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

Views and Opinions.

**Christianity and the New Generation.**

"OUR whole life and mind," says Mr. George Santayana, "is saturated with the slow upward filtration of a new spirit—that of an emancipated, atheistic, international democracy." Written the year before the European War, the statement to-day requires little detailed evidence on behalf of its truthfulness. In spite of the establishment of certain autocracies here and there, and in spite of its semi-conscious character, the unions between nations are becoming more and more unions between *peoples*. And in spite of the talk of religious leaders about the revival of religion—a phenomenon in which even they do not believe, life does become more and more definitely atheistic. A politician may use God as an epithet, but never as an argument. The arguments of even religious social reformers are based on positions with which religion has nothing to do. If I may again quote Mr. Santayana:—

In vain do we deprecate it; it has possession of us already through our propensities, fashions, and language. Our very plutocrats and monarchs are at ease only when they are vulgar. Even prelates and missionaries are hardly sincere or conscious of an honest function, save as they devote themselves to social work; for willy-nilly the new spirit has laid hold of our consciences as well. This spirit is amiable as well as disquieting, liberating as well as barbaric; and a philosopher in our day, conscious both of the old life and of the new, might repeat what Goethe said of his successive love affairs—that it is sweet to see the moon rise while the sun is still mildly shining.

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**Society and Religion.**

It is this spirit which is responsible for what is called the revolt of youth, and which I dealt with re-

cently, *apropos* of an article in a weekly paper by Mr. Randolph Churchill. The clergy are quite naturally disturbed at seeing the youth of the country slipping beyond their control. Secure first, the child, then the youth, and if control can be maintained till that period is past all is well with the church. For many generations this control was secured by the social environment. There was no need, for example, during the period of medieval Christianity, or even until about two and a half centuries ago for the church to bother whether people would grow up religious. With rare exceptions they did. There was nothing in the environment to lift them altogether outside the control of religion, although there might be forces that would lead them to exchange the absurdities of one church for the absurdities of another. But in these days the struggle of the church is not against the individual, so much as it is against the force of a modern environment. In spite of apologies, and the frantically shouted assurance that science is coming to the support of religion, it is general knowledge that the influence of science is altogether in the other direction. Once upon a time scientists were thankful if the Church would leave them alone. To-day it is the churches that are in that position, and they are fawningly grateful when a scientist throws them a word of approval. The significance of the present situation is not that youth is in a state of revolt. Youth does not create revolution, it merely acts as an index to a revolutionary situation. Revolutions are created by the development of circumstances that were in operation long before the revolutionary youth makes his appearance. Youth, I repeat, does not make a revolution, it inherits it; and it is well if it lives up to and justifies the inheritance.

\* \* \*

**A Myth About the Clergy.**

Mr. Churchill is a young man, and is far from understanding the revolt of which he is an expression, even though a very mild one, and he accepts as a cause of youth losing interest in the churches, reasons which are obviously taken from his elders. He appears to be under the impression that people have lost faith in Christianity because of the quality of the clergy, because "the bishops do not possess a sufficient intellectual and moral superiority to command the unquestioning support of the people." That is a statement which one often gets from the clergy themselves, and to them it is clearly more profitable to say that people leave the church because they do not like the service, or do not get on with the minister, than to give the real reason, which is that they are losing faith in the ideas for which the churches stand.

Was there ever a time that the Christian clergy actually, and in relation to the best laymen of the time, displayed a moral and intellectual superiority? If there was I am unacquainted with it. It is a



superstition—a profitable superstition—which the clergy themselves have fostered, part of the general superstition that the church preserved learning and stood as the great moral institution amid a mass of social corruption. Take any period of European history that one cares to take, and in never a single case can it be found that the clergy owed their position in the State to their moral or religious excellence. The complaint against the clergy in the mass is at all times that of ignorance and lack of decent living. There is no question of this with Protestant writers so far as Catholic times are concerned, and not a few prominent Catholics will refuse to deny that to a considerable extent the complaint is justified. And I am quite sure that during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Protestant clergy did not hold their position because of their manifest moral and intellectual superiority to the rest of the people. Mr. Churchill is not alone in demonstrating how deeply the superstitions encouraged by Christian teaching have sunk into the minds of even those who consider themselves emancipated.

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#### What is the Use of the Clergy?

Mr. Churchill has just put the cart before the horse. In all ages the priest has owed his place in Society to one cause only. This is the belief that in some way he stood for the influence of the supernatural on secular life. Whether as rain-maker, the procurer of success in the chase or in war, the averter of disease, or the conqueror of diabolic agency, it is to this class of assumed power that the priest owes whatever influence he possesses. Naturally he may sometimes have been a decent sort of a man or an intelligent kind of a man, and either of these qualities may have enhanced his power, but they had nothing to do with his existence. Every Roman Catholic is bound to believe that no matter what the character or intelligence of the priest his religious power remains exactly the same, and in varying degrees this atmosphere of "Mana" exists with the clergy of all denominations and of all religions. So, I repeat, Mr. Churchill is putting the cart before the horse. People looked up to the parson because they believed in his religion. They have ceased to look up to him because they are ceasing to believe in what he stands for. And when they have ceased to believe that, what is there left? Is there a single subject in art, or science, or literature, or sociology, that one would take a clergyman as an authority merely because he is a clergyman? And if there is not, on what other ground than that of religion could one look up to them? Religion has never owed its position in society to its moral and intellectual qualities, nor have its representatives owed their position to their superiority of either character or learning. The claim that the clergy are moral guides to the people is only put forward when their claim to wield a supernatural influence has worn thin.

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#### Civilization and Religion.

From the moral point of view it is probable that the Christian clergy to-day are better than they have ever been. That is because the general moral level of the nation is better than it has ever been. But from the point of view of intellect the Christian clergy are to-day lower than they have ever been in relation to the lay population. How could it be otherwise? As late as the seventeenth century the area of scientific knowledge or of sociology was not so extensive or sufficiently precise decisively to put religion out of court. Men of ability could still undertake the teaching of religion without feeling ashamed of their occu-

patation. But so far as the best intellectual life of to-day is concerned the clergy are mere onlookers, mouthers of formulas, which a growing number of men and women decline to take seriously. How is it possible for any man of genuine ability and with moderate self-respect to continue teaching things which half the world know to be false, or harmonizing or apologising with a complete disregard to the plain meaning of the doctrines they are paid to uphold? The reply to the question is found by contrasting the average ability displayed in the pulpit, and that shown in any of the other educated professions. Politics, science, literature, even commerce is to-day taking the ability that was once given to religion. The level of the clergy sinks lower as their doctrines lose touch with what men know to be if not untrue, at least of very doubtful character. The pose of being teachers and preachers of a social gospel is the last stage of the story. It is in the nature of a desperate experiment. It invites the test of social value, and that is a test no religion has ever been able to survive.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### New Lamps for Old.

"I sent my soul through the invisible,  
Some letter of that after-life to spell,  
And bye and bye my soul returned to me,  
And answered, I myself am heaven and hell."

Omar Khayyam.

"A FEATHER bed to catch a falling Christian," was a witty bishop's description of Unitarianism over a hundred years ago. To-day the phrase more aptly describes Spiritualism, which appears to be gaining adherents at the expense of all the Orthodox Christian churches. Whilst the older places of worship are half empty, there are now between five and six hundred Spiritualist meeting-places in this country, and that number is being added to constantly. Most of them are tin tabernacles, and the speakers are, in most cases, uneducated people, but that they are growing in influence and numbers is undeniable.

With the exception of the Christian Religion, there is, probably, no other cult in the whole range of religious history whose record is so steeped in fraud as that of modern Spiritualism. The fraud is "gross as a mountain, open, palpable." Even Spookists themselves have to admit it, and are driven to the sorry argument that the detection of fraudulent mediums is no proof that all manifestations are unsatisfactory. The cases of detection range from the time of the Davenport Brothers, the Fox Sisters, down to the days of Mme. Blavatsky, Eusapia Palladino, and others. Behind all the scientific verbiage of telepathy, clairvoyance, automatic handwriting, precognition, spirit photography, and the like, there is always the furtive figure of "Sludge the Medium," as sinister a character as Bill Sikes.

This element of fraud helps to explain why Spiritualists have nothing of interest to tell the world at large. Mind you, Spookists profess to be in communication with the dead, who, it is alleged, have passed into a "higher sphere." These "spirits" comprise the vast majority of the human race, and include the most gifted of the sons of men. Yet all that we are told is that "Uncle Jack is there and is as fat as ever." "Aunt Lizzie is there and is her own sweet self." The most momentous thing that Sir Oliver Lodge has told an expectant world concerning this alleged after-life is that cigars are smoked there, brand not specified. With all due respect to a University professor, this is an uninterest-



ing and to some of us a positively deterrent piece of information. To judge by the "spirit messages" Mark Twain was justified in his jesting remark that the bright hereafter was peopled with "a host of hosannaing ignoramuses."

At the Albert Hall memorial service to the late Sir A. Conan Doyle, a medium declared that she saw the famous novelist wearing evening dress. She also said she saw another figure in military uniform. This is a proof that the medium was playing with her own sub-consciousness, or else monkeying with the audience. For it is absurd that starched shirts, and evening clothes should be immortal and indestructible. It is as ridiculous as the alleged spirit photograph of a man with Dundreary whiskers who died two generations since. For a razor is necessary to make that particular arrangement of face-fungus. The whole thing is far too suggestive of Corybantic Christianity as taught in Carolina, U.S.A. One can almost hear the negro refrain:—

"O dem golden slippers,  
O dem golden slippers,  
O dem slippers I'm going to wear,  
To walk de golden streets."

The wheel has come full circle. Spiritualists are not the only folks who profess to have dealings with the supernatural. The Christian clergy, from the two Archbishops to the latest stammering curate, are as much interested in "spooks" as the mediums, and they make much more money at the game than the Spiritualists. There are 300 Christian bishops who get salaries running into four figures apiece, with a residence thrown in. There are 40,000 clergy of all denominations in this country, and they are not on the dole. All babble of "gods" who get wild with us; of "devils" who must be guarded against; of "angels" who fly from heaven to earth and back again. The Christian Bible is a spook-book, and belief in spirits is a fundamental part of the Christian Superstition. Forty thousand men form a caste apart from their fellows, and are engaged in this spook business at salaries ranging from £5 weekly to the £15,000 yearly of His Grace of Canterbury. The spooks of the clergy are no more real than the bogeys of the Spiritualists. The clergy, however, are cleverer than the mediums. They know when to stop, and they make so much more money. They do not bother about petty details, or too much explanation. They realize that if a showman never lifts the curtain, it does not matter whether he has anything or nothing on the other side.

Whilst Sir Oliver Lodge's description of an alleged future life seems as inadequate as that of some side-street grocer who has just "seen the light," there is one point well worth noting. The Spiritualists are at heart far more humane than the Christian clergy. Life after death, to them, may be as crude as the work of a pavement artist, whose masterpiece is a highly-coloured bloater, but they are not so cruel as the orthodox clergy. Spookists try to depict the alleged hereafter as a continuation of life on earth, which is a very different proposition from the Christian ideal of a red-hot-poker department for the majority of the human race. Apparently, even religious folks nowadays are getting ashamed of the old barbaric ideas of heaven and hell. Unconsciously, their ideas are becoming more and more secularized. Their ideas may still be childish, but it is gratifying to find that they are more humane. "For this relief much thanks," as Shakespeare expresses it.

MIMNERMUS.

Wit is in general the finest sense in the world. I had lived long before I discovered that wit was truth.

Porson.

## More Catholic "Truth."

(Continued from page 474.)

SHE gave her name as Diana Vaughan, and claimed to be in direct descent from Thomas Vaughan the seventeenth century English mystic, who (she says) wangled himself into being the executioner of Archbishop Land, and so managed to steep a linen cloth in the "martyrs" blood. He then burnt the cloth as a sacrifice to Satan, who accepted the sacrifice and made a compact with him. Later, Vaughan travelled to America, where, one summer night he took a walk. A crescent moon was shining, and it came down out of the heavens and proved to be an arched bed, very luminous and wonderful, and containing a vision of female beauty—no less than Venus Astarte, goddess succubus.

Result, *in eleven days* (we skip the remarkable details of this remarkably high speed performance) a daughter to Thomas Vaughan and his spouse Venus Astarte. From this daughter the deponent Diana Vaughan is descended! She was born in America, and in due course was initiated into a Masonic lodge by her own father. After advancing through various grades, Lucifer himself arranged for an interview with her, with a view to further promotion. She went through an elaborate preparation (we are condensing very forcibly) and was then taken to a vast apartment lit by phosphorescence. The temperature rose, the phosphorescence became flames that surrounded her, thunder began to roll—three and one and two great thunders—five breathings on her face, followed by appearance of five radiant spirits, a salvo of artillery and—appearance of Lucifer himself in "superb masculine beauty" on a throne of diamonds. (A Marie Corelli touch this, eh?) The interview was very satisfactory—Miss Vaughan was appointed Grand Priestess of Lucifer. A spectacular drama was arranged in her honour—appearance of Asmodeus with fourteen legions—manifestation of the signature of Baal Zeboub, generalissimo of the armies of Lucifer, written in fire on the void—pitched battle between the genii of Lucifer and Adonai—the terrestrial Paradise taken by storm—etc., etc. On another occasion she was transported in the arms of Lucifer himself to "Oolis, a solar world unknown to the profane, where Lucifer reigns and is adored." She was returned in good condition, on the back of a gigantic white eagle to Charleston, U.S.A., the headquarters of Masonry and diabolism. She gives reasons why she could not have been hypnotized or hallucinated—speaking for ourselves this explanation would be second thoughts. First thoughts (and third) which, as the poet says, are best, suggest an explanation that could be described more briefly . . .

The exuberant logic of French Atheism seems to have frequently attempted to prove to Roman Catholics that there is nothing godlike about the Cake God, by breaking into Churches, running off with the "god" and playing tricks with it. The proof would seem to be as conclusive as could be wished either for common sense or Roman Catholic ignorance. But one explanation of the anti-Masonic campaign is that it is an ingenious attempt to save the face of the Cake God. We all know about the miner's wife, who reached the depth of woe when her husband ceased to knock her about—because then she had descended to absolute unimportance . . . Holy Church, to save its Cake God from the fate of the miner's wife, denies the very possibility of there being any doubt about the godhood of its bits of biscuit and asserts that the consecrated wafers are stolen because they are God or rather Christ. Evil men



crucified Christ when he was a man on earth—similar evil men wish to crucify him nowadays, and *because* they believe the wafers are Christ (*i.e.*, God) they steal them for the purpose of "crucifying" him again. Only men in league with Satan would do it, hence this "Devil worship" stunt. If these evil-minded men didn't *believe*, if they didn't *know*, the wafer were God, they would not bother to go to the trouble of robbing the altars of Holy Church.

Ingenious isn't it? Bearing this theory in mind you will see the implications in the account of Miss Vaughan's initiation as a "Templar Mistress." After progressing through the grades in U.S.A. she came to Paris and was offered initiation as a Templar Mistress—and accepted. But the initiation includes (she asserts) a ceremony of stabbing a (stolen) consecrated wafer with a stiletto, and when it came for her to perform the act she refused because, she says, she did not then believe in the Real Presence, and consequently the act would have been for her ridiculous. There was consternation and anger, and the initiation was only completed (without the stabbing bit) on the intervention of Albert Pike the then Pope of Freemasonry—and he, seemingly, only acted on direct instructions of Lucifer himself; Diana being Lucifer's pet she was allowed to have her little whimsy—though *now*, of course, the good Catholic will see that it was God himself who over-ruled Lucifer, so that Diana should be saved from performing sacrilege in view of her ultimate conversion . . . one man who noisily persisted in objecting to the favour shown to Diana suddenly had his head reversed on his shoulders. For twenty-one days he had to review the situation backwards, and only got his head screwed again the right way by the intercession of Diana.

We have, however, no more time for Diana, because—you will hardly believe it, but you shall judge—as a romancer she must take second place to Dr. Bataille. The doctor wandered to and fro on the earth—and the sea, for he was a ship's surgeon—and, after he once got on the track of it, he found diabolism everywhere. Wherever he came, a ceremony was just about to take place—and some man or other, who could take him along, was handy. It was in India where he got his first insight. He met an old acquaintance, an Italian whom he had formerly known as a rollicking care-free, atheistic, free tongued and loose moralled commercial traveller, a very gay spark indeed, but now the very opposite. Of course the doctor made sympathetic enquiries, and after much beating about the bush, the commercial at last screwed up courage to tell—burst into tears, and communicated the terrific information that he was damned. In other words he was in the first stage of religion. For a foolish fancy—just to see what there was in it—he had become a Mason and since then he had been bedevilled, as he feared, beyond recall. The doctor arranged for him to come into safety in Holy Church, and then he (*i.e.*, the doctor) set out to explore and unmask the world of devildom. He went back to Europe, and, acting on information received from the commercial, bought his way through umpteen degrees of masonry. With these degrees and the passwords he could then go anywhere.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be concluded.)

The true epic of our times is not "Arms and the Man," but "Tools and the Man"—an infinitely wider kind of epic.—*Carlyle*.

There are some people of whom it cannot be said that they fear God, but rather they are afraid of him.

*Diderot.*

## The Soul of Man in Animals.

THE tales and traditions of plants and animals animated by the souls of human beings are innumerable. In contemporary, as in ancient Europe; in every savage and semi-civilized society; these stories have been, and continue to be credited without question. The superstition survives among the peasantry in the more unprogressive regions of Europe, and it is not so very long since it bemused the minds of many otherwise enlightened men.

The were-wolf legends assume several forms. The most popular allege that the uncanny creature roams about devouring infants. It occasionally appears as a wolf attended by dogs, or in the form of a white dog. It is sometimes disguised as a black goat, or even assumes an invisible shape.

These were-beasts were bullet-proof, unless the bullet had been sanctified in a conventicle dedicated to the holy St. Hubert. Once universal in Pagan and Christian Europe, this gross superstition still lingers in the more benighted districts of rustic and Catholic France. The fifteenth century, sometimes claimed as an age of enlightenment by Papal apologists, nevertheless witnessed the assembly of a Council of Romanist theologians convoked by the Emperor Sigismund, which solemnly decided that the *loup garou* or were-wolf represented a sober reality of life.

Quite in accordance with this grotesque pronouncement is the tale of St. Patrick's transformation of Vereticus, Prince of Wales, into a wolf. In Pagan times, both in Greece and Rome this belief was widely current. Herodotus, the father of history and of fables tells us that the Neuri were transformed to wolves for a few days every year. Pliny and Ovid, among other ancient authors, have handed down similar legends of were-beasts and their doings.

In Catholic Christendom St. Thomas Aquinas lent his powerful influence to this strange delusion. "All angels, good and bad," he says, "have by natural virtue the power of transmuting our bodies." In Britain the wolf has been long extinct, but the cat and the hare have taken its place in our stories of witch transformations.

Needless to state, fables and fictions of animal metamorphosis are everywhere in evidence among races of the lower culture. In Nigeria to-day, as Mr. P. Amaury Talbot tells us: "The idea that the soul of man or woman has the power to leave its human form and enter into that of its 'affinity,' or appear in the shape of a were-beast, is as firmly held among these people as was our childhood's faith that the soul passed at death into the body of a winged angel. Countless persons are ready to swear to cases of metamorphosis which, they declare have come under their own observation, and are as unshaken in this belief as was Benevenuto Cellini in the existence of the salamander sporting in his grandfather's fire." (*Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 87.)

Mr. Talbot was favoured with the supreme advantage of living in close communion with a native population, among whom supernaturalism is ubiquitous. The normally educated European when surveying the phenomena of demonology and witchcraft, as these at one time prevailed throughout Christendom, instinctively marvels at the credulity of the past. But the cultured white observer who constantly encounters a people still saturated with these baleful beliefs is apt to be influenced by them, however unconsciously. This seems in some measure to explain the uncritical acceptance of savage romance which European observers of native manners and customs occasionally display.



Be this as it may, however, the Ibibio firmly believe that everyone is animated by three souls or spiritual entities. The first of these is extinguished at death. The second survives bodily death and dwells in the ghostly kingdom during the period that intervenes between incarnations of the spirit. The third, on the other hand, shares the company of the divinity.

The soul of the living man that enters into plants or animals leaves the body of its proper owner to reside in some other form of life. In some districts in Nigeria snake affinities are very general, and when a man's soul animates one of these reptiles, any trouble or danger that threatens the snake stamps its influence on the man.

A story is told of a Nigerian woman whose soul at intervals left her to dwell in a freshwater fish. "One day she came to her husband crying: 'I am caught! I am caught, and must die! for a fisherman has snared my soul in his trap by the waterside. Go therefore to the place of which I shall tell you, and release me before it is too late, for should the man come and kill my affinity, I must die also.'"

The husband then proceeded with his companions to rescue the fish from the snare. When this was successfully accomplished they returned home and found the wife completely restored to health. And it remains a universal native belief that had the fish perished the woman would have shared its fate.

Not merely may human souls invade the bodies of animals, but the spirits of wild pigs may possess men and women. Again, a native of very doubtful reputation is popularly believed to project his soul into a wily crocodile, which haunts the beach adjoining the Rest House when high Government officials are in residence there. We are told that he does this "in order to listen, in case report of his ill deeds is brought to their ears. Should such a thing happen, he goes into hiding until the matter has blown over, and is stated thus often to have evaded punishment."

Nor was this the limit of this crocodile-man's turpitude. When anyone greatly affronted him he avenged himself without mercy. A few years' since, when enraged at the restraints imposed by the authorities on his criminal conduct, he is said to have skulked in his crocodile form near the water until one of the Chief's boys came there to bathe, when the man-reptile dragged his victim beneath the surface of the pool.

With innumerable streams infested with crocodiles these sanguinary monsters take considerable toll of human life. Many of these loathsome reptiles are regarded by the natives as were-beasts. In fact the larger and more aggressive of these depredators are commonly identified as the affinities of well-known, if little respected fellow countrymen.

On one occasion, Mr. Talbot shot a crocodile-man, whose depredations among the domesticated animals that ventured to the water to drink had made him extremely unpopular. A day or two later, a chief who was notorious as "a crocodile affinity," departed this life, and as the huge saurian shot by Talbot had never been seen afterwards, the Nigerian natives became firmly convinced that the defunct's soul resided in the body of the slain reptile, and that its demise was swiftly followed by that of the bold bad man with whom it had been indissolubly associated.

While suspicion naturally fastens on those reputed to possess snake or crocodile affinities, no exception seems to be taken towards those whose souls are mysteriously associated with the lives of birds or vegetation. Even when a branch descends suddenly from a forest tree, which is supposed to be tenanted with a human creature's spirit, the leading natives assemble, and having solemnly placed a cloth over the fractured limb, proffer a sacrifice so that the tree's human affinity may be spared.

In certain tribes, the colour of the native skin, which sometimes inclines to redness, appears to have generated the superstition that the souls of these people are apt to dwell within the camwood tree. Some plants are specially reserved to the native aristocracy. The silk-cotten tree, for instance, domiciles the souls of chiefs and their offspring only. When a chief's spirit dwells in a tree he usually fences it for security from harm. These spirit trees naturally acquire a reputation for sacredness. Wives nourishing a grievance, real or imaginary, against their partners, or barren women who crave for progeny, repair to such sacred trees, and call down punishment upon their erring or disgusted husbands.

Among birds, the fish eagle is a favourite totem of various chiefs. The souls of men sometimes inhabit the bodies of monkeys. Natives celebrated as runners, or those who progress in a noticeably creeping manner are regarded as leopard souls. Rats and various other vermin possess their human prototypes. Where the rat souls are common, these destructive rodents multiply at an alarming rate and become a terrible pest to the people. So serious were their depredations, runs the story, that an ancient and worldly-wise ruler convoked a council of famous magicians well versed in the languages of the lower animals. The rat trouble was discussed in every detail, until at last the chief ordered the beating of the Great Drum, while in stentorian tones he addressed the rats as follows:—

"Listen, rat people! We know well who you are. If, therefore you do not stop troubling us, we will catch and kill you in your human forms.' After this the rat people were afraid, and so left off annoying their neighbours."

Cases constantly come before the native courts, in which women charge their spouses with wizardry. One case of this character was that of a wife who accused her husband of visiting her by night in the form of a great rat. Instead of entering the woman's apartment by the door, this man-rat's bad practice was to arrive through a hole in the roof.

The kinship of apes and men seems to be dimly discerned by these untutored children of Nature. At least some Ibibio folk-tales suggest that the power of projecting their souls into other animals is possessed by monkeys, as well as by men. That arrogant aloofness from the lower animals fostered for so many centuries by the orthodox Church has been spared aboriginal races. Despite their, in many instances, revolting superstitions, the peoples of the lower culture appear to recognize the natural community of organic Nature.

T. F. PALMER.

### A Nigerian Limerick.

[The Harmattan Season is caused by terribly hot winds from the Sahara, which blight everything in their course.]

"This Harmattan's really a writer!"

Cried the Doc. to the Nurse at Gazilla:

Since so thoughtlessly sank

That 'small-boy' in the Tank,

I'm afraid we must order a filter!"

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

Most books of to-day seem to have been written in a day with books read the day before.—*Chamfort*,

Men are always against reason when reason is against them.—*Helvetius*.

We can be worth far more than other men and yet be worth very little.—*Premontval*.



## Atheism—The Vilest of All Crimes.

THERE is a certain amount of tolerance in America. In Chicago, New York and several other centres, even where religion shouts as loudly as anywhere else, Freethought is neither boycotted nor regarded as a regrettable abnormality.

In Boston there is a Unitarian Church where three Presidents of the Republic are buried. Unitarianism has many faults, but it has never persecuted Atheists in America. Yet Boston and the State of Massachusetts may be regarded as fanatically puritanical, using the word in its usual and worst sense.

Citizens who do not live in the Bible-zone, where fundamentalism is supreme in city and State, look down on these "back-woods" of America. To remind them that in half a dozen States of the union, an Atheist is deprived of citizen rights, solely on religious grounds, leaves them cold or sarcastic. They take for granted that the ignorant bigotry of Southern States is incurable. Nobody in America will listen for a moment to any suggestion that human rights, assured by the Constitution, should ever be enforced by the Federal Authority.

Cases have now arisen which must tend to reduce this nonchalance and this lack of what surely ought to be a patriotic pride in equal-handed justice where American citizen rights are concerned. The Federal power itself is responsible for this latest violation of its own constitution.

Three candidates for citizenship were recently refused admission to the rolls of citizenry. Madame Rosika Schwimmer, Dr. MacIntosh, and a Miss Bland applied and were turned down. On appeal two of the three were admitted. Madame Schwimmer is rejected.

Rightly or wrongly these were said to be "pacifists," and anyhow their answers to questions in the lower court implied that they were guilty of possessing a conscience. In each case the applicants claimed the right to discriminate between one war and another, and to refuse to declare in advance that, whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, they would fight for America. Neither went any further than this.

The difference between Madame Schwimmer and her two friends-in-misfortune is that she is an Atheist. The others are Christians. This difference is a real one. It has some bearing upon the question of citizenship, a difference which ought to be noted (nobody has apparently noted it yet). The two Christians set up an authority which is either a church, or a church-made creed, or a book edited if not invented by a church. If they were Catholics they would be subject to even more definite and external authority. They claim that Christ, or God (or church or Bible) comes before laws, votes, prejudices, or even common-sense.

The Atheist says that she must appeal to the knowledge which history and experience have taught. She will not stultify her own intelligence by agreeing to approve of whatever wars may be forced upon the people. She, unlike the others, does not say that all wars are unjustifiable.

The pacifist is often a "literalist," who believes in disarmament and "non-resistance." It would be impossible to clear up the contradictions existing between the various schools as to how far "non-resistance" should go. Some people believe that the Indian revolution can be at once "non-resistant" and a boycott! Boycotting, as the Irish proved, can be a very "resistant" act, involving the enemy's starvation. It is a form of resistance, sometimes most effective.

The mere belief in actual non-resistance as preached (sometimes) by Christ, might not unfairly disqualify anyone from an office where intelligence was a qualification. It is on the same level intellectually as the conscientious objection to "kill," even when the "victim" is a disease-laden rat, or the lice which Saint Simeon Stylites so loved (and preserved alive.)

Madame Schwimmer repudiates all these insanities. She is an Atheist, and a scholarly thinker. She wants to be a citizen because she wants to add her vote and influence to the betterment of the State. She is refused

by the Supreme Court of the United States, on the definite ground that she is an Atheist.

In earlier days, there have been many countries which have decided that nobody is fit to be free unless that country's religious creed is accepted. You must believe in Mumbo-Jumbo, and ALL THAT GOD TAUGHT. It might have its inconveniences for sceptics, but one can see the logic of it. If a man were a Jew, his outlook on life might be entirely different from that of a Christian. It seems most remarkably illogical to say that you may to-day believe in Mumbo-Jumbo or an inferior deity, if there is one, and belief in that or other queer god will justify your admitting its worshipper into your citizenry. You may have a man who swallows, as some "Freethinkers" do, every word of every moral precept based upon Christianity, but if he has some difficulty about accepting Jehovah or his equivalent, he is considered inferior on that account to the lowest and most debased idolator that ever breathed the word "god."

It is a pleasure to quote, in conclusion, the following from the editorial columns of the *New York Telegram*. I doubt if any English newspaper would admit such commonsense about religion to its well "kept" pages:—

Sooner or later the courts will have to square their practice with modern conditions and not with medieval and early modern theology. The country, for better or worse, is becoming a nation of unbelievers. More than sixty per cent of our citizens no longer attend church. According to current court ruling they would not be fitted for witnesses, if, indeed, for citizenship.

As an actual matter of fact, the unbeliever has the better case in regard to conscientious objection to war. The believer must refer back to Holy Writ and the teachings of Jehovah and Jesus. Jehovah is overwhelmingly on the side of war. Jesus cannot be counted more than fifty-fifty for peace. If He said that we should turn the other cheek He also stated that He brought not peace, but a sword to mankind.

On the other hand, the unbeliever has at his command the vast body of secular wisdom, which proved war to be the most dangerous and criminal anachronism which has come down to us from the superstitions and savagery of the past. The cosmic humanitarian basis for opposition to war is far more cogent and powerful than the Christian conscience, which usually falters when war enmeshes us.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## Sylvania and Beyond.

ONE feels it may be presumptuous to suggest a series in a journal so deliberately and singlemindedly edited as the *Freethinker*, but such glimpses of the world as I am prone to may not be wholly irrelevant to its issues—always the printer forgiving, for their brevity, the pencilled notes, the ever-ready facile pencil, so dear to me, which my right hand reaches for so instinctively on my left breast—so near the heart as that! recalling, also, the instinctive action of a very noble Freethinker I know, whose finger and thumb are crooked so readily over a vest-pocket, where lies his spare cash, but not for long, in his benevolence—local readers will recognize J.F., who has not yet been made Provost or J.P., because the man is a god!

Well, above and beyond the sylvan windings of the Ayrshire Coyle are austerer places of more sweetly-sad association, especially when the way thereto has tired the wheelman. Here is a Boiler Pool at a sharp bend in the stream. One rests here and has reflections and reflections, or bathes in the alder's shade. Then how pleasant to stroll along some trickling tributary of the semi-sterile fields. Here a thorn overshadows a gleaming pool, a wild rose struggles in an ancient dry-stone dyke, with vistas beyond of delightful desolation under the summer sun. The wind has a lonesome note in such solitude, the lush pine woods and other ripples and pools are just behind you sloping crest. This is recreation, indeed, a very wholesome and needful reverie. It soothes and consoles, and only second to such consolation, is the pleasure of recapturing it in writing. The Leopardi in me will not deny me that, nor the printer, the editor, nor yet the reader?

COLLA.



## Acid Drops.

In dedicating a British Legion standard at Upminster, Essex, the time honoured association of Christianity with militarism was duly observed. The day selected was Sunday. The star performer was the Bishop of Chelmsford. The men on parade bristled with war decorations. In true military style the "Shun"; move to the right in fours, etc., broke in upon the sabbath quietness. The morals of the men were endangered by moving off to the strains of a stirring march, and after the ceremony "Tin hats" were used as collecting plates. Well, why not? The good old book tells us "The Lord is a man of War."

The London County Council has decided foundling children under its care are to be baptized members of the Church of England, "unless they have indications of another faith." We wonder what are the indications that would mark a foundling as a Baptist or a Presbyterian? One may also count it as certain that there will be a scramble for these children among the various religious bodies.

The King received the 300 bishops who have been attending the Lambeth Conference and closed his speech to them with the remark, "God reigns." We daresay that a great number of folk will now consider that question as authoritatively settled. But we imagine there must be considerable sympathy between the King of England and God, for both reign, but neither govern, and both are tolerated so long as they do not interfere with things.

Dr. F. W. Norwood, of the City Temple, enlivens the columns of *Reynold's* with a disquisition on "Does God do anything?" Having asked the question Dr. Norwood proceeds to tell us—exactly nothing. At least what he does tell is that God does nothing in particular, but he does everything in general. He says that God's action is shown in the fact that whatever a man sows he reaps. In a sense that is true, it is a mere statement of Determinism, but it hardly fits the Christian case. God's action, says Dr. Norwood is shown in the fact that this law of cause and consequence applies right through the universe. Again, granted, but how does that affect the statement that what happens to man is the result of his own sowing? When a man gets the germ of a deadly disease, what has he done to deserve it? When children suffer the consequences of an evil or a diseased heredity, how can he be said to be reaping as he has sown? Dr. Norwood is talking nonsense.

What of the Italian earthquake? Somewhere in the neighbourhood of two thousand men, women and children have been killed. Were they reaping the consequences of their own sowing? But Dr. Norwood says that God's action is shown by the fact that consequences follow causes. Certainly the earthquake is the result of definite causes, and Dr. Norwood believes that it is in this way that God shows his rule. Well, but what has man sown that he reaps a consequence of this kind? Clearly man did nothing to cause the earthquake. It was an Act of God. We wonder whether Dr. Norwood ever troubles to think about the implications of what he says, or does he trust to his audience never taking the trouble to do so? Still, it must be rather a dangerous policy, because even in the City Temple some of the congregation will do a little independent thinking occasionally. But perhaps he thinks that in that case the sooner they leave his place of worship the better.

There is at least one barber in the country who likes to do his hairdressing on rules drawn from the Bible. The *Sunday Chronicle* relates the case of Mr. Joseph Kasser, who declines to "bob" a woman's hair because there is a passage in Corinthians which says it is a shame for a woman to be shaven or shorn. But Mr. Kasser is not alone in this. The great Tertullian ob-

jected to woman dying their hair because Jesus said you could not by taking thought make yourself taller or shorter, and it was monstrous to alter the colour of one's hair, and so disprove the teachings of Jesus.

We are indebted to the *American Mercury* for the information that some preachers in America are resolved to bring their theology up to date. Dr. J. Holmes, professor of philosophy, at Swarthmore, thinks that much of the Bible language is out of date. There is, for example, "The Lord is my Shepherd." What he asks, does a town living people know about sheep and shepherds? So he suggests the following should be substituted:—

The Lord is my automobile's low gear to help me in climbing hard hills.

The Lord is my antiseptic in times of dangerous epidemics.

The Lord is my dynamo to charge my run-down batteries.

The Lord is sunlight in my room, bringing me the health of ultra-violet rays.

It reads like a satire on the advanced theology, but it is intended as a serious effort to bring theology up to date.

Also from the *American Mercury* we take the following sample of what Christianity can do in another direction. One Wesleyan Elder, the Rev. C. Mack, does not, we gather, altogether approve of a certain Conference. So in the full flow of brotherly love he says:—

There is a presiding elder in the Conference whom I consider the most colossal beau-ideal jackass who ever stood in a pulpit or brayed over a Bible, who received a letter from one of his preachers conveying to him the information that old Ananias as a liar would pale into significance in comparison to himself, and this preacher with real character and backbone also told his eldership that there were things spawned under a barn and kicking fleas off their umbilicus with their hind legs who were broodingnagians of probity in contrast to his perfidious self. And yet this microscopic insectivorous incognita or microbean was elected to go to the General Conference to help guide the destinies of this great denomination that was raised up to spread scriptural holiness over the world. Let us all take an emetic.

We would rather like to hear Mr. Mack preach.

The Rev. Dr. Maldwyn Hughes says that Methodism has been stigmatized as a corybantic religion. He retorts that true Christianity is always the religion of the dancing heart. More accurately, we suggest, Christianity might be called the religion of a prancing brain, and where the Modernist is concerned, of a shuffling intelligence.

The Archbishop of Malta is to be commended for reminding thoughtful people of the disinterested aims of a medieval body in the twentieth century:—

We have issued our pastoral, and let me remind you that those who vote or help the present Government commit a mortal sin as if they had committed theft or murder.

And Freethinkers are reminded of the joke about flogging a dead horse.

The seaside crowd seems, says a writer, to have more laughter and enjoyment in it this year. Perhaps the explanation can be sought in the fact that fewer people are worrying about the ultimate destination of their "immortal soul," despite the efforts of newspapers turned pious for circulation's sake.

In the garden of the Inner Temple, London, has been created a statue of a boy. It is nude. Our Puritans, who add to the gaiety of the nation by sluddering at a bare arm or unclothed leg, had better persuade the men of law to make the statue "respectable," lest it corrupt the morals of passers-by.



Week by week *Radio Times* gives selections from the editorial post-bag to air what "the other listener thinks." How queer it is that the post-bag never seems to contain anything adversely criticizing the religious service, what the preacher says, or the hours of silence introduced for the benefit of the churches! The editor of *Radio Times* is so nicely selective that one wonders whether he had to pass an examination at a theological college to qualify for his job. Such a test would certainly seem necessary for one who is working for a branch office of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel.

In the armed forces there are 14,111 men classified as Wesleyans, of which 1,051 only are actual Church members. It would seem that the other 13,000 are labelled Wesleyan merely because the War Office demands a religious label for each man. The same proportion is probably true of most of the other denominations represented in the forces. This being the case, one can guess there is no particular love of compulsory religious attendance. Men who don't trouble to register themselves as actual church members are not likely to appreciate being driven to church. The War Office might try the experiment of treating soldiers and sailors like ordinary citizens where religion is concerned.

The Rev. Robinson Whittaker, at the Wesleyan Conference, was deeply concerned about the widespread non-observance of the Christian Sunday. The parsons are face to face with the biggest threat to the Christian Church in the present time. There is a question of whether the parson can exist at all without the Church; and the question of the parson's living is bound up with the existence of the Church. Mr. Whittaker did not put the matter quite so plainly as this, but it is what he should have said if he were as great a lover of the truth as he urges his congregation to be.

Tucked away in a corner of a newspaper is the following item of glad tidings:—

It is pleasing to know that the Salvation Army is making sound advances in the musical world.

There's no disputing about the "sound." But there's room for difference of opinion as to whether the noises and the bands could quite easily make a sound advance into oblivion, and no one be any the worse for the resulting peace.

There are now, in Britain, nearly three million holders of wireless licences. If these millions are average persons, four-fifths of them never go to a church nor read the Bible. Yet the B.B.C. wants us to believe that a large majority of listeners is immensely grateful for the religious slop broadcast on Sunday, and appreciate the hours of compulsory silence ordained by the parsons. This seems rather incredible. But where religion is concerned, it is considered proper to swallow the incredible at a gulp. We soulfully and wistfully regret our inability to do so.

A reverend doctor declares that "only a church that is a family keeps its young people." This may possibly be so. But the trouble with the Churches to-day is that the more mentally alert section of the young people have become dissatisfied with the childish level of the Church family's ideas. This dissatisfaction is a sign of mental progress. But only professional Christians will be worried about that—it threatens their means of subsistence. That is the real objection, although it is disguised as an expression of an anxiety concerning the young people's moral welfare.

According to its Finance Minister, the Irish Free State has as much freedom as any Republic in the world. This is a neat way of dodging the issue. What is wanted is an assurance—and proof—that the Free State has more freedom than any other country in the world. That

would indicate real progress. Knowing the influence wielded by the priest in Ireland, one may affirm that the people of the Irish Free State have as much freedom as the priest believes is good for them. This accounts for the fact that several outspoken English newspapers are banned in the Free State. In other words, the fetters are still on freedom of thought.

A teetotal M.P. had a bright idea for the Licensing Commission. If you want to improve the public house, said he, take drink out of it. The brain responsible for this great thought is estimated to be worth £400 a year to the nation! If the public house is really so bad as to need radical improvement, much of the blame can be attached to the pious fanatics of total abstinence. They are responsible for the present policy which has kept the "pub" a mere boozing den. The clever notion at the back of the policy was—keep the public house thus, and then there will seem to be good grounds for suppressing it altogether.

Says Gipsy Smith, "If your motor-car will not stop at the little chapel where your mother worshipped, sell the car." This seems to be another version of the injunction to venerate the pious precepts learnt at "your mother's knee." It is quite as childish as the original version. If the injunction had been obeyed since the cave-man era, mankind would still be mentally at the cave-man stage. If each generation had refused to improve on the notions of its forebears, the civilized ideas of to-day would never have been possible.

Every great revival of religion has been, we are told, preceded by circles of corporate prayer. We presume the "circles" of prayer make people dizzy and then they see God, and have visions of "safety first" in connexion with the threat of hell-fire.

The Wesleyan Church is organizing "week-ends" during which:—

The leaders of Guilds and Christian Endeavours will spend the greater portion of Sunday together in one of the churches between the services and during the services under the guidance of some of our most gifted ministers.

Whereupon one wonders what sort of crime the "leaders" may have committed that this sort of punishment should be prescribed to fit.

Says a newspaper, Madame Curie and her husband, the discoverers of radium and its uses, have been benefactors to mankind, and radium a great blessing. Conversely, the diseases radium can help to subdue or cure must be realized as great curses for which God, as creator of all things, must be held responsible. We hope prayerful people offering up thanks will not overlook the latter point.

Mr. Leif Jones, M.P., declares it takes about 100 years for a good idea to penetrate the brains of the English people. We fancy much the same can be said of any people who have been dominated by the Christian Church. The Church has for centuries systematically discouraged interest in new ideas and created suspicion of them. It has been drastically discouraged and suppressed thinkers of new ideas. Quite naturally, the result of such a policy was the encouragement of dull-wittedness and the breeding of the dull-witted. The Church's efforts to achieve the Kingdom of Heaven on earth are not such as to excite the admiration of the eugenist and lover of human progress.

Education is the key industry of civilization, asserts Dr. L. P. Jacks. If that is so, the industry and civilized progress will be in a sound position only when the priest and the Bible are cleared out of the school. The priest's sole concern with education is to safeguard his own industry. It is not disinterested love of education that urges the parson to insinuate himself on to education committees. He is there to prevent anything being taught that may go against the interests of his trade.



## National Secular Society.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. JAMES.—We have read your letter with every appreciation. The method of meeting believers with telling quotations from established writers is often a very effective one, but there is no one plan that will be equally applicable all round. It entirely depends upon the type of man with whom one is dealing. The only general rule that will apply is to be well-informed oneself, and to bring as much good humour to bear as possible. We are glad to learn that you are so proud of the *Freethinker* and of the National Secular Society.

C. EDWARDS.—We happened to listen to Mr. Joad's wireless talk on Free Will, and are not surprised you were more amused than instructed. Perhaps the most charitable attitude is that Mr. Joad really does not understand the subject. It was not a question of a different point of view, so much as not understanding the points at issue. If he had perhaps he would not have been asked to give the talk.

M. BARNARD.—Thanks for reference. We are just a little tired and hope, with a few days rest, to be quite all right again.

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.

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

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.

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

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

## Sugar Plums.

We regret the name of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh Bonner, representing the Bradlaugh family, was omitted from the list of those present at the cremation of Miss E. M. Vance. Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner was unavoidably unable to be present.

Mr. M. Barnard writes: The passage from Newman inquired for is from *The Development of Christian Doctrine*. The introduction, p. 8:—

It is melancholy to say it, but the chief perhaps the only English writer who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian, is the unbeliever Gibbon.

We were quite sure of the quotation, although not able at the time to place our hands on it.

Councillor George Hall, of Manchester, who recently took the step of playing a game of cricket in one of the Manchester Parks, was fined 20s. for breaking one of the Council's bye-laws. Mr. Monks represented Councillor Hall, who said he would not pay, but would consider the question of appeal. If others were as determined as Councillor Hall to see to it that the Chapels and Churches of Manchester did not rule the City, the Council would soon act in a more civilized manner. Meanwhile the least civilized section of the place is allowed to rule.

We are pleased to see the report of work done by the Liverpool (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S. Regular outdoor meetings are held, addressed by Messrs. A. Jackson, Morris D. Robinson and J. V. Shortt. The meetings are well attended, and a steady disposal of literature is maintained. An additional pitch is to be opened, and there should be plenty of work in all departments for local Freethinkers. An offer to provide a speaker to put the Freethought point of view has been sent to sixty outside organizations, and the response has been very encouraging. That will mean at least, the introduction of Freethought to a wider circle. A press committee has been formed, and activities in other directions shows that Branch to be in the hands of keen and capable officials, and every Liverpool Freethinker should join up. The Secretary is Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Lancs.

An excellent report also reaches us from Newcastle-upon-Tyne Branch, N.S.S. There, Messrs. Brighton, Atkinson, and Keast, often at much personal inconvenience, have addressed regular meetings on the Town Moor, with occasional visits to surrounding districts. Trade depression is very acute in Newcastle, and the veteran, Mr. J. G. Bartram, deserves hearty congratulations for his endless enthusiasm under trying conditions.

Mr. J. Brighton reports having held good meetings in the Chester-le-Street, and we hope he will keep the good work going. We hear excellent accounts of his lectures, and should like to hear that local Freethinkers in these new places he visits give him as much support as is possible. Unfortunately the report of his visit to Thorley did not reach us in time for printing in our last issue.

The Birmingham Branch has in view a propaganda of increased activity during the coming autumn and winter season, and has issued an appeal for support to all local friends and members. We hope that all who have received the circular will give it their serious attention, and those who have not will take this as a substitute. Contributions and other offers of help should be sent to the Secretary of the Branch, Mr. T. G. Millington, 4 Weston Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.



## Catholic Apologetics.

### PRIESTS AND THEIR PIFFLE.

To any modern man with a fairly open mind and an average education, that wilderness of printed matter known as "Catholic Apologetics" must make strange reading. We do not refer here to such literary gems as the "Lives of the Saints," but the more sober and apparently more rational publications meant for the more enlightened classes, to woo them from their "spiritual blindness" and "materialism." They are very eloquent, cultured literary productions, and they present their fantastic propaganda in a superficially attractive form. It requires a little careful scrutiny to detect the innumerable fallacies underlying their arguments. It is a fundamental test of truth that it never deteriorates or loses its validity under criticism; and to me that is where Catholic "Truth" fails to stand the test, for I can honestly affirm that the more I read of religious apologetics, the less I believe.

These works appear to me to degenerate under examination into a parcel of transcendental fairy-tales. It never seems to occur to these Jesuitical gentlemen that it is possible for anything to occur in the world by natural means, without the intervention of "God." The whole realm of Nature, the whole pageant of history, is interpreted in terms of the supernatural. The whole fabric of their doctrine is as incredible as the yarn of the "Flying Dutchman." I do not believe that Religion is a mere mass of deliberate priestly fraud, and I do not hesitate to believe that there are many educated and cultured men writing these apologetics who sincerely believe in their fantastic religion; but there must be a twist in their brains, no doubt due to early training and education, if they can honestly give their intellectual assent to the Catholic dogmas. Nothing else can account for their misinterpretations, if not deliberate misrepresentations, of the facts of history. Who but a Catholic bigot could point to the Middle Ages and the palmy days of the Inquisition as the Golden Age of European history, as Chesterton, Belloc, and Co., do? What but a mental myopia could make otherwise intelligent men see in the record of European history since the "Ages of Faith" nothing but a disastrous falling-away from a state of social perfection, a devolution, not an evolution in human affairs? Do these men seriously believe that social and individual life to-day is, not only no better, but disastrously worse, than it was in those departed days of faith when it was imposed upon every individual from the age of nine upwards as a moral duty, that he or she should bear witness before an unrelenting tribunal to any word or act savouring of "heresy," while it was carrying one's life in one's hand to appear in defence of an accused person? The very existence of such a decree is sufficient to damn a whole civilization; and to-day it does damn, in the eyes of any person of ordinary decency, the Church and the social system under which such an infamous state of affairs was not only possible, but *compulsory*.

Time was, in those past days, when Catholicism needed no verbal apologetics. There was an engine of destruction established then in every diocese in Europe more effectual in stamping down the first faint stirrings of Freethought than a library full of modern apologies. A grim monster, invested with "divine authority," and supported by rack and stake, guarded the approach to every avenue of intellectual inquiry which threatened to diverge from the lines of orthodoxy. Those were the brave days

of old when Pope and priest and monk and friar had the warmest corner by the ingle-nook and waxed fat on the first fruits of the land, while the peasant toiled and sweated and procreated and sickened and died under a roof of rotting rushes, or in the ditch, with no more useful aid or comfort than the patter of Latin texts which he did not understand, or the touch of his stiffening fingers to a faked "sacred relic." "Them was the days," say our Catholic contemporaries, the days when the star of Rome was in the ascendant and shone balefully over a cowed and ignorant world, the days to which they look back with wistful eyes over the sinful centuries. And no wonder! For those were the days when their predecessors wielded a supreme and final authority over the souls and bodies of the humble poor, when the frown of a friar or the pattered "excommunicabo" of a monk could put the fear of the Devil and Hell-fire in men's hearts. The Church in those days wielded an authority, even through the meanest, basest, and most profligate of its minions, which any decent man of our day would not only disdain to exercise, but would indignantly disavow. But from the point of view of a parasitic priesthood whose prosperity depended, and still depends upon the ignorant superstition of the masses, there is not the slightest doubt that "them was the days"; and perhaps we need not wonder that the Romish witch-doctors still yearn with an ineffable longing for their return.

Ah well! These are "old, unhappy, far-off things," though it is true that their fruits are still with us, and the advocates of a return to the old order still fulminate against the deplorable insubordination of the modern world. We can afford to forget these ghosts of the past, if we remember the lessons that they teach us and be prepared to scotch the snake should it raise its head again. The world has moved on since then, and in a decidedly upward direction; the old fairy-tales do not "go down" so easily now, and the Inquisition, that mighty defender of the "Faith," is gone from our midst. Heresy is rampant throughout the land which St. Augustine and a few other bold missionaries are said to have won for the heirs to the throne of Peter, and Catholic apologists, no longer having recourse to the thumbscrew and other pleasant aids to conversion, have taken up the pen, with the hope, not destined to fulfilment, that it will indeed prove mightier than the sword.

For my part, with all the will in the world to make allowances for differences in mental viewpoint, I entirely fail to understand how any sane person with the rudiments of an education or even a modicum of commonsense can believe Christian dogmas, let alone be "converted" from a healthy scepticism. How is it possible to believe that the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Ascension was objective historical events? We know from ordinary experience how difficult it is to separate truth from falsehood in varying accounts even of contemporary history. It is one of the easiest things in the world for a man to tell a lie, easier still to misunderstand what he sees; and when we see a long line of priests for 1900 years all spinning the same yarn upon which their living depends, the conclusion is obvious. The evidence they adduce is always the same, and it is no evidence at all; the mere fact that the early Christians believed these things proves nothing. At a distance of 1900 years it is manifestly impossible to obtain direct evidence of such events; and the only records we have are four fragmentary documents written by "Heaven" knows whom, the earliest dating from about forty or fifty years after the alleged Cruci-



fixion. If they had been natural happenings, it would have been simply a matter of suspending judgment; they might have happened or they might not, and anyhow it doesn't matter a great deal now. But these yarns are so dashed incredible in themselves, apart from the fact that the pagan world of the first century was full of such yarns, that in the light of what knowledge we now possess of the workings of Nature it is nothing short of idiocy to keep on believing them.

Modern criticism has now abolished the truth of historical Christianity, and shown the events on which it was founded to be mere fables born of ignorance and credulity. Nevertheless we have in our midst even to the present day, in this (alleged) civilized world, a bunch of holy cranks who still continue to teach these dogmas as absolute truth and threaten the sceptic with hell-fire. They are bent on re-fastening the mental shackles which by dint of much effort the modern world has shaken off. All through its history the Christian Church has laid claim to a supreme authority in human affairs. To-day that authority is fast weakening, and the Church views with alarm the rising tide of Secularism. When all allowance has been made for sincerity and genuine conviction, the fact remains that all religious apologetics are simply business propaganda directed to the increase of the Church's wealth and power and the safeguarding of priest's jobs; and behind all the pious sermons in Cathedral and tin-tabernacle lurk the old worldly motives of the combative human animal—the greed of gold and the lust of Power.

C. V. LEWIS.

## Sociology.

(Continued from page 475.)

On the other hand, the social activities of man would form, as it were, a medium for the propagation of variation of conduct and ideas, when those variations were important enough to attract the attention of a sufficiently large number of the members of society.

This would be the case say when a new method of cooking food, or of preparing it in any way, was discovered by one or more of the members of a social group. The whole social group would form a sphere in which the newly discovered mode of food preparation could be propagated. The more socialized the group happened to be, the more readily would the new discovery be taken up as it was realized to be of advantage in the maintenance of life. The realization of the advantages of the new discovery would depend, not only on force of circumstances but, also, upon the capacity of the members of the group to make the necessary psychological adaptations to the newly discovered facts and the new ideas to which they had given birth. As Chapman Cohen says: "the distinguishing feature of human society is the possession of a psychological medium. The adaptations that the human being must make are mainly of a psychological character. Their form may be partly determined by external conditions, but this does not affect the general truth. Whether we take man in a civilized or in an uncivilized state, we find the important thing about him to be his relations to his fellows. He is not merely a member of a tribe or a society, but he thinks that society's thoughts, he feels their emotions, his individual life is an expression of the psychological life of the group to which he belongs. And his transactions with nature are an expression of the ideas and beliefs current in the society of which he is a part." (*Religion and Sex*, p. 37.)

But, from time to time in the history of human

society, owing very largely to changing conditions of life, there appear men whose habits of life, and whose ideas concerning things in general, differ from the habits and ideas which are approved by the greater part of society. This gives rise to strife, or a "struggle for existence." Sometimes a struggle for actual physical existence; sometimes for the existence and predominance of ideas. And this "struggle for existence," which goes on in human society, makes progress possible, although it involves, of necessity, the possibility of frequent reaction.

Strife, in its varied and innumerable forms, is one of the most prominent of facts which impress themselves upon the student of biology, or the general principles of life. The same observation may be made with regard to other spheres of investigation.

In the sphere of sociology the fact that strife is continually going on, in one form or another, in the life of the tribe, the state, the nation, and of the individual cannot escape the notice of the careful student. As J. M. Robertson says: "It is almost impossible to conceive a state of life in which the forces of attraction and repulsion shall not operate energetically in the moral and intellectual relations of human beings." (*Evolution of States*, p. 6.)

Throughout the non-human animal world there proceeds a life and death struggle, which is continued in human affairs, often with a ferocity not very far removed from that of other animals.

It is this fact that has given *apparent* justification for the theory, held by so many, that war, whether of armed forces or as class warfare on the economic plane, is one of the essential and permanent features of human life. But, while it must be admitted that the day seems far distant when all human warfare of the most bitter and destructive kind shall have ceased, there seems to be no ground for a final conclusion that men must for ever be at war with their fellow men, in the worst sense of the term.

Strife we shall have in one form or another until the last days of man, but with the gradual improvement of our economic conditions, and moral and intellectual life, there should take place an elimination of the worst forms of strife.

Armed warfare and economic class warfare, with all their horrors, misery and poverty, should give place to a collective strife, for the total betterment of society, against the non-human forces of nature, and to amicable strife on the intellectual and moral plane in the interest of a fuller and better interpretation of the universe, a higher interpretation of art in painting, sculpture, drama, and literature, and a fuller knowledge and better application of the various sciences.

That there is scope, in these various fields of human activity, for all the strife that is necessary for the consumption of all the available human energy that remains after the fulfilment of the ordinary duties of life will, I think, be conceded by most readers.

A review of some of the spheres of human activity in which "struggle for existence" is to be observed at all stages, should help the student of sociology to realize the importance of the problem of redirecting human energy into spheres of strife that will ultimately entail the minimum amount of suffering to the human race.

Improvement in the economic conditions of the majority of mankind is the most pressing need of the present age. To again quote J. M. Robertson: "Men are proximately ruled by their passions or emotions; and the supremacy of the economic factor consists in its being, for the majority, the most permanent director or stimulant of feeling. Therefore, the great social rectification, if it ever come, must



needs be economic." (*Evolution of States*, pp.71-72.)

But, valid improvement in the economic sphere can only take place in proportion to the average man's capacity to form an intelligent conception of the problems which beset him, and in proportion to his capability of acting intelligently in the interest of human betterment.

In other words, along with economic change there must proceed the required psychological adjustment to new conditions to enable man to master the situation. Or, to put it more broadly still, biological, physical, chemical, geographical, historical and economic factors are determinants of human social conditions, and of human thought and activity; but it is by virtue of being able to learn how to react upon and handle those determinants that man is able to improve the total conditions of human life.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

(To be continued.)

## Socialism and Religion.

[Several enquirers having asked for the original of Lenin's famous remark that "religion is the opium of the people," I take this opportunity of offering a summary of an article in which that phrase appeared. This and another, longer article on the "Labour Party and Religion," has been issued in brochure form by the All Soviet Atheist Union. It is necessary to remember that this article first appeared in *Novaja Shizn*, No. 28, Vol. VII, in 1905.]

He who spends his life in misery and struggle is consoled by a promise of heavenly reward for earthly humility and patience. Those who live by others' labour are taught by religion to do good on earth, and offers them escape from a future punishment for earthly exploitation—at a price—by tickets for the heavenly kingdom. Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a species of spiritual brandy, in which capital's slaves drown their manhood and aspirations for a better life worthy of humans.

But the slave, having become conscious of his slavery and rousing himself to a fight for his freedom, is already half-free. The modern class-conscious worker, brought up amongst large-scale factory life, and taught by city life, throws off with disgust the religious prejudices, leaves heaven to the priests and the bourgeois bigots, to fight for a better life here on earth. The modern proletariat fights for socialism, which brings science to the battle against religious vagueness and frees the worker from the belief in a life after death, preparing him for the true battle—for better conditions here on earth.

Religion must be declared a personal matter—in these words the relation of Socialists to religion is generally expressed. But the significance of these words makes it necessary to accurately define them to avoid misunderstanding. We demand, then, that religion shall be a personal matter *in relation to the State*, but under no circumstances can we consider religion as a private matter *in relation to our party*. The State should not take care of religion, religious associations should not be bound up with the State authority. Everyone should be free to believe or not believe, that is, to be an Atheist, as in general every Socialist is. No difference in the treatment of citizens on account of beliefs is permissible and even the mention of this or that belief in official documents should be annulled. The State Church should not be subsidized, and no money should come from State funds to help churches and religious bodies, which should be absolutely free, dependent on their own members. Only a thorough carrying out of this programme can wipe out the shameful past, when the Church was the hand-maid of the State, and the Russian citizens were bound in servile dependence to the State Church, when there existed and were used an Inquisition, and laws from the Middle Ages (and are still on the Statutes) persecuting for belief and for doubt, using

force on man's conscience, and binding State offices and State income with the distribution of State Church spiritual drink. Complete disestablishment of Church and State—that is the demand which the Socialist proletariat presents to the modern State and the modern Church.

The Russian Revolution must bring about this demand as a necessary element of political freedom. In this matter the Russian Revolution has a good advantage for the abominable bureaucracy of the political-bound absolutism has already caused discontent, protest and indignation even among the priesthood. Now and again the priesthood joins forces in a demand for freedom from bureaucracy and the official judgment, against police work forced upon the servants of God. We Socialists must support this movement, guiding the honest and sincere men among the priesthood, capturing them by their words and demanding that they break every tie between Church and State, between school and Church, in order to fully and unconditionally declare religion a personal affair.

Let us say: You are sincere and this fight for complete disestablishment must have your help or you do not accept the consequent postulate—and that means that you are captured by the Inquisition, that you are corrupted by the lure of State office and State gold, that you do not believe in the strength of your spiritual armour, you allow yourselves to be corrupted by authority—and if so, all Russian class-conscious workers declare a bitter war against you.

As regards the Socialist proletariat, religion is not a personal matter. Our party is a party of class-conscious, advanced fighters for the emancipation of the workers. Such a party cannot and must not hold with vacillation, ignorance and superstition. We agitate for absolute disestablishment so that we can fight religion openly by ideas, by our writings, and ideas, by words. We have founded our party to fight, *inter alia*, against religious stultification of the workers. For us the mental fight is no personal matter but a party matter, a matter for the whole proletariat.

N. LENIN.

(Englished by L. Corinna.)

## "Bill" the Infinite.

God watches o'er the new-born child,  
Provides it with a parents' charge;  
Whose care protects it from the wild  
Conditions of the world at large.

All hurtful things or evil sprites  
Are, through solicitude above,  
Rendered throughout long days and nights  
Innocuous through the parents' love.

Tender sensations of the nerves  
He cultivates in every part,  
His kindly care the child preserves;  
And love is planted in the heart.

Thus placed upon this mundane sphere,  
Amidst ephemeral, bustling change,  
It wages war with doubt and fear,  
Becomes familiar with the strange.

There is a purpose in all this!  
That purpose is to "save the soul"!  
Through mortal metamorphosis  
God purifies and makes us whole.

So far, we're getting on quite well!  
But when we come to question—What?  
Or who? is God: we cannot tell!  
There is no sane reply to that!

The baby in the present case  
Is sure! protected 'gainst all ill:  
Not by an unknown "saving grace"—  
Elma's Divinity is "Bill"!

B. L. BOWERS.



## An American Humorist on Religion.

It is admittedly difficult for one nation to understand another nation's humour, and for many years I have avoided reading the works of alleged humorists from America.

The other day, however, I procured Stephen Leacock's *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*, which was apparently first published in 1914, but which has just been reprinted by the Bodley Head. I have found the book a marvellous 2s. worth, and have found that the humour is not national but universal.

I pricked up my ears when on page 12 I read:—

Mr. Furlong, senior, the father of the rector of St. Asaph's, who was President of the New Amalgamated Hymnal Corporation, and Director of the Hosanna Pipe and Steam Organ, Limited, was reputed to be as smart a man as ever sold a Bible. At the moment he was out of town, busied in New York with the preparation of the plates of his new Hindu Testament (copyright), had he learned that a Duke with several millions to invest was about to visit the city he would not have left for the whole of Hindustan.

It would not be quite fair to give away the plots of the satires, but here is a list of a few titles which give a hint of the good things in store for those who have not yet come in touch with Leacock. "The Yahi-bahi Oriental Society of Mrs. Rasselyer Brown; the Rival Churches of St. Asaph and St. Osoph; and the administrations of the Reverend Uttermost Dumfarthing."

The Yahi-bahi Society is one set up by a busybody woman with plenty of time on her hands and an Oriental mystic is the object of her adoration. When she called to see him, his assistant said he was behind a curtain meditating and must not be disturbed, "but in reality Mr. Yahi-bahi was eating a ten cent can of pork and beans." Yahi-bahi was able to see into the future, and when a devotee had arranged six ten dollar pieces on the table in the form of a serpent he uttered the mystic prophecy, "Many things are yet to happen before others begin."

There is some delightful fooling regarding the teaching of Yahi-bahi, but the first step was for each candidate desirous of attaining the Negation of Emptiness, the supreme goal of Boo-hooism to send ten dollars. Of the progress and fall of the cult of Yahi-bahi, space forbids details, but Leacock tells us all about it.

The story of how St. Asaph's quarrelled with St. Osoph's is gorgeous reading, and though it may be exaggerated there is more than a germ of truth behind the mercenary motives and ambitions of all those concerned. For those who seek for humour in propaganda, Leacock's book will supply many a laugh.

NECHELLS.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."  
THE REVOLT OF YOUTH.

SIR,—During the past few weeks a number of young men and women have been meeting to discuss the problems which you have expounded so lucidly and masterfully in your editorial "The Revolt of Youth." We ourselves had adopted that very title as the name of our movement. The circular letter which we drew up, and of which I enclose a copy, seems to be so much in tune with your own article and with the general policy of the *Freethinker*, that we do not hesitate in asking you to give it the hospitality of your columns.

Our movement came to life slowly and naturally. In the beginning, two or three young people, dissatisfied, and eager to find an outlet for the energy that was in them, met, and talked, and corresponded by post. They found others of their own frame of mind. And now we have discovered that all over the country the spirit of youth is awaiting its opportunity, waiting for the chance to expand and express itself and influence the world. Your editorial has come at an opportune moment.

GEORGE PENDLE.

[Those who wish for further information on this subject should write to Mr. Pendle at "Bocken," Great Missenden, Bucks.—ED.]

## INTERNATIONAL MORAL EDUCATION CONGRESS.

SIR,—A note in your issue of July 27 asks whether or not the Congress intends to confine "moral education" to the Christian notion of it. As I attended all the Congresses so far held—London 1908, Hague 1912, Geneva 1922, and Rome 1926, and am helping to organize the coming Paris assembly, I can assure you there is no such intention, and never was. At the 1908 meeting, a notable incident was the platform exchanges, entirely friendly in manner, of our friend Mr. John Russell (still happily with us) and the Bishop of Southwark. At the Hague, in 1912, I still seem to hear the plaudits that greeted M. Ferdinand Buisson as he strode up and down the platform, emphasizing the all-sufficient ideal of the True, the Beautiful and the Good. At Geneva, 1922, in the Glass Hall of the League of Nations Secretariat, I pleaded for a Bible of Humanity; that is, a book of great records of men and women of all ages and races. At Rome, in 1926, the most conspicuous figure was that of Gustave Belot, a French inspector, and life-long supporter of the national programme (dating from 1882) of "lay" (that is, non-theological) ethical instruction in universal use in French State-schools. But the Roman Catholic, and the Salvationist, and the rest had the same courtesy of attention paid to them. The object has not been to discuss creeds as such, but to examine the needs of youth, and to offer what each school of thought or faith judges the best educational method. Hence, the Congress states its Basis thus: "The Congress does not advocate the views of any society or party, but affords to all who are interested in moral education, whatever their religious or ethical conviction, nationality, and point of view, an equal opportunity of expressing their opinions and comparing them with those of others."

To meet openly and "compare" ideas is good sense, good science, and good policy.

FREDERICK J. GOULD.

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JULY 25, 1930.

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Moss, Clifton, Silvester, Corrigan, Hornibrook, Easterbrook, Le Maine, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial Statement presented. The first meeting after the death of Miss Vance, the Executive placed on record its deep appreciation of the faithful services of Miss E. M. Vance during her Secretaryship of the N.S.S. Also of her valuable and loyal work generally in the Freethought Cause. The Executive also recorded its appreciative recognition of the long and devoted services of Miss K. B. Kough to Miss Vance.

New members were admitted to Bradford, Fulham and Chelsea, Bethnal Green, West London Branches, and the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the Society at Cardiff. The President drew attention to the case of Joseph Gaudry, arrested in Montreal, Canada, on a charge of "blasphemous libel." The President had written for more details, and it was agreed the matter be left in his hands.

Correspondence was dealt with from Liverpool, Newcastle, Bradford, and Darlington Branches.

Owing to holidays it was agreed the August meeting be not held.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion.—Thomas Paine.

There are things about which it requires courage not to write.—Remy de Gourmont.



## Society News.

THE first meeting arranged for Dewsbury was rained off, but the second was more fortunate. At this meeting many questions were put, and a rather acrimonious opponent occupied the platform. As one expects, on a new pitch, some members of the crowd were rather restive, and on the whole it cannot be said that the speaker met with the same friendly reception experienced in Bradford.

The meetings for the rest of the week were held in Bradford, and all were well attended and very sympathetic, as was illustrated by the indignant protests made whenever an occasional interrupter allowed his feelings to determine his manners. Several opponents occupied the platform, and another addressed the crowd after we had finished receiving severe and contemptuous heckling from an audience quite hostile to his views. On the Tuesday, to escape the rain, we occupied a room in the Mechanics Hall, and at the end dealt with a large crop of questions well above the average for intelligence. The second week's lectures in the Bradford area confirm the belief that this district offers exceptionally fertile soil for Freethought propaganda. Mr. Green, the Secretary, whose help at every meeting has been ungrudgingly given, intends, with the assistance of sympathisers, to take advantage of the interest which has been freely displayed, to keep Secularism well in the public eye. Some new members have been enrolled, and others should result if appearances are justified, for every evening an audience was awaiting the opening of the meeting.—G.W.

THE past week has been very strenuous. After our lecture at Clivigar, on Thursday, we passed a mission van, covered with hell-fire texts, off the Main Street in Burnley. One of the missionaries presented us with a propaganda booklet, and a remark of our in reference to the crudity of the texts roused him to give a lecture all to ourselves. When he had finished we had our turn, and our local Bible thumpers heard their first Freethought lecture. There was a frightful row. We announced a lecture on the same spot for the following Monday. The usual lively scenes took place at Crawshawbooth. The parson who always turns out in opposition gave a star performance. He brandished a letter from Prof. Eddington, to whom he had written asking if the Professor believed in God. The letter proved a damp squib, and a debate has been arranged between the parson and ourself for a month hence. The Preston meetings, on Sunday, were both good. There were many questions and some opposition.—J.C.

## Obituary.

MR. THOMAS RICHARDS.

WE regret to record the death of one of our most prominent members, Thomas Richards, of Gorseinon. Several years ago Mr. Richards underwent a very serious kidney operation, from which he never completely recovered. Latterly he was troubled with other complaints, and grew gradually worse. But his interest in Freethought never flagged, and only a few hours before his death he was philosophizing with his mother on the inevitable end. He was thirty-two years of age, and his death leaves a gap in our ranks. He leaves behind a mother, an intended wife, with brothers and sisters. They mourn the loss of a good man, and we that of a loyal comrade. He was buried on July 29th, a secular service being read by Mr. Williams.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. L. Ebury—A Lecture.

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) : No Meeting.

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. L. Ebury; 7.30, Stonehouse Street, Clapham Road, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Wednesdays, at 8.0, at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Fridays, at 8.0, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Mr. L. Ebury.

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) : 12.0, 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.) : No Meeting.

INDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1) : Thursday, August 14, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Social and Dance, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s. 3d.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN MARKET.—Sunday, August 3, at 3.0 and 7.0.—Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S. (corner of High Park Street and Park Road) : Thursday, August 7, at 8.0. Messrs. Morris and J. V. Shortt. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road Entrance) : 7.0, Messrs. Brighton and Keast. Literature on sale.

TRAWDEN.—Friday, August 1, at 8.0.—Mr. J. Clayton.

WHEATLEY LANE.—Monday, August 4, at 7.30.—Mr. J. Clayton.

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President:

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary:

MR. R. H. ROSETTI, 62 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON,  
E.C.4.

## PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks 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.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

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