

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN · · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLII.—No. 27

SUNDAY JULY 2, 1922

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

The Past and the Present.

Carlyle described man as a tool-using animal, and on the score of accuracy no fault can be found with the statement. But for that matter, if we define a tool as anything which is used by an organism to achieve a desired end, animals also are tool users. With this important distinction. In the case of the animal the tool—teeth, claws, etc.—is a part of itself. It is passed on from generation to generation, but through the channel of biological heredity. Kill the individual animal and his share in the transmission of the tool is ended. With man the tools by which he achieves the conquest of his environment—a club, a spear, a spade, etc.—are not part of himself. They are not even made by himself, being made up of accretions during many generations. They are not transmitted by biological heredity, but through the heredity of a continuous social life. The individual may die, but the tool he has discovered, or made, does not die with him. It passes into the social treasury, and becomes the property of the species. Henceforth it is independent of any individual; it has become the property of all, and only the destruction of all can annihilate it. In this way we have the curious result that while man does not achieve immortality as an individual, he does achieve a limited and indefinite immortality (the phrase may be passed) for his inventions. And on that fact hangs the whole secret of human progress. The stationary character of animal societies may be placed to the credit of the fact that there exists no true social medium. With man this does exist, and by means of language, and institutions the inventions of one generation are preserved, added to, and passed on to another. In this circumstance lies the whole secret of human progress.

A Question of Endowment.

So far it is all to the good. But there is an obvious other side to the process. If social heredity transmits the good things achieved by the individual, it transmits the bad ones also. Social heredity transmits the tradition of courage in the service of man which gives us the explorer, the scientific investigator, the reformer. But it gives also the soldier, whose existence is at this moment threatening the well-being of European civilization. If social heredity presents us with the ideas of a Marcus Aurelius, it gives us also

those of a Torquemada. Good and bad in life are closely related, and the same conditions that permit the transmission of the one serve to hand on the other. This condition gives point to a closing remark of Professor Kenny's in the article on the blasphemy laws with which I have recently dealt. Speaking of two important legal decisions, one which legalized a bequest for Freethought purposes, the other making it permissible to bequeath money for the saying of masses for the benefit of the testator's soul, Professor Kenny asks whether this is the final stage. And he says:—

I foresee the possibility that a future legislature, alive to the supreme importance of truth and to the value of unbiassed enquiry and discussion as the best avenue of truth, may some day advance to the point of prohibiting all permanent endowments for the maintenance of any crystallized form of doctrine upon any subject, sacred or secular. For such endowments tend to preserve that doctrine into a factitious survival, and so mar the uniformity with which the judgment of mankind, if left to its normal action, would have travelled towards truth.

Now I must confess that I have considerable, if not entire, sympathy with this view. It expresses one aspect of social evolution which is very largely ignored. Speaking generally one may say that we are so much on our guard against the possible injury that is often done to society by admittedly bad men, that we unwittingly ignore the actual injury that may be done by the very good ones. After all, the criminal character, or the man whose influence on society is recognisably bad, is not much of a threat to our security. His actions advertise their warning nature. But the one who stands out as a man of worth to his own generation is very apt to become a burden to his successors. Because he is a good man while alive, he becomes a standard for others after he is dead. In this way he becomes a drag instead of acting as an impetus for good. The world takes little heed of the principles that the life of the good man should illustrate, it aims mostly at perpetuating his actual teachings, with disastrous results to all concerned. It is as a French writer has said, the only real enemies of humanity are its dead. It is their ghostly hands which clutch the living present by the throat, and in the name of the past threaten to keep it down to its former level.

* * *

The Dead Hand.

The grasp of the dead hand is nowhere more in evidence than it is with religion. The whole circle of ideas that go to the make-up of religion belong to the past. They spring out of conditions that are not to be found to-day save in the more primitive communities, and appeal to ideas that find no warranty in the existing state of knowledge. More than that, and worse than that, they are incarnated in institutions, some of them extremely wealthy, all of them more or less powerful, and are so enabled to maintain an army of sworn and paid defenders, the majority of whom argue their brief for no other reason than that they are paid a substantial retaining fee. There can be

no reasonable question that were religious ideas left to make their way solely on the strength of their appeal to the educated intelligence of to-day its power and influence would undergo a marked and rapid decline. It retains its position mainly because it is maintained by the factor stressed by Professor Kenny. The huge endowments of the Church, which serve as the prime condition of the social prestige it has, enable it to control the situation from the outset. Generation after generation it is able to buy and train an army of defenders who once within the camp fight for the continuance of the institutions to which they owe their position, as officials everywhere fight for the perpetuation of the offices that give them their being. And it follows that, as Professor Kenny says, all such endowments tend to give to outworn doctrines a lease of life they would not otherwise have, and so saddle the new generation with a burden it need not carry.

* * *

A Premium on Ignorance.

In a way the law does recognise this by its bar on perpetuities. At law a legacy cannot be left so that only the income may be spent. The capital must not be preserved for ever in that way and so make itself immortal. But there are two exceptions to this. One is where the bequest is for charitable purposes, which is open to little objection; the other is for religion, which is open to a great deal of objection. For it perpetuates the past in the direction in which it is most likely to do the greatest harm. It not alone gives to the bundle of outworn ideas that go to make up a religion a factitious life, but it serves as a drag upon even the moderate amount of progress that is attempted within the limits of a Church. A great many of the stupid doctrines of the Churches might have been long since dead, but for the endowments which support them. Every liberal minded man within the Church feels this whenever he attempts a forward move. And it has another effect of throwing power into the hands of those least qualified by nature to wield it. It is the less advanced, the more ignorant who stand forward as champions of the "purity" of religion, the better informed and the more cultured who must leave the Church and seek a freer life outside. A Church that has no room for a Charles Darwin elects a Winnington Ingram to one of its most important posts. Men of that stamp control the situation mainly because they command the endowments that have been piled up. There is no doubt whatever that the present system of endowments in relation to religion does inflict a very real injury upon society. Progress is only possible on condition that the past is undergoing a constant revision, and that its objects and its teaching shall be constantly overhauled in the interests of a larger and saner social life.

* * *

The Claims of the Present.

I think, therefore, that Professor Kenny is probably correct in forecasting that some legislature of the future "alive to the supreme importance of truth and to the value of unbiassed enquiry as the best avenue of truth," may well consider it advisable to place religious endowments upon the same level as endowments left for other purposes. To endow a doctrine in such a way that the endowment does not admit of being diverted, completely expended, or utilized in a way that is beneficial to the community, is to place the living under the direct control of the dead, and to close the door to further improvement. Man, as I have said, is a tool-using animal, and among the most important of the tools he uses are the ideas that are born of the experience of the race. But these tools may be either good or bad, helpful or injurious. More important still, the tools that are useful at one stage

become useless or dangerous at another. It is not the circumstance of religious ideas being false that makes them so dangerous. False ideas have flourished in politics, in science, and in sociology. But here the objection to their removal was not so strong, and at any rate their being questioned could not be made a crime. In religion once an idea is accepted and established the road to improvement is barred; to question its truth becomes a crime. An army of men are paid, not to seek truth, but to teach specific doctrines whose truth must be taken for granted. It is in this way that religion has inflicted its deadliest injury on society, and its endowments have been the retaining fees paid by the ghosts of the past in order to bind the living present. That is a consideration which some legislature of the future may well take in hand. A prevention of this can do injustice to none. It can only prevent injustice being done to all.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

II

THE POET.

ON August 4, 1892, the centenary of Shelley's birth was celebrated at Horsham, when Mr. Edmund Gosse, the well-known writer, pronounced an eulogium upon the poet. We refer to that occasion merely in order to protest with deepest emphasis against the wholly unwarrantable contrast Mr. Gosse drew between the man and the poet. According to this modern Philistine, Shelley the man was an undesirable, even dangerous character, "the revolutionist, the enemy of kings and priests, the extravagant and paradoxical humanitarian." The late Mr. G. W. Foote availed himself of the very first opportunity to write a scathing and convincing criticism of Mr. Gosse's address, which appears in *Flowers of Freethought*, pp. 61-71. Mr. Foote says:—

Mr. Gosse himself appears to have an "intelligent aversion" to Shelley's *principles*. He professes a great admiration for Shelley's *poetry*; but he regards it as a sort of beautiful landscape, which has no other purpose than gratifying the aesthetic taste of the spectator. For the poet's *teaching* he feels or affects a lofty contempt. Shelley the singer was at best a callow enthusiast. Had he lived as long as Mr. Gosse, and moved in the same dignified society, he would have acquired an "intelligent aversion" to the indiscretions of his youthful passion for reforming the world; but fate decided otherwise, and he is unfortunate enough to be the subject of Mr. Gosse's admonitions.

As a matter of fact Shelley was the poet of social and political revolt. Even as a child, he tells us, his whole being rebelled against the false social distinctions of his day, founded on ignorance, privilege, and prejudice. He recalls in the *Revolt of Islam* a fresh May-day:—

When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why; until there rose
From the near school-room, voices, that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

How passionately he loved liberty, and his hatred of tyranny and oppression was like a red-hot fire in his veins. In the *Ode to Liberty* he traces the story of evolution till he arrives at man, when he finds that—

This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung tyranny; beneath, sat deified
The sister pest, congregator of slaves.

It is perfectly true that we do not regard the poet as a teacher, pure and simple. As Shelley says in the

Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, didactic poetry was his abhorrence, being fully persuaded that "until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life, which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness." It is inspiration, rather than instruction, that Shelley brings us, his purpose being "to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence." He paints liberty as irresistibly lovable, and tyranny as equally hateful.

He refers to a Scotch philosopher who acknowledged that the poet had what he characteristically termed "a passion for reforming the world," adding: "What passion incited him to write his book he omits to explain. For my part, I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon than go to heaven with Paley and Malthus." That he had "a passion for reforming the world" is beyond all doubt; and it is as incontrovertible that in his opinion religion was the chief obstacle to reform. Trelawny, who was on terms of the most intimate friendship with him to the very end of his life, assures us that he was a thorough-going Atheist to the day of his death. Mr. Foote gives the following quotations from his *Records of Shelley and Byron* :—

Some years ago, one of the most learned of the English Bishops questioned me regarding Shelley; he expressed both admiration and astonishment at his learning and writings. I said to the Bishop, "You know he was an Atheist." He said, "Yes." I answered, "It is the key and the distinguishing quality of all he wrote. Now that people are beginning to distinguish men by their works, and not creeds, the critics, to bring him into vogue, are trying to make out that Shelley was not an Atheist, that he was rather a religious man. Would it be right in me, or anyone who knew him, to aid or sanction such a fraud?" The Bishop said: "Certainly not, there is nothing righteous but truth." And there our conversation ended.

And yet there are divines among us to-day who have the audacity to assert that Shelley never was an Atheist at all, and that the little pamphlet *The Necessity of Atheism* was not meant to be taken as a serious contribution on the subject. Others freely admit that he held Atheistic opinions while at Eton and Oxford; but it must be borne in mind that his expulsion occurred in March, 1811, and that yet in *Queen Mab*, privately printed in the spring of 1813, the great refrain is "There is no God." Here he exclaims:—

Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
Necessity! thou mother of the world!
Unlike the God of human error, thou
Requir'st no prayers or praises.

The *Spirit* says that when he was an infant his mother went to see an Atheist burned. It was an extremely disgusting spectacle. The priests were around the pile in their dark robes, and a multitude gazed in silence—

And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth;
The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon;
His death-pang rent my heart! the insensate mob
Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
Weep not, child! cried my mother, for that man
Has said "There is no God."

That, then, is the burden of the philosophical poem *Queen Mab*. It is an argument which has never once been refuted against the belief in the existence of God. In the copious notes appended Shelley carefully elaborates the argument, dwelling at length on each of the three sources of knowledge, the senses, reason,

and testimony, and coming to the following inevitable conclusion:—

Hence it is evident that having no proofs from either of the three sources of conviction, the mind cannot believe the existence of a creative God; it is also evident that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.....God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; he is contained under every *predicate in non* that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even his worshippers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of him; they exclaim with the French poet, *Pour dire ce qu'il est, il faut être lui-même.*

There is absolutely no warrant in any of Shelley's later writings for the statement that he repudiated Atheism before he died. Besides, it was only during the last year or two of the poet's life that Edward Trelawny enjoyed an intimate friendship with him, and his testimony ought to be finally conclusive. It is well-known that on a famous occasion Shelley wrote "Atheist" after his name. Trelawny informs us that "he never regretted having done so," and then adds:—

The principal fault I have to find is that Shelleyan writers, being Christians themselves, seem to think that a man of genius cannot be an Atheist, and so they strain their own faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted from the earliest stage of his career to the last day of his life. He ignored all religions as superstitions.

Mr. A. H. Koszul, in his Introduction to Everyman's Edition of Shelley's *Poems*, published in 1907, evinces his complete incompetence to act as the poet's interpreter in the following curious passage:—

He has led us far from the "There is no God" of *Queen Mab* before we come to the awe-stricken answers of *Prometheus* (ii. 4).

Who made the living world?
God.
Who made all
That it contains: thought, passion, reason, will,
Imagination?
God, Almighty God!

Surely, the veriest literary tyro can see that Demogorgon, Milton's "dreaded name," whom Spenser depicts as "dwelling in the deep abyss where the three fatal sisters dwell," is only used by Shelley as a purely dramatic character, and certainly not as a medium of reliable information about God as Maker and Ruler of the world. Of course, Demogorgon is as mythical as Prometheus himself, or Jupiter, Apollo, or Panthea. The truth is that *Prometheus Unbound* does not contain a single line which can legitimately be construed into a plea for either Deism, Theism, or Christianity; but it does speak of man as ideally—

Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise.

To Matthew Arnold God was not a person, but a power, not ourselves, making for righteousness, the power of the Eternal which is unknown and unknowable; but Shelley regarded such power as objectively non-existent. He says:—

What is that Power? Some moonstruck sophist stood
Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
His likeness in the world's vast mirror shown.

Both as man and as poet Shelley was essentially a social reformer. He had, indeed, "a passion for reforming the world, and in his poetry it has found an

immortal expression. Brief and full of trouble was his life, but it was long enough for him to make the priceless discovery

That the glory far above
All else in life is Love, oh Love!

J. T. LLOYD.

Whitewashing a Sepulchre.

The entire early training and life of England's higher ecclesiastics seems to render the majority of them incapable of taking in facts patent to everyone else.

—*The Duke of Argyll.*

THE second report of the Bishop of Gloucester's committee on Prayer Book revision has been issued. It is not without interest to Freethinkers as it represents the result of fifteen years' discussion in the Convocation of Canterbury on the subject of bringing ecclesiastical ideas into some attempt at conformity with modern views.

Matthew Arnold poked polite fun at a former Bishop of Gloucester who had declared publicly his intention of doing something for the honour of the Godhead. Many of the poet's sarcasms are applicable to the present Bishop, who has been engaged, with other lawn-sleeved gentlemen of leisure, in the pleasing pastime of attempting to make the archaic and unreal language of the Book of Common Prayer acceptable to the ladies who sit in the pews at churches.

The report is likely to satisfy nobody except those wicked Freethinkers who delight in the discomfiture of the clergy. The Bishop of Gloucester's committee has been busy whitewashing a sepulchre, but the white exterior does not disguise effectively the moral character of the mausoleum. A book of over one hundred pages is filled with verbal alterations, and, characteristically, the committee suggest that the alterations are optional. The blunt, outspoken language of the Marriage Service has been softened, but the woman is still regarded as the weaker vessel. The service of public baptism, which is usually attended by people who rarely go to church at any other time, has been simplified. The committee also suggest fewer cursings for use on Ash Wednesday, and so forth and so on.

Some time since the House of Convocation of Canterbury decided to abandon some of the purple passages of the Old Testament. Psalm lviii, and other sacred lyrics attributed to King David, fell under the clerical displeasure. This ecclesiastical camouflage is not likely to serve for long. The Psalms are an integral part of the Bible, and David, "the man after God's own heart," is far too closely allied with the legendary figure of Christ to be thrown thus rudely to the rubbish-heap without disastrous consequences to orthodoxy. It is not only a desperate policy, but a precedent which will exert, in the long run, anything but a happy effect on the Christian position.

The Psalms were written by Orientals many centuries ago, and have been regarded by religious people as the inspired utterances of the Almighty ever since. Now the ecclesiastics have dismissed King David as though he was a chorister with Trades Union ideas. What is wrong with the fifty-eighth Psalm? It is a comparatively short one, but the clergy admit that it is "un-Christian in character," which is a polite way of saying that it is entirely out of harmony with modern humanistic ideas. This is how Psalm lviii runs:—

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, verily, there is a

reward for the righteous; verily is he a God that judgeth in the earth.

It will be seen that the ecclesiastics have not selected the worst utterances in the Bible. Other Psalms are open to the same grave objections, as, for instance, the inspired cursings in Psalm cix:—

When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

And, again, in Psalm cxxxvii:—

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Observe the clergy have themselves started to pull the Bible and Prayer Book to pieces. King David, "the man after God's own heart," thus comes in for tardy, but none the less deserved, rebuke. For David is now seen to be a barbarian, and the champions of the Bible are obliged to throw the Oriental savage overboard in order to absolve their deity from the crimes and vices of his favourite.

This revision of the Prayer Book of the Established Church is no mere academic discussion. To the ordinary man and woman the Book of Common Prayer reflects the atmosphere of the Middle Ages, with a pre-Shakespearean language, and the ideas in the volume are inconsistent with modern views. The clergy realize that their influence is on the wane, and seek to placate public opinion by tame proposals of tinkering the text of the sacred volume. The alterations in the Prayer Book are an attempt to whitewash a sepulchre, to make as attractive as possible a dead religion.

MIMNERMUS.

Canst Thou by Searching Find Out Man?

ONE of the most remarkable men that ever lived was a Greek who flourished in the fifth century B.C., namely, Herodotus. An immense curiosity possessed him, and made him an extensive traveller. Born in Asia Minor, he crossed seas, rivers, hills, and deserts; explored regions round the Black sea, and visited Babylon, Greece, Egypt, and the northern shores of Africa. Everywhere he went he asked questions, and listened to stories in palaces, temples, cottages, and by the wayside. He wanted to know all that was possible to learn about various tribes and nations, and how they got their living, how they dressed, how they fought, how they mourned, how they made merry, how they worshipped. Out of the information he picked up he made a book, "in the hope of thereby preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done." His anecdotes and sketches are still popular with us, and will remain so through the ages; for example, this note of his on Egypt:—

In social meetings among the rich, when the banquet is ended, a servant carries round to the several guests a coffin, in which there is a wooden image of a corpse, carved and painted to resemble nature as nearly as possible, about a cubit or two cubits in length. As he shows it to each guest in turn, the servant says, "Gaze here, and drink, and be merry; for when you die, such will you be."

Such are his little pictures of life. Of his larger pictures, the most famous is his account of the war of the Persians against the Greeks, the Persian bridge of boats across the Dardanelles, the Persian fleet's defeat at Salamis, and the flight of the Persian king. I suppose he must have read scraps of his articles to various friends as they sat under plane-trees, or reclined on couches at the supper-table. The result was

that he was invited to read his history book aloud to public assemblies of the Athenians, and he received a gift from the city funds.

Other Greeks, as, for instance, Archimedes and Thales, exercised their curiosity on external nature, and studied land-measuring (geometry), stars, weight, motion, animals, plants, physiology, etc. Thus, the Greeks were distinguished for a dual pursuit of knowledge, that of man, and that of the Cosmos. The knowledge of man cannot be attained except on a basis of a knowledge of nature, or environment. But finally, of the two sorts, or aspects, of science, that which directly relates to man is the most vital. To understand something of the economy of the world—chemistry, physics, biology, and the rest—is valuable; but most valuable of all is a comprehension of our human kin. In that sense, the art of an Herodotus or a Shakespeare is more essential than the art of a Thales or a Newton. So, also, those nations which acquire the art of observing and respecting the customs and ideals of their fellow-nations contribute more to the progress of civilization than those which attach the chief value to the natural sciences and their economic applications. But, of course, the effort of mankind should be to combine all orders of knowledge into one service of the general welfare.

If, as far as we are able, we compare the libraries of the early ages with the libraries of modern cities, we see that what I have called the art of Herodotus has gained an enormous enlargement. That is to say, the man of the twentieth century is not only as curious as Herodotus was, but he knows a tremendous deal more about humanity as a whole. It is just a hundred years since Auguste Comte began to outline the Positive Philosophy, which made humanity the centre of action, thought, art, and love. Then followed Charles Darwin, with his "Descent of Man" doctrine. And then followed an ever-augmenting host of inquirers and discoverers—investigators of the mind, like William James; or of the social mind, like Durkheim or MacDougall; or of communal customs, like Spencer and Gillen in Australia; or of a racial ethic and poetry, like Margaret Noble in India; or of the myth-making and god-making faculty through the ages, like Sir James Frazer; and so on.

The poet who wrote the dramatic dialogue of *Job* asked, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" and implied that the search would not be successful. Such is, indeed, the intentional irony of that Agnostic poem. But the question, "Canst thou by searching find out man?" can be answered with a "Yes." Man has been trying to know himself ("Know thyself," said the Greek philosophers) for many centuries, and the quest is not in vain, and it will go on evermore fruitfully.

On paper, it is easy to plan a world in which all the people, in all the continents, should advance at the same economic and moral pace, like children in a Council-school standard. But the realities of life do not obey paper plans. What has happened is that a few centres of action, in China, in India, and particularly in Western Europe, take the lead, and necessarily take the lead. The factors have so grouped themselves that, for practical purposes, we Westerners (and our kindred oversea) adopt the initiative. Hence it comes about that we Westerners both glory more in progress effected, and curse more at the obstacles. The curses do good. For example, the French Revolution properly cursed the old European order. But we can, as time goes on, devise better methods. Take the case of war. All sane citizens wish earnestly to get rid of it. I fear not a few well-meaning people think they have done their part in the abolition when they say, with grim emphasis, "War is a relic of barbarism." For reasons which I need not now stop to give, I doubt if the statement is true. In any case,

it carries us an exceedingly small way towards salvation. I regret to observe that many minds content themselves with uttering this and similar curses. Such an attitude is one of sheer laziness. What we need is a painstaking and unrelenting search for the natural causes of war in man, and man's material conditions. This implies an intense examination of human geography (soil, food, climate, frontiers, etc.), and a close analysis of human motives, human powers, and human ambitions. I have read a heap of learned volumes on psychology and ethics; and I do not hesitate to say that vast areas of human nature still await the illuminating ray of science. But I would like to add that one may behold numerous and joyful signs of activity in this vital research.

I was brought up in the Evangelical Christian Church, and I can testify to the fervent zeal with which disciples of that form of faith sought to know God, and sought to explain God. That theology, and all other theologies, will pass away. But why? The basic reason is that they become less and less needed by humanity the more and more humanity understands its own capacities and splendours. This self-knowledge demands courage (yes, courage!), patience, skill, perseverance—qualities the very reverse of laziness. Surely modern man will be willing to show more good sense and more devotion in the study of his own mind and history than earlier men applied to the study of the gods! Only by such study—co-operative study in all civilized communities—will the evils of war, disease, sex disorders, and poverty be removed.

You see the consequence of parting with the gods. We shall all have to work harder in the business of fraternity, light, beauty, and health! F. J. GOULD.

"A Clergyman in Hell!"

II.

(Concluded from page 406.)

"If I had searched England," says our rector, "I could not have found a congregation containing more remarkable and eccentric types of humanity." We are given a selection of the types, some of them brought note books, in which they dotted down any deviation from the appropriate vesture to be worn by the clergy during service.

These "sartorial" ladies discovered that I had worn blue or red or white, when they expected me to wear green.....Actually, I was wearing the sequence as prescribed by the old Sarium code, instead of the colours in more common use.

Other ladies specialize in footwear, they scrutinized the Rector's boots to see whether they were properly laced and polished:—

Should I, on a stormy evening, enter the church with a heavy pair of boots, instead of the dainty sanctuary shoes on which they insist, the incident becomes the gossip of the parish during the next twenty-four hours. By the end of the week this event has been handled with such imaginative hostility that I am being described as the parson who preaches in sporting-dress, in Wellington boots, and a light tweed suit.

Another type he classifies as "prompters." These ladies have made a thorough study of Church services and ritual, and are ready to pounce like a weasel on the slightest mistake or variation. They sit close up in front, ready for business. Says Mr. Synnott:—

And so I occasionally hear a loud whisper saying, "No, not hymn 140, hymn 130," or "Please go slower, Rector," or "Please don't forget the benediction." I remember on one occasion that after had pronounced the absolution, one imperious lady, worshipper, who had forgotten, or not heard it, stood

up in her pew and authoritatively commanded, "Please pronounce the absolution."

Another type of women must surely be "more terrible than an army with banners." This type take charge of their husbands and bring them to church as if they were in custody. Mr. Synnott says:—

I have seen them enter with a spouse, who seems to be decidedly frightened of his wife's frown. Some of the wives go further than frowning. They nudge their husbands, and sometimes kick them behind the shelter of a pew.

Good Lord! What do they do to them at home? When the service is over these women kneel in silent prayer for a long time while the husbands, like Milton's Angels, "stand and wait," bearing their wives' sable coats.

The devotions over, the patient husband helps his wife into her furs. She then takes charge again, and leads her husband to the waiting car. Their religious observances are over for the week.

Then there was the literary variety. The Rector says:—

They bring their own literature with them into church. As soon as I start my sermon they produce a new novel with a gaudy cover—the latest effort of Marie Corelli or Elinor Glyn! There is nothing surreptitious about their reading in church. They do not rest the book on their lap and make pretence that they are reading the prayer-book or the Scriptures. Instead, they hold the novel high up before their face and turn over the leaves, careless of the rustling, which can be heard clearly all over the church.

What would I not have given to have been allowed to take *Robinson Crusoe*, or *Treasure Island* with me to our dreary old chapel when I was a boy, but I was not allowed to read them even at home on a Sunday; to read them at chapel would have been rank sacrilege. But to return to the scandal and gossip of Rusper.

Mr. Synnott, the Rector, and hero of this story, tells us that while at Rusper he made the discovery that seven centuries ago Rusper was notorious as a home of gossip, "even in those remote times the talking women of Rusper had attained to fame in towns and villages far beyond the parish borders." The Rector thinks there must be something in the soil or the air of this village to account for it. However that may be, the fact stands recorded that in the thirteenth century the Bishop of Chichester paid a special visit to a nunnery at Rusper to impose a vow of silence on the sisterhood who occupied it. "The holy women," says the Rector, "must have resented any interference with what may have been even in those days, a recognised custom."

Certain it is, however, that this vow of silence, was flagrantly disobeyed, and that the nuns of the village indulged their practice of gossiping even as the residents of Rusper do to this day. About a year after the vow had been imposed, the fame of the busy tongues of the Rusper sisterhood again reached the ears of the Bishop of Chichester, who this time found it necessary to enforce the vow of silence. Exactly how he enforced it I do not know. His methods are a lost secret. If the lost art could be discovered, I am convinced that it would be a very valuable find for Rusper.

There is a saying that "falsehoods have no legs and cannot stand." This, however, does not hold good for Rusper, for there, we are told, "they not only stand, but walk and run, and never weary."

Rusper boasts a village hall. Most village halls are built at the instigation, or with the co-operation of the rector, but this hall was built with the intention of keeping the parson out! Says the Rector:—

This grim establishment was reared in the days of my predecessor. This good man was not invited to

be a member of the committee; there seemed to be a determination to keep him out of it. To this very day it is a common boast in some corners of the village that "The parson ain't got nothin' t' do wi' the 'all; it be the people's!" When I first saw our village hall I shuddered; what artistic feeling I had was badly jarred. It is not really a hall; it is a glorified fowl-house.

The Rector always referred to this erection as Madrid, for it shared the peculiarity of that city in being the coldest place in the winter and the hottest in the summer. Further, we are told, the whitewash had hardly dried on the walls, the paint was still sticky on the door, "when suddenly the gossips awoke to the possibilities for scandal opened up by our new Madrid."

The Rector declares:—

I can trace the origin of nearly every one of the multitude of modern slanders which haunt the houses of this quaint village to our parish hall. It is the most fertile breeding-ground for slander in England.

We give a sample of the alleged slanders that were circulated concerning the Rector:—

My voice lacked the melancholy tone.

I sang too loudly.

I was not a good timekeeper.

I did not cross myself.

I paced through the service like a man about to catch a train.

I let the children fall when I baptized them; I pinched them to make them cry.

I put the wedding-ring on a lady's thumb.

I married the wrong people.

I hurried them through the burial service, and did not give the bearers sufficient time to lower the coffin.

I pronounced the solemn words, "Ashes to ashes," before I took my stand at the grave.

I left bread on the Holy Table, and thus sinned against the Holy Ghost.

Further on, we read, "some have actually suggested that I misappropriated alms!" He was also seen to leave the vestry drawing his finger across his lips—"the presumption was that I had been drinking the Communion wine." "One glorious autumn day, after preaching a beautiful sermon," says the Rector:

I was approached in the vestry by several persons, who suggested that I was a racing man, a gambler, and owned horses at Newmarket. One of my catechisers affirmed that I was seen at a railway station dressed in loud, racing checks. I believe I asked if my interrogators had not seen me actually dressed as a jockey.

Another charge was that he owned a couple of public-houses in London, and someone dashed up to London to investigate.

Mr. Synnott was once connected, as a preacher, with Dr. Barnardo's Homes, and the rumour was started that he had been one of Dr. Barnardo's waifs and strays. Someone was sent to investigate this also.

The parish had a great gift for writing anonymous letters. The postman, he says, has travelled many a weary mile down his twisted drive to deliver the thousands of anonymous letters he received. They were awaiting him in a heap on the day of his arrival, he was eager to open them under the impression that they were letters of welcome. Some of them consisted of quotations from the poets, thought to be applicable to the Rector. One contributor started with Browning, then passed on to Tennyson and dipped into Shelley.

At the present time he (or she) is busy with Shakespeare. We've done "The Tempest," "The Taming of the Shrew," "Julius Caesar," "Midsummer Night's Dream," and are now coursing through "King Lear." At the present rate of progress we shall have finished Shakespeare by Michael-

mas, when we shall probably come on to Masfield, Kipling, and Dr. Bridges.

From all of which we gather that a Rectorship is not all "skittles and beer," as the saying is. But then this life, according to the Christian faith, was never intended to be a joy-ride. The alleged founder declared that his kingdom was not of this world, that, in fact, the prince of this world was the Devil. This life is merely a preparation for the next, a weary pilgrimage. "Blessed are ye," declares the same authority, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." According to this, the Rector of Rusper should have quite a nice balance in hand at the heavenly bank. Then why complain? If Christianity is true, the Rector is in a most enviable position. We fear the Rector is somewhat lacking in faith.

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

Astonishingly little notice has been taken of the arrangement which has been concluded between the Roman Church and the Russian Government on the subject of religion, although that was one of the marked features of the Genoa Conference. A summary of the facts appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* as far back as the issue for May 11, but no estimate of what that may mean to the future of Russia and the rest of Europe. It probably does not pay the ordinary religious paper to say anything, as it might excite feeling against other than the Roman Church, and the Communists in this country, although professing to be anti-clerical, have also been silent—perhaps under orders.

The bald facts as disclosed by the *Manchester Guardian* are that by arrangement with the Soviet Government the Roman Church is to be allowed to establish churches and other institutions, found schools, and undertake the education of children, under the protection of the State. On the face of it there is nothing in these arrangements that we as Freethinkers can object to. We of the *Freethinker* have shown in the past that we stand for freedom, not merely for ourselves, but for others—even when we disagree with them. And we should be the last to deny the right of the State to permit Roman Catholics doing whatever any other association, religious or secular, is permitted to do. If that is all there is in the agreement between the Vatican and the Russian Government no one would have any reasonable objection.

Our reason for calling attention to the matter rests on the plain ground that the growth of the power of the Roman Church in any country affects the welfare of that country for the worse. We see it stated that the Vatican has been preparing for some years for this move, and that it is sending numbers of priests from Poland who have been specially trained for the work. The Roman Catholic papers, such as the *Tablet*, write very gleefully as to the "mystical" nature of the Russian people, and the way in which that quality may be used to bring masses of the Russian people over to the Church. And if for "mystical" we read ignorance, we should not be at all surprised to find their efforts crowned with some measure of success. Thanks to the rule of Church and Czar, the mass of the Russian people are frightfully ignorant, and in the present state of the country, and with the Jesuit agents of Rome establishing an influence of the ignorant peasantry on the one side, and getting the favour of whoever happens to be in power, on the other side, it will not be at all surprising to find the Roman Church becoming—for a time—a real power for evil in Russia. And it is in view of that state of affairs that we have said what we have said.

We are not, of course, arguing that the Russian Government should suppress the Roman Church within its

borders, or that it should prevent Catholic priests trying to convert the people. These are, from our point of view, extremely undesirable, but the only genuine preventive is for the people to become sufficiently enlightened to withstand the attack. We are only anxious to stress the fact that in the present state of the Russian people the Roman Church appears to have a good chance of getting a hold on the people, and in utilizing the ignorance and helplessness of Russia as a means of consolidating the power of the Church, it is only following the historical lines of Christian development. What the real friends of Russia will work for is the establishment of a good system of general education, combined with freedom of Press and platform. These are the only things against which the Roman Church is ultimately powerless—against which every Christian Church is ultimately powerless. But the prospect of the Russian people delivered over to the machinations of Jesuit priests specially trained to capture the people, and having poverty, ignorance, and helplessness as assistants is anything but cheerful.

A referendum at Sunbury-on-Thames showed that 819 ratepayers were in favour of Sunday games in the recreation ground and only 250 against. (The Rev. S. F. L. Bernays, rector of Great Stanmore, has expressed his approval of Sunday games.) Do these things portend the ebb-tide of Puritanism?

His Lordship, the Bishop of London, combating the wicked heresies of Socialism, says that Capitalism may be represented by the last five pounds of a widow. Just so! But it may also be represented by the millions of money owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

There is something pathetic about the squabbles between the victorious and the vanquished nations. Both are in a state of bankruptcy and will remain so as long as solutions are looked for on orthodox lines. The following gem taken from the speech of M. Poincaré and reported by the *Daily Telegraph* shows us great men struggling with adversity, and also the emergence of a brilliant truth. The French President says, "Let them consider that it is not in the nature of things for the spirit of war to be quelled after a defeat." This is true and it cuts both ways, and it is the recognition of such that sends men away from their fellow creatures in disgust to study ants, astronomy, or the habits of the cuckoo.

The Rev. Ungood Thomas told the Anglesey Baptist Association the other day that he once went to the races and fancied himself in hell. We wonder what horse it was that he backed? Quite evidently it was not a winner.

We have often been told that the U.S.A. is not a land of old-world despots, but of democrats and humanitarians. From this quarter for many years we were urged to settle our disputes, not by armed force but by arbitration. Mr. W. J. Bryan, who recently conducted a campaign against Darwin and evolution, was one of the most eloquent of the internationalists. Now Harvard University appears to be falling into line with America's other academic institutions. The university authorities, said to be largely under the domination of clerical influence, have been recently criticized for discrimination against Jewish students, while coloured students have been excluded altogether from the Freshmen's quarters. Most Americans assure us that theirs is "God's own country." We are inclined to think there is something in this assurance.

America presents some striking contrasts from the point of view of general enlightenment. On the one hand there is going on there some of the best scientific and philosophical work in the world, and the endowments of research are numerous and lavish. On the other hand crude and ignorant views of religion flourish there with a luxuriance unknown in countries that have reached the same educational level. One would imagine that

there must be a great gap between the educated classes and certain sections of the people, although our knowledge of America is not intimate enough to express an authoritative or a dogmatic opinion.

In illustration of the above we have in mind the recent furore over Mr. Bryan's recent attack on the doctrine of evolution, and the attempt to prevent evolution being taught in the schools. There is nothing surprising in a crank, either in America or here attacking evolution, but that it should have given rise to so wide-spread a discussion, instead of being put on one side with a smile, gives one furiously to think. And in the *Times* of June 21 we note an article which tells us that Professor William Morris, of Harvard University, has declared that immorality can only be put under control and finally conquered "by removing the whole question of morals from the jurisdiction of religion and handing it over to science." We, of course, have no fault whatever to find with that statement, but it is an indication of how much has yet to be done when a Professor in one of the leading universities finds it necessary to impress that much upon the people. The level of education and enlightenment attained by a people is indicated by what it is thought necessary to tell them, and it is quite plain from the above that there is still much to be done, both here and in the States, before either country can lay unchallenged claim to the title "enlightened."

The Christian Evidence Society receives £200 from the will of the late Rev. C. R. Lloyd Eugstrom, who left £20,408. If this legacy be used wisely, the result may be that the defenders of Omnipotence will learn to speak the English language correctly.

"G. J.," writing in the *Manchester Guardian* (June 21), remarks that the late Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, "knew full well what was going on in the world of biblical scholarship," and yet handled the Scriptures like a preacher of one hundred years ago. He made Moses the author of Genesis, and Paul the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Yet when Freethinkers declare that the clergy withhold from their congregation the truth about the Bible, they are charged with malicious misrepresentation. One defence sometimes put forward for such conduct as Whyte's is that even those parts of the Bible which are discredited historically, still have "a spiritual value." The most degrading superstition could offer a similar plea, which in some respects has more untoward effects on character than honest belief in the superstition itself.

The Bishop of St. Albans has been writing on "Christianity or Chaos?" The clergy have always been guided in their utterances and their actions by a strong sense of their own importance in the world. When they were strong enough to do so, they followed the line of least resistance in giving effect to this sense, and ruthlessly suppressed all opposition to their influence. Nowadays, however, they have to exercise caution in their effort to secure due recognition. Hence these tears! What the Right Reverend gentleman really means is that if the Christian religion disappears, bishops and their stipends will disappear with it.

In the *Yorkshire Post* for some weeks there has been a lengthy correspondence on "What is Anglo-Catholicism?" The issue of June 21 contains a column of letters on the subject, and reports the proceedings of the Anglo-Catholic Conference at Leeds as well as the details of a counter-demonstration at Crossgates. Yet some Anglicans are clamouring for reunion with the Free Churches. According to the *Christian World* (June 22) the Rev. B. J. Snell is amazed that Free Churchmen could sign the recent Lambeth Manifesto. The proposals for reunion are symptomatic. When the Bible was God's word, there was real vitality in the sects, and a strict Baptist could no more have coalesced with an infant sprinkler than with a Papist. There was no need to keep on proclaiming the "bankruptcy of materialism." This cry, too, is

symptomatic. As a picture of the solvency of the Christian conscience it rises almost to sublimity.

Mr. W. McMurray was fined 20s. for holding a public discussion on the Princess Parade, Blackpool. Technically the defendant was breaking one of the by-laws, and a constable gave evidence that Mr. McMurray was defending Buddhism and attacking Christianity. That is the suspicious feature of the business. It is curious that it is nearly always the man who is attacking Christianity that is observed by the policeman to be breaking the by-laws. The piety of the casual policeman is most interesting, but it is apt to become a public nuisance. And when the pious "copper" is backed up by the kind of man who figures as magistrate's clerk in these places, the outcome is not very pleasing.

The *Daily Telegraph* (June 24) in a well-written leader reviews the recent correspondence in its columns on the question of "Sunday Games." Our contemporary, of course, is guarded and "correct" in its criticisms of English Sabbatarianism. For all that we welcome its plea for Sunday games in the public parks, and its emphatic statement of the disadvantage under which the poorer section of the community labours, compared with the wealthier, in regard to Sunday recreation. While the "gentleman" can, and in fact does, enjoy his tennis and golf on Sunday, an unfair class distinction is maintained in the administration of the law if the manual labourer is debarred from using the parks for similar purposes. "All the means of enjoying Sunday are there, in public spaces which are supposed to be for his benefit in particular."

The Rev. Canon Lonsdale Rigg, of Bangor, read a paper on "The Sacred Scriptures" at the Anglo-Catholic Conference at Liverpool on May 30. He said that "the new common-sense view of the Scriptures had undermined the foundation of all Protestant Bibliolatry." He also deprecated "extreme views" on such subjects as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. It is interesting, in May 1922, to be assured that the Freethought attitude to the Bible represents "the new common-sense view." With regard to the Virgin Birth, we should like to know what the Rev. Canon would consider a moderate view on this subject.

Mr. Sinha, an Indian of education and standing, says that while England was sending missionaries to India, the 3,000 students who came over to attend English universities returned home either Atheists or Agnostics. And, morally, India had not a single evil for which they were blamed that could not be found in England. But Mr. Sinha fails to note one very important distinction. In England our vices do not spring from our religion, because our religion is Christianity. In India the native vices do come from their religion because that religion is not Christianity. Mr. Sinha might reply that Christianity ought to keep those vices from flourishing. But any Christian would regard that as quite irrelevant. Besides, when the English Christian tries to make the Indian as he is, he is atoning for many of the vices which Mr. Sinha finds among us. It is not quite so clear as one would wish, but as this is the stock Christian explanation it must be the right one.

The sufferings of the religious are world-wide. And in the main it is all due to one cause—their inability to make the world stand still. In Potchefstroom a prominent cleric is lamenting that, on the information of an inspector of schools, ninety per cent of the teachers are teaching science in such a way as to sap the students' faith in God and the divine revelation. Now that is very wrong. The right way to teach science is to make it agree with the six days of creation, with the "divine" cure for disease, with virgin born men, and resurrected saviours—at least that is the way our ancestors taught it. And there are plenty of clergymen in this country who cannot see why, if that kind of scientific teaching was good enough for our ancestors, it is not also good for us.

THERE IS A NEW READER WAITING

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

J. GAIR.—Sorry we did not see you at the Conference. Thanks for cuttings. Our regards to the family.

A. RUSSELL.—We should be glad to do anything we can in the direction you indicate. With regard to the other item of information, we are afraid it is quite impossible to combine the politician and the teacher, and your information proves it. When people go about looking for votes they are almost certain to trim and compromise in a way that robs their message of all vitality. We presume that is the reason why there are more politicians than teachers.

J. P. HARDING.—Major Warren is, we believe, quite well, and we hope to soon have his pen again busy in these columns.

CELSUS.—Perhaps the confusion results from treating "mind" as a thing. So far as we know it is the expression of a relation.

B. GREENWOOD.—We should be only too pleased to help you in the way you suggest were it possible. But, unfortunately, it is out of our power.

A. PIONEER.—You appear to have been rather unfortunate in your surroundings although we dare say that your experience might be matched by that of others. We know that the work of getting new readers is not an easy one, and are the more indebted to those who make the attempt.

H. LATIMER VOIGHT.—Please send along article when ready. Your suggestion of a circle of, say, 100 persons interested to subscribe a preliminary sum of 10s. for the purchase of the higher priced books, to be lent to subscribers, and either sold when done with or to go towards the formation of a Freethought Library, is a very good one. As you say, 50 books purchased in this way would give each reader one book every other week for 100 weeks. If enough of our readers are interested we should be pleased to do what we could to help. Pleased to see you when you can call.

J. SIQUIER.—You do not say what is to be the nature of the "Conferences." We cannot advise until we know that. A parcel of specimen copies of the *Freethinker* is being sent you.

L. S.—Thanks for the two new readers. Hope you will soon be able to add to the number. The only reason we can see for the foreign post being cheaper than the home post is the stupidity of those responsible for the management of affairs. I hope to see you one day.

H. BAYFORD.—Thanks for the new reader. It usually means another one to give the cause a push forward.

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

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

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—

The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

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Sugar Plums.

There are not usually enough avowed Freethinkers in prison to lead to the Government's making special provision for their "spiritual" entertainment. The regular customers are nearly all pious, and their confinement gives them time to reflect upon the benefits of their spiritual upbringing. But when J. W. Gott was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment the N.S.S. thought that it might as well see that Freethinkers had all the privileges that Christians have in the shape of "Chaplains." On our advice Mr. Gott himself also requested that a regular weekly or fortnightly visitor should be permitted to see him. After a first refusal—although nothing was being asked that was not covered by the prison regulations—and a subsequent letter to the Home Secretary, permission has been given for a Secular Chaplain to visit Mr. Gott either weekly or fortnightly till the end of his sentence. Mr. McLaren has undertaken the duty. If we go on at this rate we shall have to get a larger number of our people in prison for various offences to feel that we are on a complete equality with Christians.

On the back page of this issue will be found an announcement that will, we think, prove of interest to our readers. There is no need at this time to praise Mr. John M. Robertson's *History of Freethought*. It is the only history of the subject in existence with any pretensions to thoroughness, and it covers the ground in Mr. Robertson's well-known scholarly manner. The whole work consists of two large octavo volumes, running to well over 900 pages. By arrangements with the publishers we are able to offer the work on the instalment plan at slightly under, instead of over, the published price. The two volumes will be supplied at 11s., post free, or on payment of 3s. 6d. with order and three monthly instalments of 2s. 6d. each. It is a work that should be in the possession of every Freethinker, and it will be found invaluable as a work of reference concerning Freethought ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, and in all the leading countries of the world. Those wishing for copies should write without delay.

Another work which should also appeal to our readers is *Life and Evolution*, by Mr. F. W. Headley. This volume of nearly 300 pages is profusely illustrated, and discusses the whole subject in a manner that any ordinary reader can follow with interest and appreciation. It deals with the more recent evolutionary theories—Mendelism, Mutations, etc.—and is a volume that we can well commend to those who are not already acquainted with it. It was, we believe, published at 10s. 6d. We are able to supply a very limited number of copies at 4s. 6d. each, postage 8d. We do not expect that our supply will last more than two or three weeks, which may be taken as a hint to those who care to take it.

In another part of this issue we publish a first list of the names of the General Council of the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. More names will be added from time to time, as it is desired to make the list as representative as possible. We may add that the Committee has now completed its machinery for carrying on its work, and will miss no opportunity of keeping its aim before the public. Its chief "display" work will be in connection with the general election, whenever it arrives, and it is well for friends to remember this, and that it will then need funds for an intensive campaign. The secretary of the Society is the Rev. R. R. Sorensen, 5, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C. 4.

Mr. Whitehead is continuing his crusade on Tyneside, and will then proceed to Huddersfield. After that he will be at the service of other Branches of the Society wherever suitable arrangements can be made, or wherever small groups of friends care to take the matter in hand. It should be understood that, if required, the Executive makes itself responsible for all financial responsibility connected with Mr. Whitehead's visits. All that it asks

IN EVERY STREET—WHY NOT GET HIM?

of friends is that they shall do what they can locally to make the campaign successful. There is a good opportunity for open-air work being done during the summer, and we should like to see this taken full advantage of.

We again thank those of our friends who are doing what they can to get us the extra 1,000 readers for which we asked some weeks ago. We cannot reply to them all individually; they must take this general acknowledgment as sufficient. The new readers are there if they are only looked for and booked.

We are glad to learn that the American Tea arranged for the benefit of the Manchester Branch was quite a success, and Mrs. Bayfield was able to hand over to the Branch treasurer the sum of £10 15s. The discussion class organized by this Branch is making good headway, and that is a step we should like to see followed by other groups of Freethinkers and Branches of the Society. Another meeting of the Manchester Branch Class will be held in about a month's time, due notice of which will be given in these columns.

The Adversity of Romance and Realism.

The nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in the glass.

The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in the glass.

—Wilde.

SUCH are the two phases by which the nineteenth century, and no less the twentieth so far as it has gone, did and does its best to prevent itself from the life conservation of truthful art. In the one case it was violated by shame, in the other its sanity, which protected it from its shame, was deathly wounded. And so it became wrapped in a cotton-wool of cant, sentimentality, and hypocrisy, which was not to be pierced, even by the glittering shafts of its many noblemen.

From under these impervious wrappings came moans and groans of "unwholesome," "prurient," and the like, when any word of Realism was said. The word was not to be said, its meaning was not to be allowed, but to be hidden in the back ground, as behind the fine courts of mammon-growth lie the consequent hovels of poverty, though they must not be known to exist.

The function of Realism was to disturb that complacency, and a very disturbing factor it has been, so that while condemnation and anathema have been hurled at the school, it has grown perhaps to Gargantuan proportions in the literary art of to-day. A healthy sign, but an ominous! For that contemporary literary art can find no beauty in the life of its time, upon which it can spend its spirit, is a most grave indictment of the society in which it exists.

Existing society, however, by its lack of knowledge may hold that its reason for the extinction—if that were possible—of Realism, is that it does not portray the normal, but seeks always the abnormal and excessive. It has not in its scope appreciation of the best that is, but always turns its attention to the worst, making that worst to be the ordinary, the commonplace, just as its antagonist, Romanticism, would have it believed that the best, and better even than the poor best which modern society can bring about, is the more usual.

Again part of the disdain of Realism is based upon that it is much sought after by the really prurient, and upon those it does nothing but wreak harm. Is that not a tendency of society to indict itself for a taste in the obscene, rather than to pillory the artist for the uncleanness of his matter?

Most men engaged earnestly upon some work do not perceive clearly the influence of that work. They are so keenly busy upon the doing well of the job, that it is only subconsciously that they can, if at all, be aware of its tendencies. That is one of the reasons for the industrial calamity, but it is even more potent in the development of Realism. The work was there to be done, and the men were there to perceive it. They were perhaps not alive to the possibility that their work was a necessary result of the state of civilization. They saw certain matters, certain characters, and certain ugliness, and they set themselves to portray these things as accurately as they might. The rage of Caliban at seeing his own face in the glass gives an immediate moral significance to their work. The nausea, which after a time is bound to affect readers of their work, is essential to a correct observation of the pass to which we have come. Thence to a change is no great distance.

The opposing force of Romanticism is developed out of the desire to portray somewhat purely of the imagination, somewhat beautiful, glorious, spiritual, which shall be a means of liberation from the chains of circumstance. That it shall bear no relation to life as it was lived, or is lived, is most essential to its right production. And by its lack of relation its charm is assured. Such was the *Faerie Queene*, and of such there is a quantity to-day, of beauty not for one moment comparable to Spenser, it is unnecessary to add. Paradoxically such an oblation is hardly more welcome than its converse, the only acceptable matter being literary pictures of life as Caliban likes to believe he lives, which readily and immediately explains his rage at Romance.

But Romanticism has lesser terms than the actual creation of intrinsic beauty, and, though kinema production is hardly literature, it is so closely allied to it as to bear a certain examination of its propinquity. The kinema is a modern hotch potch of amusement, not always intentional, that is right for the revivifying of a desolated intelligence, and its mightiest achievement is the picture shewn in successive periodic parts. That such pictures are a panorama of the most impossible happenings seems to be the quality of appeal, and, although the final scene, followed by the inevitable "To be continued," is frequently welcomed by an Homeric burst of laughter from the audience, they nevertheless go willingly, nay, interestedly, to see the development of action in the succeeding show. An indication not easily to be misunderstood is inherent in this interest, and its obvious reading is that the audience are so willing to forget, even in grotesquerie, the dearth of imagination in every day modern life, that they must perforce accept the exiguous spiritual appeal of such art.

The true province of Romance is somewhat more than this mere drugging by insensate inexactitude, and unrelation of its facts to any other existing facts. The power of created beauty for life should be the correlation of the power of a life of beauty to create increasingly yet more beauty, not as it lies at present in the power of life reflected by creative art only to be that of sordid ugliness. Ugliness may truly be ideal, but the ideal ugliness of Realism should not be a reflection of the life of the nations of the earth. It should indeed not be anything but the imaginings of distortion, not to be found in existence.

And in this effort to change life, Romance and Realism are not adverse in anything but method. The one tries to escape by showing better things than those which exist, those things indeed which are ideal, the other tries to lead away by showing the lack of beauty in the things that do exist, and so to create a desire for the unattainable, to create a desire for the ideal towards which mankind has instinctively turned throughout the ages, despite his many backslidings.

and his so obvious failure. Failure it is that results in a rage of Caliban, which cannot be assuaged until the features of the unwitting brute himself are changed by the adverse efforts of sincere art, sincere work in reflecting himself and in not reflecting himself.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Lies and Hypocrisy.

ROMAN rule seems impossible in Europe, but Papists hope to "Make America Catholic," and do not hesitate to use any means to that end. Since history depicts them in a horrible light, the Knights of Columbus now propose to "rewrite history." Popes have condemned every principle of American democracy; have tortured, burned and imprisoned heretics, and still claim the right to rule by such means; but the Knights will whitewash all such records with their new "history."

Romanists claim America by right of discovery, exploration, and settlement. Our noisiest Catholic editor, J. F. Noll of *Our Sunday Visitor*, wrote the *Fairest Argument*, in which he claims (page 356) that Catholics "first proclaimed religious toleration in America," citing the Maryland colony. Unfortunately for Rev. Noll, Cardinal Gibbons, in his widely circulated *Faith of our Fathers*, quotes historian Prescott (page 227):—

The Catholics took quiet possession, and religious liberty obtained a home, *its only home* in the wide world.....Every other country in the world had persecuting laws.....No person *professing to believe in Jesus Christ* was molested.

The charter was a bargain between a Protestant king and a Catholic proprietor, and they perforce had to tolerate each other. Jews and unbelievers were not admitted. Holy Father Gibbons here allows that all the countries ruled by the Pope "had persecuting laws," which was true; yet on page 220 he says: "The Catholic Church has always been the zealous promoter of religious and civil liberty."

Lies are usually contradictory. It will be great fun to compare statements in the new "history."

Rev. Noll also claims America by right of defence: page 357:—

It will not be difficult to prove that we would have no United States were it not for the assistance received at the hands of Catholics. Catholic France sent a fleet of 10,000 men, and supplied \$3,000,000. Catholic Poland sent us Pulaski and Kosciusko. Catholic Ireland furnished a dozen generals, and one half the soldiers in the revolutionary war were Irishmen.

This is a "whopper." There was a Protestant Ireland, and the generals and soldiers were Protestants.

Rev. Noll is again disputed by Cardinal Gibbons, who wrote for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the article on "The Church in the United States," vol. 23, page 499:—

In 1790 Father Carroll was made Bishop of Baltimore. There were then about 24,500 Catholics in the land, 15,800 in Maryland, 7,000 in Pennsylvania, 200 in Virginia, and 1,500 in New York.

The leaders of the revolt were not in Maryland, but in New England States, in which were *no Catholics*.

The year 1790 was fourteen years after 1776. Catholics might come freely after the war, and doubtless the increase was great after 1783. The number of Catholics in 1776 was probably not over 10,000. From this population Rev. Noll derives 150,000 Catholic soldiers, one half of the entire army of about 307,000 men.

Catholics cannot claim Settlement of the United States as a reason for domination, since 300 years after discovery they claim less than one per cent. of the

population. Irish Catholics had no desire to be pioneers. After cities grew and needed policemen, they came freely. There were not enough Catholics to need a bishop until 1790.

The explorers were a credit only to the murderous Inquisition. See a history called *Builders of Our Nation*, page 54:—

Pizarro ordered a great fire to burn the Inca, who would not become a Christian. A Spanish priest asked that the Inca might suffer an easier death if he would be baptized. After he was baptized he was strangled.

Page 56:—

De Soto laid in a stock of guns, bloodhounds to hunt slaves, chains to bind them, and white robed priests to convert them.

History by Woodbury and Moran, page 26:—

De Soto was a brave man but cruel. He thought slaying Indians a fine sport. Many a savage was torn to pieces by the dogs of the Spanish explorers.

The kind of people torn is told on page 40:—

Raleigh reported them most gentle, loving and faithful.

When will the world tire of this gang of heartless, murderous Christian? How long will Religious Liberty protect them? Within a few years past Knights have enforced the Pope's laws by committing fifteen or twenty murderous attacks, some of them fatal. After the killing of William Black, because he would not agree to stop lecturing against a frightful "religion" the Knights have been rather quiet, probably because in that affair one of them was killed and another wounded by Hall, a companion of Black. Noll's *Sunday Visitor* gives the following account in its issue of Feb. 21, 1915 (the killing was on Feb. 3):—

When Ryan was asked why they went to Black's hotel armed, he said: We heard they were ready for resistance, and we took precautionary methods. This version of the tragedy places the blame *not on the Catholics*, whose protest was surely called for, but on Black and Hall who provoked shooting as a matter of self defence.

Only officers could so report. These Knights were officers of the Pope only; had no legal warrant or right to oppose Black.

We may expect the "holy father" to continue his programme of hate, intolerance and murder, since behind the continual declarations of loyalty, tolerance and love of liberty, there lurk such threats as the following from *Spiritual Pepper and Salt*, by the Rt. Rev. Wm. Stang, Bishop of Fall River (*Nihil Obstat*, Rev. Austin Dowling, Censor Deputatus; *Imprimatur*, M. Augustine, Archbishop of New York):—

The Catholic Church is intolerant. We admit the truth of this charge.....Truth is intolerant; the Church being the divine depository of truth, is and must be intolerant. She abhors error and all offences against the truth, especially apostasy and heresy. The Catholic Church is the spouse of Christ and admits of no rival. There can be no religious or dogmatic toleration for the Catholic Church; the very word is an insult to her who represents God on earth.....God Himself in the Old Testament enjoined religious intolerance.....death was the penalty for those who revolted against the Jewish religion. Has not the Catholic Church in the past persecuted and punished heretics and those who differed from her doctrine? Yes, when heresy was a political crime. Heresy was considered a graver crime than treason. In our days we hear blasphemies against the majesty of God vomitted forth in public, and His holy name profaned on all sides, and the Government officials take no notice of such crimes which were formerly capital offences. When Europe was Catholic, sins against religion were sins against the social order, and heretics were rebels and had to be punished on the principle that no man was allowed to teach and

spread falsehood. But in our days, when society is no longer professedly Catholic, religious toleration has become almost universal, not because people [Catholics] have become more charitable or more enlightened, *but through sheer social necessity*. In her doctrine, however, and form of worship, the Catholic Church will remain intolerant to the end of days (p. 119).

Send to Ave Maria, Notre Dame, Ind., for a copy of *A Brief for the Spanish Inquisition*, a pamphlet sold in Catholic Churches to frighten the faithful with hell here and hereafter, and to encourage them to apply the torch. Read on page 8:—

He that believeth not shall be damned. What, damned? Yes. What, just for not believing? Yes. Now, if that be your creed, toleration in the ordinary sense is inconceivable; if you firmly hold that all who do not think with you regarding religion are going to spend eternity in torments, you will naturally do your utmost to change their views, and to keep them from influencing others. And the rest is merely a question of method; if you believe that the burning alive of a few heretics will save multitudes from a fate infinitely more dreadful, what can you do but heap up the faggots?

U.S.A.

A. PAGAN.

The Divine Average; Or The Gospel of Manliness.

LIFE has no other purpose than that given to it by the will of mankind. The present age dwells in the shadow of the past and the future, and the lap of the gods is nothing but the will of mankind. All perished civilizations have each been the genesis and revelation of the will of mankind, and, if we are to fold our arms in the present and quietly subside into a state of euthanasia, we shall ratify that terrible assertion made by Hegel, that "we learn from history that men never learn anything from history." In the autumn of our civilization, hastened by the four years' drought of war, all men of goodwill are asking to what destination is mankind directing its steps? We cannot hear any answer to this sphinx-like question. That, however, is no reason for a retreat into shadowy places where the torch of humanity may be left to flicker out. That is no reason why we should despair of rising out of the inevitable wreckage of values that were raised on faulty foundations. Avoiding generalities, let us come quickly to the particular. *Our Salvation lies in the will.*

If character is Fate, then destiny may be moulded by the present generation, so that the future may be what the will desires in the present. Whitman's invitation to give the gospel of manliness a trial still remains neglected. This universal religion, beginning in embryo form in the American Civil War, and stirring to life in the European War, is prophetically declaimed by Whitman in *Drum Taps*. All religions and philosophies ultimately become a striving for individual perfection. Whitman's Divine Average as a theory may be rather vague, and naturally so as detail is not a characteristic of prophecy, but a glance at the superman idea of Nietzsche will enable us by comparison to see in clearer outline the depth and breadth of Whitman's ideal.

Nietzsche's Superman is anti-social; the idea denies the frailty of mortal life, and it ignores that wonderful and complete definition of man by Pico Della Mirandola: "It is a commonplace of the schools that man is a little world, in which we may discern a body mingled of earthly elements, and ethereal breath, and the vegetable life of plants, and the senses of the lower animals, and the intelligence of angels, and a likeness to God." Nietzsche's Superman would add

one more heavy weight to the burden of mankind that already contends with enough anti-social forces. For that reason, and in spite of the fact that the idols of the market-place in our time flourish on the life-blood of society, we cannot include the Superman in the will of mankind for a new direction in this hour of twilight which may be the twilight of dawn, or that twilight preceding primeval darkness and old night. Nearer for us, and more in conformity with human society is Whitman's ideal of the Divine Average in man. We shall find his aim sufficiently high to be an ideal, and it is formed from the gold to be mined in *Drum Taps*. In *Reconciliation* there is a hint of the eternal recurrence but this is sublimated in the note of chivalry, heralding the gospel of manliness.

I need not have never heeded either experience, Cautions, majorities, nor ridicule.

Somewhat loosely knit we shall find in these lines our ideal; the last two enemies mentioned have caused no little paralysis of the will of mankind; the history of the world would have been different reading if Columbus had been one of their victims. It is possible to discover Dionysos and also our ideal in the lines entitled "O Tan-Faced Prairie-Boy." On reading *By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame* the memories of many will be stirred who made friendships in the late war, where our ideal was called forth by the realities of blood and iron and not evoked by the arm-chair philosopher. The caterwauling of our popular idols produced nothing but derision from the men of action—from our Divine Average; nothing from our most earnest philosophers could penetrate that world where he began to grow. In travail was he born; it may have been a false show of his strength immediately after the end of the war, when nothing that was offered to him seemed to be the right thing. In the coming dispensation he will be needed, for new values will have to be created. Nothing but the dead bodies of old values remain; he will let the dead bury the dead of such encumbrances as "Necessity Knows No Law," "Right is Might," "To Ensure Peace be Prepared for War." These have had their day; let them speedily depart into the oblivion that Fate mercifully grants to enable mankind to remain sane. These are the evil values that brought men face to face with realities. Our Divine Average will not be afraid of evil nor wish it non-existent. He will be on the side of light, and not blind to the fact that evil will exist as long as Time and no longer, for wishes, and sighs, and tears cannot efface the evidence of evil even if we cannot clearly see its cause. Somewhere in the will of mankind it may be found—not in the sky nor under the earth. If our Divine Average succeeds in willing the "Gospel of Manliness," he has laid the foundation of the future with good taste, illuminated by the vision without which we perish. Good taste being long sight, he will therefore give life a purpose, leaving out no one in our "Gospel of Manliness"—for it is universally democratic, and contains ethics without headaches, at the same time leaving each and everyone free to get to heaven in their own particular way.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Obituary.

Our readers will learn with deep regret of the death of the infant son (aged two years and four months) of Mrs. Walters, daughter of our late editor, G. W. Foote. The little boy was taken with an attack of appendicitis, and preparation for an operation was made so soon as the nature of the complaint was diagnosed. Unfortunately, the operation could not be performed in time. The body was cremated at Ilford Cemetery on June 22. The loss of the child is very deeply felt by all concerned, and the family have the sympathy of all in their bereavement.

The Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws.

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CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—So after all, Mr. Salkind does "recognise the benefit of sport for brainworkers or those who are doing sedentary work"—but perhaps not for those who are as lucky as he and I are in these matters. Well, I believe in sport and healthy exercise for everybody, and I deny the right of any Anarchist to call them "degrading attractions." I was glad to see, however, that it may be necessary to use the word *verboden* in his ideal state, and I can assure him if it were my unhappy lot to be subject to it I should risk all the terrible penalties he could inflict, and of his two evils, choose his greater—that is, go and see a good cricket match (if they were not completely *verboden*), and even have a little bet on it, if it suited me, than go or be compelled to go to church and listen to the "infantile drivel" an Anarchist bishop would probably indulge in.

There is one thing, however, pretty clear in history. You cannot mention a crime black enough or foul enough which has not been committed by some particularly devout religionist fresh from that well known magical entertainment of changing a wafer into a Jewish deity to the accompaniment of suitable Latin incantations, and no one is ever surprised. But it would occasion a great deal of surprise if, let us say, Joe Beckett shadowed his rival Carpentier and shot him in the back on his door step, or our county cricket captains went about with armed guards to prevent assassination because of the county championship. Sport, as much as anything else in the world breeds, not as Mr. Salkind says, "the basest animal features" in man, but the best instincts of justice and fair play, of tolerance and healthy rivalry. And I would rather my converts to Freethought came from its ranks than the ranks of the bigoted and intolerant Churches. And I regret, as a Freethinker, my frankness must compel me to class with the Churches—Anarchism.

H. CUTNER.

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

SIR,—Ah! What is my own business? Some things may appertain to me solely, but I really can hardly say what.

As far as I understand things I have passed my life in trying to get people to mind their own business. Because if they won't mind theirs I cannot effectively mind mine. But the bulk of people are such fools or are so lazy that rather than think for themselves they let the priest think for them in religion, the doctor in medicine, and the politician in affairs of the State and foreign affairs. And as an old saying went: "Where are we now?"

To let other people think for you would perhaps be all right if each individual had an independency which allowed him to think independently and to give an unbiassed opinion. But let any priest or parson say, "I have been misdirecting the people." Even if he says, "I did it mistakenly," in many instances his life is endangered. The same with the doctor. What happened to Dr. Tebb? He had a good position as a medical officer of health. He was shot out of his job because he found out that vaccination was a delusion, and was honest enough to say so to politicians instead of leading public opinion. If they must they follow it instead. The object of all my addresses, and I have given many hundreds indeed, the opening words of, I should say, nearly half of them, have been "Mind Your Own Business!" The object of all my letters to the Press has been the same.

"Know something of everything and everything of something" is a wise saying. But if you are driven to the experts—listen to opinions on both sides, and do not accept the opinion of a majority without comparing reasons. The minority to-day is the majority to-morrow.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

"GOD'S SUFFERING."

SIR,—In your issue of April 30 appears a rejoinder by Dr. Lyttelton to my letter of the 9th.

Dr. Lyttelton assumes, rather rashly, I think, that if I were in charge of large classes it would not be long before I should find myself "inflicting suffering, not only consciously, but of set purpose." Flatly, I should do nothing of the kind. I have been in charge of large classes for long periods without resorting to corporal chastisement, and I see no earthly reason why I should do so in the future. My experience suggests that corporal punishment defeats the purpose for which it is applied, is psychologically unsound, lowering to the moral tone of the school, and a prime factor in the production of social derelicts.

Moreover, too often, the teacher who resorts to it with a view "to doing some youngster good" is really only gratifying his own desire for power. Read Neil's *Dominie in Doubt*. Dr. Lyttelton's little moral tale about the naughty puppy and his moral reclamation is very interesting doubtless—it is hardly impressive. But what about the duckling? Possibly he was maimed for life by the naughty puppy! Did he love the terrier devotedly after the mauling he had received? And what was his special blend of good and evil? Was the puppy's love perhaps cupboard love? I am sorry Dr. Lyttelton has such a deep and abiding distrust for plain folk in general and "plain fathers" in particular. But then parents are very aggravating to schoolmasters, I know! (I am not a "plain father" myself.) Does Dr. Lyttelton's aversion also extend to the "plain" truth? This question is not meant as an insult! I am afraid Dr. Lyttelton's conception of suffering and mine differ materially, as I think can be inferred from my original letter. The castigation of a worm with a feather, the agony of rising from slumber, and the torture inflicted in passing from light into darkness sound rather more imaginary than real. They are analogies, but are they valid? Dr. Lyttelton speaks of an "ingredient" and a "blend." Why not say a modicum, an irreducible minimum, or better still, no pain at all? Blends are useful sometimes. I like a good blend of "Cut Mixture," but I draw the line (naughty thing to do) at blends of "good and evil." Let us have our "good" unadulterated, say I. Theologians tell us that in Heaven there is no blend of "good and evil." There it is all "good." Well, why not have the pure and unadulterated article here? Dr. Lyttelton

suggests that life would be dull and unendurable here without the contrasts afforded by the blending of "good and evil." But if there is to be no such blending in the Heavenly City, how wretchedly dull and unendurable it is going to be *there!*

My letter laid emphasis on the generally admitted evils of life. By a father "brutally ill-using his child" I did not, of course, mean Daddy's frown of repression. Dr. Lyttelton reminds me of the youngster who picks out all the straight and easy sums, but carefully ignores the real problems.

As an example of evil let us take the poor sufferer writhing in agony from a dose of poison gas, or say the victim of cancer in its worst form enduring perhaps for long months the exquisite torture! Here we have evil in one of its most repulsive forms! Will Dr. Lyttelton admit that it is beneficial? Does he truly admire his Heavenly Father's methods? Are these terrible afflictions merely ingredients in a "blend of good and evil?" What becomes of the "good bound up with the pain here?" And what is that good? While I give Dr. Lyttelton all credit for earnestness and sincerity of purpose I must still remain unconvinced by his untenable theories. I feel that Zoroaster went one better than Christ. In his concluding remarks Dr. Lyttelton hints that I am disappointed at finding no cogent arguments for Theism in the *Parson and the Atheist*. I neither said nor implied anything of the kind. I am only too well aware that no such arguments exist. Dr. Lyttelton deems that as an Atheist I should be pleased that Theists have nothing to say. Why? It is not the aim of Freethinkers to stifle the voices of their opponents, but to render possible the freest expression of thought—the fullest possible discussion. The foes of intellectual freedom are religionists, not Freethinkers—and no Freethinker fears to encounter his Theistic opponent. He has nothing to lose and all to gain by the contest.

It is the clergy to-day who are shy and coy.

Dr. Lyttelton is an honourable and outstanding exception. J. H. Newman says, "that apart from an interior and unreasoned conviction the existence of God cannot be proved."

Now I have a *reasoned conviction* that God does not exist. Therefore, I think, the inference that may be drawn from Dr. Lyttelton's final question, viz., that I am "seeking God all the time" cannot reasonably be sustained.

CHAS. BAKER.

Harrismith, O.F.S., South Africa.

Newcastle Lecture Tour.

JUNE 18-23.

I addressed four meetings on Newcastle Moor and three others in the villages of High Spen, Greenside, and Chopwell. The Sunday evening meeting in Newcastle was unfortunately terminated by the rain when the address was nearly finished, and a good-sized crowd reluctantly dispersed before questions could be taken. Another of the four was held in face of very threatening weather which, however, on this occasion allowed the meeting to continue to its natural end. The other two Newcastle meetings were all that could be desired as far as numbers and interest are concerned, volleys of questions and platform opposition being dealt with for a considerable time.

The Sunday morning meeting in High Spen passed off very well; the Greenside meeting also, for a small village, came up to expectations. At Chopwell the audience ranged itself like sparrows on a fence some twenty yards away whilst the speaker delivered a long-distance lecture which failed to evoke a single question.

Another week will be spent in this district, the meetings yet to be addressed when this report appears being on Newcastle Moor, Thursday evening, and at Greenside on the Friday (June 29 and 30). GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

Goethe's religion was eminently concrete, and devout in its worship of realities. He believed in fact; he thought reality in itself holier than any fiction could make it.—George Henry Lewes, "Life of Goethe."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on post-card.

LONDON:

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "The Christian Churches and the New Social Order."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. Darby, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park): 6.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Jesus Christ: History or Myth?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6, Mr. Shaller, Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble: Train 9.58 a.m. Plaistow, calling Upton Park and East Ham to Upminster. Lunch to be carried. Tea will be arranged. Return fare 1s. 9d. from Plaistow.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (12 Straker Terrace, Tyne Dock): 6.30, Business Meeting; Report of Mr. Whitehead's Visit; 7, Mr. J. Hannan, "Organized Freethought."

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