

SABBATARIANISM IN THE COURTS.

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Views and Opinions.

Sabbatarianism in the Courts.

THE London County Council very solemnly and with legal absurdity gave permission to the Astoria Cinema Theatre, Streatham, to open on Sundays. Whereupon the Entertainment Protection Association brought the L.C.C. before the King's Bench Divisional Court on December 4, to show cause why they should not deal with the application of the Streatham Cinema in accordance with the law. The judges promptly quashed the permission to open on Sunday, and granted a stay of execution for fourteen days to allow for the possibility of an appeal. It should be pointed out that the action was brought, not to oppose the opening of places of entertainment on Sunday but to secure it. The parties in the appeal represented the theatrical interests, which said, rightly, that if one place of entertainment was open on Sunday so might others be, or so ought others to be.

For very many years, as all readers of this journal know, I have been pointing out that no body of licensing magistrates, no Council, no Watch Committee has the power to issue licenses for Sunday entertainments. I also said that any person who cared to lay information and bring the matter before the Courts could get such bogus licences annulled, and as such magistrates are *ipso facto* themselves breaking the law, I should imagine they could be removed from the Bench. I also told Cinema theatre proprietors that if they cared to tell these licensing magistrates to go to the devil and open, so far as Sunday entertainments are concerned, they would be in no worse legal position than they are with permission. The permission does not secure them from attack by anyone who cares to make it. It is interesting to note that when the matter is brought before the courts the judges

find no alternative other than to declare such entertainments illegal, and that these licensing authorities are assisting at a breaking of the law.

* * *

An Act with a Purpose.

These Sunday entertainments, so long as admission is for money or for tickets sold for money, are statute barred, and the L.C.C. should have known this to be the case. The Act of 1781 is clear and precise. It provides that any place used for entertainment or for debating or discussing any subject whatever, if admission is by payment, is to be deemed a disorderly house. The keeper of the place is made liable to a penalty of £200, smaller penalties are to be paid by the chairman, manager, doorkeeper, etc., and those advertising such places may be fined £50. A later Act provided that the fines might be remitted by a Secretary of State. But there is one further aspect of the matter which, so far as I am aware, has never yet been raised. In any raid on a gambling club or similar illegal assembly, not merely are the principals liable to be summoned and punished for keeping a disorderly house, but also those who are found using the premises. I see no reason why this should not apply to any place of entertainment that is open on Sunday, and for which there is a charge for admission.

Every person is, in my judgment, assisting in the maintenance of a disorderly house within the meaning of the Act and so is subject to punishment. Apart from this aspect of the matter, the law on the subject seems so plain, it is surprising that some Sabbatarian body has not moved before for its application. It may be that these people are as ignorant of the scope of the law, as the magistrates and licensing bodies throughout the country appear to be; but a more likely reason is that Sabbatarians are afraid to take the extreme step of arousing public opinion against the Act by a wholesale application of it, and feel it best to trust to local bigotry being strong enough to keep the civilizing of Sunday to as low a point as possible. As I have often said, in any case brought before the courts, judges would have no alternative but to decide on the illegality of the meetings, save in such cases where admission is free, but a charge is made for reserved seats, even though the reserved seats may cover nine-tenths of the accommodation.

It is of some interest to Freethinkers to note that the real motive underlying the passing of the Act of 1781 was not that of suppressing entertainments, but the prevention of Freethinking discussions of political and religious questions. The Deistic controversy had been permeating the general public, and there were numerous places at which religious questions were discussed. There was, of course, the Puritan dislike to anything in the shape of "worldly pleasures" in the background, but the main purpose was to cripple the propagation of Freethinking opinions that was

beginning among the "lower" orders. With the circulation of Paine's *Age of Reason* and *The Rights of Man*, the usefulness of such an Act became more apparent to the governing classes of the country. The general application of the Act began to drop into disuse when Freethinkers showed by their obstinacy that they were not to be silenced by this means. No one yet has, by the way, done anything like justice to the immense amount of work done by these small societies scattered over the country in creating the reform movements of the early nineteenth century. Historians have all devoted their attention to the more fashionable and more "respectable" names that followed the pioneers.

* * *

No Compromise.

The action of the Entertainment Protection Association was not motivated by any ill-will to the Cinemas. It was in the nature of a friendly move designed to put an end to a law that ought to have been ended long ago, which, in fact, never ought to have been passed. The action of the Entertainment Protection Association is likely to effect at least a modification of the Act, although it is to be hoped that it will not be on the lines of so many "compromises," which leave the real evil substantially untouched, and even makes it the more difficult of removal—as was the case with the Education compromise of 1870. The Act should be thorough and not on the lines suggested by the Home Secretary with regard to the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, which was to agree to the repeal of the existing laws provided Freethinkers would agree with the passing of a new and a worse one. It does not need the passing of a new Sunday law, but the repealing of the old one; all such regulations concerning hours of labour, etc., should have no greater application to Sunday than to any other day in the week. In fact, so far as Sunday goes, and so long as that remains the day on which workshops and offices are generally closed, there is far more justification for the opening of theatres than there is for opening during the rest of the week. The only people who will suffer are the parsons but their's is a decaying industry, anyway, and there is no reason why that particular industry should be "safeguarded" by special legislation.

* * *

No Local Option.

One of the Beaverbrook papers suggests that the new Bill may safeguard the Sunday opening by providing that the profits or a proportion of the profits should go to charity. The proposal is unreasonable and unjust, although that paper may take the other view if it finds that public opinion is against it. There is no greater reason why entertainers should be compelled to give a part of their profits to charity, than there is to compel the butcher to give a share of his profits to the local hospital. This condition, laid down so frequently by magistrates, was a special tax, and a wholly illegal tax. No one suggests that a parson should give a part of his Sunday takings to charity; why should the theatrical world be singled out for this specially enforced levy? The general rules of the industry must apply on Sunday as on Saturday or Monday. It is no concern of the State what a man does with profits that are legitimately made.

Another suggestion is that the new Act should leave it to local authorities to allow or disallow Sunday performances. I hope that nothing of the kind will be done. It would mean leaving the whole thing in the hands of a noisy but united religious minority, with all sorts of petty local tyranny. That

already exists to a greater degree in provincial towns and cities than the general public is aware of. A few years ago, in a certain town, after a Cinema theatre had been booked to me for a Sunday's lecture, the proprietor was approached by the local chief of police and informed that letting his theatre to me would prejudice him in the eyes of the public and might react on his licence. It was only after I personally visited the police station and threatened this official with public and legal action for threatening the man, that a half-hearted apology was made and the matter allowed to drop. It would not have been dropped but at the request of the proprietor who felt that action would expose him to all sorts of vexatious interferences from the police. In other parts of the country I have had the experience of proprietors who have let their halls for Secular meetings, being told by the police that if they did this their music or dancing licence would be jeopardised. And only recently the use of a cinema was refused me at Bradford, solely because the proprietors felt that it would expose them to petty persecution in the carrying out of their ordinary business. The general public has little conception of the exercise of this cowardly and stealthy terrorism which is brought to bear on all concerned in public life from music hall proprietors to members of parliament. Naturally those who give way to it do not blazon their surrender abroad.

Moreover, in many parts of the country the chief constable may be an active chapel or church member, or the licensing authorities or local councillors may be either active Sabbatarians or afraid to oppose those that are. Local option would mean, therefore, the introduction of a new religious issue in local politics; and in local politics it is the solid vote of a united body of bigots against the divided votes of a more enlightened section. In matters of opinion the less scope given to chance parochial majorities the better. Sunday entertainments must be made illegal by a general Act, or they must be made legal for all by the sweeping away of the present Act. So long as we are priest-ridden let it be an open and avowed rule. That is preferable to the contemptible and underhand domination that exists at present.

* * *

More Freethinkers Needed.

A final word on a general aspect of the matter, which covers other, but allied things. The London County Council has just been pulled up by the Divisional Court for taking to itself powers it does not possess. Some years ago we had, with others, to pull up the same body—through the agency of the High Court—for making regulations concerning public meetings it had no power to make. All over the country licensing magistrates and others are taking to themselves powers they have no right to exercise, but whose orders are obeyed with that slavish docility which the average Britisher yields to anyone in authority. I find, for example, with regard to public meetings in the open-air, the police are in the habit of demanding in many places that their permission shall be obtained before a meeting can be held. In this connexion I had to stop the action of one chief-constable who had demanded that one of our speakers should get a "permit" to hold a meeting. On pressure he admitted that he had no right to issue such permits. But the same game goes on at other places. In this connexion I would advise speakers that the police have no power to give permission for a meeting, in any part of the public highway. Nor have they the right to prevent one, provided that there is no breach of the peace, no language of an indecent character, or of a nature calculated to promote a breach of the peace used, that no obstruction is

caused, and no annoyance to those living near takes place. In all these cases the onus of proof lies with the police. There is almost a need to-day for a society for the protection of the individual against the aggressions of officials and executive bodies.

But whatever happens with regard to Sunday entertainments there will exist an urgent need for us to go on making Freethinkers. With the passing of another Act, or an amending Act, there will be, I expect, a chance for local bigots to make themselves a nuisance, and it is an unfortunate fact that bigotry is always more intensely active with its nuisances than toleration is with its benefits. At present I verily believe that in most of the great towns it is only a busy and well-organized minority that maintains the existing Sabbatarianism, just as it is a busy minority headed by a first-class bigot that devotes so much of the energies of the B.B.C. to a preaching of religion. The growth of Freethought has made possible the existence of our present comparatively civilized day of rest. It is only the continued growth of Freethought that will enable us to preserve and extend it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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Napoleon's Irreligion.

"The task of the twentieth century is to discipline the chaotic activity of the nineteenth century."

Frederic Harrison.

"There is nothing else in history but the fight between freedom and tyranny."—*Arnold White.*

INTEREST in Napoleon never dies. He appears to have been the last of the great soldiers who have impressed mankind, and modern warfare has not, since his time, produced a personality who set the world alight before he was thirty years of age.

The trait that first and last most impresses us is the amazing personality of Napoleon. Not only did he impress people from his early manhood, but even after his death this characteristic told in some inexplicable way upon those who came in contact with him. Insign Duncan, a young English Officer, who was on duty at Longwood at the time of Napoleon's death, and twice visited the death-chamber, has recorded his impression. Writing home to his mother, he said that to see such a man lying dead in a small room was an awful sight. "It struck me so," he added, "I could have gazed on him for hours, have taken his hand and kissed it, but I could scarce breathe."

Since that day much ink has been spent on Napoleonic history, and on Napoleon's personal traits, and, curiously, even the critics write with heat. Thomas Carlyle admired the one article of Napoleon's faith: "The tools to him that can handle them." The austere Emerson regarded Bonaparte as the supreme type of the man of the world, and Bernard Shaw thinks that mankind would have benefited had Napoleon never been born. Indeed, this superman's character has baffled so many men. Even his own brother was mesmerized, for, after the Emperor's death, he marvelled at the impression his dead brother had produced. "He was not so much a

great, as a good man," he said with really touching simplicity.

Critics who are so wise after the event say that Napoleon's conquests were splendid but useless. But when King Louis was deposed the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia declared opposition to the French Revolution, and threatened Paris with "the most dreadful and terrible justice." Napoleon saved something more precious than France in defending Liberty against her hordes of enemies. Nor can it be denied that the ardour of Napoleon's magnetic personality set France afire. It inflamed every soldier who dragged the heavy cannon over the sands of Egypt, and every warrior who carried his musket amid the snows of Russia. Napoleon also imparted to his marshals something of his own impetuous and adventurous career. When victory begat victory nothing seemed impossible, for few then foresaw the melancholy close to a meteoric career. Napoleon's own mother told him that his success could not last for he had too many enemies. Napoleon may have been afterwards humiliated to the dust, but the Army of Human Liberation is still inspired by the watchwords of the Great Revolution—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

There is a legendary Napoleon as well as a real Napoleon. We have all heard anecdotes in which the Emperor is represented as pointing to the sky and talking like a green, young curate. We have been told that he kicked Volney in the stomach because he disagreed with his opinions. We have also been informed that Napoleon compared the fame of Cæsar and Alexander with that of Christ, and thought the hero of the Gospels had the advantage. The real Napoleon talked in a very different fashion. Napoleon himself preferred Mohammedanism to Christianity. He objected to the Christian Religion because it damned Plato and Socrates, and he questioned the justice of eternal punishment for finite offences. He also agreed that Christians, in worshipping three deities, were polytheists. "As for me," Napoleon broke out on one occasion, "my opinion is formed that Christ never existed." Further, he proclaimed himself a materialist. In all this he was frankly heterodox.

Like so many statesmen, Napoleon found it prudent to patronize superstition instead of fighting it. This is understandable, if not defensible. The Roman Emperors did it systematically. Henry of Navarre, Catherine of Russia, Frederick the Great, and many other rulers, took the easy line of least resistance. In our own time the "Holy Carpet" of the Mohammedans is saluted by British war-ships and received with military honours by British soldiers. Napoleon's Catholicism was assumed to please the French people, the majority of whom were then Catholic. Yet he treated the Pope of Rome with contempt. In forcing that pontiff to attend his coronation, he had no other object except that of impressing the crowd. In the face of Catholic dogma he divorced Josephine, and compelled the unhappy priests to remarry him to Marie Louise, the daughter of his Austrian enemy. Napoleon induced priests to further his ends. Fighting France's enemies in all parts of Europe, he had little liking to add the Black Army of priests to the long list of his enemies. He was himself as irreligious as Voltaire, though he had nothing of that passion for humanity which distinguishes the greatest of all French writers.

Yet Napoleon could be very human at times. Whilst walking at St. Helena with some ladies, a heavily-loaded peasant approached on the narrow road. "Respect the burden, mesdames," said the great soldier, as he stood back to let the man pass.

Indeed, a mere catalogue of Napoleon's actions is more profitable than a string of epithets.

When Napoleon died he was a bitterly disappointed man. After all his glories and victories he died like a poisoned rat in a trap. He had almost forgotten his greatest victory, for as sponsor of the Code of Napoleon he had given a just and beneficent jurisprudence to a world which had only just escaped from the enforcement of the laws of the jungle.

MIMNERMUS.

The Two Lions.

THE spectacle of the British lion fraternizing instead of fighting with the Lion of Judah is a very edifying one. When he reads the glowing accounts in the daily press of the coronation of the new king of Abyssinia, the Archbishop of Canterbury must regret that he was not delegated to accompany the Duke of Gloucester to the function. For we read that the Church in Abyssinia is an extremely wealthy one; and at least one fourth of the population of the country consists of priests. In this congenial company our Primate might have got some useful tips in his task of endeavouring to retain the allegiance of his people at home.

Besides, the Lion of Judah is now the Lord's Anointed—another scriptural synonym for the Lamb that was slain. And consider what splendid material the Archbishop might have brought home to his clergy for a thousand sermons based on the touching picture of *two* Lions lying down with the Lamb! If the Archbishop had made the trip to the coronation he could have taken a phial of the holy oil with him and given Tafari a friendly rub with it. Such a gesture would no doubt have been very welcome, and would have been recognized by the League of Nations as another brick in the new Temple of Peace. But it is easy to be wise after the event. No English Archbishop or Bishop was there! The Moderator of the Church of Scotland was not there! So that's that—and this aspect of the matter need not be pursued further.

Incidentally, however, we may remind ourselves that in our home press there have of late been some very scathing comments upon the emoluments of the minor clergy of England. The Lions of the Establishment—the Archbishops and Bishops—though their stipends sound big, apparently have the greatest difficulty in making ends meet. The Lambs—the small vicars and curates—have to make shift, therefore, on pay that is less than that received by an unskilled labourer. A married curate has a strong incentive to economise; and it may be that the modern material condition of the curates has induced so many of their bishop bosses to support the policy of birth control. Had the Church of England been represented at the Abyssinian Coronation, it might have been possible to ascertain whether the Church of Abyssinia would not invite some of our preachers to enter its communion with the offer of a living wage. Anyhow, young men contemplating a clerical career would be well advised to learn the Abyssinian language. American is easier at the moment, though it promises to become as difficult as Abyssinian; but when Americans want sermons or whiskey they prefer Scotch. And they pay well for both.

Even with the depressing unemployment problem at home, there does not appear to be a large number of our youth who are bent on adopting the Church as their profession. But surely they are too limited in their outlook. If a young fellow has the "gift of the gab," a good address and plenty assurance, why

should he not as a preacher "make good" abroad? Abyssinia is a field with many possibilities. And consider what prestige is to be obtained by ministering under the patronage of the Lion of Judah. It is quite romantic!

But, speaking seriously, what is the lesson to be learned from this insane exhibition in Abyssinia? Firstly, then we have it painfully brought home to us that there are so very many of the earth's population who think not, neither do they know. These empty-headed and shallow-pated and intellectually enslaved beings are only impressed by pompous pageantry and spectacular shows. And, be it observed, an extensive slave trade goes on in Abyssinia; and it may be assumed that a portion of the revenues from it goes into the coffers of the Church there. Secondly, we have anew impressed upon us the fact that the great ecclesiastical corporations are rooted in huge material wealth, and wield enormous political and economic power. They have possessed that wealth, and exercised that power for ages. And look at the world to-day! The greatest religious countries are on the verge of economic collapse. Millions are out of work. The markets are glutted with goods, and the banks and big commercial companies with money. And all the time these millions, who are potential producers and consumers, are not permitted either to produce, or to consume—except to the very limited extent of maintaining a bare subsistence. Month by month we read of big financial crashes, huge swindles, suicides, murders and burglaries. The gulf between rich and poor is not only much wider, but there are now many more of the very poor, and more of the very rich. And the wealthy religious people sit with folded soft white hands calmly and heartfully thanking God for having blessed them in their basket and their store! Greed, covetousness, envy, malice, jealousy, and suspicion are the unhappy marks of many human relationships, nearly 2,000 years since the time of Christ. Could anything imaginable be more monstrous or more fiendish than a God who by his actions as universal economic distributor has produced effects like these?

Yet the Church of England is an extremely wealthy corporation. So is the Church of Abyssinia. And they are both lions who may very suitably fraternize together! Like draws to like. Birds of a feather flock together.

IGNOTUS.

Symbols.

LIFT the goblet to the heavens,
Of heart-sorrow make no sign;
Lift the goblet—let none gather
How it lacks for wine!

Wear the blossom on your bosom,
Proudly near the heart that bled;
Vaunt it boldly: since each petal
With that blood is fed!

Gift or token, bear them, wear them,
Cherish both with earnest zest:
In the glory of the sunset
Comes at last your Rest!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

Primitive Mentality.

COINCIDENCES are sometimes striking, sometimes merely interesting or amusing. Though not particularly striking, readers may derive both entertainment and interest, even possibly instruction, from the following coincidence which occurred to me.

Having just finished reading my *Freethinker* for October 26, I returned to the library book which I had set on one side for the time being. After a few paragraphs there came a passage which, for sheer appropriateness to what I had read a moment before in the *Freethinker*, almost seemed as if it had been written for the purpose to which I now put it.

Let me quote first from the *Freethinker*. The extract is from a letter written by a correspondent in Quebec, and runs as follows:—

"In all the Catholic Churches there are shrines with life-size images of local or popular saints. At the side of the image stands a money-box with two slots, one marked 'offering,' and the other 'request'—one for the cash and the other for the 'slip' with your 'fancy' written on it. Your chances are supposed to be better at certain very famous shrines . . . Half the fun of winning lies in letting other folks know your luck. So a list of the lucky ones is published every month. There are lots of items like these: 1s. for the good birth of my baby; 3s. for my son to pass his school exam.; 2s. 6d. for the healing of my bad leg, etc. Most of these gamblers are women. Of course if you ask one of them if she has drawn a winner lately, you get a slightly rueful, 'No, I suppose it was not considered good for me.' But if you talk till you are hoarse you will never convince them that an 'answer' is not entirely the result of the 'prayer.'"

The second passage comes from a book by the well-known Sorbonne Professor M. Lévy-Bruhl. The title of the book is *How Natives Think*, and the extract runs as follows:—

"Du Chaillu tells us: 'As I came from seeing the King (of Ashanti), I shot at a bird and missed it. I had been taking quinine and was shaky. But the negroes at once proclaimed that this was a fetish-bird and therefore I could not shoot it. I fired again and missed again. Hereupon they grew triumphant in their declarations . . . while I loaded again, took careful aim, and to my own satisfaction and their dismay, brought my bird down. Immediately they explained that I was a white man, and not entirely amenable to fetish laws; so that I do not suppose my shot proved anything to them after all.'

"It is the same in Loango. 'I had been presented,' writes Pechmel-Loesche, 'with a collar made of hair from the tail of an elephant, and adorned with teeth from a sea-fish and a crocodile. These teeth were to preserve me from any danger connected with water . . . It frequently happened that my boat was upset when I was crossing the bar, and one day I had great difficulty in reaching the shore. I was told quite seriously that it was the teeth alone that saved me. I was not wearing the collar, but its efficacy was in no manner of doubt from that fact.'"

Professor Lévy-Bruhl himself precedes these quotations with the remark: "Experience is peculiarly unavailing against the belief in the virtue of fetishes; a method of interpreting what happens in a sense which favours the belief is never lacking." And he concludes them with the following sentence: "The fetish and the medicine-man always have the last word."

Readers who are not entirely deceived by the reputed superiority of our so-called "civilization," will not need my assistance in drawing the obvious inference in regard to the mentalities of whites and blacks as illustrated by the foregoing passages. The curious

thing, however, is that such a renowned authority as Prof. Lévy-Bruhl should still, apparently, be blind to the facts. I quote him again, though the italics are mine:—

"We thus have good authority," says the Professor a few pages later, "for saying that this mentality differs from our own to a far greater extent than the language used by those who are partisans of animism would lead us to think. When they are describing to us a world peopled by ghosts and spirits and phantoms for primitives, we at once realize that beliefs of this kind have not wholly disappeared even in civilized countries. Without referring to spiritualism, we recall the ghost-stories which are so numerous in our folk-lore, and we are tempted to think that *the difference is one of degree only*. Doubtless such beliefs may be regarded in our communities as a survival which testifies to an older condition, formerly much more general. *But we must be careful not to see in them a faithful, though faintly outlined, reflection of the mentality of primitives*. Even the most uneducated members of our societies regard stories of ghosts and spirits as belonging to the realm of the supernatural: between such apparitions and magical influences and the data furnished by ordinary perception and the experience of the broad light of day, *the line of demarcation is clearly defined*. Such a line, however, does not exist for the primitive."

After reading these parallel cases few persons would, I imagine, be inclined to agree with the professor that the difference in mentality is not one of degree, or that there is in fact a clearly defined line of demarcation between the mentality of the "religious" white man and the "superstitious" black.

A study of the writings of some of our most distinguished scientists, who have ventured to express opinions upon matters outside their special sciences, bears witness to the extraordinary pertinacity with which the primitive outlook on life still clings even to those regarded as the most "civilized" amongst us.

C. S. FRASER.

A Christmas Gift.

MR. COHEN has given us a real Christmas present this year in the shape of *Opinions** The book is printed on good paper and with an excellent portrait of the author provides a presentation volume of a sort that at this time of the year many of us will be looking for. His more than forty years advocacy in speech and writing will have prepared all of us for the store of wit and wisdom that Mr. Cohen has here provided. The passages, some a mere line or two some of greater length, display well the manysidedness of his outlook. The wit is not buried in the wisdom, nor is the wisdom overlooked in the wit. It is Mr. Cohen in all his moods, now a piece of philosophy parcelled up in a neat epigram, now a burst of sly humour, now a fragment of clear exposition—in which he has few equals—now a simple theme viewed from that quaintly original angle which has always been at once a source of entertainment and enlightenment to his readers and hearers. Among the brightest features of Mr. Cohen's wit we should place that habit of saying the thing he wishes by talking about something else. For example:—

A rigorous selection is often a blessing in disguise. It eliminates the weaker and preserves a hardier and more virile type. This may account for the average Scot getting on so well in the world. A

* *Opinions: Random Reflections and Wayside Sayings.* Cloth gilt 3s. 6d.; full calf 5s.

people who could survive the Shorter Catechism would survive anything.

And again:—

The worst that one can say of the Christian clergyman to-day is that he actually believes what he teaches.

Or this:—

Inquisitiveness is the besetting sin of woman. Man would never have discovered this but for his overmastering curiosity.

Or:—

The greatest slander on Satan that the Church perpetrated was in depicting him as paying an enormous price to secure the soul of a monk.

As an example of sarcasm the following is worthy of inclusion among classical illustrations:—

There is really nothing either surprising or incredible in the claim of Christianity to have converted many blackguards. I am always surprised that blackguards can resist the many attractions it offers.

Most of us like condiments with our meat, and it is very refreshing sometimes to substitute for a drab and tedious portion a tasty morsel of equal nutritious value, served with a pinch of the salt of wit. Such dishes abound in the *Random Reflections*. How many, commenting upon our public life, would have offered us a dissertation where Mr. Cohen merely says:—

In these days, when someone for whom we have respect receives a knighthood or a title, we may at least console ourselves with the reflection that he may not have done anything to deserve it.

* * *

Little men are made smaller by promotion.

It is hard to stop citing from a book on which every page gives the reviewer something that calls for quotation, but we venture on the following in more sober vein:—

It is not nearly so difficult to die for an idea as it is to live for one. The impulse of the moment may secure the one, but persistent and unwavering courage is required for the other.

* * *

Only the well-to-do can afford to be economical. The poor man must rob himself of so much to obtain so little that it becomes the most foolish form of extravagance.

* * *

A leader should always be on his guard against joining the ranks of his followers.

The more serious reflections are rather longer than the snatches already quoted, but we cannot pass them by without reference to at least one of these illuminating little excerpts. In all of them we perceive the same happy knack of exposition. Mr. Cohen sees things so clearly himself that he makes them correspondingly clear to others; and one is repeatedly made aware that his perspicacity is due to an absence, from his outlook, of the confusing factors of conventional disguise. He sees the world of facts, so to speak, in the nude, and we are thus constantly reminded by him of essential values and permanent aspects. The following is an example of the sort of idea which we all find obvious once it is put before us, but which few of us had glimpsed in the course of our own meditations:—

Life moves along the lines of our necessities, but civilization along the lines of our desires. Our actual primary needs—food, clothing and shelter are in civilized countries fairly secure, but the safeguarding of our needs involves the release of our energies to engage still more steadfastly in the struggle for the gratification of desires. Life is

always possible in the absence of most of the things for which the men of to-day struggle most desperately. Bigger houses, better rooms, more artistic furniture, greater leisure, books, pictures, the thousand and one things for which the earth is ransacked and the ocean dredged, are fought for to-day with all the ferocity with which men once fought for the right to live. Necessarily civilization means the multiplication and intensification of desires, and upon the control and education of desire largely rests the future of civilization.

As an epigrammatist Mr. Cohen ranks high. As with all others of their class his aphorisms necessarily emphasize one part of the truth at the expense of some other. Nothing is so dull as the whole truth, which is nearly always neutral in tone. And just as a picture would lose all point in which no object was selected for special emphasis, so the epigram depends for its effect upon the deliberate suppression of the background. But the good epigrammatist is one who chooses as the subject for portrayal something that will bear all the light accorded to a central figure, of itself rendering the picture sufficiently agreeable and illuminating. All who read this new work must agree that the author has accomplished this. He is pointed, penetrating, scathing, at times even ruthlessly so; but none will say he is unfair except the man without a sense of proportion or a vein of humour. There is something in *Opinions* to suit all tastes, and the man must be indeed dull who cannot find throughout its pages something to illustrate his own thought, or open up new avenues for contemplation.

We must congratulate Mr. Cohen on his latest publication. It is a worthy record of his sagacity and wit. From it we gain an impressionist picture of the panorama of his thought and work, and this is something that his many admirers will find extremely pleasant to have on their book-shelves.

Perhaps we may hope for another volume on similar lines.

MEDICUS.

Acid Drops.

In any controversy in which Christians are engaged, as Christians, one must always be prepared to find a considerable amount of lying, and in this game the Roman Catholic controversialist usually comes out an easy first. For some time there has been going on a lively quarrel concerning the attitude of Roman priests toward mixed marriages—that is, cases where a Roman Catholic marries a Protestant. Dr. David, the Protestant Bishop of Liverpool complained of the methods used towards Protestants who had married Roman Catholics. He said that "Roman priests brought relentless pressure upon non-Roman partners in mixed marriages." This pressure included the assertion that the children born of such marriages were illegitimate. The Roman Catholic Archbishop retorts, with his hand on his heart—and a wink in his eye, "I cannot imagine any priest would be so ignorant and so foolish as to pronounce the children of a mixed marriage contracted outside the Church illegitimate." On which one can only marvel at the ignorance of the teachings of his own priests, and at the Protestant Bishop's indignation over such a statement, since it is only the other day that scores of the Protestant clergy were making the same statement concerning the children of marriages performed at registry offices.

Now the *Times* of December 3 publishes a communication from Dr. David, in which he cites from a number of letters he has received, and gives, in confidence, the names and addresses of the people with the names of the priests. The letters show women who have married Protestants living in a state of terror before the threats of the priests, and he also quotes from Roman Catholic magazines, and from one official catechism of

Roman Catholic doctrine he cites the following, "A Catholic and a non-Catholic presuming to go through a form of marriage before a non-Catholic minister or before the civil registrar do not contract a valid marriage—that is to say, they are not married at all." From which it would seem that the Roman Catholic Archbishop is not speaking the truth. But Dr. David himself might be equally wide of the truth if he were dealing with Freethought. Still, as no one seems surprised when a Christian minister tells a lie—at least no one reprimands him, we do not imagine that either of these two disputants will suffer in the eyes of the Christian world, whichever one is finally proved to have strayed from the truth.

The proper reply for the Protestant to make to the Roman Catholic would be that the only marriage recognized as legal in this country is the civil marriage, and the only children recognized as legitimate are those born of such marriages. The fact that the Roman Catholic priest or the Protestant minister is able to perform a marriage in a church and each one to use his own peculiar ceremony, makes no difference whatever. It is the civil power that gives him the authority to perform a legal marriage. But to tell the unadulterated truth in this way is something that Dr. David will certainly not do, not even to have the pleasure of downing a Roman Catholic Archbishop.

The *Methodist Recorder* says that the outlook for Bible teaching in the schools was never so bright as it is at present. There may be some truth in this, although it is little to the credit of everybody concerned if it is so. It is not to the credit of the Church because we are living in a time when educated Christians are on all sides throwing overboard Christian conceptions of the Bible, and to force upon children a view which they admit publicly is a wrong one is about as detestable, even as criminal a procedure as can be conceived. It reflects no credit on the Nonconformists because they profess to believe that the State should not interfere in matters of religion, while encouraging it to interfere in the case of those who are quite unable to protect themselves. And it reflects little credit upon politicians, many of whom believe wholly in a policy of secular education, and yet for the sake of gaining votes are ready to sacrifice the future of the child on the altar of sectarian aggrandisement. If we are more secure of religious instruction than we ever were since 1870 it can only mean that principle was never so low in public life as it is at present.

Apropos of the earthquake in Japan a religious journal says, "There is a touch of the sublime in the matter of fact way in which the Japanese meet ruthless attacks of Nature upon their peace and security." On the other hand there must be a decided touch of brutality of the God who works through nature who can blast the lives of hundreds, or even thousands in this way. And it is anything but sublime or even decent to find men praising the goodness of a God who can act in this way. It may be sublime to meet ill-fortune with calmness and dignity, but it fills one with something that is almost like contempt for those who can in the face of an earthquake sing the praises of the God who has caused it.

Mr. Gerald Bullett, a novelist, has supplied the *Radio Times* with a reconciliation of science with religion. He does it thus:—

Physical theories, personal beliefs, the factual truth of this story or of that, the problem of man's origin and destiny, whether or not personality survives the death of the organism, and so on, these though they open up a fascinating vista of speculation, and propound questions about which we cannot be humanly indifferent are not the concern of religion. Nothing that has happened, is happening, or will happen is the concern of religion. What does then concern religion? Well here it is:—

Spirit, being not of time, can refresh itself perpetually in the contemplation of its own values. How often have we said that there is no other subject on which the fool can ape the philosopher and the philosopher play the part of a fool as that of religion? We have to thank Mr. Gerald Bullett for so admirable an illustration.

Yards and yards of newspaper "tripe" was written about the spiritual power of the Oberamagau Passion Play. An illustration of this has just been given in the Courts. Anton Lang, who took the part of Jesus, and so was right in the way of the spiritual influence of the play, has just been ordered to pay the equivalent of £100 to his four servants. This represents their share of the 10 per cent of the "service" money levied on those who stayed at his house during the run of the play. Anton Lang is a great performer on the cross in more senses than one.

"A Puzzled Churchman," writes to the *Daily Telegraph* explaining that he has just inherited a "living" worth £370 a year in a parish of about 800 souls. Since he has come into his inheritance he has been inundated with letters from all sorts of clergymen asking him to remember them when the present incumbent, who is old and feeble, dies. He has also received an offer from a society which buys up livings, so that it can put in clergymen of a particular type. But he says:—

Of the souls in the parish and their spiritual needs and welfare, not a word. The curate wants to become rector—he longs for an "independent sphere." The vicar wants more money, so also the rector's wife. For that I have no condemnation, the desire is natural and is born of dire need. But—and this comes back to my mind insistently—what of those eight hundred souls in the parish? Where do they come in?

Well, they don't come in at all. The "cure of souls" is just a job, like every other commercial undertaking. One may get some who take it from another point of view, just as one gets men in other walks of life with whom payment does not weigh uppermost. But to the majority it is as much a job as is that of the average journalist who foams with indignation, or grows hysterical with praise, at the orders of his superior. "Puzzled Churchman" thinks when the living is vacant, he will appoint a man for twelve months, on the condition that he must leave if he does not suit the parishioners. We doubt if this can, legally be done. Once the parson is there it is very difficult to move him unless he is guilty of some obvious misdemeanour or crime.

Traces of primitive man in Palestine have been known for twenty years or so. But though investigation has not yet gone very far, important information has recently come to hand, and a brief summary of it appears in a paper by Sir Arthur Keith in *Nature* of June 21. Here in the home of Western religious legend—the creation of man a few thousand years ago, of his fall, destruction, and the rest—we have definite evidence of the presence of Mousterian man of the Middle Old Stone Age of probably not less than 50,000 years ago. The caves in the Galilean district, one on the slopes of the Judæan Hills between Joppa and Jerusalem, and one on the flanks of Mount Carmel have yielded an abundance of relics, including a skull of Neanderthal type, together with a large number of implements of the Mousterian period. Above these remains are others, including drawings, of the latter, concluding periods of the Old Stone Age.

According to a recent press report Sir Oliver Lodge said, "There are not only people who have inhabited this body and left it, but others who have not been on this earth before." It would be interesting to know how the latter came into existence. We have some idea of the origin of the spirits of the dead. Can it be possible that these add to the spirit population by some (spiritual) method of procreation? Or can the others be the transmogrified spirits of the mountain, spring, river, sea, earth, sun, moon, sky, fertility, and the like; or/and/spirits such as those which in the XIII century infected Abbot Richalm and his monastery, and worked much evil, including drunkenness and fleabite?

Irreligion must be almost non-existent in this country. Even the convicts in our prisons and the inmates of Borstal Institutions are, according to a recent return, overwhelmingly religious. Of 11,962 inmates of these institutions 75 per cent were returned as members of the Church of England, 14 per cent as Roman Catholics and 6.5 per cent as Nonconformists; and while there are, or were, 210 Jews and 90 Salvationists, Atheist and agnostics together only reached a beggarly total of 23.

The young, says Canon Storr, are dreaming new dreams, but they must not forget the vision's which have come down through history. For our part, we hope the young will bear in mind the nightmares introduced into history by the religion and Church of Christ. If they will do that, they may be warned to ignore the "vision," which caused the nightmares. The trade of the hucksters of moth-eaten visions may suffer, but the new dreams of the young will benefit.

We hear that a school for parrots has just been opened. This confirms the rumour that a certain Nonconformist denomination has reopened a theological training college. But what is the matter with the existing theological colleges, anyway?

One of the first casualties of war is truth, says the Rev. Thomas Tiplady. We presume the statement is based on the fact that the parsons, very early in the last war, told the combatants of each belligerent nation that God was helping them. If lying would have won the war the British clergy should have brought off a sweeping victory during the first year of the war.

His Holiness the Pope has been presented with a magnificent portable telephone, made of pure gold and ornamented with the heads of the four Evangelists in silver. The connexion between gold telephones and holiness and a religion glorifying poverty is none too obvious to the untutored Freethinker. But we hope the faithful will be able to see it, and be spiritually uplifted thereby. The Papacy with its keenness for the main chance might prepare a series of messages under the title of "News through the Pearly Gates to the Golden Throne through the Golden Telephone, With Replies sent via the Heavenly Diamond Radio set." The Church that has provided so many relics and miracles should be equal to the occasion.

A Methodist reporter has interviewed Sir Henry Dickens. In view of the prominent place given to conviviality in the books of Charles Dickens, the interviewer desired Sir Henry to state Dickens' attitude towards the "Drink Question" and Temperance. Hence the following:—

I suppose you would agree, Sir Henry, that Dickens was in advance of his age in reference to the Temperance question? He saw what modern reformers have now come to see, that the Temperance question does not stand alone, but is bound up with other questions that affect the life of the people, such as slum clearance and the provision of pure amusements and healthy recreation for the masses. "Exactly," came the reply. . . . And probably, I added, he was not helped by the crude advocacy of some of the good but ill-informed Temperance advocates of the early days? . . . He (Sir Henry) smiled assent. . . .

Since Dickens gives so prominent a place to conviviality in his books, the interviewer's attempt to suggest that Dickens was really a modern Temperance reformer falls rather flat. This aside, one may point out that the increased sobriety of the nation is not due to Temperance propaganda but mainly to better education, improved housing conditions, and the provision of decent amusements and healthy recreation. Temperance advocates are not responsible for these things; indeed, when these advocates are members of churches, they are opposed to healthy amusement and games on Sunday when such things would serve best to keep people away from "booze."

A reader of a Wesleyan paper would like preachers to be compelled to use present-day language in the pulpit. He wishes also to veto all traditional "religious" words and phrases. His reason is that the "outsiders" who venture to visit the church are too often "choked off" by "pious expressions" which mean nothing to their understandings and give them the impression that the Gospel message is complicated and incomprehensible, otherwise preachers would not require a language of their own. This piece of reform is all very well, but it

should be remembered that a special jargon of a religious sect enables the members to recognize one another when meeting as strangers, and also marks them off from the common herd outside. The ministers, too, will not object to religious jargon on the score of its making religion seem incomprehensible. If comprehension is too easy, half the power of the parson as an expounder of divine mysteries will disappear. And that would never suit the parson.

Writing about "Stagnant Religion," the Rev. John Bevan says:—

We still keep on using the language of religion which for us has lost its life; and such is the power of association and the glamour of sentimental reminiscence, we may not even realize that we are using the vocabulary of a faith that is dead.

If this is true of many people attached to the churches, the hold of religion on the nation generally must be even less than the numbers outside the churches would seem to indicate. Instead of trying to catch the "outsider," the churches will soon be forced to concentrate mainly on converting their own members. Meanwhile, we presume, that great revival of religion, which we heard so much about, is indefinitely postponed!

From one religious paper we learn that "the blatant Atheism of the nineteenth century is a thing of the past." From another we discover that:—

Men used to be sure, or thought they were sure of those fundamental postulates of religion. They are not sure of them to-day, and great numbers of people are not even interested in them.

The "blatant" brand of Atheism may have disappeared. But there would appear to be some variety equally as potent for mischief to the welfare of religion and the Churches.

The Christian conscience is a truly wonderful thing. The consciences of the Bishop of Birmingham and the ritualistic Vicar of St. George's are at loggerheads. For reasons of conscience the Vicar will not obey the lawful order of his Bishop to whom he has sworn obedience. The Bishop will not enforce, by way of the civil courts, the Vicar's obedience to an order, although he virtually promised to do so in his episcopal pledge. Meanwhile, says a Methodist paper, the case of conscience has interest for a wider constituency:—

"A" takes an oath to obey his superior in all things lawful. Acting strictly in accordance with the law his superior bids him fulfil such and such a duty enjoined by the law, to which "A" replies that his conscience will not permit him to obey! What conscience? If conscience is divided against conscience, how can conscience stand?

On the hypothesis that conscience is the voice of God, one might reasonably conclude that God is having a merry bit of sport with the two clerics.

An Indian Prince, the Maharajah of Patiala, says: "I make no secret of my belief that the connexion between my own country and the British Commonwealth is one that has been designed by Providence for the benefit of humanity." How beautiful is the faith which divinely appointed rulers have in the wisdom of Providence! The Maharajah has no doubt observed that the "connexion" is beneficial to him personally. And since God presumably attends to the welfare of those he appoints to rule over others, the obvious conclusion is that the "connexion" must have been designed by God!

The disregard of truthfulness by witnesses in the law courts (although spiritually sustained by a "s'welp me Gawd!") was recently commented on by Justice McCardie. The parsons were just getting ready to point the moral—namely, that untruthfulness is the result of the widespread disregard of religion—when Mr. Justice Eye butts in. He says: "although one would not deny that perjury does exist, I am quite satisfied that it does not exist, in any large extent, and it is much less to-day than it was thirty or forty years ago." As the period referred to was a time when church-going was the common practice, a different moral would appear to be indicated.

National Secular Society.

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

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

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

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D.P.S. writes that "stood inside" in his letter dealing with Church Parades in the army should have read "stood aside."

H. S. LAWRENCE.—The National Secular Society's Annual Dinner is open to all Freethinkers and their friends, whether members of the Society or not.

T. THORNTON.—The "spirit theory" of anything requires less knowledge and intelligence to believe than anything else. It throws man back upon the primitive mentality of the race. It is an understanding of the mechanism of the spirit theory that requires both knowledge and understanding. That is why it is so much easier to satisfy the majority of folk with the explanation of "spirit"—which is no explanation at all.

W. WEARING.—There is a distinction between a recruit insisting on being entered as an Atheist, and having the right to attend a church parade in the army or a church assembly on a ship. We are not sure how a man would stand who wished to change his designation in either the army or the navy. Neither branch of the service encourages intellectual independence.

CPL. A. STEWART.—No specific wording exists so far as we know. It is the right for a man to be entered as he describes himself that is the point.

ESTELLE COLE.—Received and shall appear.

LETTERS from Dr. A. Lynch, "Medicus," and S. R. A. Ready are held over until next week.

W. J. DAVIS.—We have been advertising in many directions, just so far as our limited means will permit. We feel sure that there is a much larger circulation for a paper such as this if it can only get before the public.

W. JAMESON.—Mr. Cohen appreciated your kindness in advising him as to what he should have said in the debate with Canon Elliott, and also as to what he should say in future debates. But it is difficult to live up to some ideals that are set before one.

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.

To-day (December 14) Mr. Cohen lectures at Nottingham, before the Cosmopolitan Debating Society. The meeting will be held in the Lecture Theatre, University College, Shakespeare Street, and will commence at 2.30. This will enable Mr. Cohen to return to London the same evening. The subject will be "The Passing of the Gods." Judging from previous meetings there should be a lively discussion.

Mr. Cohen was not, after all, able to fulfil his engagement at Leicester on Sunday last. He brought home from Bradford, on November 30, a severe cold, and then was indiscreet enough to attend and speak at the Secular Education Meeting on December 3. The result was a worsening of the cold, and on Saturday it was quite evident that it would have been risky to have lectured at Leicester. At very short notice Mr. R. H. Rosetti took his place. We are glad to learn that there was an excellent audience, who had the pleasure of listening to an excellent lecture. Mr. Gimson occupied the chair.

Mr. Rosetti should have lectured at Fulham, but his place was taken there by Mr. Saphin. We are obliged to both for their ready response on the occasion.

We again remind readers, who will be now booking engagements for the New Year, that the Annual Dinner takes place on Saturday, January 17. The special character of the last dinner brought many visitors from the provinces for the first time. They left swearing that it should not be the last time, and there promises to be an unusual number of provincial visitors present on the forthcoming occasion. The tickets will be, as usual, 8s. each, and the place the Midland Grand Hotel. It will help considerably if all those who intend coming will notify the General Secretary as soon as possible. The earlier the better.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture for the Plymouth Branch of the N.S.S. to-day Sunday, at the Co-Operative Hall, Courtenay Street. The afternoon subject, at 3.0, will be "What is the Use of Science?" and at 6.30, "The God Men of Science Believe in."

Mr. Cohen's new book *Opinions* is now on sale, and a review of it, from the pen of "Medicus," a writer well known to many of our readers, appears on another page. The book is issued in two forms, in cloth gilt at 3s. 6d., and in a handsome dark blue calf, very suitable for presentation, at 5s. Postage will be 4d. extra in each case. There is also a new portrait of Mr. Cohen, which has been specially taken for this edition. If we might venture an opinion on the book, it is Mr. Cohen at his best commenting on the world and its ways in a manner that is quite his own.

The Secular Society, Limited has just issued *Sex and Religion*, by Mr. George Whitehead. Freethinkers will find this a useful and Christians an informative booklet. It forms the third part of Mr. Whitehead's *Religion and Psycho-Analysis*. The three parts will be sent post free for 2s. 3d. We advise all our readers to secure copies.

We were pleased to see in a recent issue of the *Liverpool Echo*, a useful letter from the pen of the energetic Secretary of the Liverpool Branch, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, on the question of religion in the schools. The Liverpool Branch is doing excellent work in keeping the Freethought point of view before the public whenever it is possible.

The review of Mr. Cohen's *War, Civilization and the Churches*, which was reprinted in last week's issue of this journal, was wrongly attributed to the *Manchester Evening News*. The review appeared in the *Manchester City News*.

Our business manager asks us to state that owing to

the need for sending out an unusually large number of catalogues there are temporarily out of print. The catalogue is being reprinted and should be ready in the course of a week or ten days.

We said last week that if Dean Inge was asked to meet a genuine opponent instead of the half-hearted ones he does meet on the question of science and religion, he would quickly find out that he was otherwise engaged. Those who listened to his broadcast address on "Science and Religion," on Sunday last, must have realized the truth of what we said concerning his and others shirking a genuine discussion. We do not wish to say anything excessively impolite, but the only way mildly to describe that address is a mixture of religious bunkum and scientific ignorance. A man who can calmly describe evolution as an unfolding, and conclude that, therefore, nothing can be evolved that was not previously involved, is either humbugging his hearers or unbelievably ignorant of the first principles of scientific thinking. It is so stupid that if Dean Inge really believes that to be the truth, then it *would* be almost impossible to discuss with him—that is before he had been put into some class and instructed on the subject. We hesitate to think that he really believes this, for we have always had considerable respect for his intelligence, even though we differed from his beliefs. Perhaps the explanation is that it was Sunday, and he was speaking for the B.B.C. The combination may have had a paralysing influence on his intelligence. We presume that the address will be printed somewhere. In that case we invite our readers to tell us whether we have misjudged the Dean or not.

In spite of all that may be said to the contrary, we are convinced that the vast majority of marriages work themselves out to the satisfaction of all concerned. But there is a minority of marriages that do not so result, and it is with this minority that Mr. George Ryley Scott is concerned, although it is probable that he would query the "minority." But to the discussion of the subject Mr. Scott in his *Marriage in the Melting Pot* (Werner Laurie, 3s. 6d.) brings his usual fearlessness of speech and thought. Whether one agrees with Mr. Scott or not one cannot help being stirred by him, and the provocative writer, the one who sets his readers thinking round and about a problem is one of the best and most profitable.

Says Mr. Scott:—

The fact that so large a number of marriages turn out dismal failures is no more, in itself, a condemnation of monogamous marriage than is the fact of the masses being unable to appreciate genius in any negation of his genius. Successful marriages are rare because the art of love is restricted to the few, a fact which explains why the State, wearing the clumsy blinkers manufactured and fitted by Christianity, acts as though this art were acquirable by everybody and anybody. Marriage can be heavenly; it can be hellish. The tragedy of marriage lies in a myopically affected State attempting to keep together in permanent union those who have missed entering the gates of heaven and are groping about in hell. Here precisely lies the danger; a danger which has always been present in some degree, but which in recent years has increased in extent a thousand fold. In the realization of this lies the only possibility of preserving some sort of monogamous marriage. Sooner or later it will have to be conceded that marriage can endure successfully only so long as love endures; that for this very reason it is in any permanent form an exclusive, a transcendental, and not a Catholic form of union is one of the rarest things on earth.

That puts Mr. Scott's general point of view, and his book is an attempt to deal with the subject by linking up "the sociological, medical, and biological aspects of the subject." Mr. Scott writes with extreme frankness on all these phases of his subject, and we should certainly agree with him that if men and women are afraid to look fairly at a subject of so vast importance of the relations of the sexes, and make whatever modifications in the institution of marriage that is from time to time demanded, the alternative is that while the old form loses its authority the newer forms run into extravagance from the absence of sane thinking and rational social control.

The Virtues and Vices of Renascent Popes.

THROUGHOUT the fourteenth, and during the first half of the fifteenth century, the prestige of the Papacy was severely shaken by the fierce conflicts which raged within the Church. But, with the election of Pope Nicholas V, in 1447, the Vatican recovered its earlier influence, and until the pontificate of Clement VII, when Rome was plundered by the mercenaries of Charles V, in 1527, the Pontiffs ruled as secular princes rather than the representatives of a humble religion.

At a period when Italy was a land of matchless splendour in the sphere of arts and letters, the Holy Fathers were immersed in the mire of social and sexual depravity. Still, the Popes proved benevolent to the liberal spirit which pervaded the Renaissance, until the time arrived when the free mind of Italy was anathematized as the enemy of God and man, and the Pontiffs of the later sixteenth century strove by means of the Holy Inquisition and the bigoted and fanatical friars to extinguish the light of humanism and science.

For eighty years the Papacy stood supreme in Rome, and never has the Curia displayed greater ambition, worldliness, profligacy and crime. A motley array of priest-kings, adorned with all the majesty of temporal sovereigns, on a grand scale manifested every evil propensity known among men. In many respects the Renaissance became an age of paradoxes. Autocratic rulers, although strikingly responsive to the appeal of art and refinement, were apt to sink beneath the level of savages when their passions were aroused. The foulest crimes attributed by their detractors to the most degenerate rulers of Pagan Rome were paraded, naked and unashamed, in the palaces of Catholic Italy. Of Rome itself, Symonds assures us that, "Undisguised sensuality; fraud cynical and unabashed; policy marching to its end by murders, treasons, interdicts, and imprisonments; hypocrisy and cruelty studied as fine arts; theft and perjury reduced to a system—these are the ordinary scandals which beset the Papacy. Yet the Pope is still a holy being. His foot is kissed by thousands. His curse and blessing carry death and life. He rises from the bed of harlots to unlock or bolt the gates of heaven and purgatory . . . These anomalies, glaring as they seem to us, and obvious as they might be to deeper thinkers like Machiavelli and Savonarola, did not shock the mass of men who witnessed them." (*Renaissance, The Age of the Despots*, pp. 292-293.)

So stupendous seemed the transformation from the cowed and cloistered past to the brilliant ebullition of the human spirit in the present, that sacerdotal corruption was disregarded amid the magnificence of cultural achievement.

The temporal power of the Popes had been built on a protracted policy of forgery and fraud. Before the accession of Nicholas, the secular, and even the religious claims of the Pontiff were subject to the temporary successes of the rival factions who made a bear-garden of the Roman streets. Yet, through all this disorder and destruction, the Papacy conserved and consolidated its psychological claims. Romans acclaimed their city as the capital of Christendom. Some who scorned the pious pretensions of the Holy Father were solicitous to retain the Papacy as an ornament to the Eternal City. Moreover, as the metropolis of the Christian world, Rome attracted pleasure-seekers and pious alike, from every European land. The Papal revenues were sufficient to maintain the Vatican in all its secular and sacred display. The

times were ripe for the creation of a sacerdotal despotism, and sagacious Pontiffs unceasingly utilized their opportunities for aggrandisement.

The jubilee of 1450 had swollen the Papal treasury. With this increased wealth at his command, Nicholas not only adorned the city, but with priestly prescience built himself a stronghold. The mausoleum of the Pagan Hadrian was chosen for this purpose, and was so constructed that it commanded the entire city. The foundations of the Vatican palaces and St. Peter's were laid within the Papal dominions. The architectural splendours of ancient Rome were to be revived, and on Tiber's banks the sovereign Pope would hold his Court as the presiding genius of statesmanship, culture, and religion.

When Nicholas found death approaching, he read his will to the assembled Cardinals. In this testament he recalled the immense improvements he had made in Rome's architecture, and besought his audience to safeguard the Vatican and to enhance its majesty as the centre of Christendom. This policy was steadily pursued by successive Popes, and despite all the national and dynastic struggles of the various European States, at that time, and ever since, the Papacy remains a menace to civilization and culture to this hour. The temporal power of which the Vatican was deprived in 1870, has been partly restored, at least in theory, by Italy's present ruler.

Constantinople fell during the pontificate of Nicholas V, and his successor vainly endeavoured to reawaken the Crusading spirit against the Turks, Pius II, before his election, was the scholarly author and orator Piccolomini, who was much admired as a sceptical and pleasure-loving humanist. His elevation to St. Peter's Chair was regarded with high hopes in liberal circles. But the new Pope forsook his earlier friends and did nothing to promote the new learning. As Pope he proved a failure, although a man of blameless life when compared with his successors.

The pontificate of Paul II began in 1464. Pomp and ceremony adorned his reign. Vast sums were lavished on architecture and sculpture. The Pope's passion for gold was so great that when bishoprics fell vacant, he let them remain so, and transferred their princely revenues to the Papal coffers. His sexual frailties were notorious, but these excited little censure. An enemy of enlightenment, when fearing a conspiracy he arrested the leading scholars of the Roman Academy, and subjected them to imprisonment and torture, from which several died. This Pope came to a sudden end.

Sixtus IV secured his election by wholesale bribery and corruption. His domestic life shocked an age accustomed to scandal, and he brazenly robbed the Church for the enrichment of his own family. The Pope's "nephews" were numerous, and each was richly endowed. Wanton extravagance on all sides exhausted the Papal treasury. Many devices were adopted to obtain money. A monopoly in corn was created in the Papal domains, and artificial scarcity was arranged to increase the price of the vile bread the community was compelled to consume. After setting Italy by the ears, this mischievous Pontiff died at last in a tempest of disappointed rage when peace was declared before the object of his ambition had been secured. But the plot of Sixtus IV to murder the Medicis is the most dramatic episode in his career. The Duomo in Florence was chosen for the crime, and the elevation of the Host at Mass was the appointed time for the deed. One hired assassin, however, unnerved by religious fear, hesitated to stab Lorenzo de' Medici as he stood near the altar. But two priests, much less prone to super-

stition, were willing to commit murder in church. They proved themselves novices in the assassin's trade, and Lorenzo escaped with a few wounds. Still, his brother Guiliano was foully murdered by two miscreants "at the very moment of elevation of Christ's body."

Even the Cardinals were ashamed of the conduct of Sixtus, and in choosing his successor, Innocent VIII, the Sacred College insisted on his solemn oath to abstain from the sins of his predecessor. But all the many oaths solemnly sworn on relic or by saint were contemptuously ignored so soon as Innocent was seated in St. Peter's Chair. An unconventional Pope, he openly acknowledged his sons and daughters, as such. His reign proved a cesspool of corruption, and he cynically established a mart in Rome for the sale of pardons. The revenues arising from this lucrative traffic were shared between the Holy Father and a favourite son.

While Innocent was lying on his deathbed the wily Cardinals were scheming to sell the Papacy to the highest bidder, and that unspeakable scoundrel Roderigo Borgia was made Pope under the name of Alexander VI. A man of handsome appearance and commanding presence, he stood high in public estimation, and little did men suspect that Borgia's name would become a byword for infamy throughout succeeding times. A discerning few doubted the wisdom of the choice, but no one imagined that Alexander VI would dare to impose a Papal censorship on the printing presses of Christian Europe, or arrogantly intermeddle in the secular policy of foreign States. Men marvelled when the Primate of Christendom cordially invited the co-operation of the infidel Turks when he wished to subdue those Catholic princes who ventured to withstand him. Whether Alexander perished from fever or from poison, he certainly departed, and his death was the occasion of universal rejoicing.

Pius III was Pope for a few days only. Then came that truculent prelate Julius II. He it was who encouraged the splendid genius of Raphael and Michael Angelo. A statesman of the first rank, he maintained and extended the temporal power of the Papacy. Unfortunately, in furthering his territorial ambitions he reddened Italy with blood.

Leo X came next. A born Epicurean, he revelled in Renaissance culture, and basked in the sunlight of the fleeting hour. The coffers of Julius were well furnished, but when Leo slept with his fathers, it was discovered that the very jewels in the Papal crown had been pledged as security for his debts. Leo's successor, Adrian VI, was the puppet of the Emperor Charles V, and was scorned as an imported barbarian by the supercilious Romans.

In 1523 began the reign of Clement VII, whose pontificate proved a series of disasters. Prostrated by protracted strife, Italy was invaded by sullen Lutheran Germans, and shady adventurers from Spain. Rome was taken by storm, and an ignorant and rapacious rabble became for many months the masters of the Eternal City. This was ruthlessly ravaged, and many of Rome's matchless monuments were pitilessly destroyed.

T. F. PALMER.

The history of the race is but that of the individual "writ large."—*G. H. Lewes.*

A man's religion consists, not of the many things he is in doubt of and tries to believe, but of the few he is assured and has no need of effort for believing.

Carlyle.

Mobs are multiplied ignorance.—*Sir W. Jones.*

"Modern Physics" and Determinism.

(Concluded from page 778.)

WHEN we find such expressions as "nature abhors accuracy and precision," "nature permits a certain 'margin of error,'" nature "knows nothing, apparently, of absolutely exact measurements," used in the way in which they are used by Sir James Jeans, it might be thought that the last stage in the degeneracy of scientific expression had been reached. Yet the negation of future scientific research is pronounced when we are told that "nature refuses to let us discover" (in this case the exact position of an electron). What would have been the position of science to-day, if that relic of the theological way of looking at things had always held complete sway?

That man may ultimately fail to understand many of the processes of nature is quite true. That we should recognize our limitations as researchers and thinkers, when we are forced to do so, is only right; but to say that "nature refuses" to let us discover certain things, after so much has been discovered, is to indulge in the jargon of the priest instead of the language of the scientist.

That Sir James is not quite sure of the indeterminacy of the whole of the universe is revealed in the following passages which appear in the midst of attempts to show that the processes of nature frequently are indeterminate.

"So far as we know, the intensity of the radiation depends only on known constants of nature, which are the same here as in the remotest stars. And this seems to leave no room for the intervention of an external agency." p. 25.

"In the natural world it is measured by the mysterious quantity known as 'Planck's constant h ,' which proves to be absolutely uniform throughout the universe. Its value, both in the laboratory and in the stars, can be measured in innumerable ways, and always proves to be precisely the same." p. 27.

In these two passages we have in several phrases the language of science and determinism. In fact they are loaded with deterministic phraseology; and in this case the layman must point out to the scientist a very important fact. There is no room for indeterminacy and indeterminacy in the universe. It must be either one or the other. If the scientist proves determinacy in one process of nature, then all processes of nature are determined, even if we have not discovered the conditions of the determinacy of the other processes. It is on this basis that scientists have always worked, whether they have been self-conscious of the fact or not. On the other hand, if one process of nature is indeterminate then all processes are indeterminate, and a scientific summary of universal phenomena is an impossibility. If certain parts of the universe acted without conditions of existence, or independently of such conditions if they had them (and this is the only sense in which to talk of indeterminacy), and other parts of the universe acted in accordance with their conditions of existence, or were what we call determined, how could the scientist formulate his laws of nature? What is to prevent the "undetermined" parts of Sir James Jeans' universe from destroying the "determined" parts of that universe and making it undetermined as a whole; and if the one did destroy the other, would not that be a factor in bringing about a new state of the universe? In that case we would be forced to think of it in terms of determinism by having to admit that a phenomenon exists by virtue of certain conditions.

It should only be necessary to think out such a theory as that of indeterminacy, when applied to the universe, in order to realize the futility of such a theory. If things could not be relied upon to act in accordance with conditions of existence; if everything could act anyhow, any time, anywhere, knowledge of the universe would be impossible.

Let us interview Sir James once again. When illustrating the almost discontinuous jumping of the electrons in a hot filament of an electric light bulb, he says:—

"We can perhaps form some sort of a picture of the nature of these spontaneous disintegrations or jumps, by comparing the atom to a party of four card players who agree to break up as soon as a hand is dealt in which each player receives just one complete suit. A room containing millions of such parties may be taken to represent a mass of radio-active substance. Then it can be shown that the number of card parties will decrease according to the exact law of radio-active decay on one condition—that the cards are well shuffled between each deal. If there is adequate shuffling of the cards, the passage of time and the past will mean nothing to the card players, for the situation is born afresh each time the cards are shuffled. Thus the death-rate per thousand will be constant as with atoms of radium. But if the cards are merely taken up after each deal, without shuffling, each deal follows inevitably from the preceding, and we have the analogue of the old law of causation. Here the rate of diminution in the number of players would be different from that actually observed in radio-active disintegration. We can only reproduce this by supposing the cards to be continually reshuffled, and the shuffler is he whom we have called fate." p. 24-25. Then, after a few more lines, "the future may not be as unalterably determined by the past as we used to think; in part at least it may rest on the knees of whatever gods there be." p. 25.

In this gem of a passage we are treated to a description of the way in which the new science reveals the indeterminacy of the universe, and to an analogue of the so-called old law of causation. Yet in the first part, which deals with the new and indeterminate way of scientific expression, we are told that events will take place according to "exact law," and on "one condition." That condition is different from the one assumed in the second part of the passage; and the result is different in the one case from that in the other. As if the determinist asks for more. Evidently, Sir James is in the habit of mistaking man's lack of knowledge concerning certain happenings in nature for indeterminacy in nature; and in his desire to consort with the religionists he invokes "he whom we have called fate." Is it thus that modern science is to make progress?

To quote Chapman Cohen, "Science is by its very nature progressive; and its progress is manifested by the degree to which phenomena hitherto unrelated are brought under constantly enlarging and more comprehensive generalizations." *Determinism or Free-Will*. p. 17.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Religious contention is the devil's harvest.

La Fontaine.

All sects seem to be right in what they assert and wrong in what they deny.—*Goethe.*

Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to be positive or dogmatical on any subject.—*Hume.*

The latest gospel in this world is, know thy work and do it.—*Carlyle.*

The Bishop of London Explains.

I RECALL an article which appeared in *John Bull* headed "War in the Churches" (A good word for the Sword by the Bishop of London.)

It begins with a reference to the Kellogg Pact, and proceeds in a very complacent manner to persuade the reader that "The coming Conference of the Great Powers will add greatly to the peace of the World."

Towards the end of the article his Lordship says, "I have often been asked—Why did all the Bishops feel it was right in 1914 that Britain should go to War?" and then follows:—

"I always answer that the sword has freed nations again and again; and when it came to the point, we saved the liberty of the world by the sword."

He then adds—"But I have no doubt whatever that, speaking generally, war is against the will of God."

So then, although it was perfectly right to oppose the invasion of Belgium, it was also against God's Will!"

Strange logic—strange morality—strange Christianity. So strange in fact that it is entirely alienated from and opposed to each.

He concludes with—"We must always pray that some day Christendom will be united in peace and amity as one church." While the Bishops consecrate regimental banners and defy the founder of their faith who said—"Put away the Sword—they who take the sword shall perish with the sword."

I am aware that Jesus is credited with having said, "I came not to bring peace but a sword." But as is now well known, so much trickery has been practised by recorders and translators, that few people accept the Bible as a genuine account of his sayings and doings. It is as Professor Menzies confessed, *the existing uncertainties regarding what Jesus actually did and said are hard for a Christian to bear.*

Listen to another Bishop. "It seems to me that men seek a false short cut to authority when they postulate an infallible inerrant Bible. As a text book of Science or history the Bible is defective. Its story of Creation cannot be accepted . . . The book of Daniel contains inaccurate history . . . In the gospels there are contradictions." Dr. Barnes (Should a Faith Offend, p. 119). And again of the man Jesus—"the idea that Jesus was inerrant with regard to secular knowledge is the product of mistaken reverence" (Page 121.)

Why did Jesus go with others to the Jordan to receive of John the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins? If he were the sinless man he is represented to have been, his baptism was not only meaningless but misleading. The author of the fourth gospel carefully refrains from mentioning this.

Take another saying of Jesus—"Call me not good, there is one only good, God the Father." According to F. C. Conybeare (*Art Hibbert Journal*, October, 1902) this is the correct rendering, but it was altered by Mark and Luke, and still further by Matthew. As Prof. Conybeare remarks, we have this ancient corrector caught *flagrante delicto*, at his botching work with the sacred text. And for what purpose? For edification. And this it should be noted, is but one instance of a multitude that might be adduced of the perils we incur when we stake so much of our religion on history.

The Bishop of London does not agree however. He writes: "We are finding out to-day the truth of the Bible. The Bible has made no mistakes, it is we who have made mistakes about the Bible." This is perfectly true, but I fail to see what the Church gains by his sincerity. We are finding out the truth of the Bible—*finding that it is not to be relied upon.* And it is also true we have made a mistake about the Bible. *The mistake was in believing it to be true.* That however arose from an ignorance forced upon the people by those in authority. That is over. The people are no longer ignorant, thanks to the efforts of Free Thinkers and the spread of secular knowledge. The Bishop of London thinks he sees signs of "a drawing together of Science and religion." If by this he means that a knowledge of Science is compelling the Church to give up pretending

that the Bible is an infallible guide and a truthful account of the past, and to accept the triumphant victory of reason and intellect over superstition, magic, and a false theory of man as being "born in sin," and "an innocent victim of God's wrath," then he enjoys perfect eyesight. But he leaves it open for the reader to infer that he means something like this: "Science is beginning to show signs of a compromise with religion." That will never happen. It is all the other way round. Scientists as such, have nothing to do with religion. They are Free Thinkers, and the result of their freedom is so upsetting the clerics that they are trying to believe they see what does not exist.

The Church has had to choose between losing its hold over the masses or admitting that their teaching is unscientific. It has chosen the latter course, and is now sorely puzzled to know what strategy to adopt next. Once its power over the children in the schools is taken away, the game is all over. The Church of Rome knows that as long as it can control the mind of the scholar its power remains unassailed. Here lies the only obstacle to the emancipation of the intellect, a danger continually pointed out by Free Thinkers. The Bishop admits there are a few errors in the Bible, and refers to the many thousands recorded as having been killed in places where there could only have been a few hundreds. This he explains quite easily. "We know that an error arose through a 'mistaken use' of the dots that were used to represent so many thousands."

The writer was too dotty, so to speak, to give a correct account—drunk with blood no doubt. Of the prophecy of Isaiah he thinks the manuscript probably got mixed up in one box, and thus occurred another error. It does not seem to have occurred to him that the writer was in the wrong box. Some of the dates too he admits are wrong. Dots again, you see. But in spite of the dots and the mixing up of manuscript in one box, he thinks "no one will deny that the New Testament stands on firmer ground than it did fifty years ago." Well, well . . . perhaps with a little lopping off here and there, and a propping up all round, the remainder may pass as an ancient relic of priestcraft—but not for long. Its roots are too rotten for that.

And the Bishop thinks "it is really much more wonderful for God to have made something which would evolve itself into the world—*than to have made a world straight off.*"

It is all very simple and nice, but it won't satisfy intelligent men and women in these days. No doubt his Lordship feels uncomfortable over the catastrophe threatening the Church, and is doing his best to bolster up a lost cause.

CULWICK PERRINS.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

ATHEISM AND AGNOSTICISM.

SIR,—At a recent lecture I heard the expression "Agnostic opinions," which I have heard before. But surely there is some confusion here. Is not Agnosticism the absence of an opinion? I remember once reading in the *Times* the expression a "suspension of judgment in regard to the truth of the Christian Revelation" which made me smile. There seem to be plenty of people who have no opinions where religion is concerned, but whether they are described as Agnostics or nothingarians is purely a matter of taste. Agnostic opinions can only be Atheist opinions with a different label.

J. A. DAVIES.

Society News.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

DESPITE the unfavourable weather the Hall was full, when Mr. Charles Pilley, Barrister-at-Law, and one time editor of *John Bull*, delivered his lecture on "How God

Went Overboard at Lambeth."

His criticisms of the report before him, some of which were read in full, were so deadly, that they would have put the Bishops, if any were present, to shame.

With the Lambeth report, the Bible, and the Prayer Book, before him, he gave all the necessary proof of the humbug and absence of sincerity as well as hypocrisy of the whole proceedings.

Many questions and discussion followed and were replied to by the speaker, and after an unanimous vote of thanks the meeting concluded.

To-day (December 14) there will be a Debate between the Rev. S. J. C. Goldsack, of Birmingham, and Mr. A. D. McLaren on "Is Christianity of Divine Origin?"

B.A.L.M.

OWING to circumstances unforeseen, Mr. Rosetti was unable to lecture last Sunday as arranged, but the Branch was fortunate enough to enjoy a very pleasant evening, through the kindness of Mr. Saphin. His subject, "B.V.M." was an interesting one, delivered with a satisfying humour; inviting many questions and much discussion. This Sunday (December 14) Mr. F. P. Corrigan is the speaker, and the subject is "Rome and Reason."

A.J.M.

Obituary.

MR. EDWARD PARKER.

WEST HAM Freethinkers will learn with regret the death of Edward Parker, whose remains were interred at West Ham Cemetery, on Friday, December 5. Eighty-two years of age at death, he was one of the oldest members of the West Ham Branch of the N.S.S., in service as well as age. In the old days of Charles Bradlaugh's time, when hooliganism was the favourite Christian argument, Edward Parker was ever ready to lend a hand in the defence, in fact one might describe him as an ever-prominent figure in West Ham Freethought affairs. A number of his fellow-members gathered at the graveside, where a secular service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

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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. F. P. Corrigan—"Rome and Reason."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station), 11.15, Mr. G. F. Holland (Dramatic Critic, *Illustrated London News*)—"The Barretts of Wimpole Street."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road): 7.15, Mr. J. Payn—"Life's Little Ironies."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Harry Snell, C.B.E., M.P.—"If Christ Returned to Jerusalem."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"The Post War Family."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, facing The Brecknock): 7.30, Mr. E. Baker—"The Next War, and Why."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.30, Debate—"Is Christianity of Divine Origin." *Affir.*: Rev. S. J. C. Goldsack; *Neg.*: A. D. McLaren.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club Rooms, Front Street): 7.0, A Lecture.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. T. Eastwood, of Nelson—"Astronomy." Questions and Discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—City (Albion Street) Hall, No. 2 Room, Candleriggs): 6.30, Mr. John Grant—"Futility of Atheism."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): Sunday, December 14, at 7, Mr. G. H. Taylor, "Let's Play at Meta-physics." Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, M.P.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): 3.0, Bonar Thompson (London)—"Who is Bernard Shaw?" 6.30, "The Tragi-Comedy of Life."

NOTTINGHAM.—Cosmopolitan Debating Society, Lecture Theatre, University College, Shakespeare Street, at 2.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (London), subject "The Passing of the Gods."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. T. Brighton will lecture in the Bigg Market at 7.30, Subject—"Is There a God?" Literature will be on sale.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street entrance): 3.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"What is the Use of Science?" 7.0, "The God Men of Science Believe in."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. J. Young—"Why I Left the Roman Church."

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