claim a certain measure of success. But if it was established to secure moral and mental regeneration then no system the world has known was ever a more ghastly, and a more complete failure.

Greek philosophy saw what apparently, Dean Inge does not yet see, namely, that ethics proper is a branch of sociology, and that the good man as a general social feature can only exist in a good society. Christianity took the opposite view because its ideal good man was not a member of society—save accidentally so—at all. He was one who gained the character of a good man because he kept himself unspotted from the world, bent upon one thing and one thing only, the salvation of his own soul. Look at the problem of the slums. What amount of preaching or teach-

ing is likely to convert the children of the slums into a high type of citizen, or to bring about a moral and spiritual regeneration in the absence of sociological treatment? The one fundamental fact that emerges from the evolutionary study of life is that animal nature and human nature reacts in terms of the environment to which it is related. A slum environment brings one type of reaction, a Park Lane environment brings another. Recent visitors to Russia have noted that with the new generation that has grown up since the revolution there is a decided weakening in the money standard of value, in many instances the weakening has almost reached the stage of disappearance. Whether that is for good or ill remains to be seen, but the change is at least significant. In this and in hundreds of other instances that might be cited, the same fact emerges, namely, that general and genuine moral reform is part and parcel of the larger social reform. What one may call a moral variation may occur at any time, but any general moral transformation is impossible in the absence of the larger social change.

Some time ago I recall that Dean Inge, in one of his *Evening Standard* articles reminded Christians that kindness to animals, as a definite teaching originated with unbelievers, and that Christians only took up with it when social sentiment had been changed. In another article he made the same point with regard to the political equality of the sexes. He now does it with reference to the social reforming and Socialistic Jesus. He is right each time, but one wonders how long he will be before there comes the recognition that his own moral reforming Jesus is just as much a product of the times, times that have made the original Jesus quite impossible. There is only one Jesus that lies at the foundation of historical Christianity, that is the miracle-working incarnate God whose sole mission was to save men's souls from the fires of hell. Take the lives of the Christian saints, and of the great leaders of Christianity, and you will find this to be the case. Whatever else was said or taught was subsidiary to this Jesus, and these saints would have agreed that without this the justification for Christianity disappears. The god-incarnate saviour is the only thing that can make Christianity honestly acceptable. And it is a conception too outrageous for civilized common-sense to accept.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Abnormal P

A SONNET.

No more shall tramp this godly earth of ours
The brontosaurus in his rage and pride:
Or thus I dream, amid refulgent bowers:
That horn and sabre-tooth are laid aside;
But if—who knows?—we underrate the powers,
(Tasting life's honey-mud all undenied!)
Of retrogression in such somnolent hours
Mankind may yet be humbled, far and wide!

In that lull hush which presages the storm
I, meanwhile, seem to fall on swift decay,
And may not hope to leave strong sons behind us:
Ay! though I strive and strive till Judgment Day,
Still comes one poignant thought to hold and bind
us—
I, and my kind, are off the healthy Norm!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

Stodgy Sundays.

"When a man fails to cherish life in every fibre the fires within are waning."—George Meredith.

"The lie at the lips of the priest."—Swinburne.

Two generations ago Britain was in the grip of Puritanism, the most straight-laced form of Christianity. Charles Dickens, who was himself as outspoken a Radical as Cobbett, noted in his day that on Sundays the choice lay between a place of worship or a public-house, between spiritual and spirituous intoxication. This was not the language of exaggeration, for Mr. Brown was then taught from the pulpit that the joys of his salvation would consist largely in looking down upon the burning of Mr. Jones. For the Freethinkers who spoke of putting the "Sun" into Sunday, the extensive vocabulary of theological hatred was almost insufficient to proclaim their depravity and damnation.

The Freethinkers, however, won that long battle. In spite of forty thousand clergymen; despite the prejudice of centuries of clerical teaching; it is impossible to maintain the old solemn Sabbath of the Puritans, or the sombre Sunday of the Evangelicals. Even in Calvinistic Scotland, motor coaches and steamers convey people on Sunday to pleasure resorts, whether in the country or at the seaside.

To-day churches and chapels are half empty, and the clergy have to resort to the transparent tricks of showmen to attract decent congregations. As to Sunday Schools, they have outlasted their usefulness. When they were instituted it was with the intention of taking poor children and imparting to them the elements of ordinary education on the one day of the week on which they were free. For, prior to the passing of the Factory Acts, little children were forced to work. Dickens himself was employed in a blacking factory at eleven years of age.

The clergy are past-masters at circumventing any movement likely to prove dangerous to their sorry profession. They soon arranged things so that Sunday Schools were concerned only with theological instruction. To-day the average Sunday School teacher cares as much for real education as a pigeon cares for hydrostatics. The mere fact that Sunday Schools supplied the only education which many children then obtained was the grimmest of comments on the alleged priestly love of education, which the clergy are so very anxious to foster. In an ignorant age "clerks in holy orders" were distinguished from their innocent fellow citizens. To-day they are seen to be far less educated than many members of the learned professions, and their boasted claim of ecclesiastical infallibility sounds as strangely upon modern ears as the tom-toms of savages.

In this campaign for a joyous Sunday the Freethinkers were helped greatly by the increased means of locomotion. Railway excursions, in spite of enormous opposition, became a popular institution. Later came the cycle and the motor, and to-day the majority of the manhood of the nation is awheel on fine Sundays. Why should they not enjoy that one free day in all the week? For centuries priests had insisted on the ordinary citizen passing the one weekly holiday in a stuffy building listening to a still more stuffy service, a mere survival from a stuffer age than ours.

Priests everywhere are furious at the sight of thousands of overworked, underpaid, overtaxed British citizens seeking on Sunday, the sylvan glades of the country, or the salt gates of the sea. Why is this? Because priestcraft is a profession, although a sorry one. The chief difference between a theatre and a church, said a great humourist, is that you pay to go in one, and pay to get out of the other. If

people spend their money in seeking harmless relaxation, that money is not placed in the priests' collection bags. This elementary fact also explains the venomous opposition of the clergy to Sunday cinema opening. It is simply a question of trade rivalry, like a row between two grocers in the same street.

There is nothing wrong in Sunday relaxation. On that day rich folks give their choicest dinners, play golf, and play cards. And life to those leisured people is one long, vast Bank Holiday. Even priests enjoy life. The Bishop of London, speaking at a luncheon recently, said that he had spent £100 annually on theatres for many years. And this proud boast comes from this prelate's lips at a time when two millions of his fellow creatures are out of work and half starved.

Even the three hundred bishops who are attending the Lambeth Conference have no care for the working people, but to taboo their innocent pleasures. To these ecclesiastics life is "roses all the way," but working folks must not snatch at the brief opportunities of pleasure on Sunday because it means diverting the cash from the priests' coffers.

Fortunately, priestly influence in this country is on the wane. In spite of Lord's Day Observance Acts, in spite of the robed figures with the outstretched arms, in spite of all threats of ostracism and damnation, the conditions of life do alter. The priestly "Thou shalt not" has become wearisome, and not a little querulous.

From Moscow to Madrid men and women enjoy their leisure on Sundays. Theatres, music-halls, dance-rooms, circuses, all the fun of the fair, are available for amusement and relaxation. Why should the Englishman have his weekly holiday converted into a day of gloom and sadness? The present generation is better educated and better behaved than its predecessors, men and women are improved in so many ways, even if their goodness is offensive to priests nurtured on outworn Eastern ideas. Indeed, in the matter of Sabbath observance, the clergy protest too much. They remind one of the seasoned old hunting toper who declared that any man who drank more than he did was a drunkard. For the higher ecclesiastics, who work one day weekly instead of six, wish to bamboozle the working man out of fifty-two holidays each year, and ask the unfortunate victim to pay for the privilege of being humbugged. It all sounds a million years from Socialism, and, incidentally, it is an eye-opener for those Democrats who treat priests as important persons in the body politic, instead of seeing that they are, in very truth, but savage survivals from prehistoric times.

MIMNERMUS.

The Patient.

WHEN in delirium a sick man raves,
We give no credence to his fantasy;
We do not care what visions he can see,
But watch lest he too frantically behaves.
Yet when a parson cries that "Jesus saves,"
And says that God is one and also three,
We leave the poor, demented creature free,
Though madmen often do more harm than knaves.

Poor Christian brother, with your sick-bed dreams,
The product of a fever-ridden brain,
We weary of your tales of heaven and hell.
You do not understand that what now seems
So real is self-created out of pain;
That it will disappear when you get well.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Some Knocks from Father Knox.

(Concluded from page 403.)

I WISH to beg the indulgence of my readers for the delay in finishing the present article. On the 21st of last month, while crossing the road, a motor-cycle appeared suddenly from nowhere—apparently by a sudden act of creation—as these contraptions have a habit of doing, and knocked me down, and very nearly out. However, thanks to temperate habits, no complications set in—the great danger in advanced life in these accidents—and I am well on the road to recovery.

Father Knox, very surprisingly, considering the policy of Catholic papers; makes the same complaint that we do, as to the selection of the contributors to these symposia. Of the *Daily News* symposium, "Where are the Dead," he observes:—

The jury were very carefully empanelled, you might almost say packed; there were comparatively few of the writers of whom you could not foretell with certainty whether they would vote for or against "survival." Three were Catholics; three were Spiritualists; seven others at least were ministers of religion; so that in a total muster of twenty-two it was pretty certain "the Whig dogs would not get the best of it." (Ronald Knox: *Caliban in Grub Street*. pp. 142-143.)

Of the symposium organized by the *Daily Express*, under the title, "Is Prayer Answered?" Father Knox observes: "I fancy that the choice of contributors had significance; the editor wanted to get a verdict of 'Yes,' and if so, it was because he thought a verdict of 'Yes' would be popular with his public." (p. 100.) The bias in the choice must be glaring indeed when those on the same side call attention to it!

Father Knox is a courageous man, he even mocks at the expense of Miss Rebecca West, that Amazonian journalist-novelist who has taken so many literary scalps. Miss West is a firm believer in a future life. After witnessing the death of someone we love, says Miss West: "One perceives that he is not ceasing to exist, but passing into another universe," and moreover, "a universe of greater beauty than this." Where the inferior interests of life, such as tennis, chess, or the trivial social activities perish, but where "there are other actions and emotions, of greater nobility and intensity, which print through this universe and make an impression on that other universe." Such actions, for instance, as warmly loving, or creating good art, and in fact "anyone who does any work well." Upon which Father Knox somewhat sardonically remarks, "I do not know whether this last category would include professional footballers." Miss West knows all this by an inward spiritual "intuition," and declares: "These certainties of mine cannot be proved by any logical process; but I do not find this in the least disturbing, for it is not necessary that they should be. I am sure enough of them." Moreover, continues Miss West: "The only use of any logical proof would be to convince other people of their reality, and that I do not want to do; for I am certain that everybody has the same chance of receiving these intuitions that I have." Upon which Father Knox remarks:—

You see the idea? The old prophets used to say, "Thus saith the Lord," and thundered denunciations against those who did not believe them. Miss West has a far simpler method; if we do not agree with her, she tells us to go away and hunt for intuitions—she does not tell us how. Just so the mathematical usher would send us back to our places to do our sum over again. She is sure, and so could we be, it seems, if we would only take the trouble.

And how is she sure that we could be sure? For a very simple reason. "Were I the only person, or one of a restricted number of persons, who could receive (these intuitions), then this would be such an unjust cosmos that I would lose all interest in it and seek annihilation by confining myself to the actions which perish with this world." In fact, we have to agree with her; if not she will turn sulky and stop playing—or rather she will start playing chess and tennis. But she has still better munitions in store for us. "I should be afraid to convince anybody else of the reality of my intuitions; for, as the human animal is above all things indolent, he would probably accept my proof as an assurance that life has a meaning, and would refrain from seeking his own revelation, which alone can give him that assurance in a form suited to the individual needs of his own soul." Woe is me, if I preach the gospel, says this new form of prophecy. I am quite sure that life has a meaning, but I am not going to tell you why, because that would save you the trouble of finding out for yourselves. The Riddle of the Universe, you see, has to be solved by each of us; and each of us must guarantee that his solution is his own unaided work. (*Caliban in Grub Street*. pp. 63-64.)

Miss West's argument sounds, on the unbelievers ears, rather peevish, querulous, and waspish. But that may be merely "pretty Fanny's way." It is evident, however, that Miss West considers herself, spiritually speaking, as a very superior person, compared with the common rationalists who are destitute of spiritual intuitions. But if the spiritual intuitions of Miss West are the proof of her belief, what about the intuitions of the Voodoo worshipping Negro; or, to come nearer home, those of the Roman Catholic? As Father Knox points out:—

I believe various other things—for example, that the Bishop of Rome is infallible in matters affecting faith or morals. If I said to Miss West, "I am sure that the Bishop of Rome is infallible. This is an intuition, and if you have not got the same intuition you are a fool. Everybody must really have the same intuitions as I have myself; it would be dreadfully unfair if they had not. Even if I did know how I got my intuition, I wouldn't tell you, because you have jolly well got to find out for yourself"—if I said all this to Miss West, would she not be inclined to accuse me, a little, of cocksurenness? (p. 62.)

Of course she would, only much more violently. But the most astounding claim made by Miss West, as quoted by Father Knox, is the claim that "the spirit of tolerance represents the merciful hand of Christ thrust through the ages." And this in the face of John (Viscount) Morley's assertion that Christianity is a "creed in whose name more human blood has been shed than in any other cause whatever."¹ If there is one thing that history teaches more clearly than another, it is that toleration only became possible after science and rationalism had raised doubts about the dogmas of religion. Dogmas for which believers were ready to torture and burn even their own kith and kin who expressed doubts about them.

If the hand of Christ was thrust through the ages, then Christ evidently approved of what was going on. The least his hand could have done would have been to restrain the bloodthirstiness of his followers, if he disapproved of it.

To deal with all the points dealt with in Father Knox's book—to which we could add a few of our own—would take a book as large as the book itself. We hope Father Knox will give us some more books in this kind; it is pleasant to see our enemies fighting among themselves. When fanatics fall out, there is a chance of rationalists getting their rights, or, at any rate, a hearing.

W. MANN.

¹ Morley: *Voltaire*, p. 43.

Death and Sepulchral Rites in Nigeria.

BALEFUL forebodings associated with human mortality and the sinister activities of the spirits of the dead have played a predominant part in all phases of superstition. All our standard treatises on anthropology teem with testimony to this truth. Indeed, the energy expended in the service of the dead usually outweighs the attention devoted to the care of the living in many savage communities. Nor is this confined to uncivilized races. The memorials to the departed in ancient Egypt and other cultured lands testify to the stranglehold of superstition on races considerably advanced in civilization.

Further proof is afforded by Mr. P. Amaury Talbot in his excellent volume *Life in Southern Nigeria*. In this he furnishes first-hand information concerning funerary customs prevalent with the Ibibio, a people numbering a million, who have dwelt from prehistoric ages in the Nigerian region of West Africa.

Here as elsewhere when a chief feels the effects of old age he consults the leading magician of his race. The priest magician then approaches the oracle and communicates its message to the chief. This usually implies that the great god Abassi is beckoning him to his heavenly mansion.

Thus assured of a hearty welcome to the abodes of bliss, the chief returns to his residence and summons his friends to a farewell feast. When the guests arrive they find a sumptuous repast prepared. A slaughtered cow is roasted, many fowls are cooked, and liquid refreshment in the form of palm wine is freely provided. Everything in the dining hall is spick and span. One of the most commodious rooms is arranged for the ceremony of enthronement. In this a platform is placed for the chief's throne. When the feast is ended the ruler solemnly sits down upon this throne and is crowned with a ring by a priest.

At the conclusion of this ceremony the guests depart, and the abdicating chief is left with his favourite wife and family in a solitude never to be disturbed save by a few privileged visitors who come to pay their last respects.

This ceremony was originally accompanied by human sacrifice, but this time-honoured practice has been largely suppressed by the European authorities. Where the rite survives, a slave is bound to a tree and left to perish from starvation. The slain slave's function is to introduce his master to the ghostly realm. This he accomplishes by arriving before his chief so as to announce to Abassi his master's coming.

Men of substance who brought goodly offerings to the lord of heaven were invariably welcomed, and subsequently reigned as chiefs in the spirit realm, as formerly on earth. Poverty, however, proved a curse, both in life and death. The penurious man unable to bring gifts to the divinity of the shades was consigned without the least compunction to perdition. At best the poor and needy appear to have been banished from the sacred presence of the plutocratic-minded Abassi. "In any case," remarks Talbot, "whether in this world or the next, the lot of humble members of the community would seem to be gloomy enough. Many a family will impoverish itself for years in order to give its dead a sufficiently sumptuous funeral to ensure a good reception in the ghost realm." Doubtless the wildly extravagant funerals fashionable in India and other lands were originally the result of some similar superstition.

Save in special circumstances, interment takes place shortly after death. The corpse is arrayed in its costliest dress, and final leave is taken by the sur-

vivors. The native religion enjoined the sacrifice of several of the dead man's wives in numerous Ibibio tribes. These journeyed with the dead husband to the spirit land. The extent of the offering depended, however, on the wealth and social standing of the deceased. When a great man was buried, slaves, that were sometimes purchased for the purpose, were placed in the grave, occasionally with their limbs broken, but still alive. Others were more mercifully treated as they were dispatched before burial.

The remains of the defunct chief clothed in mats were solemnly laid above the bodies of the sacrificed slaves. Around the chief's corpse were placed costly rods, food and water, with several domestic utensils. "Guns and cannon were fired off, many cows and goats killed, much palm wine supplied, and a feast began which lasted up to a month, during which the members of his various clubs or secret societies came out and gave 'plays.' On the day after the burial a deep hole was usually dug at the feet of the corpse and in this another slave was buried alive, standing upright."

The funeral ceremonies of those slain in warfare differ from those recorded of men who die a natural death. When a warrior falls in battle the honoured corpse is carried to his native village by married women who are his nearest kin. The corpse is taboo to male touch. Sad-faced and weeping women singing mournful songs then convey the dead to a resting place in the shrouded recesses of the forest reserved to those who die a soldier's death. These sepulchral rites are the strictly guarded secrets of the wedded women. No virgin may attend these obsequies. The melancholy rites of a slain soldier's funeral are within the knowledge of matrons alone.

Until comparatively recent generations, suicides were buried, even in England, at four cross roads with a stake in their inside. In Southern Nigeria no sacred rites are permitted when one who has perished by his own hand is laid to rest. Should the deceased have left a son, the survivor may inter the corpse in an unmarked and unhonoured grave, remote from the burial-place of the normal native. But when no son remains to bury his dead sire, the body is left to decompose where death occurred. Talbot mentions a recent instance when a native hanged himself on the roof-beam of his dwelling. "When the neighbours heard of this, a law was proclaimed that none should go near the desecrated dwelling. The compound was deserted, and the corpse of its former owner hung from the roof-tree until decay set in. Then fire was laid to the building, which was burnt down, burying the body beneath the ruins."

As already intimated, although human sacrifices at the obsequies of eminent native rulers are no longer allowed where the Government exercises full control, they persist in the more remote districts. "That human sacrifice are still looked upon as necessary to the funeral of a chief," writes Talbot, "is proved by a case brought before me in the Native Court at Iket during March, 1913. In this the plaintiff charged another man with a theft of a piece of his property. In the course of the evidence the following statement was made, in the most matter-of-fact manner, as if merely recounting circumstances well known to, and sanctioned by, Government.

"About ten years ago my father died. According to custom, we killed a slave and buried with him. Some years later accused went, opened the grave, and stole from it the skull of the slave. This was my property, and I therefore claim compensation for the theft."

Skulls are highly treasured in Nigeria. As a re-

sult, when the human cranium is unobtainable in any other way, graves are rifled by professional body-snatchers, who find a good market for skulls. Recently a gang of resurrection men, some thirty in number was suppressed. Native sentiment strongly discountenances the desecration of graves, and this makes it easier for the authorities to restrain the practice.

Witches, mothers who succumb to the pangs of childbirth, those who die from infectious ailments, homicides, and friendless strangers when they die are unceremoniously flung into the bush. The ghosts of these uncanny creatures, for as such they are regarded, are reputed to cherish hatred and vindictiveness towards mankind in general, but are most evilly disposed towards their own birthplace or relatives, to whom they send disaster and dire disease.

In accordance with a custom widespread throughout the world, the departed are carried to their long home feet foremost. The mothers of twins, who are vicwed with misgiving, and the devotees of the black arts are not conveyed from the dwelling through the open door. A hole is made in the wall for the exit of the corpse, which is promptly sealed up again to prevent the wicked spirits from returning to their earthly abodes.

T. F. PALMER.

Proof at Last.

In the issue of the *Daily Herald* for July 10, appears an account of an interview with the Bishop of Chelmsford.

In the course of the interview, the Bishop was reminded that his argument ran:—

"Life is not worth while unless there is a God. Therefore there is a God."

To this the Bishop replied:—

"Oh, but I can prove that there is a God."

Just try and imagine the feelings of a Freethinker confronted with that, when long ago he had come to the conclusion that God could be likened to a drug which was sold by Christians and others at an enormous profit.

Small wonder that I visualized the probable wordings of the placards for the following morning:—

"Freethinkers pray for forgiveness."

"Atheists confounded!"

"The passing of the *Freethinker*."

"Bishop Bowls out Atheists."

"Well-known Freethinkers turn to Christianity."

I gazed reflectively at the copy of *The Foundations of Religion*, which I had just finished reading. How I had enjoyed the sparkling oratory, and the logical reasoning! How I had appreciated the skilful thrusts of the author's sword, laying bare with every stroke the fallacies and idiocies of religion!

But now, along had come the Bishop who told me, in effect, that it was the stately structure of Freethought that had been destroyed.

Summing up my remaining courage I read on:—

"Why should there be all this beauty around us?"

Why should the flowers smell sweet? Why should the millionfold sights and sounds of nature delight the senses? And where comes this deep-rooted instinct in man for beauty, goodness, and truth?"

He was reminded: There are miasmatic swamps and jungles, there are deadly snakes, there are slums, there is injustice, there is poverty, there are wicked men. That is another problem, said the Bishop. "Evil exists of course. But the moral of the whole world is that it has a wise and loving Architect." And that, oh wicked infidel, is all the proof! Don't you see how very effectively the Bishop has shattered your beliefs? . . . You don't! . . . That's funny, neither do I.

I fully expect the Bishop to tell us next that he can prove the moon is made of green cheese. His reasoning is so sound that I don't think I can even quite emulate him, however, I will try to give you some idea as to how I would accomplish this task.

"The moon is made up of green cheese! Have any

of you visited the moon? How do you know it is not made of green cheese? Why shouldn't it be made of green cheese? Who is there that will stand up and prove that the moon is not constructed of green cheese? . . . My friends, one night I prayed to the Lord, and in my prayer I humbly beseeched Him to tell me of what the moon was made. And in my dreams that same night I saw a piece of green cheese transform itself into the moon. Is that not ample proof my brethren?

To which one might be tempted to reply: "It sure is, bo!"

I would like to send the Bishop a copy of *The Foundations of Religion*, also one of the *Freethinker*, but somehow I have my doubts as to the success of either in instilling a little sense into his brain; I'm afraid the only method of achieving this would be to use a charge of dynamite.

TOM BLAKE.

The Book Shop.

IN an article in *The Aryan Path*, a Theosophical monthly, a writer used the expression "self-energizer." The meaning of this term is not defined, but time will not be wasted in giving to it a personal interpretation. In the physical life we are ultimately dependent on the sun; food we must have, and, by this one fact alone one could make out a good case for the necessity of the unity of mankind. Food assured, mankind has not yet seriously taken on its shoulders the duty of thinking. In this sphere there is ample room for recruits, for students, for fearless speakers with something to say; in short, in this sphere, there is little trace of self-energizing. Pushing our enquiries among a more circumscribed body of individuals, it will be found that, in the study of the work of our brilliant modern thinkers, we shall be able to trace sources—modern thinkers material is derivative with a little something of the individual's own thought added to it. Who then, can we term as a self-energizer? It would be difficult to find one. We are borrowers and inheritors when we speak. We are almost in the same state when we think. The self-energizers are remote figures of the noble past, and mankind's most noble history is at that period when the necessity of physical life was suspended by elementary thinking. Emerson, in his essay on "Intellect" will help me at this point; he wrote: "Entire self-reliance belongs to the intellect." And, speaking of those illustrious predecessors . . . "when, at long intervals, we turn over their abstruse pages, wonderful seems the calm and grand air of these few, these great spiritual lords, who having walked in the world—these of the old religion—dwelling in a worship which makes the sanctities of Christianity look *parvenues* and popular: for 'persuasion is in the soul, but necessity is in the intellect'". He mentions Hermes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato, Plotinus, Olympiodorus, Proclus and Synesius. Four are but names to me, but the others have helped me in getting my feet on the road of self-reliance. One can also appreciate the contempt, both spoken and written, for the Roman Catholic Church, that has acted throughout its history of gaoler to the human intellect. Messrs Belloc and Chesterton, in comparison to the chief oppressors are only little boys playing at marbles on the pavement outside the prison-gates. The nearest approach to a state of self-energizing is entire self-reliance. And what room is there then left in a man's life for the ritual, or the necessity of any religion with its whip of fear and its insult of paradise?

Joubert, who gains immortality by being known with only one name, was a mild and gentle soul. Reading again his *Selected Thoughts*, and this time, after having traversed some of life's stony ground, there is pleasure and appreciation in taking, for one's own possession, the beautiful diamonds of his aphorisms. "Of Truth, Illusion, and Error" contains a thought that might be taken to heart by Christian apologists. "'Fear God' has made many men pious, the proofs of the existence of a God have made many Atheists." The first part of this aphorism is a melancholy truth; the second part hits the mark obliquely, for who would ask a Catholic for such proofs

after studying the origins of the chief religions, and what could be done with such proofs? There will be war to the end of time between the faith of "high policy" of Rome and reason. In a chapter *Of Philosophy, Metaphysics, etc.*, Joubert writes, "Distrust, in books on metaphysics, words which have not been able to get currency in the world, and are only calculated to form a special language." This is good advice, and can be well applied to the new religions, to many books on psycho-analysis, and to much that passes under the name of mysticism. Words must be used with respect, as a means of communication of ideas with a view to arriving at truth. If we do not use them in this manner, we are guilty of intellectual dishonesty. There is a handy little edition of *Pensées of Joubert* to be picked up at second-hand bookshops (George Allen, 1896). Duckworth & Co., published in 1898, *Joubert, A Selection from his Thoughts*, and Matthew Arnold has a fine eulogy of Joubert, whom he calls a "French Coleridge." This may be obtained in the Everyman Series, but, if Matthew Arnold wants to claim Joubert as a French Coleridge it is not a happy choice to quote the French writer's remarks on metaphysics. "The true science of metaphysics consists not in rendering abstract that which is sensible, but in rendering sensible that which is abstract."

Messrs. John Edward Bumpus, Ltd., 350 Oxford Street, London, W., have a very attractive catalogue entitled "Books of the Month." In addition to quoting good books that will burn holes in your pockets as soon as you can say Jack Robinson, the catalogue contains articles of current criticism. One, entitled *Taken as Read* was exceptionally frank and interesting. It recorded the fact of literary pretensions, and the writer, Mr. W. Barnard Phillips, confessed at a lecture, that he had never read Keat's *Ode to Psyche*. Neither have I read all Marie Corelli's novels, or the output of Hall Caine—nor do I intend to read them, but I have read all I could lay my hands on of Keats. Mr. Phillips must not take this as being written in the superior style; on the contrary, I welcome him as one who is not afraid of admitting that there is a lot of humbug in the bandying about of great names. A better acquaintance with those authors who have stood the test of time gives a reader a canon of criticism. The books you don't buy as a result may not be a good thing for publishers, but their absence is beneficial to one's intellectual health. Mr. Phillips concludes his healthy note as follows:—

What of all the similar occasions when we have been forced to maintain our dignity at the expense of our knowledge and at the risk of our discomfort? Why not, from now onwards, adopt in the spirit of the *Morning Post* confessional the frankness shown at lectures and admit our ignorance wholeheartedly, thereby shaming ourselves into regaining it?

And now I am going to conclude with books received—not in the accepted professional sense. It is Sunday morning, and I have returned from visiting some of the country that is still left after jerry-builders and petrol-stations have done their worst. All the birds have given me a free performance; I accept it as a fact that they are happy. Last night, I had reached that part in *The Life and Letters of Anton Tchekhov*, where he met N. S. Lieskov in Moscow in 1883. While I was out my friend Robert, for no reason that I know of, has made me a present this morning of *The Sentry and Other Stories*, by Lieskov (The Bodley Head, 7s. 6d.) I picked up a nice copy (and paid for it) of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and read it again. It just fits the pocket. Another friend of mine has sent me *The Foundations of Religion*, by Chapman Cohen. This looks good; for a ducat it is a lecture and practical demonstration of "rendering sensible that which is abstract." I have bought Volume I of *Montaigne in the World's Classics*, and now completed my set of three. I have also bought *The Gamekeeper at Home*, Richard Jeffries. And this is my list of books received; with no publishers or advertisers to please I shall permit myself to indulge, with Voltaire, in the consolation of this life, "to say what one thinks," still counting it a privilege, to do so in the pages of the *Freethinker*. C-DE-B.

Acid Drops.

Judging from reports, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is leading a very busy life in "Summerland." He is reported as being in Australia, France, America, England, and other places. We do not know how to communicate with him direct, but we beg to assure him that the *Freethinker* office is open to him, and any message he leaves there will be promptly made public. And we can assure him that just a few words in that quarter will create a greater impression than dozens of messages to mediums.

One of the finest aspects of Sir Arthur's character was the dogged fight he put up on behalf of certain people whom he believed had been falsely accused and wrongly imprisoned. No one could have done better. Now there are quite a number of unsolved mysteries of this kind, and, we presume that he is now in a position to find out the truth, and so do something really useful. We beg to suggest to him—we think that some ghosts may read the *Freethinker*, that a little information in the direction of doing what he was quite ready to do when he was here would be very useful. After all, merely to exist in the next world is not more attractive than merely to exist in this one, and it is really time that some of these millions of departed spirits did something more useful than just assure us that they are alive.

The Rev. Dr. Rattenbury told a pious audience to humble themselves and ask whether, with all their pretensions, they were really "spiritual aristocrats of the Kingdom of God." Bearing in mind what egotism the Christian faith engenders, we have no doubt Dr. Rattenbury's hearers all felt certain they were "spiritual aristocrats," and each suspected the other of being below hall-mark standard.

Some English people have just returned from Athens, where they have been rehearsing classical dancing among the ruins of the Parthenon. Classical dancing is no doubt useful, as conducive to a sound body. But since the Hellenic ideal was a sound mind in a sound body, we should like to hear also of imitation of the classical spirit of enquiry and of the best classical thinking. It is certainly more rational and wholesome mentally than Christian thinking.

A transmitting station is to be erected by the B.B.C. in the Pennines for Northern listeners. There is to be an alternative programme available. Needless to say, the B.B.C.'s notion of fair-play being what it is, one mustn't expect on Sundays decent alternative items to the pious propaganda and the sacred silence ordered by the parsons. The only way in which those alternative items will be obtained is by our readers and their friends continually asking for them. Nothing would please the B.B.C. and the parsons more than that the agitation should die out or diminish. *Verb. sap.*

The Wesleyan Sunday School Department faces a melancholy situation with courage and hope. So a Methodist journal tells us. During the past year there has been a decrease of over 18,000 scholars and nearly 1,900 teachers. The decline is in scholars over twelve years of age and particularly over fifteen. For our part, we must congratulate the delinquents on their intelligence.

The Class Leader's Committee of the Wesleyan Church has its bit of melancholy to record. This is a decrease of 269 adult and 205 junior classes, and of 283 lay readers. Worse still a number of classes, one fifth of the whole, are returned as "not meeting." Evidently, there was much disquiet on the Wesleyan front when these facts came out. Our contemporary is puzzled about them, and says: "It is curious how with all the feeling after fellowship characteristic of to-day, the Society classes which exist to provide it are neglected; why don't they function?" Perhaps our friend would appreciate a helpful explanation on this point. The young

people have, we suggest, discovered that their purely natural instinct for companionship is being exploited by the churches, and that better and more mentally satisfying companionship can be obtained outside.

The Rev. Canon Carnegie occupies the *News Chronicle* "Saturday Pulpit." His sermon is very short; it is eight brief paragraphs. He credits modern science with directing its chief attention to health. He states:—

Its chief concern is with preserving and strengthening the life forces of the body so that they can by their own strength repel and overcome those which make for disease and death.

In praising science the Canon overlooks its implications. Even Omar asks: "What! did the hand then of the Potter shake?"

Mr. George Lansbury has much to answer for. He has made many adjustments in connexion with parks and open spaces, and his latest venture with the Serpentine brings some beautiful and sloppy criticism from the *Daily Mail*. Servants who have a dip in the morning return to their work quite limp, so it is stated, and children have the habit of lying about in their wet clothing, thus storing up rheumatism. One wonders if we should have heard this cock-eyed criticism if a Conservative had done precisely the same as the genial George. The answer is a bag of pea-nuts as lemons are always dear during the hot weather.

As indicating the safety of railway travel, we are told that only three passengers lost their lives in accidents last year on British railways. Believers in the protecting power of God's Providence might explain why God withholds the same protection from travellers by motor-car. After all, travellers by road are not less God-fearing than those by rail.

In the Putney Home for Incurables is an old lady who has lived there for sixty years. This fact moves a pious journalist to exclaim that it brings home our own good fortune to us. Every healthy person, he says, should say every morning, "Thank Heaven for my health." Our friend might explain whether the poor old lady is also expected to thank Heaven—for her incurable ill-health. A decently brought up person would be almost ashamed to do anything of the kind suggested. It is like a son thanking his father for not starving him as he has the rest of the family.

The value of the vote as an index to public opinion, particularly where religion is concerned, is illustrated by a note which was published in the *News Chronicle* on July 17. It is recalled that when the *Daily News* asked for a vote of its readers on a question of Spiritualism, it received 12,000 letters, of which 7,502 affirmed intercourse to be definitely proved. According to that vote the majority of the people in Great Britain are Spiritualists. Of course, the explanation is that the believers, who are actively interested, all vote, and those who are not do not bother their heads about it.

There is probably one woman in London who is quite happy to-day. This is the one whose car ran into that of the King of Spain's at Hyde Park Corner on July 17. For she has secured about half a column in a newspaper, and her portrait. What else could a woman require to make her happy? We hasten to say that if it had been a man it would have been just the same. Now in the Sunday papers we shall probably have (1) portrait of the lady; (2) picture of the car in which the King was sitting; (3) picture of the road in which the accident happened; (4) interview with newspaper seller who saw the accident; (5) "brilliant" article by James Douglas on the divinity that doth hedge a King, and its significance to a god-fearing, *Sunday Express* reading people.

We are indebted to the *Daily Express* for the following, which might well be headed "Practical Christianity":—

A party of workmen, while engaged in repairing a wall adjoining the Santa Cruz Church in Cuenca, came

upon a hole which proved to be a window leading into a room some eighteen by twenty-one feet.

On investigation, says the newspaper *El Liberal*, the chamber, which resembled a dungeon, was found to contain a large number of skeletons and mummified bodies.

INQUISITION TRAGEDIES

Most of the bodies were in such a posture as to indicate that death had taken place in dreadful conditions, and the belief is expressed that the unfortunate victims may have been buried alive in the days of the Inquisition.

Many of the bodies were found to have around the waist a rope with which they had apparently been let down through a hole from above.

The above-mentioned window, which led to the gruesome discovery, was so placed that the victims' sufferings could be watched from the outside.

The discovery has created a great sensation in Cuenca, where thousands are visiting the spot.—*Reuter*.

What would the world have done without Christianity?

Says Dr. Murray Butler, "Everybody lost the war." Assuming that God ordained this result, one may be permitted to wonder why the Christian victors should be expected to thank God annually for a victory over the Christian vanquished. Perhaps our Spiritualistic friends could get the spirits to submit the conundrum to God and bring back the answer. His reply would be interesting, if nothing else.

At Preston-Wynne, Herts, the Rev. J. H. Eveleigh is organizing village games and teaching his parishioners to play Shakespeare. Bearing in mind the difficulty the village parson has in retaining clients, we appreciate Mr. Eveleigh's altruistic efforts on behalf of the parishioners. We hope the villagers will not be so ungrateful as to start playing all day on Sunday the games he taught them, and neglect his service.

The Sunday Schools, says the Rev. E. E. Bromage, is the nursery of the Church. Quite so. And the main object of the "nursery" is to prevent the inmates from growing up mentally. When the "nursery" is successful, the Church captures some more sheep for Christ.

Nicholas Newcroft, in the *News Chronicle*, asks:—

Is evolution in very deed not merely a scientific description of the way in which things have worked out, but a veritable explanation of the working of God's wisdom, God's purpose, and God's love?

Undoubtedly! especially the working of God's love. There's a wonderful lot of love in "Nature red in tooth and claw," and in the "survival of the fittest."

The International Congress of Moral Education will be held in Paris during September. All discussions, we learn, are to be governed by the Object:—

To enlist the active co-operation of all, irrespective of race, nation, and creed, in promoting the work of moral education.

That sounds well. But we should perhaps be able to appreciate the value of the "Object" if we knew whether or not the Congress intends to confine "moral education" to the Christian notion of it. A discussion of morals with Christians given front place, and fear of them commanding the situation is not likely to do much.

In a broadcast talk on the Philosophy of Freedom, Prof. John MacMurray, of University College, London, declared that:—

Instead of saying that any freedom is bad which is against morality, we ought to say that any morality which is against freedom is a bad morality.

Needless to say, this opinion has excited protest from Christians who have no sane notion of freedom, and no inkling as to the true nature and origin of morality.

Man, says a professor, is the highest form of animal life. The professor had better not attend a Salvation Army meeting, or he may be tempted to modify his assertion. For the opinion to be really valuable, one ought to get the opinion of other animals on the subject.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. EVANS.—Regret your letter is too lengthy for insertion. The important question is not what certain passages in the New Testament *might* mean, or what the original (assuming one can be certain as to what it is) may mean, but what Christians always understood by them. Established Christianity means what is established, not what ought to have been established.

SONIA FEATHERSTONEHAUGH.—We are not surprised at your disgust at the manner in which politicians and others indulge in yards of cant about "Christ" in connexion with any fad they have in hand. It is no more than using a species of "magic" with ignorant people, and we suspect that they who work this line are very often quite aware of the humbug of it all.

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to learn you have had so pleasant a holiday. You have been fortunate in the weather, anyway.

J. WEARING.—We fancy the quotation from Newman, "The only English writer who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian is the unbeliever Gibbon," comes from the Lectures on a University Education, but cannot place our hand on the passage. Perhaps some one of our readers may be able to locate it. But it is quite authentic.

J. CLAYTON.—Your lecture list last week did not come to hand until the day after we went to press.

COLLA.—Received and shall appear.

G. PENDLE.—Shall appear in next issue.

A.B.—We have read your letter with great interest, but its length prevents publication. The talk of regretting the giving up of a stupid superstition is, of course, mere cant. It is the apology offered to bigots by some who have dared, for a time, to be honest with themselves.

The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.

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

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Roselli, giving as long notice as possible.

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.

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.

*The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.*

Sugar Plums.

A Liverpool Freethinker applied for the tenancy of one of the Bootle Council houses. He was asked to appear before the Housing Committee, and among the instructions he was asked to bring:—

Letters from the clergyman of the church which you attend, stating the number of years you have resided in Bootle.

One can imagine what chance a Freethinker would stand with a committee that had the impudence to put a question of this kind.

Burbank the Infidel is the title of a memorial volume, which contains, amongst other matters, an address by the fighting Freethinker, Mr. Joseph Lewis, of New York. The occasion of the address delivered by Mr. Lewis was at the Tree-Planting Memorial held for the great Freethinking Naturalist. The volume is handsomely printed, and contains, among other illustrations, a fine portrait of Burbank, and also a fac-simile of his application for membership to the Freethinkers Society of New York. Only five hundred copies of this Memorial volume has been printed.

In the *Sunday Chronicle* for July 13, Mr. Gilbert Frankau, the well-known novelist writes:—

At six-and-forty I recognize no God except the God of my own conscience; and that more and more as the uncertain years go by me I tend to regard all beliefs in the survival of our individualities after death as illusion.

That is quite clear; he has no belief in a God and is very doubtful about a future life. But Mr. Frankau, like so many other public men, cannot avoid throwing a sop to the theological Cerberus. He says he would be the last man in the world to hold that any religious belief is wrong. But if one definitely disbelieves in a God, what is that but saying the belief in God is wrong? And what is meant by such things as these:—

I admit that I should be a thousand times happier, because a thousand times more self-certain, if I could honestly believe any form of religion.

All that I can do is to envy—and to envy from the bottom of my heart—those who do believe, whatever they believe, in the eternity of individual existence.

We don't wish to appear discourteous to Mr. Frankau, but this sounds to us like so much popular rubbish. It has been so much the fashion for a certain type of believer to apologise to Christians for daring to differ from them that the apologetic jargon has grown into a kind of mormula. Does Mr. Frankau really envy the mentality of the average Roman Catholic, with his pantomime of a heaven and his concentrated brutality of a hell, or the ignorant belief of a (very) Primitive Methodist preacher, or the fantastic absurdities of a Spiritualist? We doubt it. It is just a fashion of speech. I have never known a Freethinker who really understood either his own position, or that of the believer who felt or talked in that way.

The better Mr. Frankau comes out in the following passage:—

I am left, more and more as these uncertain years go by me, with the thought! Do as much good as you can, do as little harm as you may, in this world and let the other, if there be another, take care of itself. For surely every form of religion would be, for you, a form of cowardice. And to do good in this world merely for the sake of receiving some reward in the hereafter would be just a sort of spiritual profiteering.

It is a pity that Mr. Frankau did not keep to that note; it is far more manly than indulging in what is no more than a customary concession to types of mind that are not worth troubling about. The notion that a man who has an intelligent objection to religious beliefs goes about moaning his incapacity to be as stupid as an ordinary believer is one of the strangest delusions that can afflict one. If Mr. Frankau is not pulling the leg of the editor of the *Sunday Chronicle*, or both of them pulling the legs of the readers of the *Chronicle*, we advise him to set to work to find out what Freethinking really means.

The Romford and Hornchurch Trades and Labour Council passed the following resolution at its last meeting:—

That this Council deplores the action of the Government in calling together the representatives of the churches so that the Education Question may be settled on lines agreeable to their sectarian interests; the history of the conflict respecting the teaching of religion in the schools produces the fact that the only solution of the Education question is Secular Education.

We should like to see similar resolutions passed by other Councils. The different sects are again busy pressing the Government with their regard to the measure that is expected in the autumn, and others should be equally active.

Meanwhile, we must remind members of Councils that whether religious education is given in Council Schools or not is entirely a question for the Councils. The Act does not make religious instruction compulsory.

With reference to the notice in our issue of June 29, concerning Kohn's *History of Nationalism in the East*, we are informed that an English translation is published by Messrs. Routledge & Sons, at 25s.

More Catholic "Truth"

It might be thought that Catholic "truth" would confine supernatural happenings to Holy Church. If outsiders claimed supernatural phenomena Holy Church (you might guess) would describe them as false and fraudulent. But this is not quite the state of affairs. The priests would no doubt like the kudos of exclusive possession of the supernatural. But historically and theologically they are committed to a belief in devils and diabolic phenomena; and naturally they have to make it come in as useful as possible. Instead of denying supernatural happenings amongst outsiders, they actually attribute a good deal more than the outsiders themselves are aware of; only, they are diabolic, whereas the phenomena inside Holy Church are divine.

The Romish religion is, of course, grossly materialistic. Its adherents are very ignorant. Their hopes and fears are very crude, and the priests cater for them accordingly. Very material—grossly material—benefits are held out in prospect, both in this life and afterwards. More important still, the chattels are frightened by tales of grossly material dangers and disasters to which they are liable here and hereafter. They are taught that the blessings and benefits come from the heavenly hierarchy of God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, angels and saints, etc.—with, of course, the priests as essential go-betweens (at a price). The disasters are liable to come from Satan, the Prince of Darkness and a few million (more or less) of other devils, his servants, or at least his pals. Protection against Satan & Co., is given by the heavenly hierarchy through priestly intercession or even directly by the priests in virtue of powers conferred on them by God (always, of course, for more or less onerous consideration). The chattels get a general idea that angels and devils fairly swarm all round—the devils being as full of tricks as a zoo full of monkeys, and the angels prepared to thwart the devils if the chattels are good boys and girls.

Obviously, the more "evidence" there is of both angels and devils the better trade there will be for the sacerdotal confidence tricksters. The miracles in connexion with saints, etc., are the evidence of the heavenly hierarchy—hence their abundant production. "Diabolic" miracles, etc., are not quite as easy to produce, hence the priestly eagerness to give a diabolic interpretation to outside phenomena and (as we shall see) to invent them if they do not come spontaneously—in other words, to tell their chattels whopping lies about demoniacal activities amongst non-Catholics.

They cannot nowadays get hold of witches and torture them into confessing to being in league with devils. But they do a little exorcism or casting out of devils, though the result is a matter of faith—they do not get a devil swarming up a bell rope in the form of a black cat à la St. Dominic. (Anglo-Catholics also do a little in the exorcism line, bless their little brains) The "evidence" obviously lacks pep. So they accept what comes to them as a gift. The phenomena of spiritualism (e.g.) are accepted en bloc—and put down to evil spirits.

Protestantism is entirely diabolic—the poor Protestants simply being deluded by devils, whose aim is to lure them to destruction. Atheists are probably devils incarnate. Of course, on these lines all non-Catholics and non-Catholic phenomena can be interpreted as diabolic. Something rather more pointed is really wanted, however, but is hard to find. In France, though, they found it, or said they did—in Freemasonry.

It is well known that the priests will not allow their

chattels to be Freemasons. In France the hatred between Catholicism and Freemasonry has been very bitter. One result was that the Catholics started a campaign of extraordinary vilification of Freemasonry. According to Catholic "truth" it is not that Freemasons are merely naughty, but that Freemasonry is actually a secret devil cult, i.e., a religion of the Devil with appropriate ritual, Satan and other devils appearing in person and taking part in diabolic orgies. The statements made have not been bald generalities, but have gone into detail, scabrous, macabrous, disgusting detail. The statements so outrage common sense that one would think they would hesitate to publish them for fear of doing more harm to their own cause than to that of their opponents. But, like the silly miracle tales, they must be looked on as a measure of the gullibility of Catholics, and also as an indication of the jaded nature of the palates that require such macabrous stuff to appeal to them.

Some years ago Mr. A. E. Waite (a Mason) wrote a book *Devil Worship in France*, in which he summarized the situation as it then was. Among the Anti-Masonic writers was an Archbishop. One book, by a layman, brought its author congratulations from many prelates (who are named) and even the Pope sent him Apostolic Benediction. So there is no doubt as to the official complicity of the Romish Church. It is from Mr. Waite's book we draw our quotations. A significant fact about the "witnesses'" tales is that the venue of them is generally outside France, obviously for two reasons—to keep out of the French law of libel, and to make disproof of them (in France) unlikely. England, Scotland, India, China, U.S.A.—most circumstantial tales are told of these places. For instance, perfectly respectable people in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, names evidently taken from directories or year books, are charged with diabolism. The "witnesses" assert they had personal acquaintance with these people. Mr. Waite went to the trouble of communicating with them and found (of course) that they knew nothing of the "witnesses"—nor of diabolism. A circumstantial tale of diabolic orgies in a Presbyterian Church in Singapore was remarkable for the one fact that such a church does or did exist.

On examination of this literature of diabolism Mr. Waite found that most of the authors repeated (with trimmings) tales from somebody else, but he got down to brass tacks (so to speak) in two who claimed to be first-hand witnesses—and one of them was a woman. Both these claimed to have been masonic initiates of very high degrees. How a woman could have been a Freemason may be puzzling to Freemasons, but presents no difficulties to Roman Catholic credulity. The man was a doctor and a life-long Roman Catholic, but had bought his way into and through Freemasonry in order to expose its wickedness. The lady, however, was born in devildom (in rather a special sense) but became converted, and at once began to tell tales out of school; in other words, began to entertain the faithful with Catholic "truth."

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be continued.)

To tolerate the ideas of others is the mark of a weak mind; not to tolerate them, that of a narrow mind. What is best is to be naturally inclined not to tolerate other peoples' ideas but to force oneself to tolerate them through philosophy.—*Louis Dumur.*

When one wishes to define the philosophy of the nineteenth century, one sees that it is composed only of theology.—*Remy de Gourmont.*

Sociology.

I.

BIOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE study of animal evolution has resulted in man's being placed physically in the same category with other higher animals. His bodily structure has evolved on the same fundamental lines.

Man is not an entirely distinct physiological creation. Not only is his morphology, or bodily structure similar to that of other higher animals; but his physical functions are of the same kind. He eats, drinks, and sleeps, only in a more refined manner (sometimes), in the same way as do other animals. Man is even brought into the world in the same way as other animals.

In other words, he is simply at the top of the animal tree.

It is not surprising, therefore, when we find that man has various mental characteristics in common with the animal world.

Human consciousness is but a further development of animal consciousness, as exhibited in the higher forms of life just below man.

To trace it further back, man's mental activity is a highly-developed and complex form of the response to external stimuli seen in the life of the protista; it is a stage in the evolution of nerve systems in which division of labour, on an elaborate scale, has appeared.

Whereas, in the simplest forms of life, the whole body responds to the influence of environment, in man response to special stimuli is made by special nerve centres and organs. The discrimination which is found in the nerve system and brain of man, when at work in response to stimuli, is absent from the lowliest forms of life.

This stage is reached by a gradual process of evolution and, consequently, in animal life just below that of man there is a similar mental activity to be observed.

The fact that memory, emotion, and general intelligence are to be seen in the pre-human animal world will be admitted by most readers of such works as *Animal Intelligence*, by Romanes.

It is not necessary to go into details, here, but in varying degrees we find the above characteristics of mental life particularly in the dog and the monkey; while, if we turn to such insects as the ants their power of memory and degree of intelligence are well known, and there seems little doubt that they possess the rudiments of emotion.

In some cases, animal intelligence, etc., may be easily overestimated, but that it exists, and often in a remarkable degree, cannot be seriously disputed.

It should be clear, therefore, to students of biology and of the general habits of animals that man, being a higher form of animal evolution, had received from the pre-human line of evolution, not only his physical, but also his chief mental characteristics. The transition from the pre-human to the human line of evolution took place, of course, by the handing on of tendencies to develop certain forms and functions of life. These have subsequently been influenced, from time to time, by various factors which have been at work in the struggle which has gone on between the human organism and its environment.

Articulate speech has played an important part in human development. It has enabled men to communicate to each other, their ideas and intentions, much more freely than they were otherwise able.

They have thus been able to act together in conscious union for a desired end, whenever they have discovered their interests to be similar or identical. This, of course, involves the fact that, on the other

hand, men with opposing interests have, on learning each other's determinations through the medium of speech, been able to guard against each others actions. In this case struggle has ensued between man and man, but it has involved at least some conscious appreciation of the field of action, and the basis of higher forms of intelligent handling of his environment has thus been formed by man.

Whatever may have been the origin of man's ideas—whether they were determined by economic or any other factors, they were of value to him in proportion as they enabled him to react upon his environment with increasing benefit to himself. This has always been the case, and will continue to be so, as far as we can see. It is in connexion with man's attempts to master external circumstances that speech, as a means of communicating ideas of action or resistance, has proved of untold value, enabling men to understand each other, if but imperfectly, when faced by the common necessity of trying to subjugate external and often destructive forces of nature.

This power of speech is a higher and more complex form of vocal communication than the cries of other animals, from which it has developed.

To quote Prof. Giddings, "The expression of feeling in vocal sounds, which is common to animals, was probably first transformed into a choral singing, and afterwards into an articulate speech. In all probability, the choral sounds thus transformed into a rude music were, in the beginning, imitations of the cries of animals and men whose actions were at the same time being imitated in the gesture and pantomime of the dance." (*The Elements of Sociology*, p. 240).

As an illustration of man's near relationship to other animals, on psychological grounds, we may take the tendency of such animals as the dog and the horse to see a living thing in a moving object. This tendency to animise is one of man's chief mental characteristics, and has played an important part in the evolution of religion.

Animism is in fact ever with us to remind us of our lowly ancestors, and to rebuke us for our conceit in thinking ourselves of divine origin.

The development of the social nature in man is a continuation of the tendency to socialise, which is to be observed in non-human animal life.

Most animals have developed the social instinct, if in many cases only to a small degree. The habit of associating in swarms, flocks, herds, or bands, which would be forced upon many of the higher animals, whether for a short or long period, by external circumstances, prepared the way for the higher and more permanent development of social habits in man.

This development and persistence of the social habits in the life of human beings has played an important part, not only in physiological, but, also, in psychological struggle, variation, and survival. It has doubtless improved the possibilities of hereditary transmission of tendencies to develop characteristics most useful in human development as a whole. Such, for instance, as the tendency to co-operate consciously for the general welfare in times of need; particularly so with regard to group or tribal efforts in the interests of preservation, by obtaining food, or by defence against the ravages of nature or the attacks of enemies.

This tendency to co-operate for the general welfare would become more and more a habit of normal life, until in many things it would be persisted in unconsciously, by the average member of the group, or tribe, while a record of such modes of conduct, and of ideas associated with them, would be preserved in tradition, whether oral or, later on, written.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.
(To be continued.)

Our Victories and Our Objects.

"Of your philosophy you make no use
If you give place to accidental evils."

It may safely be said that no Human "Movement" has been so small, numerically; has fought such a great fight; or has achieved such great progress; as has that of Freethought. It has the oldest and the best of pedigrees: it has the finest record in human history: and one is glad to see the numbers of intelligent young people to-day, who are joining in with our work. There is plenty still to do, and room for all who are prepared to participate in our progress towards further victory.

These ideas were revived in my mind after reading a symposium—I believe that is the usual journalistic term—on *Marriage Morals*, in a popular weekly with a large circulation. There were sixteen contributors to this symposium; and, of these, twelve were—more or less definitely—towards rational freedom, two were shaky, while two were in favour of sticking to the bad old ways of the bad old Christian days. Needless to say, these last two were paid Christian officials who live—and live well—on Christian superstition.

The long struggle of the *Freethinker*—both the paper and the individual—has been described, well and truly, as free inquiry against authority; reason against faith; and knowledge against superstition. In view of that, the fact that twelve out of sixteen "famous authors" have expressed themselves, openly, as in favour of greater freedom in marriage, divorce, and "sex," morals—in this year of Our Era—is a considerable testimony to the success of our efforts. A few short years ago, such open statement of opinion in a popular journal was unthinkable. It certainly is a mighty improvement since 1891—when the present writer reached a rational philosophy in secularism. A few *more* years shall roll; and we shall find "famous authors" openly declaring themselves Atheists, which prospect ought to encourage us greatly in carrying on the good work.

When we reflect on this, we must recognize the value of our "objects," as well as of our "principles," in our "statement." These objects constitute the concrete, practical, application of our principles; and, in our work for these objects, the chief—the greatest—enemy has been the influence of the Christian Churches in Great Britain—as in Europe and the Americas. In striving, "to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to RATIONALIZE MORALITY; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people"; it has been Freethought against Christian authority, faith, and superstition, all the time and all along the line. The fact that *individual* Christians—better than their creeds—have assisted in the struggle, in no way militates against the damning indictment of Christianity. The activities of such individual Christians were—and are—actually a proof of the failure of their Christian faith. It is a first—if tentative—step towards mental freedom. When hell goes, heaven follows; and *this* world—material well-being—comes into its own.

Christianism—*there* is the enemy of human happiness. If we take the problems with which those sixteen "famous authors" deal; this is flagrantly evident. People of all classes, of all forms of belief, of all political opinions, admit the urgent need for reform in marriage, divorce, and birth control. The need is clamant; yet, the one chief, bitter enemy is the Christian influence. The horrible record of the Bishops in the House of Lords is but a part—but a characteristic part—of the tale of the bitter Christian

resistance against rational morality. When morality is regarded merely as obedience to the authority of the Church, it is not "rational" morality—nay, it is not morality at all. "Shut your eyes, and open your ears, and do what the priest or parson tells you," is conduct for a mental slave—enchained by Christian superstition: and, against that, we fight.

Some of our friends have sometimes said that we should leave these reforms to political parties; and that our principles, alone, fully and sufficiently declare and define the work which we are out to do. Others have argued that there are special societies in existence to advocate each of these reforms, specifically: therefore, we should leave that work to those "ad hoc" societies. If we did that, however, we should be false to our own principles. It is true that the *Freethinker* and the N.S.S. take no part in party politics. At the same time, while being non-party-political, we maintain the right and, if needs be, the need, to act politically—as a society—where and when we are directly concerned. More important than that, it must be remembered that the greater part of the struggle for all great reforms, is—and has been—carried on, first, outside party politics. Free Speech, Free Press, Woman's Rights, Marriage and Divorce Reform, Birth Control, etc., etc., are all proof of this. The educational work was done, and the fight was fairly won, in all these living rights, before they became matters of Party politics: and, in them all, the lead was given and the pace was made by Freethinkers. Birth control is, perhaps, the outstanding instance of this. It is—so far—the greatest victory of philosophic cum practical Atheism over Godism. "God's" plans are being defeated, more vitally than they were—even in the beginning! This question cuts across all political parties: the fight, until now, has been outside Party politics: and the progress made, has been due to the advance in Freethought. Ours is the pioneer educational work in all progress; while a political party registers the reaching of the goal.

In the case of "ad hoc" reform societies—such as that for birth control—the policy for Secularists is equally clear: the necessity for Secularizing is as serious. These reform societies include, in their membership, people of many different sorts of religious belief. As a result, while they help towards the reform, there is always a tendency to hinder—if only by confusing the issue. They start to do the "right" thing; but—too often—they delay, by going the "wrong" way. That is a common result of religious belief. To give one instance: Dr Marie Stopes has told us that "God" inspired her to advocate birth control. "God," doubtless, found that all the easier—after Charles Bradlaugh had opened up the path. Such a primitive idea diverts the discussion from scientific method into the morassy maze of what "God" wants. It is "diverting"—in more senses than one! The logical conclusion of *that* line of inquiry is, "'God' only knows"—which means, "nobody knows." Several Reverend Gentlemen have declared themselves—more or less definitely—in favour of birth control. Others are prepared to go the length of discussing it—as rationally as they are capable of doing. The general advance towards this essentially Atheistic improvement on "God's" methods, has compelled these gentlemen to turn to the "right about"—in case they are left. In doing this, after the record of their Churches in the past, they have no sense of shame—if only they can retain something of their mentally nefarious influence. The same is true of the Nonconformist Christians in regard to Secular Education. Not for them, "logical consistency" nor "intellectual sincerity." But, think of how they will make confusion and delay.

Then, you will see the need for the constant, corrective, criticism of the *Freethinker*.

Our "Principle and Objects" stand for freedom, truth, and right. Towards these ideals, Secularism leads.

"If this will not suffice, it must appear that malice bears down truth."

ATHOS ZENO.

His Lost Sheep.

The Vicar of Alnmouth, Northumberland, recently complained to a Pressman that he thought his services would be better appreciated if he went out and mowed the golf-lawn. His congregation was composed almost entirely of women, the men and the young people never attending. At a special choir festival only twelve local people attended, out of a population of 900. He put up a notice in the golf club house saying he would be prepared to conduct an early morning service for the golfers, which they might attend in their plus-fours; but they didn't even deign to reply.

* * *

THERE were ninety-and-nine that stayed away
From the shelter of the fold,
Who went on Sundays past the Church,
To the golf-links on the wold.

Some went for a ride in their motor-car,
And some for a char-a-banc trip;
And the Vicar bemoaned his lonely fate.
In fact, he got the pip.

His listeners had dwindled to ladies—a few,
And the grocer's small apprentice;
The most faithful worshipper being the lout,
Allowed to be *non-compos-mentis*.

Devoutly perturbed at the loss of his flock,
And the serious shortage of cash,
He began to consider some ways and means
To dispose of his pulpit trash.

To the golfers he proffered a sermon to preach
Before they began on the course:
They could come in plus-fours, or any damn'd thing,
If they'd only stump up at the close.

But the golfers felt bored, and the Vicar ignored,
And moved to get on with the play:
So the Vicar felt hurt at treatment so curt,
And retired to his study to pray:

"I thank thee, O Lord, for the idiot that's left,
So true to Thyself and me;
Who has never used such wicked words
As 'put,' and 'hole,' and 'tee.'

"May Thy fire and brimstone quick descend,
And all golfing friends destroy;
Only save! O save! of Thy mercy save,
The village idiot boy."

JOSEPH BRUCE.

Do you wish to believe in religion? Then do not read books which prove it. Do you wish to respect religion? Then do not look at those who preach it.—*De Palajos*.

It should be expected of me that I search for truth, not that I find it.—*Diderot*.

Faith consists in believing things because they are impossible. Faith is nothing more than submissive or deferential credulity.—*Voltaire*.

We can only reason from what is: we can reason on actualities, but not on possibilities.—*Bolingbroke*.

Christianity Up-to-Date.

THAT bright, particular star of the Aberdeen local firmament, the Rev. D. C. Mitchell, made a reappearance on the Castlegate, on Sunday evening; but strange to tell, he did not shine as a bright, particular star should. Perhaps it was that the infidels, who were out in force, shone more, and so dimmed his light by comparison; or perhaps it was that in tackling his subject "The Love of God," he neither defined Love nor God. As far as I know, Mr. Mitchell seems to believe that God is Universal Spirit or Intelligence. He admits that Jesus was a particular man; he was Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth; yet at the same time Mr. Mitchell says, he was a perfect revelation of God in the flesh. Or in other words, we have a Particular (Jesus) who was a perfect example of his own Universal (Mr. Mitchell's Deity). Mr. Mitchell's logic, does not solve the difficulty of stating the relation between the Universal and the Particular, which is only a theological form of one of the unsolved problems of philosophy.

Questioned as to the Virgin Birth, Mr. Mitchell was delightfully vague, saying that whether Jesus had two human parents or not, did not matter. It probably does not matter to Mr. Mitchell, but it matters vitally to Christian Orthodoxy.

Further questioned on the same subject, Mr. Mitchell showed that he had been trained under a splendid Professor of Systematic Ambiguity; that subject appears to be the principal item in the training of Presbyterian parsons in Scotland.

Mr. Mitchell, prominent in Labour circles in Aberdeen, has a remedy for unemployment, it is faith in God. "A man," he says, "who has faith in God, may not get work immediately, but he will get it, surely."

Some people think that Mr. Mitchell comes out in the interests of Truth others think that he comes out in the interests of Bamboozle. Bamboozle is one of the principal gods of the cult of Vested Interest.

Credit is due to Mr. Mitchell for his performance under circumstances that handicapped him. He had neither pulpit, gown, hood, organ or choir, nor any of the usual accessories, necessary to proclaiming the Truth. He appeared, just like an ordinary chap, on a lorry; though he it far from me to suggest, that Mr. Mitchell is an ordinary chap.

N.R.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."
ATHEISM AS INSANITY.

SIR,—In October of last year a man named Joseph Gandy was arrested in Montreal, Canada, on a charge of "blasphemous libel." The "blasphemous libel" was held to be contained in a leaflet, which it was alleged that the accused had distributed gratis. No attempt was made to prove either that the leaflet did contain a "blasphemous libel," or that the accused had in fact distributed it. After several remands he was certified "insane" by the prison doctor and another doctor. I understand that one of these doctors did not even interview him, but "certified" after reading the leaflet referred to. After considerable trouble and expense his friends succeeded in having him examined by five other doctors—two French doctors, Dr. Molleur and Dumont, and three English Specialists, Drs. Mackay, Slight and Silverman, who all agreed that he was perfectly sane. He is still confined in the Prison Asylum.

When I read the story of the generous Bishop in Jack London's *Iron Heel*, I thought it was farfetched. I now perceive it was an anticipation of historical fact: perhaps a slight variation of what had already occurred. All the facts of the above case can be sworn to on affidavit by Gerald Mosseau, L.B., Avocat, 204 Hospital St., Montreal. Religious prejudice is very strong in Quebec, where three quarters of the people are Roman Catholics. The leaflet was strongly anticlerical. Attempts were made to interest both Freemason's and Orangemen's Societies in the case, but from fear of unpopularity none of them would take it up.

J. C. WILSON.

Society News.

For the first time for many years outdoor meetings for the furtherance of Freethought were held in Bradford. An ideal pitch, free from noise or obstruction, enabled large crowds to assemble all the week. Little or none of the rowdiness usually associated with introductory propaganda, the very feeble attempts of a small section being defeated by the energetic protests of the majority of the crowd who hotly demanded a fair hearing for the speaker. A local fanatic occupied the platform on two occasions to the amusement of everybody except himself, and his subsequent interruption were energetically resented by the audience. The questions were numerous and keen, but every evening brought more expressions of sympathy, and Bradford counts as one of the most promising fields for propaganda in the country. We managed to dodge the rain except on one evening when we adjourned to a room in the Mechanics Hall, thoughtfully provided for such a contingency by Mr. Green, the zealous and able Secretary of the Branch, the crowd packing the room to capacity. A very elaborate platform constructed by a Dewsbury member added to the proceedings, and the past week's work at Bradford must be accounted a distinct success. Systematic weekly meetings are contemplated for the coming indoor season.—G.W.

REPORT OF LECTURES IN N.E. LANCASHIRE.

THE biggest meeting of the last week was that at Great Harwood, where a big audience listened quietly for over an hour. There were several questions dealt with afterwards, but there was no opposition. We are looked at with suspicion as yet in Harle Syke, but people there are listening to our message, even while they pretend not to be doing so. Our lecture on "The Challenge of Atheism," at Worsthorpe aroused some of the usually legarthic villagers, and there were some lively passages. We addressed a men's class in one of our local Sunday Schools on Sunday.—J.C.

Obituary.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

AT 7.45 p.m., July 11, this life-long Freethinker was stricken by cerebral hemorrhage in his shop at Shepherd's Bush, London; and died four hours later, in the presence of his wife and six children, without having regained consciousness. Seventy-three years old, he retained till the end an unswerving spirit of opposition to the superstitions and shams that Freethought aims to destroy. He had the greatest admiration for the leaders of the movement, and succeeded in frequently interesting others by introducing to them the lectures and writings of first, Bradlaugh, next, Foote, then, Cohen. He read and supported the *Freethinker* from its first number, and never missed a copy. Combined with this loyalty to "the best of causes" was a gentle and generous nature that earned him the affection of men and women of every opinion. To such a representative gathering, Mr. R. H. Rosetti delivered a moving address, deeply appreciated by all present, when the remains were cremated at Golders Green, July 17.

MR. H. BLACK.

THE sympathy of all Manchester Freethinkers will go out to Mr. and Mrs. Black for the loss they have sustained by the sudden death of their son Harry, aged twenty-four. His death occurred as the result of a cycle accident on July 9. He was taken from the scene of the accident to Stockport Infirmary, but died the day after he was admitted. The body was cremated at the Manchester Crematorium on July 14. Mr. F. E. Monks conducted a secular service.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. J. Hart—A Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mrs. Grout—"Interpretations."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): Saturdays, at 7.30. Wednesdays, at 7.30, Effie Road, opposite Walham Green Station. Various Speakers.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mrs. Grout—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Arlington Road, Park Street, Camden Town): Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, 12.0, Wren Road, Camberwell Green, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Clapham Road, 7.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Wednesday, Rushcroft Road, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith, W.): 3.15, Messrs. C. Tuson, A. Hearne and W. P. Campbell-Everden.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.15, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and C. E. Wood; 6.30, Messrs. C. Tuson, E. C. Saphin, A. H. Hyatt and B. A. Le Maine. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and W. P. Campbell-Everden; every Thursday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and E. C. Saphin; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* can be obtained outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. Venton—A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. George Whitehead will lecture at the Bolton Town Hall steps on Saturday evening, July 26, and the following week in the surrounding districts.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH.—Friday, July 25, at 8 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. T. Brighton will lecture on Saturday, July 26, at 8.0, in Chester-le-Street.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) Bx3fl4: N.S.S.—Corner of Beaumont Street and Lodge Lane: Monday, July 28, at 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson and D. Robinson. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road: Thursday, July 31, at 8.0, Messrs. Morris and J. V. Shortt. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale at both meetings.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road Entrance): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton. A members' meeting will take place at 3.0, at the Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street.

PRESTON.—Sunday, July 27, in front of the Harris Art Gallery at 3 and 7 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

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