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

Views and Opinions.

On Thinking.

EVEN in religious controversy one gets occasionally a quite sensible remark although this usually happens when one religious person is going for another. Where two such controversialists agree their unanimity is generally in something that is absurd; when they fall out they are quick to apply whatever common sense they possess to the question at issue, and drop into rationality as Silas Wegg did into poetry. So I was not altogether surprised to find a writer in one of the religious papers observing, apropos of the question of religion in the schools, that the important thing in connexion with the training of school children was whether they were being taught to think or not. That is quite sound although I am quite sure it is a principle with which no good Churchman would agree. For the art of religious instruction does not in the least consist in teaching children how to think, not even incidentally, but in telling them what to think. They are taught what formulas to repeat, what doctrines they must believe; and a child is well taught when it accepts these things without question, and can repeat them without mistake. That is why if one wants to know what a man thinks on religion and he says he is a High Churchman, or a Roman Catholic, or a strict Presbyterian, one knows not only what he thinks, but also that he thinks in that way because a long time before he was born a number of people settled what it was he should think. As Hilaire Belloc once explained, when the Church has once settled what is true it is a matter of indifference to them whether this appears reasonable or not; they just accept. Their brains function as does a gramophone record.

* * *

Education and Religion.

It would be interesting to know what part, in the

opinion of the writer, religion plays in developing a child's capacity for thinking. It cannot be claimed that children understand the things they are taught in the name of religion. That is beyond even adults. And in the absence of understanding what room is there for ratiocinative exercise? It is a parrot-like repetition at best. In most children there is considerable critical intelligence, but the child's questions with regard to religion are evaded or suppressed, and everything possible is done to discourage thinking in that direction. One must indeed have a poor notion of mental development to believe that a policy of this kind can be followed with regard to one subject without its having a bad reaction in relation to others.

Some years ago the late Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman said, "Want of thinking is the great danger and drawback of the age, and one of the inherent vices of Englishmen." Unfortunately the statement contains considerable truth, for although, in a sense, everybody *thinks*, yet real, strenuous, individual thinking is with the majority, one of the the rarest of things. Out of any thousand people taken haphazard, all but a very small percentage are content to have their thinking done for them by their daily newspaper, their political leader or their religious minister. People are mentally gregarious to a frightful extent. The majority can neither act nor think with comfort save with a crowd. In the ordinary way, what they mistake for opinion is mere prejudice—a mere echo of a cry inspired, in so many cases, by self-interest or want of courage.

* * *

Reaping as We Have Sowed.

People do not think independently, but why should they? Can anyone say that the independent thinker is really held in any special honour? Formally, we esteem great thinkers, that is we profess to be proud of them. But what are the facts? If a vote of the people were to be taken on the question of a pension, or a title, or a public monument, it is highly probable that a leading sportsman, a cinema hero, a prominent soldier, or a popular politician would receive the largest number of votes. Modern political developments serve to accentuate this fact. In the constituencies "slogans" become more and more powerful, and in parliament members are more openly and more shamelessly dragged at the heels of party leaders than ever they were. A candidate who gave his honest opinion on the questions before the electors would stand but little chance of election. He need not tell lies—open, direct, lies—but he must evade, prevaricate, promise things which he knows he will not perform, and would not perform even if he could, and once elected, a man who is not a good party man stands little chance of either the "plums" or the glory of office. Instead of his conclusions being taken as evidence of his sincerity, and accepted as the

serious conclusions of an earnest thinker he would be voted either an intolerable nuisance or a social danger.

In religion the position would be more difficult, and the treatment more severe. The average Englishman *thinks* little enough on politics, less on ethics, least of all on religion. It has taken over two hundred years for some tolerably obvious conclusions concerning the Christian religion to become current among educated Christians, and even now they are treated by the press as something very novel. The facts concerning the origin and development of religious ideas are still unknown to most people, although commonplace to students for nearly three-quarters of a century. There is not a church or chapel in Great Britain that really encourages independent thinking, and when such a thing occurs, the daring innovator is soon made to feel that his absence is preferable to his company. "If thou shalt not think" is not openly taught from the pulpits, it is no unfair inference from what is taught.

* * *

Society and the Individual.

Ought we to expect mankind, under prevailing conditions to indulge in independent thinking? Mankind in the mass will always strive to get through life with as great a degree of comfort as is possible, and quite naturally will avoid actions that bring them into conflict with their neighbours. So long as independent thinking involves loss, or discomfort, or misrepresentation, so long will want of thinking remain a general feature, not of Englishmen merely, but of others also. The fault is really not one of the individual, so much as it is a fault of society as a whole. In the very nature of the case the martyr, upon even the smallest scale will be the exception. It is probable that we can never altogether altar this state of affairs, but we can make it less drastic than it is. When society gives a larger measure of encouragement to independent thinking than it does at present, and less, therefore, to mental sluggishness and cowardice, than we do at present, we shall have done something to free the country from the reproach cast on it by Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman.

But what is called "the inherent vice of Englishmen" did not originate with the present generation, and once again, it is not exclusively the vice of Englishmen. Others share it, and in virtue of common antecedents. For over fifteen centuries the peoples of Europe have been under the dominating influence of Christianity, and during the whole of that period the Churches have uniformly cast their power against independence of thought, and endeavoured to press all minds into the one mould. Generation after generation people saw heretics punished, imprisoned, burned. The world was made to feel that any offence could be forgiven save the fearless use of one's intelligence. In the face of this, can we marvel that independent thinking is as rare as it is? The marvel is that it has not altogether ceased to exist.

* * *

Christianity and the Race.

This, as a matter of fact, is Christianity's greatest crime against humanity. Other offences have more dramatic aspects, but the worst diseases are not those that kill, but those that weaken without killing. The hecatombs of people slain in the name of the religion of human brotherhood, the long lingering of heroic spirits in Christian prisons, make moving reading, and lend themselves readily to the art of the platform. But these are minor evils when compared with the influence of Christianity on social development. The constant elimination of a serviceable mental type, with the preservation and cultivation of a type, unthinking, credulous, and sheepish have combined to

keep the race at a low mental level. Every generation is moulded by the psychic environment into which it is born—the established beliefs, customs, institutions are the factors which mainly determine what each generation shall be, and had the traditions of European society been different from what they have been, independent thinking might easily have been much commoner than it is. It is useless railing against the individual; one here and there may prove strong enough to stand against the dead weight of tradition and the power of social custom, but the mass of people will inevitably accommodate themselves to their environment. It is the social structure we have to modify. Christianity has worked for generations to produce a mentally emasculated race. The state of things must be counted as the measure of the success achieved.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Great St. Bernard.

"All my life I have been a sojourner on this planet rather than a native of it."—Bernard Shaw.

"Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at truth."—O. W. Holmes.

MR. BERNARD SHAW possesses an effrontery like Casanova, a readiness equal to that of Heine, and a brain as brilliant as Machiavelli. Withal, he does the most paradoxical things. A Socialist, he publishes a luxury edition of his writings at the aristocratic price of thirty-two guineas. At a Shelley Society meeting he declared himself an Atheist; later he preached "with acceptance" at the City Temple, a proceeding which caused George Foote to write him a letter addressed "Rev. B. Shaw." Whilst young he wrote a free-love novel, entitled *The Irrational Knot*; years after he himself married a very charming lady. He has attacked Shakespeare violently, and sought to imitate him with equal zest. Is he writing to Benjamin Tucker, the Anarchist, he will tell him that Individualism can only be reached through Socialism. When addressing Socialists he will warn them of the dangers of bureaucracy to liberty. He will jibe at religious people for their barbarism, and scoff at Freethinkers for their devotion to science. Whilst a member of the Shelley Society he told his fellow-members that they ought to be Atheists, Republicans, and Vegetarians, and nearly broke up the Society on the spot. In the lambent flames of his sardonic humour he searches everything. Yet the total impression left by his life-work is of a man grappling earnestly and seriously with social and theological problems, not of a clown grinning through a horse-collar. That impression is very welcome, for, as Heine says, finely, "unless wit is based on seriousness it is only a sneeze of the reason."

It is not astonishing that so provoking a personality should receive bouquets and brickbats from the critics. Many full-blooded American critics throw flowers at Mr. Shaw from across the wide Atlantic. One likens him to "a genial Celtic Mephistopheles." Another insists that he is like Falstaff, dining, presumably, on a carrot and a glass of water. Yet another regards Shaw as a very serious rival to Shakespeare and Sheridan. A French critic, in more sober mind, declares Shaw to be "the English Moliere," which is a really graceful compliment to the most brilliant living man of letters. For critics, from Moscow to Madrid, have noticed the rare quality of his genius. This wide consensus of intellectual opinion is remarkable, for the purely parochial success of an ordinary writer sinks into insignificance beside a world-wide reputation of this kind.

The underlying seriousness of Shaw's work cannot be ignored. Despite his chameleon-like changes he always maintains stoutly the rottenness of the prevailing ideals. He criticizes these ideals in his novels, his dramas, his musical, sociological, and theatrical reviews. He sets up these ideals, strips them, and tests them. The ordeal is the cleansing fire of truth and the scalding water of satire. So thorough is the process that few impostures may walk and live. He is so much more than a merely brilliant writer. Underlying all his wit and irony, you find a sanity, a good sense, which mere smartness lacks. Occasionally, as an Irishman, he justifies his reputation as a "Celtic Mephistopheles," and grins under his cock's feathers, as in his attacks on Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and his many somersaults on the subject of religion. The explanation is that Shaw has not the temperament which suffers fools gladly, and when he is annoyed he is merciless. Withal, he sees all round a subject, a rare accomplishment among authors.

After all, Shaw's plays contain his finest work. He has been at great pains to emphasize his technique and his philosophy, and to explain that his technique is old and his philosophy new. Frankly, neither is originally Shavian. The one is seen in Ibsen, and the other plainly conveyed from Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. But Shaw's comedy is most valuable. He has re-introduced high comedy on the British stage. So far as England is concerned, the comic spirit, as Meredith so admirably calls it, has had few chances between Shaw and the Restoration dramatists. And, remember, the secret of Congreve and Wycherley's interplay of character is not mere dirt and depravity. It is the Shakespearean quality of equality of equipment with which men and women pitch their battles of wit.

There is no question of Shaw's genius. The impress of his unique personality is on every line of his work. Even his newspaper articles retain their freshness and survive the test of republication triumphantly. They are the work of a brilliant, clever, and witty man. He once asked: "Who is Hall Caine?" and people have not done laughing yet. "Sardoodledom" is not a compliment to the popular author of *La Tosca*. "Bardolatry" is applied to the wholesale worship of Shakespeare. His famous war-time retort, "Sir Edward Grey is himself a Junker" was merciless. And so was his advice to the Nonconformists that if they were wise they would place busts of Voltaire in their tabernacles. Shaw is too much in earnest to be impartial. "I have never claimed for myself the divine attribute of justice," he says blandly. His life's work is a seige laid to the social and religious abuses of his time by an author who had to cut his way into them at the sword's point, and throw some of the defenders into the moat.

M. Harmon is right in pointing out Shaw's affinity to Moliere, for he has the same sense, his capacity for crusading, and the acidity of his sarcasm. Listen:—

This Christian Church, founded gaily with a pun, has been so largely corrupted with rank Satanism that it has become the church where you must not laugh.

There is a strain of austerity in the following:—

I am as fond of fine music and handsome buildings as Milton was, or Cromwell, or Bunyan; but if I found that they were becoming the instruments of a systematic idolatry of sensuousness, I would hold it good statesmanship to blow every cathedral in the world to pieces with dynamite, organ and all, without the least heed to the screams of the art critics and cultured voluptuaries.

Shaw's emendation of the so-called "Golden Rule" is often quoted: "Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same."

Bernard Shaw is, indisputably, the most brilliant of living writers. His plays have crossed all frontiers, and have been played in all the chief cities of the civilized world. The nimble lightning of his wit rouses men and women everywhere. He is, in fact, the only man of letters of world-wide reputation. It is well, for he has done his best to hasten the day when the world will be one country and to do good to the only religion. The pity is that since he could not gain a public by orthodox means he had to resort to the methods of the mountebank.

MIMNERMUS.

The Cosmic Christ.

SINCE writing last about the Christian Saviour, I find that 82,973 articles and books have been written about him. I am happy to say that I have read but very few of them, and dreadful rubbish they were; but the latest, by Mrs. Violet Tweedale, entitled *The Cosmic Christ*, and published by Messrs. W. Rider deserves more than a passing notice.

First of all it should be noted that while it is true there are hundreds of Christian sects, it is quite easy to recognize them. When a Christian habitually uses the term "Jesus of Nazareth," you can scent a Modernist. He may be more or less reverent; that is, if you don't press him too far, he will let you think that he believes in the Virgin Birth, the Miracles, the Resurrection, etc., and he will talk for hours about the wonderful moral superiority of the Greatest Being Who Ever Trod this Earth. If you ask him point blank, does he believe in the Virgin Birth, etc., he will commence to hedge. He will claim that under no circumstances is it necessary to believe these things if you wish to call yourself a Christian. Oh dear, no. Just say you are a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, and you automatically become a Christian. The fact that there is no proof whatever that such a place as Nazareth was known in the early part of the first century really matters not. Jesus of Nazareth is, of course, universally acclaimed the Greatest Teacher or Spiritualist, or Anarch, or Socialist, or Individualist, or Vegetarian, and there you are: you are a Christian, even without knowing it.

If a Christian says, "Jesus Christ" or "Our Lord," you get a more or less orthodox believer. He may not be Church of England or a Roman Catholic, or he may be either; but he is almost certain to belong to the Evangelical crowd. "Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Saviour" is the term used by large classes of people who call themselves Christians and never think what they are saying.

If he says "Christ Jesus," then he is touching, so to speak, on holy ground. There you get your genuine believer, be he Church of England, Roman Catholic, or Salvation Army. The man who says Christ Jesus is generally bewhiskered, and very solemn. He is full of the Plan of Salvation, and also, very often, of the torments of Hell for the unlucky Infidel. He looks upon the last named with a sort of terrible anguish in his voice or a pitying smile. He only has the "Truth," of course. If the Christian says "*The Christ*," you get one who is either a "mystic," or wants to be one, a man who not merely believes the "outward" story in the Gospels but the "inner" one. He has almost reached the position of those who talk about the "cosmic" Christ, a position which, so to speak, only comes after years of meditation on the "mysteries" or if one has become an "initiate" or an "adept." The average Christian looks upon the Gospel story as Gospel truth. The events happened as narrated—

contradictions and all. In fact the existence of contradictions is positive proof of the absolute truth of our Saviour's story. The mystic, on the other hand, claims that there is a symbolical meaning to the stories as well. In this he has the support of many Christian Fathers, like Origen, for example. They claimed that Christianity was the final truth in Jesus, but the religion had been given to men throughout the ages. This is the position of the Rosicrucians and other "adepts"—that God gave His Message many times in history, and that Osiris, Buddha, Krishna, Siva and other Pagan deities were all genuine forerunners of "the Christ." To understand the "inner" meaning of the Gospels one had to be initiated into the genuine "mysteries," and once these were understood, one could see how wonderful was God's purpose in the universe.

For my own part, I am convinced that the Gospel writers, at least in their earliest drafts, did write allegories. Their meanings have been elucidated to some extent by the work of Dupuis, Robert Taylor, Inman and others. Whether we shall ever find out all that the writers tried to convey is another matter, but the underlying ideas attached to the "mysteries" are based on entirely erroneous data and suppositions about the purpose of God, and are so much balderdash and drivel. Read a chapter of Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* or some of Mrs. Besant's Theosophical works, and they will be found to consist of page after page of words, words, words. Theosophical "mystery" or Rosicrucianism or Black Magic, or however these things are named have a jargon of their own. They are full of pretentious words which make up in sound what they certainly have not in sense. The actual words "Cosmic Christ" really mean nothing but sound—except, of course, to those who are prepared to swallow any "mystery."

Mrs. Tweedale—like Mrs. Besant—has read a good deal of the Freethought literature dealing with the resemblances between Christianity and Paganism. Because it can be definitely proven that they are alike in many ways she accepts both—one as a forerunner of the other. Buddha, Osiris, Mithra, Orpheus, Krishna and the other famous mythological characters all actually lived. They were the messengers sent by the Divine Mind to teach mankind, the arts and sciences necessary for his existence. No one, she contends, would have found out iron without such Messengers who were all "Christs."

"Modern Science," she tells us, "also accepts the occult teaching that our solar system was originally evolved from the Saturnian nebula. Kronos the God of time, or Saturn, is our oldest God: the one with whom time began."

The idea that modern science agrees that time began with Kronos is one of the many delusions, Mrs. Tweedale fills her book with, but as she proceeds to tell us about a crowd of other "great creators," I am left wondering how much further credulity can go. After all, the notion that there were myriads of genuine Gods was part of Paganism and the theism at the basis of Judaism resolved them all eventually into one. To make the one, three, as Christianity does, was reverting somewhat back again to the exploded Polytheism, but Mrs. Tweedale swallows the lot quite as easily as the Jews swallowed the one. The "great creators" belong to the "supreme Hierarchy"—that is, "God in action." If you think of this God as in the singular then he is "divine universal principle." If in the plural as "divine power in action through the Elohim Hosts." And it is this kind of jargon which is necessary for us if we wish to "save" ourselves!

"Matter," we are told, "was slowly built up in

the way in which the Divine Architect ordained," and "in the minutest particle of the world the substance is permeated with the Christ spirit." Cancer germs, for example!

No sex existed in the "earliest beginnings," but everything was fertilized from without by the great "Sun Beings," while the Cosmic Christ and His Angels "worked upon the fashioning of our globe." Now isn't that just too cute? They surely must have had a great time kneading mountains to a conical top, and filling our ocean beds with waters from the Great Beyond, carefully adding salt to get the requisite flavour.

Mrs. Tweedale is very anxious we should thoroughly understand the "Second Person of the Trinity—the Son." He is the "totality of the Solar system, and the Sun of the seven sacred planets: Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Saturn, Moon and Sun." In time, we shall certainly get to know something about the "son" at this rate, but to be only the "totality" of some planets and the sun should be enough to make even a Christian Evidence speaker shed bitter tears. But in addition the "Cosmic Christ" is actually evolving himself into something greater—"a Cosmic Entity," though in the meantime, he can be considered also as the "Solar Logos." What with "radiant Christ auras," with "seven Logoi," with four archangels, Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel and Michael with Rama and Saritri, Avatars and the infant Krishna, it seems to me the more you know of "Cosmos" in the occult sense, the more tomfoolery you have to swallow.

Moreover, the teaching of Zoroaster found in the Zend-Avesta, is necessary to be understood to become an "adept," though I have no more space to deal with the Word of Ormuzd, or the Primal Fire or Ahura-Mazda. When Mrs. Tweedale comes to Mithra, who though the sun, is equally a Cosmic Christ, she quotes (and garbles) a passage from "Professor John Robertson"—carefully refraining from giving the name of the book *Pagan Christs*, perhaps because some of us might be more inclined to follow the whole mythos in Mr. J. M. Robertson's brilliant exposition rather than the hocus-pocus of occultism as revealed by Theosophy. Mrs. Tweedale, like other believers, does not like the non-historicity of Christ theory, for, of course, she recognizes that if "Jesus of Nazareth" never existed, the "Cosmic Christ" could not have entered his body at the famous baptism. So she quotes Mr. G. S. R. Mead, one of the most learned occultists of our day:—

Our new phase of quest of the historic Jesus centres round the discovery of the long lost or suppressed testimony of Flavius Josephus to infant Christianity in its cradle . . . Our position, at any rate has been won—definitely and decisively secured. The non-historicity school—which would have it that Jesus had never existed—is for ever hopelessly down and out—knocked senseless, nay, stone dead.

So that the fact that some Christian deliberately forged a passage about "Jesus" in Josephus is now made to prove Jesus really existed! Wonderful!

Finally, Mrs. Tweedale is very angry, as a feminist, that Deities have had a habit of being masculine. A woman herself, she insists that the real God was a "Father-Mother" god and not a mere "he." And she rightly points out that the "Blessed Virgin" was only one of the "Divine Female Principles" through the æons. Eve, Lilith, Isis, Istar, Ashtoreth, Maya, Astarte, Aphrodite, Venus, and many more lady goddesses right down to Mary, Joan of Arc (and possibly, Miss Amy Johnson) are really all the same—the "Blessed Virgin of all Time." This is her reply to the "utter failure and arrogant assumption of male superiority." Poor man!

I have no more space to deal with the Angels guarding us, like Michael, who used to be called the god Mercury. Or all about the oldest esoteric body of initiates in the world, the Sufis. Their late leader was Pir-O-Mayat Khan, and he was known as the "Murshid," and he always wore, when lecturing, the Sufi symbol, a heart with wings. This kind of thing should silence a horrid Materialist (like myself) for ever and ever.

No, I'm afraid it won't do. That there are mighty forces in the Universe I quite agree; that we have barely tapped them for our use is proven every day. But that the hopeless dreams and mystifications, the insufferable jargon of occultism can explain or help in any way is pure delusion. Practical science and ethics, the recognition of the essential Brotherhood of Man, the will for Peace between nations, right work and play—these are the things which will help us in this world, and they constitute Secularism.

H. CUTNER.

Religion and Freethought at the Seaside.

AFTER an interval of two or three years, I have visited my favourite watering place on the South Coast—Ramsgate—for a couple of weeks pleasant holiday of rest and change.

I always go by steamer, for a day on the Thames and on the sea from Southend to Ramsgate in weather of brilliant sunshine is a rare tonic, and braces one up for future enjoyment. This year I went by "The Crested Eagle," from Greenwich, and had a delightful trip each way.

To those who have never been to Ramsgate I may say that it is a magnificent seaside resort in the Isle of Thanet, and when the tide is out there is a wide stretch of beautiful sands from the Stone Harbour to the Cliffs, well on the road to Broadstairs. I have been so often to Ramsgate during the last fifty years that I know almost every inch of this antique and picturesque town, almost as well as some of the oldest inhabitants. Consequently I am on the look out for every little change that has taken place since my last visit. When I went there first, nearly half a century ago, I found the general inhabitant—the fishermen, the sailors, and even the lodging house keepers in a very primitive state of ignorance in respect to religion, the drama, music and art. Every Sunday during the early years of my visit, was given up, almost entirely to religious observance, in some sort of fashion. All sorts of religious cranks were on the sands for the best part of the day, holding forth on their crude doctrines of belief, and a large number of visitors would join them in singing hymns, and offering up prayers. Two or three large churches, of the Established Order, in the centre of the Town, would be occupied very largely by visitors from London, and a large assortment of Dissenting Chapels, such as Congregationalists, Baptists, Primitive Methodists and a number of other Fancy religions, would be occupied by visitors also. And in the course of time the Salvation Army, which began with a small band of howling Dervishes, playing concertinas, and young women banging tambourines, developed into a really fine brass band; and now, to-day, I should think the Band of the Salvation Army at Ramsgate is one of the finest in the country, and even the preachers of that primitive order have abandoned, in some respects, the old "Blood and fire" crusade, to proclaim a less gory and cruel Gospel.

On the sands, this year, I found that the visitors

had their usual dip in the sea on Sunday morning, and very few indeed showed any inclination to be washed in "the blood of the Lamb," which was said to make them "whiter than snow." The kiddies too played at their usual occupation of digging big holes in the sand, and covering some of their parents with it, quite oblivious of the ministrations of the Salvation Army or any other of the religious cranks on the sands. In the evening I saw a representative of the "Primitive Brethren" at the foot of the "Plains of Waterloo," holding forth; but let him howl never so loud, he could not get more than four boys and a little dog, to listen to him even for a few moments. There was also the usual open-air preacher holding forth close to the gates of the Harbour, but very few of the people who were on their way to the "Grand Concert" at the beautiful Hall on the West Cliff, stayed to give even a moments consideration to his desperate appeals to them to "Give heed to warnings of Christ," which if they neglected, meant death and destruction in the world to come.

And so I and some of my friends, *wicked unbelievers*, made our way to the Hall and heard the splendid concert, which was entirely secular, and which also included a conjuror, who played a game of cards with three persons selected from the audience, and blindfolded, showed them how to win. There was also an operatic singer, Mr. Booth Hitchens, one I had heard at the "Old Vic," who sang "Largo al Factotum," from Rossini, also "The Trumpeter," and who for his rendering won rounds of applause and many encores. There was also a lady vocalist, Miss Eva Broughton, who sang "Elizabeth's Greeting," from Wagner's "Tannhauser," very finely, and the whole entertainment was a great success.

Whenever I go to the seaside I always carry on a little judicious propaganda. For instance, I dropped a copy of the N.S.S. Tract *Mr. Ramsay Macdonald on Secular Education*, under the doorway of a Baptist Chapel, where the first comer would be sure to find it. One evening on the East Cliff, I got in conversation with an intelligent lady, and during our talk she asked me what I thought about Sir Conan Doyle's death and alleged subsequent appearance at "The Albert Hall," when he is alleged to have walked on to the platform and *deliberately* "sat down" in a vacant chair. In reply, I said that the person who is alleged to have seen him must have been suffering from a "heat oppressed brain," like Macbeth, who saw the "dagger in the air," when he was on his way to the bedchamber of King Duncan, to murder him. When I was further asked whether I believed that people would live again after death, as Christians and Spiritualists believe, I gave the lady a brief lecture on the doctrine of Evolution, and showed that man has come up through all the lower animals and asked if that was so, when the soul or spirit, or whatever it was that was to live again began to be—whether fishes, reptiles, birds, or the lower mammals or the anthropoid apes had souls, and if not, why not? The lady's husband, who, at this point, came up to join in the discussion, said that he had recently been undergoing a course of study in anatomy, and that he quite agreed with me that man carried within his own body, "the scaffolding of his early ancestry." And so we passed a very agreeable hour of conversation.

On another evening, on the East Cliff, I was introduced by my friend, Mr. Trevelion, a Freethinking resident of Ramsgate, to an old gentleman, who said he was a thorough-going Freethinker, and he had heard John Stuart Mill and the famous Thos. H. Huxley lecture, but he added the most brilliant Freethought lecturer he had ever heard was a gentleman named *Foote*—whom he had heard many years

ago at the Hall of Science. When I told him that the late G. W. Foote was an old friend of mine, and that I had often walked with him along this same East Cliff in the summers of the past, as we were now walking, discussing some of the great problems of the Universe—he was delighted, and said he wished he had known Mr. Foote personally. I also discussed with two young airmen of "His Majesty's Air Force," who had been up in planes 14,000 feet and 17,000 respectively—and I asked them—both of them were intelligent young men from the North of England, Newcastle and Durham, and I asked them if they could breathe all right at that altitude, and they said yes, but at another thousand or two feet the air would become so rarified that they could scarcely be able to breathe. I asked them further, what prospect Elijah would have had with his fiery chariot, up above, or Jesus, when he ascended into heaven without a plane or parachute of any sort, they both laughed very heartily and said "not much." And so I carried on with my "judicious propaganda," and I found on the whole, that most of the people I met were practical Secularists—though some of them did not know it—and believed in making the best of this life—the only life of which we have any knowledge, and which is worthy of our best and wisest efforts for the promotion of human happiness in every part of the world.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

"Inside the Roman Church."

THE full title of Mr. Poynter's book is *Inside the Roman Church, by One who was there, A general survey, with special reference to Great Britain.* Mr. Poynter is already known to Freethinkers by his occasional contributions to the *Freethinker* and the *Literary Guide*. As one who was formerly a Roman Catholic, he can speak with authority on some, at least, of the activities of the Romish Church. We hope the present book is only a forerunner of others. Although very interesting, it hardly bears out the expectations raised by the title. The sub-title "A General Survey," more correctly describes the work. The preface contains most of the autobiographical matter. Mr. Poynter says he is of Free Church ancestry, though never a member of any Free Church, and had not even been baptized (presumably he was of Baptist stock). He joined the Roman Catholic Church as a youth and was in it for eighteen years, being very zealous and active. In especial, he worked as a controversialist in the Press in defence of Roman Catholic claims. This meant that he had to know something of both sides and he "became aware of the unexpected strength of the case against Rome." He ultimately came to "a reluctant conviction that the ecclesiastical machine is too worldly, too autocratic, and that its special claims are erroneous."

Following this short personal preface the "general survey" begins (Chapter I) with "Growth and Claims of the Roman Church." Perhaps the most interesting part of this chapter is the selection of instances where "infallible" Popes have contradicted each other. Chapter II. deals with the "temporal power" of the Popes. If anyone who read my book *Priestcraft* thought that I overstated the swelled-headed claims of the Roman Catholic priests he will find that what Mr. Poynter says amply confirms me. The Romish doctrine "comes to this: The Roman Church is above all States, and in no way depends on them; the State, while verbally acknowledged to be independent of the Roman Church is so only on condition that it agrees with that Church or defers to it in controversies; State laws opposed to the Roman

Church are not binding in conscience, and it is a crime to obey them. Roman Catholics are bound to obey not merely the defined doctrines of the Church, but also *anything that Bishops command.*"

The Bishops, of course are simply the Pope's lackeys—a fact which comes out plain enough in the recent Blue Book on the troubles in Malta—which everybody ought to get and read. In my book I carry the Romish dogma to a logical conclusion, which Roman Catholics do not like, but cannot controvert, namely, that membership of the Papal Church is treasonable. I am sorry Mr. Poynter does not allude to this aspect of the case. Believe me, this will be, in practice, the weakest and most vulnerable spot at which to attack the priests' organization.

Chapter III. "The Roman Catholic Church throughout the world," is a very rapid survey—too rapid in fact. The case of Mexico, *e.g.*, is treated far too briefly for satisfaction. The paragraphs on Canada are the best. How many people in this country realize that Quebec is practically ruled from Rome—as much as, if not more than, the Irish Free (?) State. "The practical application of Canon Law (as in Quebec, that Roman Church-law is applied) is to deny to those affected by it the benefits of British Law—freedom of speech and the press vanishes, statutes are superseded by canons, our highest Parliament denied the right to regulate so vital a concern to society at large as marriage, and allegiance to the State superseded by obedience to a caste of men who claim to be imbued with a divine essence which places them above criticism, and makes questioning of their act sacrilege. A few years ago Canon Law had no civil force; it is now superior to the King's Courts." Is not this treason in practice?

The next chapter (IV.) "The Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain," though it does not tell much not already known, is written with an intimacy only possible to one who has been actively engaged from the inside. The fifth chapter is practically a continuation of the fourth, and deals mainly with Roman Catholic literature. The sixth is "Summary and conclusions." The most interesting item here is the form of words that a convert has to use on joining the Roman Catholic Church. He submits himself with his whole heart to the Church. "I firmly believe" (he has to say) "all the articles she proposes for my belief; I reject and condemn all that she rejects and condemns and I am ready to observe all that she commands me." In other words he signs on as a chattel.

There is an appendix on the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacraments and another on Canon Law. A Bibliography and an Index complete the work.

Mr. Poynter's book is obviously a very incomplete survey, and a few things on which we hope he will sometime give us more information may be mentioned.

How much of the case against Catholicism does the Roman Catholic laity get to know? Mr. Poynter quotes a trade opinion that they are not a good reading public. The Index of Prohibited Books is one reason. Another is that the official machine keeps them going on purely Roman Catholic stuff—very poor stuff intellectually speaking, and—Mr. Poynter says—very vituperative. A specialist like Mr. Poynter, who knows his way about Roman Catholic periodicals, could do useful work in reporting some of this sort of thing. More detailed information about Roman Catholics on the staffs of the great dailies would also be useful.

There is one anecdote in the book worth repeating. Mr. Poynter mentioned H. G. Wells to a pious young lady. "Who is he?" she asked. "Is he a Jesuit? If not, why should I read him?"

Mr. Poynter tells practically nothing of monasteries and convents. Do people realize that there are 350 monasteries and 959 nunneries in the country—secret places that ought to be open to Government inspection as they are in Roman Catholic countries.

Another subject on which Mr. Poynter is almost silent is finance. We hear of a £2,000,000 Cathedral for Liverpool; a £250,000 one for Leeds, and a £250,000 scheme at Edinburgh. How is the money raised? We have heard that the priests have an approach to an income tax system and each chattel is told what he has to subscribe. Is this correct?

Then as to confession. It is surprising that any one of Free Church ancestry should have been brought to a priest's knees. How was it done? We know that even born and bred Roman Catholics are touchy about it—in public. They feel some shame. But in private do they shirk it—or wallow in it?

Mr. Poynter says that Home Rule for Ireland healed the political breach between the English and Irish Catholics in England. But do the English Roman Catholics look with unalloyed pleasure on the increase of the Irish in England? How many of them are like Lord Strickland, who, as an Englishman and a politician, stands up valiantly to the Vatican? (Incidentally how can a man like Lord Strickland, after his personal experience of the humbug, lying, hatred and vituperation of the Vatican gang—his experiences including an attempt on his life—still be a Roman Catholic, and say he is kindly disposed to the Holy Father?)

Mr. Poynter left the Roman Catholics because he "found the ecclesiastical machine too worldly, too autocratic." It sounds very mild. I do not think the machine will take much notice of such gentle criticism. Give it something to be going on with, Mr. Poynter, and after that, some more.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

Acid Drops.

According to an article in the *Sunday Express*, the site of Sodom and Gomorrah has been discovered by Father Mallon, of the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome. More than that he has also discovered a very fine house which was probably the one in which Lot lived, and outside the city a stone pillar shaped like a human being, which is believed to be Lot's wife, after she had been turned into a pillar of salt. Now this is a very striking confirmation of the Bible story. For if there were two cities destroyed by fire from heaven, then these two may have been the cities in question. And if Lot lived *somewhere* in the city, then he may have lived *anywhere*, and if anywhere, then this house may have been the one. And if Mrs. Lot was turned into a pillar of salt, then this column may be the actual salt column, transformed by another miracle into ordinary rock. If many more striking confirmations of Holy Writ are discovered, we are afraid we shall have to suspend publication of the *Freethinker*, or incorporate it with the *Christian Herald*.

On the lofty peak of Corcovado, overlooking the harbour of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, is being erected a huge figure of Jesus with arms extended to have the appearance of a cross. Alongside it, might well be placed a monument in memory of those hundreds of thousands of unhappy human beings who suffered death, torture, boycott or banishment as a consequence of the religion Jesus introduced into the world.

Italy has agreed with France on a naval "holiday" until next year. Still more useful would be a perpetual

holiday for dictators who specialize in speeches that create or incite the war spirit among their compatriots. Better still, let us have a concerted effort in all countries to create among the peoples a feeling of shame at the very idea of settling differences by means of war.

"No more moving or searching or thought-compelling sermon" has been broadcast than that by the Rev. Dr. Newton Flew the other Sunday. So a Nonconformist journal declares. The sermon was woven around Christ's exhortation, "Come." Most of the listeners seem not to have been "moved" enough to accept the Christly invitation. For there's no evidence of any large additions to Church and Chapel congregations since the sermon was preached. But we believe a lot of bored listeners were "moved" to switch off. So no one need doubt that the worthy Doctor is a very "moving" preacher.

The infant death-rate in England was 128 in every 1,000 twenty-five years ago. To-day it is 74. For this improvement there are no thanks due to "Our Heavenly Father." The credit must be given to the painstaking investigations of our medicos. God has been content merely to smile benignantly up aloft on his ignorant creatures below.

"About Fools," is the title of an article by the Rev. A. E. Whitham in a Free Church weekly. While touring in Italy he met an American tourist, a fool, who asked him what was to be seen in Sienna. Mr. Whitham says:—

I quietly told him it was the city of St. Catherine. Who was she? "A saint," I replied. What had she done? I spoke to him of some of the striking incidents in her wonderful life. "Oh, a fanatic," he drawled. "No," I said, raising my voice, "a saint." "Tell me more of this curiosity." "I am sorry," I said, "I must go"; and I walked out of his presence to resume my pilgrimage and light a votive candle in the place where her head rests.

There was, we gather, more than one fool present during the conversation. For a man who swallows all the fairy-tales spun by fertile religious imagination concerning some pious person of the past can hardly be classed with the wise. But perhaps this is unjust to Mr. Whitham. After all, he belongs to a profession which adroitly secures, without needing to indulge in socially productive labour, food, housing and clothing from others who are not so wide awake. And possibly his professed belief in the fairy-tales is merely for encouraging others to believe. The credulous type of mind has to be fostered whenever possible.

Bishop P. H. Tsen, of Haaang, China, told the Christian Evidence Society about a bright wheeze he adopts to entice people into his church. His practice is to speak outside the open door of a church until a good-sized crowd assembles. He then proceeds to walk slowly backwards while the people are engrossed in what he is saying, with the result that the whole crowd ultimately enters the church, without knowing it. He then asks them to sit down, "which they do without giving the matter much thought." Then, we presume, he propounds the glad tidings, and those of the mob who are not capable of giving the matter much thought are captured for the religion which requires its adherents not to think but merely believe. And after all, there's something suggestive about the fact that the Bishop leads the mob by walking backwards. The ideas he stands for go back likewise into the primitive past of the human race.

Wesleyan undergraduates of Oxford University recently held their annual campaign, under canvas, at Witney. Some of the subjects discussed, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Harold Roberts, were: "Is God good?" "Jesus Christ." "What does prayer do?" "What is the Church for?" A report of these discussions says:—

The keynote of these meetings was free discussion and clear thinking, and because of this the atmosphere was

one of the deepest spirituality. This may seem paradoxical, as such methods could easily have led merely to barren intellectual discussion.

One can quite realize how far the discussion was and how clear the thinking, while a reverend doctor was present to steer the discussion along "safe" lines. What would have improved things would have been the presence of a few good Freethought debaters. These might have disturbed the atmosphere of deepest spirituality. But they would have clarified the undergraduates thinking considerably.

Among literary temptations, says a religious journal, none is more common or more unfortunate than that which prompts the reader to ignore books which, for reasons of heresy or prejudice, he thinks he will not like. Our contemporary will not mind our adding that this particular literary temptation is common among the narrowly pious than among other sections of the reading public. Most of the prejudices, too, is created by parsonic reviewers or by journalists who have had a narrow religious upbringing. It is unfortunate for the mental progress of the reading public that most of it waits to be told what it ought to read or like. But, of course, the schooling it receives endows it with that type of intelligence. And we feel sure no parson wishes it were otherwise than it is.

At least one correspondent on the *Daily Mail* has been allowed to put a few questions to the Spiritualists following the recent huge advertisement at the Albert Hall. This correspondent requires the seraphic spirits in the great beyond to tell us something of the structure of an atom, a cure for cancer, or how to solve the unemployment problem. These are very sensible demands, and for that reason they do not enter the minds of those who are more concerned about the dead than the living.

It will be joyful news to religionists to know that according to Lord Hewart in a recent case, the court had no concern with the merits of any particular religious faith. This was a case of a jangle between Protestants and Catholics, and the subject of it was the welfare of a child.

A medical report has been asked for in the case of a man who had a habit of throwing himself down on the pavement before strangers and praying. The candidates for heaven have much to learn in the simple business of being in the first place a good citizen on earth.

The Rev. H. Wilks, of Upper Thong, says that "without a saving grace of humour, the average parson's life is not conducive to robust health." But if his congregation develops a saving grace of humour we expect he will find them leaving for other fields. And we have often suspected that many of the congregation only submit to what is said because they fancy the preacher is only joking.

In Italy the schools are now completely under the control of the church so far as religion is concerned. From the elementary schools onward the religious teaching is definite and dogmatic, with an interpretation of history strictly in accordance with the claims of the Roman Church. Italy is away back in the Middle Ages. How long it remains there remains to be seen. No one country can remain outside the general stream of civilization for ever.

Reviewing a book, *From Daniel to St. John the Divine*, which is a study in Apocalypse, a reverend doctor says:—

All sorts of weird sects owe their existence to a mor-

bid and unenlightened pre-occupation with Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic fantasies. On the other hand there are those perplexed preachers who can sympathize with the parish priest who came to a well-known scholar . . . with the confession: "Whenever Advent comes round I am confronted with the same difficulty as to what I am to teach my people about the Second Coming, with its accompanying problem of catastrophic apocalyptic—darkened sun, blood-red moon, falling stars, the heavens shaken, etc. Nowadays people simply don't believe these things; and I very much doubt whether I do!" Those who feel like this should first make a study of the background of thought without which all this splendid symbolism can convey no meaning to us.

We, too, can recommend Christians to make a study of the "background of thought" in connexion with all the fundamental ideas of the Christian creed. To the Christian anxious for full enlightenment in this matter, we suggest he should study books by Freethought writers. All that he will get from the modern theologians is a farrago of speculations—quaint attempts at rationalizing the irrational.

The Rev. A. D. Belden, of Whitefield's Church, London, has fully grasped the fundamental importance of the principle of "catching 'em young." He says:—

It would indeed be a very healthy tradition to establish in our [Sunday] schools that it is morally wrong for elder scholars to drift away carelessly, or because their particular fancies are not met, from the Church which has provided them with their religious education, and to which they owe a sacred and incalculable debt.

Mr. Belden adds that the making of such a tradition should be a growth, an ever deepening impression secured by the teachers from the earliest age of the child. Quite so. What Mr. Belden obviously desires is that independent thinking shall be discouraged as a "moral sin." He also wants carefully insinuated in the immature intelligence of the children the notion that they are morally bound to a particular denomination. It is curious how often a priest's idea of what is morally right coincides with what is advantageous to his professional interests. It is also odd how the mind of the medicine-man works along similar lines in all countries and all ages. The instinct of self-preservation cannot be denied expression.

From a letter of the United Methodist Conference to its members, the *Methodist Times* quotes the following:—

There are many beautiful and attractive things in our Church life; kindness, courtesy, tolerance increase among us.

Our contemporary adds that "our people do not quarrel as they once did, our quarterly meetings seldom resemble 'bear gardens,' our leaders are kind, tolerant, and generous; our churches are good mannered." And one gathers that these virtues are quite recent improvements. What has happened is that Methodists have been reformed by contact with the "worldly" outsider. Nevertheless, we don't anticipate that any Methodist will be generous-minded enough to admit it.

London Presbyterians are appealing for money in support of a housing scheme they are organizing in Poplar. The appeal says: "For Christian people who believe in the sacredness of the family, the cause of providing good housing becomes a sacred one." Whereupon, a weekly journal is moved to say that one of the most cheering features of recent times is the "activity of religious bodies in sharing the work of better housing in overcrowded districts." We like that word "sharing." Persons outside the Churches are the first to suggest and organize such better housing. Then a few churches start to imitate the efforts of the pioneers—after having rather belatedly discovered that the "cause" is a "sacred one." What we should like to see is the Churches doing something useful without accompanying the action with a lot of sacred cant.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- F. GALTERHILL.—Pleased you found information useful. News about Freethought abroad is naturally interesting to English Freethinkers.
- J. PEARSON.—Thanks for your letter. You appear to have good grounds for saying that obstacles were placed in the way of your child going to an extra-district school on account of withdrawal, although you do not say that the child suffered. You must in all cases see that the child is in school before the closing of the register.
- J. WEARING.—We do not think there is any reliable authority for the saying attributed to Pope Leo the Tenth, although more than one Pope was suspected of heresy amounting to positive disbelief.
- H. T. DERRIET.—Thanks for *Citizen* articles. They add one more to the many exposures of Spiritualism, and prove that for many exposures are quite useless. The only effective cure is a raising of the general mentality of the people.
- B. L. BOWERS.—There was no promise in 1870 that the instruction given in schools would be strictly secular, but the government grant is given on account of the secular instruction alone, not for the religious teaching.
- E. E. MAWDITT.—There is nowadays no direct grant of money to the Church, but there is a remission of rates and taxes which is substantially the same thing.
- A. E. ALLEN.—Sorry, but we are unable to make use of the lines sent.
- BEDFORD JOY.—Only one of the many ways in which the Churches are striving to retain some sort of a hold on the people.
- MR. T. O'NEILL, of 68 Hamilton Street, Stalybridge, would be glad to get into touch with his old friend P. Mihill, late of Manchester.
- R. T. GOULD.—We have not heard of this particular experiment, and question very much whether it is as stated. An insect is a highly developed thing.
- W. PEARSON.—You must really try to use your imagination when either reading or listening.

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

In "Views and Opinions," last week, we stated that we had not received any letters from parents, giving examples of persecution of children as a consequence of being withdrawn from religious instruction. We have now received two such, one of which we are unable to print this week, but will do so in our next issue, the

other we can only summarize, as it is marked "Private and Confidential." The writer gives two cases. One, a child was withdrawn from religious instruction, and in consequence was held up by the teacher to the ridicule of the class. Complaint was made to the Education Authority. He was informed that if the matter was pressed the case would have to go before the Committee, and in the case of anything being done the N.U.T. would most certainly take the matter into the Courts. The case was therefore dropped by the parents, because they feared the expense that might be incurred if legal proceedings were taken by the N.U.T.

We are not very satisfied with this case. If proceedings were taken against the teacher it would have to be by the Committee, and if the N.U.T. were so ill-advised as to defend a teacher who had so disgraced his position, it would be against the Committee that action would be taken and the parents would not be exposed to any expense whatever.

The second case has to do with a child that was withdrawn from religious instruction, but was found to be still receiving it. The father visited the school, received an apology, and was told it had been given by mistake. But under cover of going to night school, the child was for several years being trained in religion, until the father learned that his child was being prepared for confirmation. As the girl was then fourteen years of age, the parents submitted. We do not see that either of these cases seriously cut across anything we said in our notes. The parents must have been lax not to have known what was going on during the three or four years the child was in the Secondary School, and a little more vigilance might easily have checkmated what was attempted. The real conclusion appears to us to be greater strength and greater vigilance. While Christians can terrorize they will do so.

Following the attempt of Councillor Hall to break down the Sabbatarianism of Manchester by playing a game of cricket in one of the Parks on Sunday, a Sunday Games and Freedom League has been formed. The Society has a good programme, the Chairman of the new association is Councillor Hall, and the membership fee is one shilling per year. We hope that many thousands of members will be enrolled, as it is numbers rather than money is required. Letters should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Cox, 379 Kingsway, Didsbury.

There have been several examples of late of printers declining to print certain articles in journals which they regularly issued. The latest example occurs in the case of the *Socialist Review*, which was compelled to issue its July number with several blank pages owing to the printers declining to publish an article on "Sex Reform and the Christ Ideal."

Will those who write the Secretary of the N.S.S. please note that Mr. Rosetti is away on holiday until August 23, and only such letters as require immediate attention will be dealt with. Others will await his return.

We have pointed out time after time the illegal character of Magistrates and Councils in giving permission to Cinemas to open on Sundays, no matter to what purpose the money taken is devoted, so long as there is a charge for admission. Such performances are statute barred. Now we see that the Entertainments Protection Association has taken action against the L.C.C. for giving permission to the Streatham Astoria on Sundays. The Council promised it would not prosecute if the money taken was devoted to charity. But others may prosecute, and any place of entertainment which is open on Sunday, and to which there is a charge for admission may be prosecuted. There is only one thing to be done, and that is to sweep away these ridiculous Sunday Acts and be done with it.

Sociology.

(Concluded from page 507.)

THE first period of barbarism then began with the making of pottery.

The termination of this period, in the two hemispheres may be indicated by the "adoption of equivalents. In the Eastern hemisphere, the domestication of animals, and the Western, the cultivation of maize and plants by irrigation, together with the use of adobe-brick and stone in house building," may serve the purpose. (See *Ancient Society*, p. 11.)

This leaves, in the lower status of barbarism, the Indian tribes of the United States east of Missouri River; and such tribes in Europe and Asia as practiced the art of pottery, but were without domestic animals.

Simple huts were used for habitation. Some form of clothing was usually worn, although this could be discarded, if the climate made it possible, without any sense of shame. Stone, wood, and bone implements were in use.

(5) *Middle Status of Barbarism*.—In the Eastern hemisphere, such tribes as possessed domestic animals, but were without a knowledge of iron, belong to this division of barbarism.

The ancient Britons used iron, but as this was due to contact with more advanced tribes of the Continent, and as the domestic institutions of the Britons were not correspondingly advanced, they are classed as Barbarians of the Middle Status.

In the Western hemisphere, we have the Village Indians of New Mexico, Central America and Peru, who cultivated by irrigation, and used adobe-brick and stone in building.

In many tribes of this period, huts of wood were in use; cane or straw being often used for roofing. Nudity was not considered to be immoral, but clothing was more frequently worn. There was weaving, the making of pottery and metal work; commerce in markets, and the rule of kings in states, with traditional laws and rank.

(6) *Upper Status of Barbarism*.—This began "with the manufacture of iron, and ended with the invention of a phonetic alphabet, and the use of writing in literary composition." (*Ancient Society*, p. 11.)

It is represented by the Grecian tribes of the Homeric age; the Italian tribes prior to the founding of Rome; and Germanic tribes of Cæsar's time.

These barbarians were in possession of stone buildings; and had made some advance in the art of life and government, upon the barbarians of the middle status.

The reader is possibly acquainted with other classifications of the various stages of social evolution through which man has passed; this has been adopted as giving a useful indication of the naturalness of the process. It must be remembered that it is impossible to draw a line and say, with certainty, here one period ended and another began. Hence, variations in classifications cannot be avoided.

The preparation and eating of food reveals a gradual process of refinement from the days of the savage to the present time. But, traces of man's primitive habits often make their appearance even to-day.

Early man's habits in regard to food were at first little better than those of the animal world in general. His time was largely taken up by gathering and eating articles of food, which were devoured without preparation, until the use of fire and water was learned.

To primitive man there came no feeling of disgust

when indulging in voracious feasting. He had to obtain food how and when he could and, often being forced to refrain from eating for days, he would eat to repletion when the good fortune of finding sufficient food came his way. The coarse sense of the savage responded to the delights of satisfying his hunger in the most ferocious and beastly manner. As Letourneau says: "The life of the savage, and especially of the savage who is neither pastoral nor agricultural, is very different indeed from that of certain well-fed townfolk, whose issues are overcharged with adipose tissues, with ailmentary reserves, and who often, vainly endeavouring to awaken in them a simple appetite, sit down several times in the day to a too plentiful table with the most mechanical regularity. The meal of the savage will depend upon a thousand chances. Nature, as one used to say formerly, serves him very unpunctually. In this kind of life, so much akin to that of the animal, man must eat when he can and how he can, compensating as far as possible his hours of famine by hours of gluttony. To know what he will eat is then the great affair of life; it is the all absorbing care. All the faculties of his intelligence are absorbed, and often to no purpose, in looking after his daily food. For nearly every other object man's thought is dormant; the cry of the empty stomach makes itself heard before every other." (*Sociology*, Book I, ch. 3, Eng. Ed., 1893.)

With inventions and improvements in the arts of cooking and variously preparing food, many of the beastly habits of our ancestors have disappeared and food is eaten more circumspectly.

The possibility of regulating his food supply which has followed the discovery of means to bring an increasing number of natural objects in use as food has enabled man to regulate, to some extent, his meal-times. This has largely made unnecessary the habit of overeating in fear of a food shortage; especially as a knowledge of how to preserve perishable food-stuffs has enabled man to dispense with loading his stomach with a plentiful supply of food which might otherwise deteriorate.

Important as the quest for food still remains, a large percentage of time can now be given to other pursuits.

The same lack of refinement and lack of shame is to be found in savage and barbaric tribes with regard to sexual matters, as with regard to food.

It is after a long process of evolution that a high degree of sensitiveness on the question of exhibiting the sexual parts of the body is reached. In the meantime, a great number of variations in regard to manners and customs relating to sex has been indulged in, from savagery through barbarism into civilization.

To many peoples, such as the Fuegians and Australians, nakedness involved no sense of shame, and if clothing were used it was not originally on any moral grounds, but as a protection against the weather. Even in tribes where some sense of decency seems to have arisen, the covering of the sexual parts of the body is most inadequate, and is often not allowed to young girls even when adopted by the married women.

As Letourneau says: "We may mention the little apron worn by the Hottentot women; the belt with a fringe to it worn by the women of New Caledonia, and even this is forbidden to young girls, married women only having the right to wear it. In many savage tribes the young girls are obliged to go naked, even among tribes in which some clothing has become common." (*Sociology*, p. 58.)

Restrictions concerning the satisfying of the amorous passions have also varied in the different

stages of savagery and barbarism, and among different tribes in the same stage. These variations have in large measure been carried over into civilization as many of our present-day regulations of the use of sex are publicly complied with and privately ignored.

In many, if not all, savage and barbarous tribes, freedom to dispose of their sex, has, at some time or other, been exercised by both men and women with no sense of shame.

In some cases the women has been at liberty to satisfy her amorous desires, provided she attended to the requirements of her husband, or the men to whom she belonged. On the other hand, men have often been free to dispose of their womenfolk when desirous of pleasing a friend or showing respect to a visitor.

With the facts concerning the shamelessness of the savage and barbarian respecting the exposure of the whole body, and the free use of sex, all theories of the innate goodness of man fail to square.

Originally man was neither good nor bad, with regard to matters which now come under moral judgment he has learned what it is to be both.

It is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules for the appraisal of man's moral life. All estimates of moral doing should only be made in the light of whatever knowledge we possess of the circumstances of the various tribes or nations brought under review. Nudity on the part of both men and women, in tribes of the lowest order, may be simply unmoral; ideas of morality and immorality not having as yet entered their consciousness. Like other factors in the development of moral ideas and feelings, the sense of shame is a product of social evolution, and is always relative to the social habits and circumstances of the community in which a man lives. Hence, a member of a lowly tribe might be without a feeling of shame on his committing an act which would cause a member of a modern community to feel very keenly ashamed of himself. It is important that the relativity of morality should be kept in mind. It is essential to a naturalistic understanding of man's evolution, in the sphere of morals. It makes valueless the theory of the divine, or religious origin of morality.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

A Woman Pioneer.

(Concluded from page 508.)

SHOCKED by this state of affairs Ernestine hastened to Albany in the winter of 1836-37, and personally circulated a petition in the State capital for a law to enable a married woman to hold property. People laughed at her, and all the signatures she could obtain after much trouble were five; yet nothing daunted, she presented the petition to the New York Legislature, which took no action in the matter. She continued for eleven years to send petitions until she brought about the adoption of a Bill which conferred upon married women the right to their own wages, and to equal guardianship of their children. The following incident related by L. E. Barnard (the chief source of these informations regarding her) gives an idea of her courage. At a public meeting in the Broadway Tabernacle, to consider the necessity of an improved system of Free Schools, J. S. Buckingham, M.P., from England, and Rev. Robert Breckenbridge were among the speakers. Mrs. Rose called the Rev. Gentleman to order for violating the sense of the audience by overlooking the important object which had called the audience together, and indulging in a violent clerical speech to attack a class whom

he stigmatized as infidels. This bold challenge to the prerogative of the clergy by a woman caused a tremendous excitement. Loud cries of: "Drag her out, she is an infidel," resounded in the hall. She, however, held her ground, calm and collected, while the tumult lasted, after order was restored, continued her remarks in a most dignified manner. In 1852 she attended the Woman's Rights Convention at Syracuse, N.Y. She was introduced as "a Polish lady, who had been educated in the Jewish faith," and her presence was pointed to as proof of the universality of woman's demand for equality. She responded with a powerful speech indicative of her cosmopolitanism, "It is of very little importance in what geographical position a person is born, but it is important whether his ideas are based upon facts that can stand the test of reason, and his acts are conducive to the happiness of society yet, being a foreigner, I hope you will have some charity on account of speaking in a foreign language. Yes, I am an example of the universality of our claims, for not only American women, but a daughter of crushed Poland, and the downtrodden and persecuted people called the Jews, pleads for the equal rights of her sex."

After this gracious bow to the Convention, she got down to business by introducing a resolution that woman asks for her right not as a gift of charity but as an act of justice! and that any discrimination in civil rights on account of sex, is in direct violation of the principles of justice, etc. The resolution was adopted.

For the Freethinker. Some passages from a speech, entitled "A Defence of Atheism," will serve to give an idea of her style as an orator—a style which was pointed logical, and impassioned—turning to the story of Creation as related in the Book of Genesis—the same book which involved her in such difficulties when she was a little girl—she goes on to say: "Having finished in five days, this stupendous production, with its mighty mountains, its vast seas, its fields and woods, supplied the waters with fishes, from the whale that swallowed Jonah to the little Dutch herring which the Russian mujik is consuming; peopled the woods with inhabitants, tigers, lions, bears, the elephant with its trunk, the dromedary with his hump, the deer with his antlers, the nightingale with her melodies, down to the serpent which tempted Mother Eve; covered the fields with vegetation, decorated the gardens with flowers, hung the trees with fruits. And surveying this glorious world as it lay spread out like a map before him, the question naturally suggested itself, what is it all for, unless there were beings capable of admiring, of appreciating, and of enjoying the delights this beautiful world could afford? And suiting the action to the impulse, he said, 'Let us make man.' So God, created man in his own image in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them! I presume by the term image we are not to understand a near resemblance of form, but in the image of likeness of his knowledge, his power, his wisdom, and perfection. Having thus man he placed him in the Garden of Eden, and bade them, with the single restriction not to eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, to live, to love and to be happy. What a delightful picture, could we only rest here. But did these beings fresh from the land of omnipotent wisdom, in whose image they were made answer the great object of their creation? Alas, no, no sooner were they installed in their Paradisean home than they violated the first, the only injunction given them, and fell from their high estate; and not only they, but by a singular justice of that very merciful Creator, their innocent posterity to all coming generations, fell with them. Does that

bespeak wisdom and perfection in the Creator or the creature? But what was the cause of this tremendous fall which frustrated the whole design of the creation? The serpent tempted mother Eve, and she, like a good wife, tempted her husband. But did God not know when he created the serpent that it would tempt the woman, and that she was made out of such frail materials (the rib of Adam) as not to be able to resist the temptation? If he did not know, then his knowledge was at fault; if he did, but could not prevent that calamity, then his omnipotence ceased to function, if he could and would not then his goodness comes under the lash. Choose which you like and it remains fatal to the rest." Having thus disposed of the O. T. Cosmos, she proceeds to pay her respects to the New Testament. Having failed to purge mankind of sin by means of the deluge God, according to the New Testament finally sent, his only begotten son "Jesus in order that by his death on the cross he might save the world." But, asks Mrs. Rose in a fine biting sarcasm. Did he succeed, even then? Is the world saved? Saved, from what? From ignorance? It is all around us. From poverty, crime, sin, shame and misery? It abounds everywhere. Look into your poor houses, your prisons, lunatic asylums; contemplate the whip, the instruments of torture and of death; ask the murderer, or his victim, listen to the raving of the maniac, the groans of despair, the cruel deeds of the tyrant, the sufferings of slavery, etc., etc. Count the millions of lives lost by fire, water, sword and epidemic. Why does God still permit these horrors to afflict the race? Does omniscience not know it? No! Humanity revolts against such a supposition."

She lectured in twenty-three States of the Union, some of which she visited often. Ernestine also addressed several State legislatures with marked effect. She paid her own bills, never charged admission to her lectures or took up a collection, her husband gladly defrayed the expense of her extensive tours. After 33 years work in America she and her husband returned to England. On the eve of her departure Susan B. Anthony presented her with a handsome sum of money and other presents in recognition of her great services. In 1874 she returned for a brief visit to New York. Her husband died in 1882 and his death left her very lonely. When Susan Anthony visited her in England the following year she complained about her isolation. According to Miss Anthony she was vastly more isolated in England on account of her non-religious views than in America. Nine years later this noble, altruistic woman passed away at the age of eighty-two. How much the women of America, wrote L. E. Barnard, in 1881, owe to this noble Polish woman, cannot be estimated, for moral influences are too subtle for measurement.

X.

The Whip Cracks.

DESPITE all depressing rumors to the contrary, there is direct evidence available to the effect that the Great American Mind *does* move. Where is your Galileo now? That which was fixed has come un-fixed; and John McCrashan's is the chastening hand which, via the *Freethinker*, has livened up the Great American Rule.

This paper, about three months ago, and in two sections, published an article of mine entitled "Chain-Store Religion." The said article tied-up the New York *Forum*—a largish, "better-class" American Magazine, with great cultural pretensions—to the world's whipping-post, and its editor, Dr. Henry Goddard Leach, Ph.D., for his ridiculous, three-eyed

attitude upon questions of race, especially the negroid race; Roman Catholics, mad Fundamentalists, and other credal vermin deposited on this earth in the name of Jesus Christ. Result, I have received this day, from the said Dr. Henry Goddard Leach, Ph.D., the following entirely meek, well-disciplined epistle:—

The Forum,

441 Lexington Avenue, New York,

May 3, 1930.

"DEAR MR. MCCRASHAN,

You are a valued contributor of *The Forum*. During the past year and a half, you have probably noticed that we have been conducting an experiment, not only in typography, and lay out, with symbolic illustrations, but also in content. The times we live in are marked by great skepticism of all the traditions, and by a vast novelty of experimentation in many directions at once. Under these circumstances, no body of thought commands universal respect, though it seems to me, as an editor, that the thinking public is groping, sincerely, though blindly, for a new unity, a new orientation.

"This is the background and the justification for *The Forum's* policy of give and take. We are trying to turn the searchlight on various dark corners of the human mind, where Truth is said to be hiding. *Every shade of opinion is given its day in court*, and our reading public, we believe, is exercising an intelligent judgment upon the views presented to it. Many specialists of distinction, in their own field, speak in our open forum; but what they say is being weighed, not so much on the basis of their eminence and authority, as on the basis of their appeal to the inherent common sense of our public.

"Our journalistic venture is, frankly, an experiment. I am writing to ask if you will do me the favour of sending me your honest reaction to the magazine. *I should like to know not only whether you think our purpose is sound, but also whether you believe our practical attempts to carry it out are effective.* We are not afraid of criticism. *We should like to see ourselves as others see us.* We want to know the worst, as well as the best, that can be said of our experiment.

Sincerely yours,

H. G. LEACH,

Editor."

The italics, of course, are mine. Personally, I do not in the least care whether I am a "valued contributor" of the New York *Forum*, or not. My first contribution to its pages, published away back in 1923, was a personal account of some four years, spent in prison; and I challenged, then, in that article, all the editorial, legislative and smug parsonical cripples in America, telling them to get into the nearest penitentiary, even for one week; and to find out, for themselves, how their coward's castle of a Republic was being, officially, shot to pieces.

Of course, they did nothing. America's parsons, near-editors, politicians, never dream of doing anything until they are kicked. But one touch of the whip is enough to stimulate the Great American Mule. It has taken me seven years, of course, of close and patient watching, to get the New York *Forum* in a nice convenient racio-religious corner, right where I could stand up to it, with a world-sized whip, and slam the hide off it; and, now that I have done so, I thank the *Freethinker* for the occasional use of its friendly and distinguished column.

To-day, also, from Miss Dorothea Brande, associate editor of the New York *Bookman*—Mr. Bernard Collins' very able magazine—I have received the following laconic, but all significant note:—

The Bookman,

386 Fourth Avenue, New York,

May 19, 1930.

"DEAR MR. MCCRASHAN,

Thank you for your encouraging letter on the *Bookman*. We were most interested to read the

article from the *Freethinker*. There is no doubt, whatever, you hit off the American *General Magazine* very justly. I do believe that *Harper's Bazaar* would take your stuff. And Mr. Hearst can pay a great deal better than we can.

"Very sincerely yours,
DOROTHEA BRANDE,
Associate Editor."

And that's that. One dozen copies of the *Freethinker*, squirted, by me, into the right editorial offices, in Boston, Chicago, and New York, have stirred some little laughter with regard to the absurd claims of the New York *Forum* to be the literary-ethico God Almighty of America, under the so-distinguished editorship of Dr. Henry Goddard Leach. For, wherever there is a dirty little Rockefeller-Cathedral to be built, either in honour of St. John the Divine, or in that of St. John the Damned, there Dr. Henry Goddard Leach is always to be found; crawling around, upon the executive committee, in nice convulsive circles; and I want Dr. Henry Goddard Leach to get over with that silly business, and to attend, strictly, henceforth, to the business of being a real editor of a respectable magazine, instead.

That the *Forum* itself is good, in many ways, I do not question. I only insist that it is not half good enough, as yet, for the real cultural needs of America; and that it is not one quarter good enough, therefore, for any further general contributions from me. But, since Dr. Henry Goddard Leach so pathetically insists that "Every shade of opinion is given its day in court." I am going to try him out.

During the past year, that is to say, Dr. Henry God's-uncle-of-a-Leach has allowed almost every prominent holy gas bag in the United States to bellow, in his pages, "Why I Am a Presbyterian," "Why I Am a Baptist," "Why I Am a West-Bound Rock-Lily for the New Jerusalem," etc., etc. Well and good. I suppose that all such parasites upon the vast World-Mule that I call America have a right to come out of the mule's short hair, and to scratch themselves, occasionally, in the sun? But what I propose to do is this. I shall write a short, plain-spoken article. I shall call it "Why I Am An Atheist. And I shall fire that honest article straight at Dr. Henry Goddard Leach. And I shall be guided, henceforth, in any further personal criticisms of the New York *Forum*, by Dr. Henry Goddard Leach's own editorial "reaction" to the same.

If he prints it, well and good. If he fails to do so, also well and good. In that case, I shall then, with the *Freethinker's* esteemed permission, proceed to tell America that this is where Dr. Henry God's-Tutor of a Leach quits his job; catches the first train for Ahron, Ohio, and disguises himself as something useful in a rubber-mill. So the game is up to Henry.

Mind you, I do not say that the "purpose" of the *Forum* magazine is not "sound." I simply say that it is all sound, and that it is not sense. Why the blazes, for instance, does Dr. Henry Goddard Leach hire a greasy Irish flunky like Dr. Jeems Murphy to crawl all over Europe, plastering Albert Einstein with fifty-gallon buckets of treacle mixed with glue? Whenever an Irishman goes in for the business of boot-licking and genuflecting, he makes an imbecile display of the hitherto-concealed reptile-instincts of the human race. He makes of all our racial and cultural history a dirty-purposed, dreadful Celtic nightmare; and I, for one, as a Scotch-Irish-baw-Australian, object to the posturings and the writhings, as well as the writings, of Dr. Jeems Murphy; who makes such a regular Gehanna's basking-place, for his own lizard's purposes, out of the pages of the *Forum* magazine.

JOHN MCCRASHAN.

A Gallery of Rogues.

FREETHINKERS are so accustomed to hearing the Christian dilate on the wickedness of Atheists that we can be pardoned for being grimly amused when we read of the misdeeds of churchgoers.

The fact that a churchgoer proves to be a rogue is no discredit to the Church, but there is irony in the revelation for Christians are so smug and self-satisfied.

Charles Kingston in his *Law Breakers*, published by the Bodley Head at 12s. 6d., retells the stories of some remarkable criminals, and William Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner, was one of the most remarkable.

William Palmer was brought up in a household where the Sunday was "a protracted orgy of religion," and when he grew up he was one of the "Church's most obvious, if not brightest ornaments." On the Sunday before Mrs. Palmer fell ill he and she attended Holy Communion, and as he slowly poisoned her, Palmer became stricter and stricter in his religious observances. He prayed for her, but as Mr. Kingston reminds us, "His confidence in the superiority of the poison to his prayers was borne out when shortly afterwards his wife was buried amid a cyclone of tears."

After attending at church and winning golden opinions for his grief and piety, Palmer spent the money he had gained by his wife's death and then poisoned her brother. It is thought that altogether he murdered six people before he committed the crime for which he was sentenced to death.

He poisoned John Parsons Cook, but suspicions were aroused, suspicions which were lulled when Palmer was seen in his usual pew in church. But he was found guilty and spent his last few days reading his Bible and talking religion.

Another interesting law-breaker dealt with by Mr. Kingston is Father Hans Schmidt of New York, who fell in love with Anna Aumuller. His solution of the difficulty in which he found himself was to marry Anna to Schmidt the man, and to officiate at the ceremony as Schmidt the priest.

In other words he made her his mistress, and then when she was expecting a child he murdered her. He said he did it to save his church from disgrace, and when he had committed the murder he went to the altar of his church to say Mass, and then returned to carve up the body into small pieces. In his defence he said that the Lord commanded him to kill Anna, and that he had to do it for the sake of the reputation of his church.

Because Schmidt had been a priest thousands of pounds were spent on his defence, but although the fight lasted three years, he was eventually electrocuted.

There are some terrible stories of miscarriages of justice, of people being executed for crimes of which they were innocent, which suggests that those who plead for the abolition of the death penalty are not such cranks as the popular press would have us believe.

There is also a screamingly funny true story of Kumpf the German actor who was successful in impersonating middle aged women. So successful was he that he impersonated his own wife (he was not married) called on an insurance company, and then next day dressed as a man, pretended he was the husband of the woman who had called the previous day. He passed the medical examination, and then in his disguise as a woman, was given a policy for twenty thousand marks. Dressed then as a man he "died," and dressed as a woman collected the insurance money. How he was bowled out is interesting reading, and the whole book throws graphic sidelights on the curious twists which exist in human beings made after God's own image.

NECHELLS.

Love of truth generally means love of our opinions.
Premontral.

The condition *sine qua non* of wisdom and happiness is a good digestion.—Lemesle.

We can change our religion much more easily than our café.—Courteline.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

MALTA AND THE POPE.

SIR,—The affair of the Archduke Ferdinand was the spark that started the Great War. But the Great War was not fought about the Archduke. The affair of Father Micallef brought the Maltese question to the point—but is not the Maltese question. The gang—you know which I mean, Mr. Corrick, the Vatican gang—considers the people of Malta to be its chattels and wishes to boss them from Rome, and damn the British Empire—that is the Maltese question. (Incidentally, Mr. Corrick, what tribunal passed sentence of banishment on Father Micallef?—did he quit Malta?) It shows the rottenness of the Catholic case, that they shirk the main issue and whine about Lord Strickland's lack of tact—a stupid calumny. Although, in my article, I gave our side credit for sticking to its guns, yet I said they did it with a sort of crawling politeness that grated. What our side wanted was the Palmerston touch, or better still the Cromwell touch—and no nonsense from the pestiferous sect. The men of Malta are not going to be as abject chattels as the gang wishes, and because Lord Strickland has stood in with them he is charged with "intolerable interference." How the gang squeals when it doesn't get all its own way! As for the women of Malta they are the worst dupes of the priests. They justify that sentence in *Priestcraft* that has got me into more hot water than anything else in the book—"Where religion is concerned, women are a soft lot."

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

Society News.

THE week's activities have been among the most successful of the season. Mr. George Whitehead addressed two meetings on Blackburn Market, the crowds assembling on each occasion being the largest he has ever seen on this pitch. The appreciation displayed was most encouraging, the opposition being practically nonexistent. With a little push from the local sympathisers it is evident that Blackburn would be made one of the best centres in England. Six other meetings were addressed in Bolton, completing a series, which this year has evoked more sympathetic interest than ever before. In spite of threatening weather the crowds, each evening, awaited the arrival of the speaker, and numerous expressions of tribute were paid to the work done. Every evening the audiences were large and well behaved, the opposition being much less acrimonious than on some previous occasions. The police of Bolton also deserve a word of encouragement for their fairmindedness. The only discordant note was struck by the Vicar of Bolton, who, on the Friday evening, gave an unpleasant exhibition of bad manners by persistent interruptions, attempts to address our meetings before he was invited, and trying to bully the speaker. When these tactics failed the gentleman appealed to the police, presumably to stop our meeting, and again failing to achieve his object, he called upon the crowd to follow him to another pitch, which appeal proved as abortive as the others. Some of the comments made by the audience upon this conduct were more pungent than polite. Our thanks are due to Messrs. Sisson and Partington for valuable help, and to the other friends who assisted at Bolton and accompanied Mr. Whitehead to Blackburn.—G.W.

NELSON AND DISTRICT.

FOUR lectures have been given this week, at Wheatley Lane, Padiham, Nelson and Burnley. Excepting the first one, we had questions and discussion on each occasion, the crowd at Burnley, on the Sunday night, being very large, and barring one or two interruptions, we had a good hearing.—J.C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mrs. E. Grout—"The Ten Commandments."

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—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. (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 HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. Grout—A Lecture.

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, H. J. Savory, 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.

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.

ACCINGTON.—Sunday, August 17, at 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton.
CRAWSHAWBOOTH.—Friday, August 22, at 7.30, Debate—"That Science and Religion are Antagonistic." *Affir.*: Mr. J. Clayton; *Neg.*: Rev. Clennel.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Ballygiogh, meet at Clarkston Car Terminus 12 o'clock.

HIGHAM.—Monday, August 18, at 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S. (corner of High Park Street and Park Road): Thursday, August 14, at 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson, D. Robinson and J. V. Shortt. Mr. George Whitehead will be speaking each evening at 8.0, as follows: Saturday, August 16, Islington Square, Sunday, 17, Queen's Drive (opposite Baths), Monday, 18, Beaumont Street, Tuesday, 19 and Wednesday, 20, Islington Square, Thursday, 21, High Park Street, Friday, 22 and Saturday, 23, Islington Square. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale at all meetings. We shall be glad to see a good rally of local members, friends and sympathizers.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7.0, Mr. J. C. Keast—A Lecture. Literature will be on sale.

TRAWDEN.—Friday, August 15, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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