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

Views and Opinions.

Playing with God.

THE stunt press has been at it again. This time it is the *Evening Standard*, which arranged what it wished its readers to believe was a discussion on the pros and cons of religion. The method of procedure was as usual. Someone was selected who stood for what could be said against orthodox religion—in this case Professor Julian Huxley, who is actually trying to build up a new religion that is just a trifle more unscientific and a little more silly than the one he criticizes, and then Dean Inge and the Roman Catholic Father Woodlock are selected to speak for the other side. The trick is so transparent, one would imagine that even the least intelligent of newspaper readers would see through it. For the people selected to debate are all fighting for something they call religion, and for something they call God. Not one of them really touches the fundamental issue, and consequently whichever side comes out on top—always assuming that the average reader can make out which is top and which is bottom—religion wins. For some kind of a God emerges and some kind of a religion holds the field. The real question is never allowed to appear. It reminds one of the "disarmament conferences," where the one thing that is ruled out of order is disarmament.

Now, obviously, the logical antithesis to religion is non-religion, which gives us Secularism; and the logical opposite to the belief in God is the absence of that belief which gives us Atheism. Everything else is a discussion between rival religions and competing deities. An out and out Secularist is never allowed to state his case, an uncompromising Atheist is never permitted to speak. If they were, men like Dean Inge and Father Woodlock would discover they were too busy to reply. These men can fight while the

enemy is a friend in disguise, or while the guns used against them are loaded with dud shells. They are gallant fighters so long as the real enemy is not let loose on them. Really, Christianity grows more contemptible as it grows older.

* * *

Roman Catholic Bunkum.

I have dealt so recently with Professor Julian Huxley's plea for a new religion, that there is no need to deal again at length with him. His *Evening Standard* article—duplicated—in several provincial papers—repeats the main points of his Conway lecture. He still talks of "religious experience" as though that could ever be anything more than experience which is misinterpreted in terms of religion, and he still puts religion in opposition to theology as though one could exist without the other. A theology is made up of the inevitable inferences that one draws from religious beliefs, and how one can exist without the other no one has yet been able to explain. Certainly one never has existed without the other. Dean Inge is evidently thankful that Professor Huxley is in verbal agreement with religious believers. Whether he is in actual agreement or not is of small consequence. It would be too dangerous for the Dean to press that point. Nor is one at all surprised to find the *Church Times* pointing out to its readers that while Professor Huxley has no satisfactory idea of the nature of God, he "insists on the necessity of religion." The strength of one's enemies is very often built on the weakness of one's friends.

It is quite useless to discuss belief in God, says Dean Inge, until we have explained what we mean by God. It is unfortunate that the Dean did not take his advice to heart and explain just what he means by God. As it is he is as vague as may be, and in the course of a brief article "God," as he uses the term may stand for almost anything. It is quite certain that when he says "some of our greatest scientists are returning to the belief in God," that the God which some of our modern scientists are returning to is not the God that Dean Inge as a Christian clergyman ought to believe in, and which he is paid for believing in. It is not the God of the Christian Church, it is not the God of believing Christians. A God who is represented by a mathematical symbol is not a God that will do for any religion on the face of the earth. Neither modern scientists nor modern science is returning to the God of religion. Dean Inge is simply playing with a word, satisfied if he can get men of education to pronounce it, whether they mean anything or not.

In this respect he is followed by Father Woodlock, on whose contribution no more than a mere word or two is required. He writes on "Must a Scientist be an Atheist." And the answer to that is, "Yes, so far as he is a scientist." Whether his department be

physical, biological, or mental so far as he is a scientist he is bound to act as though God does not exist, or the very least as though no one need bother about him. It would be interesting to see Father Woodlock trying to prove that a scientist needs the belief in God to pursue his investigations, or that he cannot state his conclusions without in some way assuming or involving God. Certainly, a scientist, as such, must be an Atheist.

Father Woodlock attempts to prove his proposition by citing from a book which has collected together the names of a number of scientists who say they believe in a God. But what kind of a God they believe in, is not stated. Again, so long as the magical word is used it is enough. Abracadabra is a wonder-working phrase, and when conjoined with fee-fo-fium is irresistible. And there appears to be some little consideration due to the fact that all these citations prove is that a certain number of men have retained some remnant of their childish beliefs in spite of their science. But only a fool would take this as proof that the beliefs are a product of their science, and only a Christian priest would so impose upon the credulity of those who look to him for guidance.

Father Woodlock substantiates his statement about scientists by citing a statement from Darwin, to the effect that in certain moods he deserved to be called a theist. As one is dealing with a Roman priest one could hardly expect him to have the honesty to point out that Darwin specifically repented having used such a term as Creator, and said that more and more as he became older he recognized Agnosticism as the best position.

* * *

Science and Superstition.

To return to Dean Inge. What may be called, with some latitude, his positive contribution to the discussion is contained in the two statements that "Mechanicism" is inadequate because it leaves out values, and that "the progress of science itself has made mechanicism more difficult to hold. More and more physics seems to be resolved into mathematical symbols." This kind of thing has become the jargon of every one with a vested or other interest in the perpetuation of superstition, as well as of those who are too cloudy in their thought, to understand aright the significance of science, or too timid to tell these belated Godites to go about their business. The values of life are not abstract but concrete. As Socrates said a thing must be good for something, for use, for eating, for wearing, otherwise it is good for nothing. There is no such thing as good in the abstract, or beauty in the abstract, or truth in the abstract. There are only things that are good, or true, or beautiful, and the moment we realize this we clear away the fog created by theologians and discover that the "values" of life are rooted in social utility, without which they have no meaning and no significance.

The disappearance of physics in mathematical symbols, of matter in electrical charges, are also part of the stock in trade of those who lack a proper appreciation of scientific methodology. How we shall picture "Matter" it is the business of science to determine, but however this is determined matter remains as real as ever it was, possessing the qualities it always possessed, even though it may not be the ultimate element which experience gives us. Water did not cease to be water when it was shown to consist of H₂O. Its properties did not alter, its uses remained exactly what they were. And so the qualities of matter remain unaffected by whatever may be discovered concerning its constitution. It is only those who have never understood the function of "Matter" in scientific terminology who can write as

does Dean Inge and others do about its destruction or annihilation.

The Materialist is not at all disturbed by being told that fundamental physical conceptions may be replaced by mathematical symbols. He knows, if he knows Materialism and *understands* science, that such things as "matter" and "force," and "mind" were never more than symbols created to express certain aspects of human experience. If a mathematical symbol will enable us better to express our experience than certain other symbols now in use, the last man to be affected by it is the "Mechanicist." Only when the Theist can perform the inconceivable feat of proving that a product is not the outcome of its factors can the Materialist be disturbed in his philosophy. Up to the present he is confirmed in every advance made in scientific knowledge and in scientific understanding.

So much for this latest newspaper farce of a discussion on religion. The game will continue so long as wealthy newspapers find it profitable to exploit ignorance and credulity in the interests of large circulations. In this way men like Bishop Barnes and Dean Inge will gain the reputation of thinkers by repudiating beliefs which every civilized man or woman should be ashamed to hold, and the reputation of courage for facing enemies who are carefully selected because of their inability or disinclination to do them real harm. Of the three writers Father Woodlock is the only one who states the real issue. This is Atheism or Theism, Naturalism or Supernaturalism, and having indicated it, he lets it severely alone. It may be quite true that you cannot fool all the people all the time, but you can still fool a sufficiently large number for a sufficiently lengthy period to make the occupation a paying one.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Secret of Saltus.

"Care I for the limb, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man? Give me the spirit, master Shallow."—*Shakespeare.*

"We think our civilization near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star."
Emerson.

EDGAR SALTUS was an author with a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic ocean, and he was an American only in the sense that Henry James was one. There was nothing narrow nor provincial about Saltus, and in thousands of erudite and well-written pages he revealed his cosmopolitan culture and sympathies. With Thomas Paine he could have said, proudly, "the world is my country." An artist to the finger-tips, Saltus called for recognition as much as D'Annunzio, Maxim Gorky, Eric Remarque, and others, for whom so many British altars have flamed in worship.

Characteristically, Edgar Saltus began his bright literary career with a book on Balzac. It was brief, brilliant and imbued with the spirit of the master. A year later he showed another facet of his genius by writing *The Philosophy of Disenchantment*, a remarkable exposition of the teachings of Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Leopardi, and other thinkers. This work was followed by the brilliant and illuminative, *The Anatomy of Negation*, a book which alone would have made the reputation of a lesser man. The prefatory note was both piquant and personal:—

The accompanying pages are intended to convey a tableau of anti-Theism from Kapila to Leconte de Lisle. The anti-Theistic tendencies of England and America have been treated by other writers. In the

present volume, therefore, that branch of the subject is not discussed. To avoid misconception, it may be added that no attempt has been made to prove anything.

Unlike so many ponderous philosophic works, the book was a literary success. In a note to a later edition Saltus said :—

In brief, it was the writer's endeavour to divest his reader of one of two idle preoccupations, and to leave him serene in spirit, and of better cheer than before."

All Saltus's books are thought compelling, and what is not always the same, eminently readable. As an essayist he stood in the front rank. His *Pomps of Satan* was not only a work of unflagging interest, but journalism at its best and bravest. Instead of fantasy and the unreal world of dreams, the author gave us society and the world of reality. Instead of pathos and bathos, we had cynical criticism, and the style was a glory of epigrammatic brilliance. The subjects were curious and varied, such as *The Gilded Gang*, *Vanity Square*, *The Golden Fold*, *The Toilet of Venus*, and described the foibles and failings of modern plutocratic society. There was acid, too, in the criticism. His cutting description, "The Benighted States," as he called the Great Republic of the West, was not a compliment, but it stuck in men's memories. New York he drenched in vitriol :—

Never, perhaps, except in the Rome of the Cæsars, has there been gathered together in one city a set so rich, so idle, so profoundly uninterested in anything save themselves.

This was the manner in which Edgar Saltus hurled out his gibes and his epigrams. All that easy zest, that curling his tongue round the subject, that freedom from enthusiasm, were possible only to a man who simplified his life by dividing it well, and not by cultivating one side at the expense of another.

As a novelist Saltus at once justified his reputation. His stories form a collection which almost merit his claim to be the English Balzac. In his work, *Mary Magdalene*, he produced the most successful and daring reconquest of antiquity that has been attempted of recent years. In it he reconstructed a Biblical legend, just as Gustave Flaubert presented a story of ancient Carthage in his *Salamambo*. All Saltus's novels were similarly provocative. *Mr. Incoul's Misadventure*, *The Truth about Tristram Verek*, *A Transaction in Hearts*, *Madame Sapphira*, to name but a few, form a very notable collection which challenged the idols of the public and private libraries, and beat them with pure artistry.

Edgar Saltus was endowed with a genuine love of literature. In one of his novels, a principal character is made to say :—

I would rather have written *Salamambo* than have built the Brooklyn Bridge. It was more difficult, and it will last longer.

This characteristic remark presents his life-long ambition in a sentence. A poet at heart, Saltus proved his claim in many passages of beautiful prose. We quote the following daring and eloquent passage :—

The Orient is asleep in the ashes of her gods. The star of Ormuzd has burned out in the skies. On the banks of her sacred seas, Greece, hushed for evermore, rests on the divine limbs of her white immortals. In the sepulchre of the pale Nazarene, humanity guards her last divinity. Every promise is unfulfilled. There is no light save, perchance, in death. One torture more, one more throb of the heart, and after it, nothing. The grave opens, a little flesh falls in, and the weeds of forgetfulness, which soon hide the tomb, grow eternally above its vanities. And still the voice of the living, of the just and the unjust, of Kings, of felons, and of beasts, will be

raised unsilenced, until humanity, unsatisfied as before, and yet impatient for the peace which life has disturbed, is tossed at last, with the shattered globe and forgotten gods, to fertilize the furrows of space where worlds ferment.

A many-sided man of genius, Edgar Saltus relished the prodigious panorama of life. He loved the old-world garden where Horace smiled at Rome; the midnight supper-table where the alert Voltaire challenged the best wits of Europe; the chateau of brave old Montaigne, the study of Emerson; or the beautiful river haunts of Walt Whitman. Saltus, like James Whistler and Henry James, showed us that the American can compete successfully with the culture of the admired Continental artists and writers. He was a philosopher, a poet, a critic, a novelist, and the rare thing in our populous world of laborious penmen, a really fine writer of English, the noblest and most used language in the wide world.

MIMNERMUS.

A Feeble Challenge.

THE NOVELIST AND THE SCIENTIST.

ON the front page of the *News Chronicle* for October 27, Sir Hall Caine takes up the cudgels with Sir Arthur Keith in defence of human immortality. "Sir Hall Caine's Challenge to Sir Arthur Keith." "A Stirring Rejoinder." "Man . . . a Living Soul." So blare the headlines in all the dignity of leaded type and block letters. But Sir Hall Caine's article is neither a challenge nor a rejoinder, for it neither cites any fact in evidence of human immortality, nor attempts to deal with any particular department of the scientific evidence against the belief. It is purely and simply a rhetorical appeal to the emotional prejudices of a populace who, almost without exception, have been brought up from earliest childhood in the belief in the immortality of the human soul. Of any attempt to meet and refute the arguments to the contrary there is no trace.

Sir Hall Caine begins his apologia with the dictum that Sir Arthur Keith's thesis "is opposed to nearly everything that has come from the greater part of the wisest and best that we can yet call man." Well, Sir Hall Caine, as a believer in the Bible, will certainly have heard of Solomon's reputation for wisdom; yet I think he will look in vain among the reputed writings of the Hebrew philosopher-king for any light on the question of immortality. Indeed, it is well known that the Old Testament is almost barren of such a teaching. It was by no means a prominent doctrine of the old Greek thinkers, and Stoicism, the best and noblest of ancient ethical systems, taught not a future life, but extinction as the reward of virtue. Finally, in our own day, Buddhism, the religion and ethical guide of millions more people than the entire Christian world contains, includes no doctrine of immortality. In the light of these few facts Sir Hall Caine's confident appeal to the world's wisdom appears, at the least, a little misguided. His appeal to Genesis begs the whole vast question of Biblical authenticity, and of course proves nothing.

Man's bodily limbs and organs, says Sir Hall Caine, "are merely parts of the shadow of man . . . The man's shadow, indeed, dies, but of the death of man's soul science says nothing at all. Therefore, of the death of man himself, science knows nothing and never can know anything." Admittedly. The mind and soul of the living individual appear to the observer as the sum of the functions of the brain; they are wholly dependent upon the metabolism of the cerebral cells, and necessarily pass out of existence

when cerebral metabolism ceases at death. Personality is the expression of the individual's relation to his environment and to the hereditary stream of life from which he has arisen, and it is impossible to conceive how it can persist after the bodily frame, through which alone this relation can be manifested, disintegrates and loses its corporate unity.

"Which of us," asks Sir Hall Caine, "has yet seen so far through the dark veil that he can say with certainty there is nothing there?" No one, certainly. But I, for one, have never heard Science make this dogmatic statement, though the evidence goes a long way to justify it. Science has nothing to say certainly about a subject of which nothing can be known, for caution is Science's middle name, as the Yankees say. It merely points to the strong *a priori* case against the belief in immortality, and argues quite cogently that what cannot be known cannot be proved to exist. To Sir Hall Caine, on the other hand, the admitted fact that nothing is known of what follows death appears to be presumptive evidence of the continuity of life in that totally unknown sphere. I find it difficult to understand how a state of complete ignorance can be regarded as proving anything; certainly it is not so in earthly courts of law, and we may leave Sir Hall Caine to explain his theories of the value of evidence to some competent jurist, while the rest of the world devote their attention to the crying needs of this mundane existence.

The believer who looks for light on immortality to this article will most assuredly look in vain. Sir Hall Caine neither states any affirmative, nor attempts to refute the negative. His article is a tissue of rhetoric, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." As a countryman of Sir Hall Caine, I feel an invidious pride in his world-wide reputation; but his article is pitifully weak.

It appears to be a settled point of agreement amongst defenders of this belief, that the hope of immortality is a precious divine gift, a solace in bereavement, a balm for human suffering, the fount of consolation and the well-spring of hope. The platitude is heard beside every death-bed, in every bereaved household. It is but a half-truth, and like all such statements, expands the particular into the general without due warrant. It need not be denied that millions of human beings have faced death calmly, even exultantly, in the fervent belief that beyond the veil there awaits them an existence in which pain and woe, the sting of death and the bitter pangs of bereavement, have no place, where in time they will be united to their loved ones in a life of endless happiness, free from all the drawbacks and defects of earthly life. Any system of belief which eases suffering and calms the terrors of approaching death is right and true, but in a pragmatic, not a literal sense. Good taste prevents one from combating a belief from which one's fellow-creatures draw genuine comfort and solace; but reason rebels when orthodoxy and bigotry make of this pathetic fallacy a rigid dogma and talk about the "New Jerusalem" as if it were as real a part of the material universe as the Solomon Islands. It is quite true that the hope of immortality is a cherished and valued belief, full of hope and comfort in dark moments—to some people; it is equally true that thousands of people in the present, and millions in the past, are and were totally without such a belief.

This is the other side of the half-truth, and a little thought, even the facts of ordinary human experience, fully bears it out. Let any impartial person ask himself candidly if he really expects, in some future sphere of existence, to hear the voice or see the face of the friend whom death has taken from his

side? We stand by a death-bed as at a last parting of the ways. We look upon the confined face of the dead with the irresistible conviction that we look our last upon those familiar features. The tears of the bereaved bear witness to our conviction that he who is gone is gone indeed, not as one who goes in front a little way to await our coming, but as one who has gone upon a journey whence there is no return. "In Loving Memory of ——" We see it on every tombstone; and yet there is no more certain or more blessed fact of experience than that time dulls the first sharp pangs of loss, that with the passing of the years comes forgetfulness and the drying of tears, that in time we turn from the gloom of the grave to the light of the living world. "Rest in Peace." There is no hint here of a supra-mundane existence.

The fundamental irrationality of the belief in human immortality is shown by the fact that each one who holds that belief pictures the after-life as a continuation of the present one, minus all its imperfections. The warlike Norseman looked forward to eternal war; the Indian to the happy hunting-grounds where the supply of game is inexhaustible, the servant in the rhyme to an eternity of idleness in a land where there is no washing of dishes. They have no common conception of this mysterious future existence. The Gospel presentation of heaven is frankly revolting in its gilded and jewelled crudity, that of hell awful in its horrors.

Modern science presents us with the conception of an infinite and eternal universe, in which life is a mere emergent property of matter at a certain stage of complexity, precarious in its status, manifested in living organisms which are mere accidents in the cosmic drama. From this view of existence there is no escape save through egotism and sentiment. And the acceptance of this view brings a clear and satisfying conception of death as the inevitable end of an organism which can only maintain its individual existence by constant struggle with an often hostile environment. There is real comfort in the belief that at the last all the sufferings and follies, the errors and sins of imperfect nature, are swallowed up in merciful oblivion. And there is a practical value, too, in a belief which, if accepted, would release human energy more fully to the consideration of the problems of this world, which so sadly need attention.

C. V. LEWIS.

Sometimes.

SOMETIMES when the rose at flush of morn
Brings joy to the waking world,
I see your smile in its heart the while,
And your love with dew impearled!

Sometimes in the peace of a summer night
The lone lake-waters croon;
Then the winds rejoice, and I hear your voice
Float o'er like a fairy tune!

Sometimes at evening's twilight hour,
When home my spirit flies,
From realms above flame the stars in love,
And I dream of your luring eyes—
Your smile—your voice—your eyes!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

The Book Shop.

JAN and Cora Gordon in *Star-Dust in Hollywood: The Truth About the Film City* (Harrap, 12s. 6d.) recount a good story about Maeterlinck. The famous author was eventually pressed by a motion-picture manufacturer to write a story for the screen. In due course the story appeared, and, the film magnate on being asked if it was all right replied, "The play's all right, but what's the use of that? He's given me a hero what is a bee." With fundamentalism at one end and the making of screen pictures at the other, America has yet to prove its right to having contributed much of importance to world culture, and it is to be hoped that Hollywood will reconsider the production of Maeterlinck's screen play. In the works of Maeterlinck there is breadth and depth, and in any one of his volumes there is enough mental sustenance to help the reader over many an awkward stile in life. He seems to derive his strength from a close contact with realities of the world; he wins the readers attention with that intimacy affirming affinity with mankind and nature, and best of all, it must not be forgotten that he has gained his place in a country that is still safe for Catholicism. Open him where we will, and we find him making re-valuations of all things that have been grievously mishandled by fanatical religionists. Some one wrote that wisdom was the art of being at home in the world; Maeterlinck's efforts, after a careful reading, are a valiant attempt to make this possible for the human race.

The quarterly issue of *Purpose*, October-December, edited by W. T. Symons and Philippe Mairet, contains many good and thought-provoking contributions. None of them are cheap and flashy like so much that finds its way into print these days. The articles give the impression that is in keeping with the title, and they all are distinguished by that clarity which is the beacon light of truth. Freethinkers attack the major superstition of the world; that there are hosts of minor superstitions no one will deny, but even these are immense. Mr. W. T. Symons in *The Just Price*, arraigns the Church for its apathy towards the subject; there are few signs that the church will awaken from its slumbers in matters of common equity. There is occasionally snow in June. He concludes: "The Just Price affords the rallying ground for religion, economics and social revolution. Whether its recognition arise from the impetus of moral passion, the scientific urge, or the feeling of social responsibility, it focuses the just, the accurate, and the human attention of men, on the essential point." Financiers have no need for the church, and its priests are considered an impertinence in modern life—that is the price priesthood has had to pay for its past position as an exclusive caste. The feeling of social responsibility will come to most human beings when equity begins from the top of society; in the meantime, Mr. Symons dispenses with the uncertainty of a start in that direction by knowing clearly what he wants and defining it in good prose. His hopes of help from religion may be indulged in, when it has washed its hands of 1914-18, but we prefer to trust to scientists—chiefly because they disagree with religion, and engineers, because they have no feelings about a matter which is purely one of mathematics—the Just Price. Filoque in *The Foundation of Genius* writes with passion, and touches the spot. "Men and women of spirit and reality," he states, "are being exterminated to-day with a deadly, systematic earnestness—they are prevented from being conceived and born." He attributes this, and quite rightly so, to the cult of Individualism. Well, what are the prizes for sharp swords? Knighthoods, peerages, honours—all well and truly blessed by national Christianity. It is almost true to say that no man can succeed on the above valuations without adopting the cult of individualism. And such aims logically fit in with personal salvation of centuries old in the teaching. Personal salvation—personal hosh—personal egotism; the aim of a blown out frog so stupid that it cannot think of its own oblivion.

The October issue of the *Adelphi* contains a good story abbreviated, by the late D. H. Lawrence. It is entitled "The Escaped Cock," and an editorial footnote informs us that it is unlikely to be published in this country for fear of arousing religious prejudice. And there are those who tell us that we are flogging a dead horse—presumably because they can look through their window on Sunday and see a boy kicking a football. "The Escaped Cock" is allegorical in style, betraying the obsession of the late author. It contains an account of a figure called Jesus meeting a virgin princess in the temple of Isis; it is interesting, but not instructive, and adds nothing to the knowledge of any scholar who has served his time with the giant classics, modern psychologists, and the airy fairy blither in books on Rosicrucianism and like books. It might be compared to a fragment of the *Brook Kerith*, and I have no doubt that some readers will be pleased to add it to their bookshelves. Of better value, in my opinion, is "Quo Vadimus," a slight sketch by E. B. White. This is really enjoyable; it reduces nine-tenths of the complications of life to a few simple words for the two characters in the story—"all you really want is a decent meal when it comes to meal-time, and a warm place to sleep in when it comes night." That these things are not extensively common is a back-handed compliment to the hosts who quibble about scripture, creed and sacraments—and have gabbled so for two thousand years. The *Adelphi* is a good shillingsworth, and Mr. John Middleton Murry should take courage in both hands and give the public a little more in the same style of the "Creation of Conscience," an almost free-thinking essay in December-February issue.

C-DE-B.

War and Civilization.

We have been reading with much interest a trenchant little volume of essays on *War, Civilization, and the Churches*, by Mr. Chapman Cohen (London: The Pioneer Press, 2s), a series of articles originally published from time to time while the great European contest raged. With the criticisms of a noted Freethought writer on the part played by the religious world we need not for the moment concern ourselves, pungent and severe as they are; but the main principles clearly enunciated by a thoughtful and logical man, a master of apophthegms, are worth everyone's attention. In view of what the Prince of Wales said on Armistice Day it is interesting to note that Mr. Cohen years ago was writing that the rising generation must be made to understand what war really meant with all its cruelty and horror; and in view of what the Bishops are now proclaiming, that "war is an outrage on the brotherhood of man" it is decidedly enlightening to find that their Freethought critic from 1914 onward was preaching exactly the same in identical language. Mr. Cohen is philosophical, and he puts his philosophy in nugget form such as—"No people in their senses would submit to the burden of preparation for war unless they thought war probable," and "War is not killed by war any more than brutality is cured by brutality." He warns us against those displays which tend to create false impressions and to keep unworthy ideals alive. "What is the use," he demands to know, "of canting about the evils of war when so much of our ordinary life is given to exhibiting to the rising generation the tremendous esteem in which we hold the soldier, the high appreciation we have of his services in the past, and how much we shall look to him in the future?" And he finally tells us what true warfare should be, and we believe that all men of goodwill and right heart will agree with him:—

The task before the world is to use the fighting spirit of the race to the right end. It should not be difficult to indicate that end. There is the whole field of adventurous discovery in the ice-fields of the North and South, and in the deserts and forests of Africa and Asia. There is the world of scientific research which calls for rare qualities of courage and perseverance. And nearer home there is the necessity for fighting disease and vice and demoralizing social conditions. In the thousand and one tasks of science, education, and medicine, there is ample

scope for all qualities expended in—not created by—military warfare. And while these remain with us, there need be no fear that the courage of man will decay or the fibre of the race grow slack.

Manchester Evening News.

A Safe Question.

LIBERTY in expressing one's opinions should be the primary aim of every individual. It is the only recognized form of intellectual progress. To suppress opinion is to enchain the human race with fetters, from which emerge divers forms of afflictions too numerous to mention. It should be the aim of everyone to summon enough courage whereby they can give expression to their thoughts.

To-day we live in a world where moral courage is sadly absent. Discussion upon politics, art, literature, or any of the sciences is quite permissible, and anyone may express freely his opinion without fear of the axe of orthodoxy dropping upon his head. But with the greatest of all controversial subjects, Religion, the priest has stopped the mouths of the people with the gag of fear and social ostracism.

It does not require a great deal of study to discover that religion has always been the opponent of free opinion. Whenever man has attempted to free himself from the evils that beset him, the church has been his strongest enemy. And is not this quite obvious when we find that the roots of religion are feeding off these very evils, namely, superstition and ignorance, the abolition of which would seriously endanger the livelihood of the priest? To-day the church is using every artifice whereby to cover its lies with responsibility. It has the open sesame to every public organ whereby to express its views, and very good care is taken that no adverse criticism is allowed.

The above was brought to mind when I noticed a poster displayed outside a tin shanty erected to the glory of God, bearing the words—"What Think Ye of Christ?" Now, on the face of it, the question appears to be very daring. It savours of free opinion. But wait! To whom are we going to tell what we think of Christ should the opinion be an adverse one? To the newspapers? We should be refused publicity for fear of offending their pious readers. To our employers? We should suddenly find ourselves out of employment. To our customers should we have a business? Our customers would leave us. To the electors should we care to contest a seat for Parliament? We should be at the bottom of the poll.

So we find that the church is quite safe in asking a question which they know will not receive any adverse criticism. It is a subtle lie that should read—"We want you to think of Christ as we would wish you to think of him."

To-day the time of the clergy is spent in apologising for the shortcomings of Jesus. In the Dark Ages the mystic figure of Jesus required no explaining. The church dominated every mode of thought, and whoever questioned this shadowy figurehead, received the full force of punishment born of its displeasure. But in spite of a tyrannous church, with every means at its disposal for subjugating opposing views, reason born of common-sense took root, thanks to those pioneers who suffered ineffable cruelties for the cause of free expression.

The modern clergy are giving us a Jesus wrapped in all the regalia of a reformer. We are given a Jesus not as he was, but as the clergy would wish him to be. But even upon this point we cannot get the different sects of Christianity to agree as to what he should be.

That Jesus contributed nothing to the benefit of mankind is obvious. Except for a few outpourings of so-called philosophy, which were quite common hundreds of years before Christ was born, he imparted nothing that was of any value to humanity. There was not a social problem that he tackled. All that he asked was, a belief in a Heavenly Father, and to become obsequious before king and master. For our misery upon this earth he offered no remedy, but required us to submit to in-

tolerable oppression with the promise of an after life as compensation. As a man, Jesus was hopeless, as a god, he was perfect.

It has been left for man alone to struggle with the social evils, and in doing so he has put Jesus in his right perspective

It is due to such glaring inconsistencies that the people are becoming apathetic towards Jesus, despite the wailings and lamentations of the clergy. They can only smile at the stupid beliefs which have their origins in Eastern mysticism. Tales of spitting in the eyes of men to cure blindness, cursing a fig-tree for its state of barrenness, raising the dead to life, walking upon water, casting evil spirits into innocent pigs, and the virgin birth, along with all the rest of the ridiculous beliefs of Christianity, may have provided excellent propaganda for the priests in the days when the world was young—but the primitive mind has passed along with the primitive conditions, and Christianity will certainly follow them into the limbo of forgotten things.

DAVID HARDENG.

Character v Circumstances.

In a recently issued auto-biography Mr. Winston Churchill has declared that "Freewill" and "Determinism" are two sides of the same thing; he mentions a certain butterfly whose colour depends upon the angle from which it is viewed.

To many the problem is not thus disposed of, and further explanation is desired with regard to the subject and implications involved.

By character we include the sum total of our individual characteristics; when speaking of circumstances we refer to all that surrounds, with special reference to the environment with which we come into direct contact.

There is a marked difference of opinion as to whether circumstances determine character or the reverse.

Those who accept the theory of Evolution and the Law of Causation will agree that the individual is the product of Heredity and Environment, and thus affirm that character is largely, if not entirely, due to something not ourselves, therefore they hold the view that circumstances decide the nature of the creature.

On these lines it is assumed that our existence is dependent upon parents, from whom we inherit physical bodies with mental equipment of instincts and potentialities, which develop by experience. Thus it is argued that circumstances determine character.

From a different viewpoint we see that the character of an individual is a circumstance affecting others, evil natures tend to corrupt, worthy examples elevate. Thus it is affirmed that character shapes circumstances.

The question arises: "What does it matter?"

The social reformer will probably answer in terms of utility, and proceed to take steps to so utilize circumstances that they will be for the best in the making of character in the individual, and also direct the individual to make the most of circumstances.

On broad lines the way to progress is clear.

Mental development is based upon innate desire to know and to get what is deemed to be necessary to one's existence and satisfaction.

To gratify this Inquisitiveness and Acquisitiveness we must investigate. To disseminate Knowledge so gained we must educate, teach what we have learnt. By means of Statutes and Enactments we must legislate, and with the object of Social Service, we must administrate.

Having done this, what we need, to ensure success and realize the ideals of those who are endeavouring to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, is the true Spirit of Co-operation.

Thus as Individuals our Characteristics may be used to further Humanitarian movements; these in turn being Circumstances which influence those who are brought into contact therewith; but we should realize that such institutions are the outcome of Characters who by their mental and moral constitution were instrumental in the construction thereof.

We thus conclude that Circumstances mould characters, and Characters affect Circumstances; we also see how we may, if we will, participate in building the "New Jerusalem," the Golden City of our dreams, hopes, and aspirations.

P.S.—For Truth and Right *investigate*; with words of Wisdom *educate*; for Social Justice *legislate*; as Comrades true *co-operate*.

C. RATCLIFFE.

Acid Drops.

We often hear from Christian sources about Freethinkers who have been converted. They are invariably nameless. But a reporter on the *Methodist Recorder* staff, who recently visited Blackburn Wesleyan Mission Hall has discovered one with a name:

The very first worker I met, Mr. Charles Dugdale, said, "Do you know, eight years ago I was a Secularist lecturer. I used to go all over the country speaking against the Christian religion. I am now secretary of the Saturday concerts.

Very wonderful things occur in this interesting world of ours. We have a very lengthy and a very wide experience of the Freethought movement in this country, and we must confess that this is the first time we have ever heard of this Mr. Dugdale who went all over the country as a Secularist lecturer. It looks as though there has been some very tall lying about, or shall we say that religious enthusiasm is growing in the Methodist movement? Very often these are only two ways of saying the same thing.

Perhaps the following quotation from Mr. Cohen's new book, *Opinions*, may not be out of place here:—

I have no greater objection to the religious liar than I have to any other kind of liar. My special grudge against him is that he lacks both originality and humour. His lies are always very old and very stupid. Lies to be interesting and acceptable should be at least witty, and if possible presented in an original manner. These are the two qualities that make a lie tolerable.

A scientist prophesies that human legs will gradually disappear, through disuse. His guess may not be right. A piece of history suggests, for instance, during the Age of Faith intelligence and reason seemed also likely to disappear through lack of exercise. They did not, because something happened which revived the use of them. A similar cause may save the atrophy of legs. Anyway, let us hope so; for without legs how can the Christian animal properly grovel before his Almighty Bogy?

The Archbishop of Canterbury has noted the modern girl's freedom from embarrassment and constraint when she meets older persons. She even, it appears, talks to an Archbishop in a frank and friendly way! We can quite believe it. The modern girl treats a bishop as an ordinary human being and not as a very special pal of God Almighty. Unlike the girl of a former generation, she doesn't take a bishop at his own valuation. As this new point of view is the outcome of the waning of clerical influence, the Archbishop had better be cautious in encouraging the modern girl's modern ways.

Geneva, we learn, is the Clearing House of world problems. Since the League doesn't discuss religion, one may presume that it is not a world problem, although interested parties do prophecy the doom of civilization if the dumping of religion continues.

A contemporary suggests that:—

The old war men had to pretend that war was a noble thing, but they will never fool the world again.

The world has been fooled so often by ancient catchwords, fallacies, and shibboleths that we are not inclined to share our friend's optimism. Still, we believe that by means of ridicule and exposure, the power of catchwords, fallacies, and shibboleths to fool the world can be considerably weakened.

An American has sent £21 to each of twenty-one cathedrals of England. It seems a pity his donations were not larger. The better our cathedrals are kept in repair, the more valuable they will be in the days to come when cathedrals will be put to socially better uses.

A pious journal invites all and sundry to rejoice at the news that China's three leading men (the President, the Foreign Minister, and the Finance Minister) are all Christians. On the humble assumption that a Christian is not as other men (thank God!) and possesses all the available human virtues, there seems no sound reason for not rejoicing.

At Leeds there has been a "Crusade" in which all the local species of Christian Churches took part. The primary gain of the crusade, we are told, has been the "delightful feeling of comradeship and brotherhood amongst the members of the various Churches." We presume the feeling is "delightful" because of its novelty. Comradeship and brotherhood amongst the various followers of the Religion of Brotherhood has hitherto—for nineteen centuries—been somewhat unusual or rare.

Dr. James Black, of Edinburgh, is tired of ministers who are afraid to tell their congregation about "punishment." The Church, he says, is losing half its power because ministers are mealy-mouthed about punishment. Stoke up the Eternal Bonfire! The Churches can do nothing without some nice, red Flames to put the fear of God into men, and to make them appreciate the love of Jesus. The world will never be "saved" by Churches which have only a kind, old grandfather in the skies to offer. The religious instinct of man can only be aroused properly by fear of a Big Bogy.

Roman Catholics stand to sing and kneel to pray; Highland Presbyterians and French Protestants sit to sing and stand to pray. Whereupon a writer in a pious weekly is moved to say: "A history of what one might call deportment in worship would be deeply interesting." Perhaps so; and the possibility is that anthropologists would illuminate the subject as well as any. The same writer remarks: "I do not quite know how to describe the posture of myself and my fellow-worshippers during prayer." It would be safe to assume that: "ludicrous" would be accurate enough. We wonder why the Christian God always wants the human animals he created to cringe while talking to him?

"What is wrong with this generation?" appears to be a favourite theme of our parsons and journalists. The moral judgment implied by the word "wrong" suggests that the critics have made an egotistic assumption that each preceding generation is qualified and entitled to pass an ethical judgment on the differences between a former generation, and a new. After having assumed that the manners, customs, habits, and ideas of a former generation were (or are) impeccable, the critics quite naturally assume a divine right (as it were) to sit in judgment. They overlook the fact that things may be different without being either "wrong" or "right" morally.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society invites the godly to offer thanksgiving for "the world-wide reverence for Jesus." From this you would be right in inferring that pious imagination is a wonderful magnifying-glass.

The Christian way of life, says a preacher, was not meant to be an easy one. Still, that doesn't justify the Christian bigot's efforts to make life for non-Christians as miserable as his own. But, after all, the Christian way of life is not so very hard. How many of the Christian clergy would have the comfortable lives they have in the absence of Christianity? As G. W. Foote used to say, most of the clergy can get a better living on the cross than they could hope to get on the square.

This nation, says the *Manchester Guardian*, spends more on the Officers' Training Corps than on the League of Nations. Presumably our wise politicians and diplomats are too busy to study the causes and prevention of war, and still venerate such antique maxims as, "If you desire peace prepare for war." This aside, surely the supreme lesson of the last great dog-fight was that success in war depends on Prayer. Therefore, what should be encouraged and subsidized is not a training corps of officers, but a training corp of parsons skilled in sending up massed petitions to God for a victory.

The historian of the future may note the tremendous tonnage of books turned out in our present dispensation; if he is keen in his observation he will also note that hardly any qualification, other than covering paper, were necessary for their production. In a *Daily Mail* review of a book *Stark India*, it is noted that the author, Mr. Trevor Pinch, in the following extract, wishes to make someone's flesh creep:—

In casting off, as it were, his former gods and substituting nothing for them, either nobler or lower, the Indian is left with a mere negation . . . The mystery, the suggestion of a hidden, perhaps higher, influence on his destiny has vanished. So the only thing to which he can turn is a stark materialism indistinguishable from Atheism.

The Indian may, if he likes, find ample evidence of stark materialism in England if he examines the wills of departed divines, or listens to General Higgins, who, in all humility state that the Salvation Army's property is worth 2½ millions in this country alone. For the diffusion of the gospel of poverty he may also note huge buildings called Cathedrals and Churches, the value of ecclesiastical properties, and palatial residences of those enjoying the plums of religion—or stark materialism. Mr. Pinch appears to have as much knowledge of the misuse of words as the ordinary journalist; that he has the newspaper trick of word-juggling is evident; that he does not know that Buddhism is atheistic is our case, for a book's a book although there is only journalism in it.

Mr. Reginald McKenna, who will probably be one of the first men to put the country right, states that there is not enough money in circulation. Although it does not need a Napoleon to tell us this, it is to be carefully noted, that Mr. McKenna said it before any Archbishop or lesser luminary in the religious world. Perhaps these shepherds are too busy sheep-shearing.

It is not true that an apology has been demanded by the canine occupants of the Battersea Dog's Home as a result of recent affairs in the House of Commons.

Christian Science is not a poor man's religion. A recent book entitled *Mary Baker Eddy, A Life-Size Portrait*, by Dr. Lyman P. Powell, can be bought for £1 bound in cloth, or £1 10s. bound in leather.

For the supercilious and ill-informed administrators of justice who put obstacles in the way of witnesses affirming, we commend the following statement of Mr. Justice McCardie: "Too often the oath is looked upon as a mere formality." The help of God appears to be a dubious assistance.

Mr. R. J. Campbell says:—

Let it be granted that the best kind of life is impossible without religion. This is no mere *obiter dictum* of a Christian teacher, it is an established principle both of philosophy and psychology.

Wonders will never cease? Some philosophies and some psychologies, of course, teach anything, but it is just a little remarkable that even Mr. R. J. Campbell, the once fiery religious reformer of the City Temple, but now the quite contented Canon of the English Church, should not have heard of some philosophies and some psychologies that leave religion on one side altogether. He must have heard of them, although he will not say so. After all as we have so often said, there are very many ways of telling a lie. A volume, say, of the *Christian World Pulpit*, which contains some hundreds of sermons, will contain specimens of almost every kind going.

A Sunday-school expert declares that "it is generally admitted that the enormous decline in drunkenness, and the far higher standard of sobriety to-day among English people as a whole, is the direct outcome of temperance teaching in both Sunday and day schools during the past generation and more." These "Temperance" fanatics have a good conceit of themselves. They keep telling each other that their total abstinence propaganda has done more than anything else to make the nation sober, and now they believe it to be true. But any observer knows that their intemperate propaganda does as much as anything to attack a fictitious glamour to "booze."

In *John Bull*, Dr. R. J. Campbell says:—

To-day, says Sir James Jeans, there is almost unanimous agreement on the physical side of science that the universe shows evidence of being designed and controlled by mind—a mind that works something like our own.

This is of great practical importance to every reader of these words; for if mind has created us, mind must care for us.

Sir James adds that science is not yet prepared to say that the mind at the back of everything feels as we do about the worth of goodness and beauty, or exhibits some signs of sympathy with human struggle and stress.

From the same issue of *John Bull*, we learn that there are forty-two different sorts of epidemics, endemics, and infectious diseases which may be fatal, and are responsible for the deaths of 3,122 males and 28,232 females last year in England and Wales. Also, tuberculosis killed 29,157 males and 16,466 females; cancer killed 56,000; diseases of the nerves and sense-organs slew 41,000; diseases of the circulatory system, 105,000; diseases of the respiratory system, 59,000; diseases of the digestive system, 26,000. And when one tries to visualize the appalling total amount of suffering and pain—in this country alone—entailed by all these diseases, one is humbly grateful for Dr. Campbell's consoling suggestion that it is all designed and controlled by a "mind" which "has created us" and "must care for us."

A reader of the *Christian World* complains that ministers of religion seem strangely indifferent to the sufferings of animals. To see one at meetings concerned with animal welfare, especially on the platform, he says, is a rare sight. The complaint will send the parsons to such meetings post haste. They will assume an interest in animal welfare, in order that religion shall not get a bad name nor parsons be disparaged for indifference. One thing may be added. They will need to search the Scriptures a very long time before discovering therein anything to indicate that the Bible encourages sympathy for animals. "Does God care for oxen?"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- A. G. MOSS.—Pleased to hear from you with so good a recommendation. Sorry we cannot use your enclosure. The point is hardly strong enough.
- C. BENTLEY.—Sorry, but we are not acquainted with the verses to which you refer.
- J. DAWSON.—We note that you and your friend were entered as Atheists on joining the army, without comment. This is a right that all soldiers have, if they will insist upon it, as is also the right to affirm instead of taking the oath.
- J. ALMOND.—In the *Life and Letters* of Charles Darwin you will find the express statement of Darwin that he much regretted having used the term creator, by which he meant happened by some unknown cause. But Darwin, great as he was, evidently had an inadequate conception of the trickiness of religious controversialists, and trusted to them to take a mere expression in the sense in which he used it.
- H. DAVIDSON.—We wish you every success in your endeavours to stir up Freethinkers in Belfast.
- W.L.—Sorry unable to use article.
- H. MARTIN.—We wrote on the subject in the *Freethinker* for April 21 of last year. The Secular Society, Limited, and the House of Lords decision marked one of the greatest legal victories ever won for English Freethought, and is recognized as such by every legal authority wherever English law has any influence. The Society was founded by G. W. Foote.
- R. FIMWORTH.—We think that Mr. Cohen's address to the Leyton Literary Club, on January 10, will be open only to members of the club. It is not, we think a public meeting in the usual sense of the term.
- J. REEVES.—Thanks. Quite useful.
- A. B. MOSS.—Intend taking a little rest over Christmas time—at least we shall not be doing quite so much.
- C. BENTLEY.—Will see what can be done.
- J. CLAYTON.—It is a peculiarity of spirits to be very shy when sceptics are about.
- The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.*
- The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.*
- The National Secular Society's Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.*
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.*
- All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."*

Sugar Plums.

The Queen's Hall, Bradford, was comfortably filled on Sunday last—there being only a few vacant seats, to listen to Mr. Cohen. Mr. Searle occupied the chair, and the lecture was received with evident appreciation. The Bradford Branch appears to be making good progress. To-day (December 7) Mr. Colten will speak in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30, on "God and the Universe—Eddington, Huxley, and Jeans."

On Sunday next (December 14) Mr. Cohen will lecture before the Cosmopolitan Debating Society, Nottingham. The meeting is an afternoon one and will commence at 2.30. Judging by previous experiences those who wish to get in should make it a point of being in good time.

This will be the last public meeting of which Mr. Cohen will address until towards the end of January. He

has spent a very strenuous autumn, and will not be sorry to have a rest from the platform for a few weeks. Week-end lecturing in the provinces makes a terribly large hole in the week, and there are many other things that are awaiting attention.

The Executive of the National Secular Society has published a post card containing a telling quotation from Thomas Hardy as follows:—

Peace upon earth! was said. We sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it.
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison-gas.

A reminder of the real position among Christian nations should be very useful in the coming season of cheap sentiment about peace and goodwill, and it is hoped Freethinkers will take full advantage of the opportunity by using the post cards widely in corresponding with friends. Twenty cards for sixpence, post free, may be had from the Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, or the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

The Transport Hall, Liverpool, was well filled last Sunday, and Mr. R. H. Rosetti had an enthusiastic meeting. Questions were many and assorted, and interest was well maintained. Mr. McKelvie was a popular chairman and sent everybody home in a good rumour.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti speaks for the Fulham and Chelsea Branch, N.S.S., at the London Co-operative Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham, at 7.30 to-day (Sunday) on "Nature, Man and God."

Manchester Branch reports two good meetings last Sunday, addressed by Mr. F. C. Moore, of Wallasey. With the number of Freethinkers in Manchester the local Branch should have crowded audiences at each session.

A Christian Evidence Society speaker, Mr. Charles Thomas Quinn, was at Marylebone Police Court bound over and ordered to pay one guinea costs for using insulting words and behaviour at Parliament Hill Fields. Annoyed at having no audience, he decided if the people would not come to him, he must go to them, and placed his stand at the edge of another meeting. Refusing to go back to the pitch allotted to him he was arrested. Decent people will in future give Mr. Quinn a wider berth than ever, although, no doubt, his adventure with the authorities will bring a few curio hunters to his platform.

Will all members of the Bradford Branch N.S.S. make a special effort to attend a general meeting at the Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street, Bradford, on Sunday evening, December 7, at 7.30. Also please note change in the Secretary's address to 10 Elsworth Avenue, Bradford Moor, Bradford, Yorks.

London General Omnibus drivers and conductors conducted a Brotherhood meeting at Loughton recently, and the Rev. S. Morris gave an address on "If Christ were Conductor." We hope the Rev. Morris's involved suggestion of Jesus Christ in a bus conductor's uniform, shouting Piccadilly, Hyde Park Corner and Chelsea does not infringe the Blasphemy Laws. One imagines the son of God smiling sweetly at the dear old lady tendering a ten shilling note for a penny fare during the rush hour. Still the idea is a good one with the possibility of endless variety, and we may yet have Jesus Christ as a lift man, or a Nippy.

Alderman W. T. O. Sheat says land is becoming so scarce in rapidly-developing Ilford, that people are asking if churches could be bought and used for other purposes. Dear, dear, that is what the wicked Soviets are doing in Russia.

"Modern Physics" and Determinism.

If the reading of the *Mysterious Universe* did not impress one with the seriousness of Sir James Jeans, one would be inclined to look upon him as the humourist of Physics and Astronomy bent upon pulling the leg of the parson. He tries to give the reader to understand that the universe is indeterminate, yet the scientific portions of his book are in support of determinism. There is nothing worth having in the *Mysterious Universe* that can be adopted in support of the rather fantastic theory, to which we have lately been treated, concerning the possibility of determinism and materialism receiving a rude shock from science in the near future. In fact, we may venture to say that there is no likelihood of any such shock ever coming.

That Sir James Jeans is capable of very careless reasoning and of incautious modes of expression, is revealed early in the book. On page 4 he writes, "into such a universe we have stumbled, if not exactly by mistake, at least as the result of what may properly be described as an accident. The use of such a word need not imply any surprise that our earth exists, for accidents will happen, and if the universe goes on for long enough, every conceivable accident is likely to happen in time." That the use of the word accident in this connexion is quite unjustifiable, it being used to indicate that various processes in nature may happen by accident, should easily be realized by anyone acquainted with scientific reasoning. In every-day talk we speak of an accident when something has taken place as a result of our having failed to observe that a certain result would follow certain actions, or when we have relied upon the strength of something and it has given way. Even then the word accident stands for our ignorance of certain conditions and not for absence of conditions as implied by Sir James in the above passage.

In the next sentence Sir James goes on to say, "it was, I think, Huxley who said that six monkeys, set to strum unintelligently on typewriters for millions of millions of years, would be bound in time to write all the books in the British Museum." p. 4.

This would not be worth discussing except that it is a type of illustration which appears, to the uncritical reader, to present all the conditions of the case when it does nothing of the sort.

In the first place, the ordinary typewriter, and any conceivable typewriter is quite incapable of producing all the pictorial plates, all the mathematical and astronomical illustrations, and all the various languages that are to be found in the books of the British Museum.

In the second place, if Huxley meant only such books as are printed in words, then it would be necessary to use typewriters which were fitted only with keys on which were the different alphabets used by mankind. If number keys were on the typewriter, the possibility of the books in printed words being produced would be nil, as the monkeys would be just as likely to periodically strike numbers as they would be to strike letters.

In the third place, if we reduce the performance to that of producing a Shakespeare sonnet, the requisite typewriters must be granted. If nothing but numbers, or only half the English alphabet were on the keys the sonnet would not be the result of any number of millions of years strumming.

What I want the reader to realize is that if certain conditions are granted in this, or in anything else, then we have all that the determinist requires. With-

out the conditions which make possible the production of a thing or of an event, that thing cannot be produced nor can the event take place; and Sir James Jeans is unable to cite any event in the evolution of the universe which has taken place apart from conditions. If he could prove that unintelligent monkeys working on typewriters for millions of years could produce a Shakespeare sonnet, he would not thereby prove the indeterminacy of the performance. He would still have to prove that it could be done without the use of some of the necessary letters or with the wrong kind of typewriters, which is absurd.

With physics, astronomy, and mathematics, as such, I am not concerned. My reading in these subjects is not extensive. Not even by "accident," as Sir James might say; but I am amazed at the blunders in thinking which can be exhibited, in a small work on the findings and implications of modern science, by an outstanding scientist. Especially when Sir James seems to have so great a desire to put the philosophers right.

As examples of the confused way in which such words as "law" and nature are used, by Sir James, we may take the following: "Chemistry suggests that, like magnetism and radio-activity, life may merely be an accidental consequence of the special set of laws by which the present universe is governed." p. 10.

"We have long thought of the workings of nature as exemplifying the acme of precision." pp. 25-26.

"Yet Heisenberg now makes it appear that nature abhors accuracy and precision above all things." p. 26.

"If we know that an electron is at a certain point in space, we cannot specify exactly the speed with which it is moving—nature permits a certain 'margin of error,' and if we try to get within this margin, nature will give us no help: she knows nothing, apparently, of absolutely exact measurements. In the same way, if we know the exact speed of motion of an electron, nature refuses to let us discover its exact position in space." p. 26.

If ever anthropomorphism were introduced into what is supposed to be scientific reasoning it is surely here. Some measure of figurative speech may at times be allowed when we speak of nature and law; but it is obvious that no figure of speech is intended in the above, when Sir James is set on rejecting the idea that a scientific interpretation of the universe involves determinism.

The suggestion that the universe is "governed" by a special set of laws is ridiculous in the extreme. To put it briefly, any scientist ought to know that a "law of nature" is a summary of observed processes in nature; not something going about telling certain parts of the universe what to do, or making them do it. Even if laws had objective existence, and did govern nature, it would be preposterous to speak of life as possibly being "an accidental consequence of the special set of laws." How anything in the universe which results from a "special set" of "laws," as Sir James would say, or "conditions" can be accidental is beyond scientific statement and proof.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

(To be concluded.)

There is not a more melancholy object than a man who has his head turned with religious enthusiasm.—*Addison*.

There are two freedoms—the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.—*Charles Kingsley*.

Force is no remedy.—*John Bright*.

The Sabbath.

(Concluded from page 763.)

THE foundations of Rationalism is the intellect. "Pleasure" does not conduce to intellectualism—very much the reverse. A Sabbath, *i.e.*, a serious day, is more essential to Rationalism than to religion. This may be a startling statement for anti-Sabbath fanatics, but it is worth thinking over. Also I contend that Rationalism is better fitted to make a success of a Sabbath than is religion. A short article is not sufficient to discuss the subject fully, and I can only briefly deal with it.

In my introductory paragraphs I showed that a Sabbath could be not only serious but pleasurable. A pertinent criticism and question of this would be—why, if the Sabbath was pleasurable, has religion failed to keep up one of its most distinctive institutions? Two or three main reasons can be given, and note that they would not apply to a Rationalist Sabbath.

When the English Sabbath was in its palmy days practically everyone believed in the religious foundations of it. Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall undermined the foundation. Why they succeeded when men like Hume and Paine failed is an interesting question. The fact remains, however, that belief was undermined. The religious part of Sunday became as a consequence, a stumbling block. Men who had lost their beliefs could only participate by practising more or less hypocrisy. This being irksome, they gradually withdrew from attendance. But, you say, the communal pleasure remained. To some extent, certainly, and it is perhaps the chief thing holding the remains of the Sabbath together. It is nowadays more social than communal. Religion was at once a levelling and a binding agent. When it was strong, *i.e.*, when everybody believed in it, rich and poor met with a great measure of equality. All were children of God. The social inequalities of this world were only temporary. Life was short. Eternity—either in heaven or hell—would be long—and in eternity all would be equal. The poor did not look on the rich with undue envy, nor the rich on the poor with undue contempt, because in a few more years the difference would disappear. When the vividness of this belief faded, when religion began to lose its hold, then the social cleavage showed itself. Each little community found an irksomeness in the differences of social status. The forces of disintegration began to work strongly.

With the advent of cheap and easy locomotion—especially when the motor-car arrived—the disintegration went on rapidly. The poor man sulked at home in the morning with his Sunday paper whilst the rich man gallivanted off . . . and the Continental Sunday began to show its ugly face. On such lines the decay of the English Sunday could be described and explained.

But Rationalism has not that fatal weakness of religion of requiring a man to believe what he cannot believe. It could call men together on an honest and real equality—the equality of individuals as individuals. Could it but be done it would be a good thing for both Rationalism and the nation. With all the emphasis I can put into it I say that Rationalism has a desperate need of an organized communityism similar to, but higher than, that of the Nonconformists. It has so far failed to impress itself on the nation. It has been mainly destructive. It will not have its due influence until it is constructive. It ought not in mere contrariness go to an extreme from its opponents. It ought to be strong-minded enough to

show the sincerest form of flattery if it is for its own good. The community and social arrangements of religion are worth studying—and copying.

A well informed strong-mindedness is necessary for the production of a first-class rationalist. Under present conditions only a select few are produced, and they are too rare, too individualistic, too isolated to produce a rationalist atmosphere or environment that would both produce more rationalists and prevent the weaker vessels from running after quackeries. How is that atmosphere to be produced? How better than in communities on the model of Nonconformist chapels where the children would find Rationalism the natural and normal thing, and would also imbibe the knowledge that would confirm them in Rationalism in adult life.

The strong power of mass suggestion is well known. "Atmosphere" is really another way of expressing the same thing. Women are more susceptible to it than men. Many of our very individualist and lonely rationalists lack the sympathy and support of their wives, because the wives have not the strength of mind to be out of the fashion of the majority. Yet, from exactly the same motive, the women of a rationalist community would probably be more partisan than the men.

Has it ever struck you that a chapel is practically a club for its women members? Without the name it does actually function as such. This explains, to a large extent, why the majority of chapel members are women. Further, if you come to think of it, something on the lines of a chapel is about the only safe form of a mixed club—a fact worth thinking of.

Rationalism and religion have this in common, they are both "serious." Primitive pleasures such as the herd run to are a danger to both; in some respects a greater danger to rationalism than to religion—especially ritualistic and magical religion. Superstition, either pagan or Catholic does not need a Sabbath. But from the more serious and intellectual Protestantism the Sabbath was a natural evolution. Rationalism being more intellectual still, I can imagine that, if rationalists become organized, with hundreds of rationalist "chapels" up and down the land, then a quite natural evolution would be a Rationalist Sabbath. Sermons or addresses would keep the people intellectually up to date, elocution would keep our great poets and authors a continuing influence, community singing would give emotional exercises, and perhaps some ritual of friendship would give a weekly reminder of the brotherhood of man. Think it over.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

WAR AND LITERATURE.

Literature has not consciously lied about war . . . But literature has strangely failed to see and depict this one thing in its true colours. Always the fundamental thing in war, the agony and the sorrow, has been complacently suppressed . . .

Since 1918 all that has been changed. The poets and the novelists, having seen war at first-hand and realized how little the clanging phrases correspond with the brutal reality, have made noble amends for the long blindness of literature. The history of literature contains no more astonishing page than this: that in a single decade a few poets, novelists and dramatists have made it utterly impossible for any serious writer ever again to say a romantic or poetical thing about war. Even the elegiac poetry of war is gone . . .

I would not blot out a line of the homage which literature has rendered to courage and sacrifice. But I hope and believe that she will never again lend herself to idealizing the unspeakable brutishness of war.

E.H.T. (in the "Christian World.")

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

RELIGION IN THE SERVICES.

SIR,—Following the remarks of Cpl. Stuart in the *Freethinker*, of November 23—in his reply to Mr. W. H. Field, perhaps a few quotations from a Chaplain's point of view might be of interest.

I shall therefore draw on a very human little book *Tips for Padres* (A Handbook for Chaplains) by the Revd. Everard Digby, C.F., (Gale & Polden, price 1s.).

The quotations are exact—the italics mine.

I find the Army Chaplains "Pay is none too generous." "We are willing to make sacrifices and to do our best on poor pay."

"If there are no *proper* Chaplains quarters provided, the *wise* Chaplains will apply for permission to live out of the Mess. He is then entitled to Lodging Allowance."

"The Chaplain can either draw his rations in kind, or claim the ration allowance."

"If the Chaplain is a married man, living out with his wife, it will certainly pay him better to draw rations, as all provisions are so expensive."

"You can send your batman along to the Quartermaster's Stores."

"A Chaplain can claim *Travelling allowance* when on duty, which includes cab fares. One always has to travel *first class*, but when on duty one is provided with a *free travelling warrant*, which is used as a railway ticket, and given up at the end of the journey."

"At other times you can obtain a voucher from your *orderly room* entitling you to travel at half fares."

"Postage—which includes any sort of a letter to a soldier may be claimed."

"If you are away from your quarters on duty for a day and a night you can claim."

"Contingent Expenses, i.e., expenses—such as altar wine, candles, washing of altar linen and surplices, are allowed."

"The clergy are *simple children in matters of finance*."

"The Transport Officers Packing Cases will always hold a few of the Padre's belongings when you move."

"But you'll have to reciprocate by finding room for the mess whisky in the chaplains cart sometimes."

"A good servant is worth his weight in gold. The wise padre does not look out for a good young man, of an ecclesiastical turn of mind. They are all right for assisting in services, but choose an old soldier for your servant. Remember, he has his feelings, and it is not always wise to ask him where things come from."

"The old sweat will never let you down, and you will not want for many things as long as you can keep him, even if his place is vacant on your parade service."

In difficulties with Commanding Officers the Chaplains "Resistance should be firm but tactful, and it is the one matter in which you can be always certain of the backing of the powers that be."

It is the Chaplains duty "To back up the Commanding Officer and officers of the Unit," also "It is his duty to uphold authority."

Amongst other duties we find "Then your daily visit to the cells—never to be neglected, for many of your best captures come from there. A lad in cells for the first time is very impressionable."

"See the daily batch of recruits. A little talk on the traditions and history of the regiment."

Now regarding sports. "If you are really good at any sport play for the Battalion Team, but don't take on Committee work, and never be the secretary. Certainly sing at the concerts if you can sing well, but don't be responsible for the entertainments. It is not your job. you are not the only man with nothing to do."

"Don't be tempted to run the Battalion War Savings Association, as it will eat up all your Saturdays."

"The Chaplain can teach pardon to hundreds of lads who have never been taught the forgiveness of sins before, or any other vital fact about religion," also send hymns to men "For a tempted Soul," and "For one who cannot get to Holy Communion."

Perhaps I have quoted enough, but if Major W. P. Young was right in *A Soldier to the Church*, that "the Church as an Organization during the War, touched the men most of all through its mugs of tea and coffee,"—it would seem that the ordinary canteen could have done that.

In fairness to the Protestant Army Chaplains, it should be stated that whilst the Commanding Officer can report them for any departure in the laid down service of the church, the C.O. has no power over a Roman Catholic (vide King's Regulations)—also vide Allowance Regulations, whilst the Protestant Padre has to submit bills for his candles and wine, the Roman Catholic closes at 30s. per month per church, win or lose, and no bills shown.

The question of Compulsory Services, is bound up with the whole overdue question of Army Reform, and on the timeliness or otherwise of this, the whole future of British Democracy and Liberty, I think, must rest

"LATE WARRANT OFFICER."

SIR,—Re *Church Parades in the Army*. I enlisted (1914) as an "Agnostic," and my identity disc throughout the war was marked "Ag." When I enlisted I refused to take a Bible oath, and was permitted to affirm.

As regards Church parades, when I asked to be excused these, I was given a "fatigue" in lieu thereof. These, I discovered, could be nasty, if the responsible N.C.O. was piously inclined; and they could last longer than the Church parade. Therefore, acting on advice from the *Freethinker*, I then paraded with the Church of England party, marched to the church door, and stood inside while the "good" men entered. When the door closed I "dismissed" myself. No one ever enquired why I did not enter the church. But, of course, the Army of to-day may be different, and officers and N.C.O.'s more inquisitive.

Corporal Stuart obviously put himself in a false position—through innocence—when he enlisted other than as an Atheist or Agnostic. And so he will have now to keep running after the Padre, and "stating views" in order to get out of church parades. D.P.S.

GENERAL IDEAS AND BIOLOGY.

SIR,—As one who possibly has had a more intimate practical experience in the field of normal and morbid psychology than Colonel Lynch, I venture the suggestion that his statement: "the value of biology in regard to throwing light on psychological problems has been greatly exaggerated" is a matter of opinion based, apparently, on authorship of *Principles of Psychology*. Overwhelming evidence shows that the many "howlers" in psychology perpetrated by academic philosophers, metaphysical mathematicians, spiritist physicists, to say nothing of the arm-chair psychologists themselves, are mainly traceable to ignorance concerning the elementary facts and principles of biology. The really valuable findings in mental science are the output of the physiological psychologists whose data are the structure and functions of the organ of feeling and thought in man and the lower animals.

I submit that Colonel Lynch has not been just in including among the names of those he accuses of constantly writing in a "meaningless or misleading manner" that of Sir Arthur Keith who, of all scientists who write for the public, is the most outspoken, straightforward and unambiguous.

CHARLES M. BEADNELL.

BIRTH CONTROL AND ABORTION.

SIR,—In your issue of November 30, Dr. Marie Stopes protests against my calling abortion a "form of birth control." I have no desire to enter into verbal disputes, but surely anything that prevents birth is a form of birth control. It may be an undesirable form, but still it is a form.

Dr. Stopes defines abortion as "the ignorant, hole-in-corner murder of an embryo, and interference with natural, physiological processes by untrained persons for

improper reasons." Here, again, we have a dispute about words. If everybody accepted the above definition, then, of course, nobody would advocate the legalization of abortion. It happens, however, that many enlightened persons all over Europe attach a different meaning to the word, and that two countries, Russia and Esthonia, have already adopted what is commonly known as legalized abortion.

In Russia any woman who desires an abortion can have it, provided the operation is performed within three months of conception by a qualified doctor in a public hospital. What the motive is does not matter, but the statistics show that it is usually economic.

Dr. Stopes also says: "Our present law permits the evacuation of the uterus by competent medical practitioners for adequate reasons." I should be more impressed if Dr. Stopes quoted her authority for this statement, but in any case we should merely have another dispute as to what are "adequate reasons." Certainly poverty, or the fear of birth pains, or the desire to space babies, would not be considered an adequate reason by any court of law. Those who advocate the legalization of abortion would make it permissible at the will of the mother after due consideration, provided it were done within three months of conception.

R. B. KERR.

SIR,—Dr. Marie Stopes cannot justifiably limit the meaning of the word "Birth Control" to Contraception. She should only advocate "Conception Control." Birth Control obviously means the control of births, and therefore includes abortion. If she is so sensitive to the "murder of the embryo," why is she not equally so to the poor spermatozoon?

No "Conception Control" method is as yet perfect, for complete Birth Control, abortion is the only alternative.

Dr. Stopes is herself confused upon the legalization of abortion. What the Working Class needs is not a "hole-in-the-corner" abortion, but the same rights accorded to them as are given to the ruling class—viz.—abortions when they want them, at a fee within their means, and by a gynecologist. This is the only way to prevent "ignorant, hole-in-the-corner" methods.

(Mrs.) GLADYS EVANS,

(Member of World League of Sexual Reform).

SIR,—That eminent Christian, Dr. Marie Stopes, misrepresents those who advocate—not the continuance of the present frequent but secret, septic, bungling, futile or fatal interferences with pregnancy, but—the legalization of abortion, *at the woman's request*, by a qualified surgeon, and within a limited period.

I suggest that this shrill misrepresentation is, after all, understandable, for the right to abortion is a cause in its pioneer stage, in Britain to-day. The path for its advocates has not been beaten safe and easy, by several decades of initial work. It is not yet either popular or profitable, when it becomes both—if it should do so within Dr. Stopes' lifetime, which is unlikely—we may hear a change of tune.

I deplore the insolence to the World League of Sexual Reform, many of whose members, all over the world, have a longer and more strenuous record of help to humanity, than Dr. Marie Stopes.

But, as I have publicly advocated the legalization of abortion, not only at Wigmore Hall last year, but in print and on platforms since 1915—may I express my amusement that Dr. Stopes should protest so much? She herself has stated that on one occasion, she received 85 requests to procure abortion, and only 14 for contraceptive help! Does this look like a "fancied grievance"?

But it pays to hunt with the hounds!

Thanking you for your honesty and calm courage in giving publicity to this need.

F. W. STELLA BROWNE.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND TRUTH.

SIR,—Although it must be admitted that Mr. Boyd Freeman does go all out in his attacks upon Catholics

and Catholicism, I should have thought that Mr. Corrick would have been more useful to his cause and much more convincing in his argument if he replied to the charges and even ignored the grounds for his personal complaint.

The average Freethinker's experience of Catholics and their methods of controversy is not exactly edifying, and plainness of speech in most cases is more than justified.

The Catholic creed based as it is upon absurd dogma and crude superstition, its persistent enmity throughout the ages to Freethought and progressive advancement, its fearful repressive institutions and the whole trail of mass murder, villainy, obscenity and forgery left in its wake, must leave all honest men with the conviction that the *informed* Catholic must be the unfortunate possessor of a black heart.

It is the facts that convince! Catholic countries and areas the world over are chiefly noted for ignorance and general backwardness, Catholic scholars are notoriously dishonest and untrustworthy.

Mr. C. G. Coulton has discovered this fact in relation to Catholic scholars, likewise has Mr. H. G. Wells.

On the history of controversy a Catholic scholar has at times tried to break away from the traditional methods, his reward is only too well known as instance the cases of Dr. Dollinger, St. George Mivart, Loisey, Houtin, etc.

Father Wasmann, a prominent German Jesuit and a zoologist of whom the Catholics are very proud, illustrated the Catholic mind in the last words of his well known book on *The Psychology of Ants*, English translation. He is referring to the evolution of a school of animal psychologists, the crime being, of course, that their findings do not agree with Catholic dogma. The following quotation is given with his italics:—

Do away with all books, pamphlets and periodicals, whose only purpose is to raise the brute to the level of man.

R. TURNEY.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 28, 1930.
THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present Messrs. Clifton, Gorniot, Quinton, Corrigan, Easterbrook, Ebury, Rosetti (A. C.), Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, and the Secretary.

A number of apologies for unavoidable absence were read.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted, the monthly financial statement presented. Correspondence from Liverpool, South London, Burnley, and West Ham was dealt with. New members were admitted for the South London and Liverpool Branches, also the Parent Society. Preliminary details of the Annual Dinner were discussed, and the Secretary instructed. A report from the International Freethought Conference Committee was received, and decisions arrived at. It was agreed the next meeting of the Executive be held on January 2, 1931.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

Society News.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.

We were fortunate on Sunday last in listening to Mr. J. H. Van Biene. For over an hour he kept their interest in the subject, "What Do We Know," delivered with clearness, force, and in fine style.

The questions and discussion which followed proved the impression he had made. I trust we shall have the pleasure of hearing him again shortly. This Sunday (December 7) the speaker is our General Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, on "Nature, Man and God.—A.J.M.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

THERE was a full Hall on Sunday long before Mr. C. E.

Saphin delivered his lecture in a most masterly manner. The B.V.M. doctrine explained by the lecturer in simple terms left little reason for doubt and discussion.

A great deal of time and study must have been given by the speaker to that subject, and judging by the splendid reception given by the audience, I am sure it was well spent.

No foe or friend could have doubted the sincerity and zeal of the speaker, and every one there gave assent to that fact by the unanimous vote of thanks accorded to him.

On Sunday next, Mr. Charles Pilley, late editor of *John Bull*, will lecture on "How God Went Overboard at Lambeth."—B.A.L.E.M.

On Sunday, November 30, the Birmingham Branch again had the pleasure of hearing Miss Stella Browne. Her lecture on "The Lambeth Resolutions and Human Realities" was enthusiastically received. The importance of a logical appreciation of population and sex problems was emphasized, and the futility, indecency and absurdity of the Lambeth resolution on these matters was exposed.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

CITY GENTLEMAN requires Large Unfurnished Bed Room and Kitchenette or two small rooms; every convenience; no attendance; rent up to 21s.; N.W. district preferred.—Write Box C.L., FREETHINKER, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, opposite Walham Green Church): Every Saturday at 7.30.—Various speakers.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine; Every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Friday at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

INDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Nature, Man and God." No. 11 'bus to door.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.3, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. Roy Calvert—"Crime, its Nature, Cause and Cure."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, A Yusuf Ali, M.A.—"India: Medievalism v. Modernism."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Dr. Alexander Magri—"The Situation in Italy." Questions invited.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road): 7.15, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—"Character and Circumstance."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, facing The Brecknock): 7.30, Debate—"Is Progress a Delusion?" *Affir.*: Mr. L. Ebury; *Neg.*: Mr. C. Ratcliffe. Thursday, December 11, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Social and Dance, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s. 3d.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 7.30, Mr. Charles Pilley, late Editor *John Bull*—"When God Went Overboard at Lambeth."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Welfare Hall, Chester-le-Street): Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture on "Christianity and War." Doors open 6.30, chair taken at 7.0. Music will be rendered by Mr. Jos. and Miss Lapman.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"God's Birthday." Questions and Discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—City (Albion Street) Hall, No. 2 Room, Candleriggs): 6.30, Mr. P. Christie—"Marx."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): 7.0, Councillor J. Haworth, J.P. (Bootle)—"Non-Resistance—Disarmament by Example."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "God and the Universe—Eddington, Huxley, and Jeans."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. Robert Ogilvie—"Religious and Political Liars." Branch Meeting on Wednesday, December 10, at 7.30, in the same Hall.

RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION (Glasgow District)—Central Halls, 25 Bath Street, Sunday, December 7, at 3.0, Professor C. J. Patten, M.A., M.D., Sc.D. (Sheffield University)—"Memory—The Mainspring of Evolution." Lantern illustrations.

BURNLEY (Barden House Club): 11.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"Spiritualism."

LOWERHOUSE LABOUR CLUB (Holyoake Street, Women's Section): 8.0, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Soul in the Making."

CRAWSHAWBOOTH, LABOUR CLUB, Tuesday, December 9, at 7.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Soul in the Making."

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

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"Freethinker" Endowment Trust

A Great Scheme for a Great Purpose

THE *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was registered on the 25th of August, 1925, its object being to raise a sum of not less than £8,000, which, by investment, would yield sufficient to cover the estimated annual loss incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is controlled and administered by five Trustees, of which number the Editor of the *Freethinker* is one in virtue of his office. By the terms of the Trust Deed the Trustees are prohibited from deriving anything from the Trust in the shape of profit, emoluments, or payment, and in the event of the *Freethinker* at any time, in the opinion of the Trustees, rendering the Fund unnecessary, it may be brought to an end, and the capital sum handed over to the National Secular Society.

The Trustees set themselves the task of raising a minimum sum of £8,000. This was accomplished by the end of December, 1927. At the suggestion of some of the largest subscribers, it has since been resolved to increase the Trust to a round £10,000, and there is every hope of this being done within a reasonably short time.

The Trust may be benefited by donations of cash, or shares already held, or by bequests. All contributions will be acknowledged in the columns of this journal, and may be sent to either the Editor, or to the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. H. Jessop, Hollyshaw, Whitkirk, Nr. Leeds. Any further information concerning the Trust will be supplied on application.

There is no need to say more about the *Freethinker* itself, than that its invaluable service to the Freethought Cause is recognized and acknowledged by all. It is the mouthpiece of militant Freethought in this country, and places its column, without charge, at the service of the Movement.

The address of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust is 61 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.