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Views and Opinions.

Repairing the Idols.

Most of my readers will be acquainted with the mediæval builder's bill of costs for certain church repairs, among which was the item "To repairing the ten commandments, 3d." There is also another story—which has a bearing on my notes this week—of a labourer who boasted of having had in constant use the same spade for over ten years. During that time he had only had three new blades and four new handles, but it was a remarkable record. Both stories illustrate what is constantly going on with regard to the Christian religion. It is constantly having a new blade to the handle and then a new handle to the blade, but its followers are quite proud of the way in which it wears. Nothing they say can destroy the Christian religion. Its enemies attack it but it defies and conquers them all. So runs the tale. Christianity defies and defeats its enemies as the labourer perpetuated his shovel. It gives up a doctrine here, it modifies a teaching there, it drops an idea in another direction; and what is finally left is not the original religion at all but a new set of teachings masquerading under the old name. All that is permanent in Christianity is its folly, its barbarism, its appeal to the primitive in man, and its disastrous social influence. In sober truth Christianity has never been able to withstand its enemies, save for a time. Sooner or later it had to admit they were right. Where is to-day—so far as official Christianity is concerned—the doctrine of demonic possession, the belief in witchcraft, in a flat earth, in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, in the doctrine of hell and eternal damnation? All these are given up, in spite of the fight made by the Churches on their behalf. The old Freethinkers did not fight in vain. If they did not live to see the triumph of their ideas, we who come after them have entered into their kingdom. From their graves Voltaire, Paine, Carlile, Bradlaugh and Foote, force the Churches to do them unwilling and unadmitted homage.

* * *

Revising the Prayer Book.

A committee has been sitting to consider in what direction, and how far, the prayer-book of the Church of England needs revision. It makes recommendations in various directions—some of which tend towards the extreme High Church position, while

others favour the opposite faction. The result will be a pitched battle between the two sections, each of which will be quite convinced of the un-Christian character of the other's teachings. That is the benefit of an inspired religion. Without inspiration men get together and their discussions yield a growing measure of agreement to which reference may be made for the settlement of future differences. But with a revealed religion the longer you discuss the more you differ. If only God Almighty had taken lessons in Mr. Max Pemberton's school of journalism he might at least have acquired the art of expressing himself so that there should be no mistake as to what he meant however much one might dissent from his meaning. But in an educated age piety finds consolation in obscurity, and a revelation which everyone understood in the same way would stand but a small chance of survival. It was expected that the obnoxious word "obey"—which the bride affirms at the marriage service—would be deleted; but that is to remain. The inferiority of woman is too deeply rooted a tradition in the Church for it to be given up yet. So the Christian bride will continue—in theory—to obey her husband. The man will remain the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the Church, for, as the New Testament reminds her, man was not made for the benefit of woman, it was woman who was made to satisfy the needs of man. The Christian, who believes that it was woman who upset the whole plan of creation, cannot be blamed if he moves with extreme caution with regard to so dangerous a creature.

* * *

The Ten Commandments.

Among the suggested revisions are those concerned with the ten commandments. The first, sixth, seventh and eighth, are left as they were, but certain deletions are advised concerning the others. From the second it is suggested to omit the words, "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those that hate me, and show mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." Probably it is thought that depicting God as jealous of other gods rather gives the game away by presenting Jahveh as merely one of a crowd of gods, and demanding that his followers shall have nothing to do with rival ghostly potentates. Of course, all students of comparative religion know that this is all that the Bible god ever was—just one of a multitude of gods and godlets—but it does not do to admit the fact in so many words; and the immorality of punishing, not merely the one who offends, but his children and grand-children and great-grand-children, represents a form of ethical degeneracy that is simply intolerable to-day. A man or a government who acted on that principle would be denounced as a monster of depravity, and with so much talk of reform of the criminal law, we are not surprised that a reform of God Almighty is also being attempted. Not that the commandment as it stands is without a germ of truth. Those who do wrong actually bring suffering upon their descendants. The man who ill-uses his constitu-

tion may hand on to his children a debilitated constitution, the parents eat sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. These things are so obvious that they have been noted in all ages; and if there is a god behind Nature, and who is responsible for the existence of the conditions that make this inevitable, he must be credited with the brutality and the immorality of it all. No amount of apologizing can relieve him of this responsibility. This can only be done by abolishing him; and so far as man can correct this ill-aspect of natural law he does so. He tries to protect the children from the ill-deeds of the parents; nor is there a criminal code in the civilized world that would set out to punish the children for the fault of the parents. Man is always—in point of character—ahead of his gods; and it is to be expected that in this respect he should try to extend the civilizing influence of human society to the celestial regions. If heaven were only as good as earth it would be worthy of more attention than it gets.

* * *

A Protectionist Religion.

The command against covetousness is reduced to the bald expression, "Thou shalt not covet." That gets rid of the lumping together of the proscribed things—a man's horse, ass, ox, and wife. It was not very flattering to the woman to find herself lumped in with her husband's horse, ass, and ox. It is true she is given first place among her husband's animals, but in these days of woman's rights the juxtaposition is apt to rouse reflections as to the manners of the Lord; and every good Christian will satisfy himself with saying to his neighbour, "Thou shalt not covet," with an emphasis on the first word. There is nothing like laying down good rules—for one's neighbour. So, again, the fourth commandment stops at the imposing of the Sabbath. The latter portion which explains that the Lord made the heavens and the earth in seven days is cut out altogether. Even Christians learn, and doubtless it has dawned upon some that it is asking too much for people to believe nowadays that the world was made in six days, and that the Lord took a day off and rested on the seventh, and therefore boys must not be permitted to play football in a London park on Sunday. The carpenter theory of creation is out of date. We have the remains of civilizations that were already decaying when the biblical god set about creating the world, and the remains of men who existed many, many thousands of years before he was heard of. The command, "Thou shalt have no other God but me," is, as might have been expected, left untouched. The one thing the Christian religion could never stand is competition. A rigid protection is the policy it loves. Shut out all other gods; proclaim yourself as the only old and original firm, and in time they who know better may cease to think of any other. Once the public realizes that the Christian deity is only one of a huge crowd, every one of which is born of the same conditions, passes through the same history, and eventually comes to the same end, and the game is up. Competition is the life-blood of business, but it sows the death-germs of religion.

* * *

The Lord Spake Unto Moses!

"And the Lord spake unto Moses." That is the way the commandments used to be introduced. Now, I presume, it will run, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, as revised by the Church of England National Assembly." It has been said more than once by Freethinkers that what the Lord really needed when he inspired the Bible was a capable sub-editor. It was a big work to carry through single-handed, with the world also needing attention, and there is no wonder that errors crept in and many things were said that

would have been better left unsaid. After all, journalism is a profession and must be learned like any other. What not to say and what to say, how to say a thing so that the reader may be left with just the impression that the writer wishes to create, all this is an art that is not easy to master; and so far as we know the Christian deity made but one attempt at literature. He inspired the Bible, and the whole Christian world has been quarrelling for nearly two thousand years as to what the devil he meant when he wrote it. Church Council after Church Council has tried to fix his meaning. Individuals have "wrestled" with him in prayer, more commentaries have been written to make clear the meaning of the Bible than has befallen any other book; and the Christian world is still at it. None of the meanings suggested by the believer has endured for very long; and that suggested by the unbeliever has been scornfully rejected by the pious. And yet if one really wishes to know exactly what the Bible means one must shun the pious commentary as we were once warned to shun the Devil. Throw your commentaries into the waste-paper basket and get down some good work which deals with the lives of uncivilized and semi-civilized peoples. Place what they believe side by side with what the Bible teaches, and you will discover an identity of thought and a similarity of language. The savage is the true biblical commentator. The keel of the modern liner was laid when the savage floated down a stream on a hollowed out log. The song of Melba commenced in the rhythmic howls of our simian ancestors; and the God of the Church Assembly had his beginnings in the fear-stricken ignorance of the primitive savage.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

God's Methods.

(Concluded from page 52.)

THE Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations having proved gigantic fiascoes, God introduced a third under which we are living to-day, and which Mr. Switzer calls the Gospel dispensation. It is not, however, the last dispensation, a fourth having been Divinely ordained to follow it. Indeed, the Christian dispensation is already about to end. Mr. Switzer is good enough to inform us that "the Bible times this Gospel dispensation to last for 2,000 years," though he is not sure "whether it will end within 100 years, or fifty years, or ten years, or one year." Nevertheless, he is quite certain that "during the fourth dispensation the earth will be governed by Christ and His Bride, who will hold a visible and most glorious court at Jerusalem."

Meantime, let us dwell more in detail on the Gospel dispensation. During the first dispensation God dealt with humanity at large endeavouring to bring it back to the knowledge of himself, but he achieved no satisfactory result. The world kept getting worse and worse until he was obliged to abandon it altogether. After all, however, it was his own world, for the state of which he could not help feeling more or less responsible. Consequently, he planned a second dispensation, under which he would attempt to win the world back to himself by means of a chosen nation. Israel he would teach and discipline himself, in Israel he would make himself known as the Sovereign of the Universe, and Israel would become the channel through which his knowledge would flow out until it covered the face of the whole earth. But the chosen nation did not choose to become the medium of salvation to the world. On the contrary, it positively refused to accept God's salvation for itself, with the result that God was obliged to abandon it also. For

Mr. Switzer all this actually happened, and it never occurs to him to see in it any reflection upon the Divine character. It all came to pass through the exceeding sinfulness of the human race, not because of any lack of power and goodness in God. Despite past failures God planned a third attempt to save mankind. This time it was not Patriarchs, nor a chosen people through whom the world's redemption was to be accomplished, but through his own beloved and only begotten Son, who, by a strange miracle, was made flesh without ceasing to be God, and who, in the flesh, voluntarily became the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Mr. Switzer says that "on the Cross he tasted death instead of every man." According to him there are two deaths, the first and the second, and Christ suffered both. He then adds:—

We learn from Christ's experience (Matt. xxvii, 46) what the second death is. It consists in this—*God forsaking the individual*. God's abandonment of any being is for that being the second death. When God deserts or forsakes a person *for ever*, then that person suffers the second death for ever. Saul, the king of Israel, is an instance of a man forsaken of God, and his anguish was terrible (see 1 Sam. xviii, 12; xxviii, 5, 6, 15-25). Saul seems to have begun to suffer the second death in this world. *The second death is the just due of every human being*. To save us from this, rightly called in Scripture "everlasting fire" (Matt. xviii, 8; xxv, 41), "everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv, 46), "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (11 Thes., 1, 9), "torment.....for ever and ever" (Rev. xiv, 9-12), etc.—to save us from this Christ *tasted* it. He was tasting it on the Cross when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He tasted it for a *short time* only, perhaps for the whole of the three hours' darkness at the crucifixion. Afterwards God was again present with his Son.

That is literalism with a vengeance, and its teaching is horrible in the extreme. Take the sentence we have italicized, "The second death is the just due of every human being," and you will realize what a dreadfully hateful thing the orthodox creed is. Human beings are God's creatures, and yet, because Adam, who was created perfect "in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness," showed imperfection by disobeying his Maker, they are all doomed to be tormented for ever and ever in the lake of fire and brimstone. Such is the just due of every one of us, and the only possible escape from this doom is through faith in the Son of God who endured it in our stead.

We wish to pay Mr. Switzer the compliment of granting that his book is thoroughly Scriptural and of admiring his courage in standing up so boldly for what the majority of the clergy even no longer believe. Very few preachers take the Bible literally now. Take the following specimen of our author's loyalty to the letter of the Bible:—

Here we reach the point round which the whole plan of salvation centres. Here we can see how the Atonement was accomplished. Christ, having been forsaken by God, was able, *of his own right*, to re-enter God's presence. *Though* he had been forsaken, yet he could (and did) claim to be received back from the second death. Why? Because *Christ is God* (Rom. ix, 5; St. John i, 1; Phil. ii, 6; Heb. i, 8; 1 Tim. vi, 13-17, etc.). Christ, being God, is the Source of Life, as God the Father is. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (see St. John v, 26). Thus by his own inherent *life*, which he possessed independently of the Father (the Father having so ordained it), Christ, as God, *lived himself back again*, so to speak, as both God and Man from the second death, into the Father's presence. Into the presence of God he came, the God-Man, demanding re-admission as a conqueror in his own right, and as the Fellow of Jehovah (see Zech. xiii, 7). He was readmitted. This was the Father's will. "Therefore

doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again" (St. John x, 17).

Like the divines of sixty and seventy years ago, Mr. Switzer clinches every statement with a text or texts. To him the Bible is the court of final appeal. Believing it to be the inspired and infallible Word of God, no other course is open to him, and we praise him for his amazing consistency. To us, however, nothing is true because the Bible says it, and we know with the utmost certainty that many Biblical statements are wholly untrue. Looked at from a rational point of view the history of the world proves the unreality of Theism. Take the plan of salvation under the Gospel dispensation and you will see how impossible it would be to conceive of anything more fundamentally immoral and absurd. Nothing could be more irrational than the belief that the only begotten Son of God became the God-Man by a virgin birth, and that ever after there were two distinct natures, the divine and the human, dwelling together in one personality. When we come to the crucifixion we are face to face with the greatest absurdity ever heard of. The human part of him died and was buried, lying in the sepulchre for three days and three nights, while the divine part visited hell and preached to the spirits imprisoned there; but on the third day the two natures came together again, to part no more for ever. When we consider the theological interpretation of Christ's death we learn that to the grotesque absurdity is added the grossest immorality. Could anything have been more cruelly wicked than to sacrifice the innocent in order to spare the guilty, to put the eternally Holy One to death with the object of conferring eternal life on those who richly deserved eternal death? What moral right had God the Father to have God the Son heartlessly murdered to make heaven possible for the miserable sinners who were only fit for hell? We put these questions on the argumentative assumption that such a catastrophe ever really occurred. Again, assuming that there was a real God-Man and that he tasted death for every man, the fact that stares us in the face is that he did so almost entirely in vain. Despite the vast army of ordained ministers and their innumerable assistants, all working with all their might, the conclusion is inevitable that the overwhelming majority of the world's population will have no dealing whatever with the Church's Christ. Mr. Switzer frankly admits this, but explains it in the following curious fashion:—

It comes to pass that from manifold causes, the work which God gave the Church to do is but half performed, and failure again mars the benevolent plans of the Almighty. But the failure is always because of man's inability to co-operate with the Divine will. We must not overlook one especial hindrance to the Church's work, which did not appear to anything like the same extent in former dispensations. That is, the active and angry hostility of human beings in general, to the aggressive work of preaching the Gospel and teaching the doctrines of the Word of God. On account of this hostility the Church is subject to the constant attacks of unbelievers—and many, professing (hypocritically) to be within the Body, are not seldom found to be wolves in sheep's clothing.

We strongly doubt the accuracy of the statement that men and women in general are in a state of angry hostility to the Church and its work. Perhaps the majority are merely uninterested through lack of active beliefs. Many are intellectually convinced that the Gospel is not true, and that the so-called doctrines of the Word of God are but outworn, empty superstitions. The number of those engaged in aggressive work against the Christian religion is comparatively small; but they are full of zeal for what they regard as "the best of causes." Mr. Switzer is of opinion

that "the sin of this age is unbelief in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ," but we totally disagree with him. It is our conviction that the sin of this age is lack of intellectual honesty which serves the cause of supernaturalism.

We thank Mr. Switzer for his *Mystery of the Ages* because it has confirmed us in our unbelief and because we are sure that the perusal of it is calculated to create many sceptics. To explain Christianity, as this book does, is the best method of exposing it.

J. T. LLOYD.

An Unabashed Victorian.

Liberty's chief foe is theology. —Bradlaugh.
To bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
That is the top of sovereignty. —Keats.

THOMAS CARLYLE'S affectionate tribute to Walter Savage Landor, "the unsubduable old Roman," comes to mind on reading in the newspapers that Frederic Harrison is dead at the age of ninety-one. He had lived a full life, and, only a few months before his death, he was lecturing on "Dante." It was characteristic of the man that at an age when most persons would be only concerned with slipped ease he should discourse on a literary subject, and do so without repetition or staleness.

A man who had seen as much of the world as Frederic Harrison in travel, and had been mixed up for seventy years with most of the developments of thought, politics, and religion, had enjoyed unusual scope for observation. Always of a serious turn of mind, his criticism of men and events was of unusual interest, and much that is of value can be gleaned from his published books and utterances. For example, what struck the veteran was "how small a substantial change has been introduced even into superficial details of life" by modern inventors and improvements. To him our boasted progress was largely an illusion. He was as emphatic as John Ruskin in his denunciation of the hurry-scurry and haste of modern life, and he regarded it largely as a thing to be deplored. He was also very critical, too, of educational reforms. Public schools he said plainly were a failure, and even the universities had lost their former usefulness by specialization. He went so far as to regard the devotion to athletics as a form of extravagance. Harrison himself, be it remembered, was not a curled, perfumed darling of the drawing-rooms. He had been an excellent cricketer, and had done his share of mountaineering, both somewhat rare accomplishments in a reformer. What he saw most clearly was the necessity of the twentieth century reducing to order the chaotic activities of the nineteenth century. He declared, bluntly, that if it failed to organize a new social order, Western civilization itself was doomed. It was, indeed, this profound conviction that made him a life-long Positivist.

Harrison's judgments on men were as interesting as his criticisms on other matters. He spoke, caustically, of Thomas Carlyle as being "precisely like one of Shakespeare's fools"; and of Frederick Denison Maurice's "muddle-headed and impotent mind." Of Matthew Arnold he told us: "Whether he was criticising poetry, manners, or the Bible, one imagined him writing from the library of the Athenæum Club." Thackeray, to him, as to so many people, was simply a "rebuker of snobs." He is far kinder in his remarks on Ruskin, who, he said, was a "fascinating genius in a magnanimous soul." He is unreserved, however, in his admiration of Auguste Comte, whom he always regarded as his master. His fervid apostleship, in conjunction with Beesly and Congreve,

aroused the gibe that the new Religion of Humanity consisted of three persons and no god.

Frederic Harrison was presented with an illuminated address on his ninetieth birthday in commemoration of his lengthy service to his high ideals. It was happily done. We do well to salute the veterans of the Army of Human Liberation. There is something more, however, in those ninety years than the life of one individual. There is the summary of the biggest change that has ever come over the life of mankind during the lifetime of one individual. The greatest change during the past century is due to the undoubted fact that Supernaturalism is being outgrown, and men's minds are broadening slowly towards a newer and better era of thought.

MIMNERMUS.

The Protestant Reformation.

The invention of printing was a severe blow to Catholicism, which had previously enjoyed the inappreciable advantage of a monopoly of intercommunication. From its central seat, orders could be disseminated through all the ecclesiastical ranks, and fulminated through the pulpits. This monopoly and the amazing power it conferred were destroyed by the Press. In modern times, the influence of the pulpit has become insignificant. The pulpit has been thoroughly supplanted by the newspaper.—Prof. J. W. Draper, "The Conflict Between Religion and Science" (1876) pp. 292-293.

The moment people completely realized there was another continent (America) where the eagle of the Holy Roman Empire had never flown, that moment the whole structure of mediævalism was undermined. Columbus discovered a new world beyond, and Copernicus announced new worlds above. Scarcely any discovery of the nineteenth century, not even Darwin's, had such far reaching effects as these two which made the Reformation inevitable.—R. H. Murray, "Erasmus and Luther" (1920), p. 43.

THE Reformation of the sixteenth century had been preceded during the Middle Ages by many attempts of a similar kind. In the eleventh century the Albigenses in the provinces of Dauphiné, Provence, and Languedoc, in the south of France, put up a determined opposition to Rome, and all Catholic doctrines and practices. This was crushed out at the beginning of the thirteenth century by Pope Innocent III ordering a crusade by which they were exterminated, their cities being given up to sword and flame. The Waldenses in Piedmont, in the twelfth century, were nearer allied to the later Protestants by their dependence upon the Bible than the Albigenses who were more freethinking. The crusade launched against the Waldenses, although carried out with all the ruthlessness and ferocity of the other crusade, never entirely succeeded in exterminating this heresy owing to the multitude and inaccessibility of the mountains and valleys of the country; they continued to exist down to modern times, and all the while they were sending over Europe teachers, in the guise of pedlars and merchants, to disseminate their doctrine.

It is often claimed for Luther that he made the Protestant Reformation; but if Luther had lived in the Middle Ages, even he would have been powerless against the authority of the Church in those days. As John Addington Symonds has well said:—

During the Middle Ages man had lived enveloped in a cowl.....humanity had passed, a careful pilgrim, intent on the terrors of sin, death, and judgment, along the highways of the world, and had scarce known that they were sightworthy or that life was a blessing. Beauty is a snare, pleasure a sin, the world a fleeting show, man fallen and lost, death the only certainty; ignorance is acceptable to God as a proof of faith and submission; abstinence and mortifi-

cation are the only safe rules of life; these were the fixed ideas of the ascetic mediæval Church.¹

But the times had changed, the resurrection of the ancient Pagan literature and art of Greece and Rome during the Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had killed this monkish ascetic ideal of life for all men of intellect, and the breath of liberty which inspired the Pagan writings communicated itself to its discoverers and made them more critical of the claims and pretensions of the Church.

Added to all this the grasping greed and rapacity of the popes had raised them many enemies. The popes appointed foreign ecclesiastics, mostly Italians, to the richest livings, and although they neither resided in the country nor performed any duty in it, they received the revenues and spent them abroad. In England in the reign of Edward III:—

It was computed that the tax paid to the Pope for ecclesiastical dignities was five-fold that paid to the king from the whole realm.²

Then the "Great Schism" towards the end of the fourteenth century, which divided the Church, and for thirty-nine years saw two contending popes, one at Rome and one at Avignon, all tended to undermine the authority of the Church. As Macaulay says:—

Two popes, each with a doubtful title, made all Europe ring with their mutual invectives and anathemas. Rome cried out against the corruptions of Avignon, and Avignon, with equal justice, re-primed on Rome. The plain Christian people, brought up in the belief that it was a sacred duty to be in communion with the head of the Church, were unable to discover, amidst conflicting testimonies and conflicting arguments, to which of the two worthless priests who were cursing and reviling each other the headship of the Church rightfully belonged.³

Wicliffe, in his tract *On the Schism of the Popes*, declared: "The fiend no longer reigns in one but in two priests."

The minds of men were also loosened from their orthodox ideas by discoveries on the earth. In 1426 the Portuguese began to organize those systematic exploring expeditions which culminated in the discovery of America by Columbus under the patronage of the Queen of Spain. A new country, altogether unknown to Church or Bible and for whose salvation the Lord had, seemingly, forgotten to make any provision whatever.

The way for the Protestant Reformation was also prepared by the teachings of Wicliffe in England during the fourteenth century. He opposed the claims of the Pope and translated the scriptures, thus taking them out of the hands of the priests and throwing them open for investigation. The writings of Wicliffe circulated all over Germany and made converts of Huss and Jerome, with many other leading men.

Another great advantage to the Protestant cause was the invention of printing about the middle of the fifteenth century. Some would claim an earlier date, but we know that before 1480 printing was practised in many of the large German towns, Strassburg, Mainz, Bamberg, Cologne, Augsburg, Basel, Nuremberg, Speier, Ulm, Lübeck and Leipzig, being among the number. By this means the new ideas were scattered broadcast, they were accessible to everybody. even those who could not read could hear them read. The printing press made word-wide the results attained by scholars, and the astounding discoveries of great and wealthy countries across the seas. It communicated the intellectual ferment of the time to all men, of all nations, and of every class. The world was at

last waking from its long slumber and ready to cast off the fetters of the Church.

Into this world on November 10, 1483, Luther was born at Eisleben, a town in Prussia, about twenty-four miles from Halle. Eisleben is the centre of a great mining district, its chief products being silver and copper. Luther's father himself was a miner. The child Luther spent a very unhappy childhood. His father was a stern harsh man. His mother once beat him till the blood came, all on account of a nut. At school he was subjected to the stupid brutality of his teachers. He tells us later that one day he was "beaten fifteen times in succession during one morning,"⁴ to the best of his knowledge without any fault of his own. After this school, in his fourteenth year, he received instruction in Magdeburg from the "pious Brethren of the Common Life." His father being too poor to support him while training for a better position, he was compelled to beg his bread by singing from door to door. This continued for some time, until a charitable woman named Ursula, the wife of Konrad Cotta, took pity on him and received him into her comfortable home, furnishing him with food and lodging. Luther, in his old age, recalled with gratitude the memory of this good woman.

His father wished him to be educated for the Law, so he went in the summer of 1501 to the University of Erfurt. His father's financial circumstances having somewhat improved, he was no longer dependent upon the help of strangers. In 1505, at the age of twenty-two, he took his Master's degree, and then suddenly and unexpectedly, contrary to the will of his father, he turned from law to theology and entered the monastery of the Augustine Eremites at Erfurt.

(To be Continued.)

W. MANN.

A SONG OF THE EARTH.

Not of thee, Melancholy,
But rather of joy's ceaseless summer sky
And all the rapture holy
That on the snow-white breast of love doth sigh
I'd sing,—and not of heaven
With endless golden harp and golden crown
But of the stars of even
And all the autumnal waving corn gold-brown
And all the woodland's glory
When wild October gilds them with bright hand
And the long sea-waves hoary
Which dance attendance on the glittering sand;—
Not of the angelic glances
But of our women's eyes of sober grey
Through which the sweet love dances
And of their feet that linger in the way
And of their heaven of passion
Wherein the souls that worship them may dwell
I'd sing,—in the old Greek fashion,
For flowerless loveless heaven to me is hell.

I sing of hedgerow roses
And quiet violets nestling in the green
And vales where love reposes
And meads where in the grass his hand is seen
Flowerlike amid the flowers,
White 'mid the lilies, scented 'mid the may;
I sing of the soft bowers
Where love was radiant in the world's young day
Before the need of higher
And holier loftier rapture—so they said—
Thwarted love's living lyre
And marred the sunshine on his golden head.

—George Barlow.

¹ Symonds, *Short History of the Renaissance in Italy*, p. 5.

² Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, Vol. I, p. 69.

³ Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays* (1883), p. 547.

⁴ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. I, p. 5.

Writers and Readers.

VOLTAIRE AND CANDIDE.

THE almost simultaneous publication last year of two versions of Voltaire's *Candide* would seem to indicate that we solid, serious English people are beginning to wake up to the fact that the representative figure in the intellectual life of the eighteenth century in Europe is still a force with which we should do well to reckon. I say advisedly "would seem to indicate" because I know there are people who assure us that Voltaire is out of date. The other day I was talking to a friend of mine, an emancipated thinker with a training in the exact sciences, who told me frankly that he thought I was inclined to overrate Voltaire's work, especially his militant onslaughts on revealed religion. In his opinion the letters, essays, dialogues, and homilies which are to be found among the always delightful *mélanges critiques* or critical miscellanies, are now hopelessly out of date. I am afraid I cannot agree with my friend, or with those who think with him. While there are people who are prepared to claim that the Hebrew writings are records of the actions, the thoughts and the aspirations of a mixed racial group, divinely chosen and divinely directed and endowed, as Matthew Arnold would have us believe, with an unique genius for right conduct, the ironic and sarcastic comments, the average good sense of the most magistral of critics continues to be splendidly effective.

The effectiveness of Voltaire's criticism, I am persuaded, is measured by the way in which the believer reacts from it. No one is likely to waste his time abusing a critic if it is possible to dismiss him as negligible. But we find, however, that Voltaire even now comes in for a generous share of scurrilous vituperation. For devout Catholics (like Louis Veuillot) he is, if my readers will pardon me for using a rubber-stamp phrase, the coryphæus of profanity, a sink of moral impurity and gross arrogance, an enemy alike of Christianity and of France. He is placed with Rabelais, Montaigne, Shakespeare and Molière under the category of *les mauvais maîtres*, the teachers of evil doctrine. Yet it is curious to note that the French Catholic man of letters, while deprecating Voltaire's attitude to religion, is not afraid to make a practice of reading him for his supreme mastery of the language and command of his ideas. His genius is ungrudgingly admitted, and even becomes a source of national pride. There is therefore the possibility that an intelligent French believer may ultimately reach Free-thought by way of Voltairean deism. For English Catholics there is less hope for they are usually contented to vilipend the master without putting themselves to the trouble of reading him, while for those amusingly eccentric belletrists who call themselves Neo-Catholics there is no hope at all for theirs is the all too serious labour of inditing odes to the Blessed Virgin, or rollick-songs in praise of Guinness, Allsop, and Bass, or essays in dispraise of the manners (or want of manners) of our Hebrew aristocracy. Probably if they could be brought to read anything outside their own works and those of their friends, they would either disparage Voltaire as out of date, or echo the inept judgment of Victor Hugo for whom the intellectual pioneer of the eighteenth century was an "ape of genius, the ambassador of hell to men on earth."

However that may be, and in spite of what some of my freethinking friends may say, Voltaire to-day is neither out of date nor out of fashion; indeed he was never more alive. He is a seminal thinker, a liberator of ideas, a genius embodying that rare quality called good sense, whom the titanic struggle we have lately passed through has revealed in his true proportions. Twenty years ago the attitude to Voltaire taken up by intellectual France was in general one of coudescension or disparagement. Even Rémy de Gourmont, the most independent of modern dissociators of ideas, was antipathetic and just a little contemptuous. However, in 1915, just before he died, he hastened to acclaim the greatness of his forerunner in strongly and sincerely phrased eulogy. He says:—

Before the war we believed that there was nothing in

Voltaire to amuse us, just as we had believed that he had nothing to teach us, and then we had M. Salomon Reinach building up almost the whole of the modern part of his *Histoire des Religions* on the foundation of the *Essai sur les Mœurs*, and M. Victor Tisserand reprinting, in a popular series, the *Vie Privée du Roi de Prusse*, which Macaulay assured us was the most mordant pamphlet ever written. This pamphlet is emphatically the most valuable introduction to the study of German mentality, and Voltaire imparts this knowledge not in a thick octavo of stupefying psychological pedantry, but in a slender pamphlet where everything is said gracefully and wittily. It is precisely this German influence to which we have submitted for the last forty years that has caused us to regard solidity and dullness as synonymous terms. Voltaire, however, shows us how stupidly wrong-headed we have been. Every kind of writing is good, he tells us, except that which is wearisome. We shall do well to meditate this dictum, and try to persuade ourselves that there is more of real philosophy in *Candide* than in the *Critic of Pure Reason*. At one time I despised the whole of Voltaire, now I set a great value on the whole or pretty nearly the whole of his work, for when I read him I can see that he is something more than a great writer, that he is the typical humanist, the all-round thinker. Everything he praises is worthy of our praise, everything he ridicules merits our contempt. He is perhaps the steadiest intellect I have ever come across, and, whatever fools may say, the least superficial. If he writes about all things it is because he knows all things. Read him. Voltaire is astounding.

Certainly the intelligent reader cannot do better than read Voltaire, and if he sets any value upon my literary judgment he will accept my suggestion that he should begin with *Candide*. A few years ago there was some excuse for ignorance. A complete translation was not accessible. The only cheap edition was the late eighteenth century one which Henry Morley was thoughtful enough to bowdlerise for the ingenuous youth of the 'eighties. The young people of to-day are not so squeamish. Their growing minds have been strengthened by a course of psycho-analysis which, as some of my readers are aware, is a prophylactic against the mid-Victorian disease called modesty. If we can stand the scientifically indecent and ill-written lucubrations of the American followers of that witty Austrian Jew, Freud, we are not likely to be shocked by the graceful nudity of Voltaire's ideas. We now know that Wordsworth's intimation of immortality from remembrance of childhood was mere romantic foolishness, and that he would have had quite different intimations if he had known that his angelic child was a "potential polymorphous pervert." Anyhow, although the intelligent reader will get a good deal of amusement of a malicious kind from the psycho-analysts, he will find that he can spend his time more profitably by reading *Candide*. He can now make his choice of two editions. The better of the two is the cheaper. It is one of a series of reprints called "The Abbey Classics," published by Chapman and Dodd at 3s. net. The translation is the earliest eighteenth century one, and is not expurgated in the interest of false modesty and old maids. It has a short, light and witty introduction by Mr. A. B. Walkley, whose style shows that his acquaintance with Voltaire is not of yesterday. The little book is well printed and soberly apparelled, a fitting English tribute to the wittiest and wisest of Frenchmen. The other edition is in quarto form and comes from Routledge and Co. Its price is 12s. 6d. net which is pretty stiff considering that the text was merely reprinted from Henry Morley's castrated edition issued by the same publishers nearly forty years ago. I notice that it is advertised as Henry Morley's translation. Why, I cannot imagine, except that the publishers had a shrewd notion that the average reviewer would not take the trouble to compare it with the old versions. To compensate for the incompleteness of the text the reader of Voltaire is presented with a set of illustrations by Mr. Alan Odle, a belated follower of Aubrey Beardsley. They represent, of course, a serious criticism of *Candide*, but I am afraid I cannot place myself at the artist's angle of vision. They are clever enough in their way, but unspeakably coarse, grotesque and violent. Evidently his notion of Voltaire is a sombre unsociable half-insane genius, a sort of French Dean Swift. He has yet to make acquaintance with the Voltaire whom we delight to honour as the perfect embodiment of French civilization.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

Acid Drops.

A Protest Campaign has been started with a view to getting the London County Council to repeal the use of the parks for Sunday games. A largely attended meeting was held at the Queen's Hall the other evening in pursuance of the campaign, with the clergy in attendance in good numbers. The Solicitor-General, Sir Thomas Inskip, was in the chair, and among those present were Sir G. Croydon Marks, and Canon Peter Green. We do not suppose that any of these want the public parks at any time for games, but they were, as usual, much concerned at the labour that would be involved if games were permitted. The curious thing is that these same people are never so concerned at the hours of labour during the week. It is when it comes to Sunday that they object to any labour being employed. As a matter of fact, the labour involved in Sunday games is of a negligible quantity. There can be no labour while the games are proceeding, and an extra attendant or two is the utmost that would be needed. The plea is pure humbug, and those who put the plea forward are, to put the matter plainly, hypocrites. It is the infliction of sabbatarianism they are after, but they lack the moral courage and straightforwardness to say so. A bigot who says quite plainly that he objects to anyone playing a game on Sunday because it is desecrating the Sabbath, one may respect. But these men who say one thing and mean quite another fill one with nothing but contempt.

Among those who spoke on behalf of preventing Sunday games was Mr. C. G. Ammon, one of the Labour M.P.s. He replied to the statement that Trade Unions would be able to defend their Sabbath by saying that they did not want to fight that fight over again. Mr. Ammon thus added humbug to his bigotry. Now we should like Mr. Ammon to tell us when the trade unions had to fight very seriously against Sunday labour. We shall be surprised if he does not know that during the very worst Labour period of English history, when children were being killed in factories and women were at work below ground, the employers, being good Christians, were always concerned to avoid Sunday labour. If Mr. Ammon does not know this much of the history of labour in this country he is quite unfit to be called a Labour leader. In any case, the sight of a Labour leader joining with a platform of bishops and other members of the "Black Army" to prevent the working classes spending part of their day of rest in healthful recreation, leads one to believe that the most needed work before real Labourites is to clear the religious cant and pandering to the clergy out of their movement.

Perhaps it may be as well to commend to the attention of the Sabbatarian-no-amusement-on-Sunday Mr. Ammon the following from a speech from the Bishop of Manchester on January 22. Speaking of the attitude of the Church towards industrial movements in the past, he said, "The Church was nearly fast asleep when the industrial revolution took place. The great industrial North was built up without the Church paying any particular attention to it." Of course, it is quite fashionable for the clergy to talk in this way now. They have been discovered, and it is the better policy to confess what everybody knows. All the same the Bishop is rather too hard on the Church. It was not asleep during the industrial revolution, and it was not inactive. It never ceased to tell the people that it was their duty to be respectful and submissive towards their pastors, and it did this, and preached contentment while men were being imprisoned and transported, under the anti-combination laws, for trying to form a trades union. The Church has never been inactive. It has never been asleep. It has always tried to keep other people asleep. That has been its main function.

The Paris *Journal* states that the Pope has contributed £6,300 from his private purse for the relief of the German dioceses. It is pleasant to reflect that Papa is not so near "starvation" as some of the clergy.

At an inquest held at Southwark by Dr. Waldo on a child at Guy's Hospital, one of the house surgeons stated that the little sufferer had a double spine and only one kidney instead of two. Christian evidence lecturers kindly note.

"When I saw the cross and the religious pictures I knew it was a place of worship, so I did nothing," said a man charged with burglary at Aldershot. The Bench was unmoved by this theatrical appeal, especially as the man had previously broken into a stationmaster's house and other houses.

"Curate in the Workhouse," was a headline in a London paper. The accompanying letterpress explained that the Rev. S. Huntley had been accommodated at Eye Workhouse for a payment of £80 a year because of the house shortage.

Here is some shocking news for the religious world. Mr. Watkin R. Roberts, who has just returned to England from India, and who is treasurer of the Bible League of India, says that out of 4,000 missionaries employed in India, Burma, and Ceylon, not more than 2,000 "believed in the Bible as the infallible and inerrant word of God." He also says that many of the missionary schools and colleges are staffed by men and women who have little or no belief in the Bible. Mr. Roberts intends warning subscribers at home that the money they subscribe is being to a large extent misused.

This is a very terrible state of things. Fancy, out of 4,000 missionaries sent out, not more than 2,000 believe the Bible to be the infallible and inerrant word of God! Our surprise comes, however, from a different cause from that of Mr. Roberts. We are astonished that 2,000 out of the four are so terribly backward as to take the view of the Bible which Mr. Roberts thinks is the correct one. We think the Bible League of India must have searched very carefully to have found 2,000 people in that primitive state of mind. Or perhaps while we have been marvelling over the discoveries in Egypt, the Bible League of India must have discovered some lost community which remains in the mental condition of the seventeenth century, and have recruited their 2,000 from these. But they should not be left in India. They should be brought home and exhibited as specimens of a long lost and undeveloped type of human being. We should do so if we discovered some living "missing links"; and living mental missing links are quite as interesting as physical ones. And what must an educated Hindoo think of men and women of the type of this 2,000 being sent out as specimens of English men and women? It is decidedly unfair to us who remain at home besides tending to lower us in the eyes of the natives.

But we see from an article in a recent issue of the *Daily News* that there is at least one theological college in this country which demands from all its teachers a written declaration that they believe in the first chapter of Genesis as literally interpreted. None of your symbolic interpretations, nor of fancy readings which many of the "advanced" clergy give us, but a literal acceptance. For this college the science of astronomy and of geology does not exist. It prefers Moses to everyone else. Now that is a fine robust faith; and it may be, we do not know, but it may be that this college makes a speciality of getting hold of the mentally deficient, training them as missionaries, and sending them out as emissaries of the Bible League of India. That would explain the situation; and the 2,000 who do not share the views of Mr. Roberts would be those who have developed in spite of all the training college could do to prevent it. Still, we do not know what the Hindoos have done to deserve these people being thrust upon them. No wonder they riot!

"The symbol of sovereignty is no longer the crown nor the silk hat, but the cloth cap of the worker," says the Archbishop of York. Meanwhile, the Bench of

Bishops still retards progressive legislation in the House of Lords, and 50,000 priests follow the lead of their "spiritual" superiors.

"It was God's will that my lights went out," said a motorist charged at Feltham. The Bench smilingly retorted that it was also God's will that he be fined.

Canon Deeds, of Coventry Cathedral, was found dead on the floor of his bedroom. The Rev. G. A. Cowan, of Purse Caundle, Dorset, collided with a motor while cycling and broke both legs. Just like ordinary men!

The Additional Curates Society's income for the past year was £37,660. As the clergy are said to be starving, this society apparently exists to increase the number of unhappy and unfortunate beings.

The Rev. F. Jennings, of St. Paul's Church, Battersea, declares that he will see night life in London and make a round of the dance clubs and public-houses. Let us hope that he will not, like a certain archdeacon, finish up in a blaze of glory.

Two silver candlesticks, made from war-medals and trophies, were dedicated by the Bishop of London at St. Paul's Cathedral. On this occasion the Bishop did not mention that Christ was the Prince of Peace.

William Smith, a Ryhope milkman, was fined five shillings for ringing a bell on a Sunday. The Bench told him that the next fine would be five pounds. Parsons ring thousands of bells on Sundays with perfect impunity.

The steady propaganda of Freethought that has been going on at Weston-super-Mare has had its effect in the difference in the attitude with which the local Press is beginning to face the question. Even the clergy are realizing that Freethought is not something that can be set aside as of no consequence. That was the attitude adopted at first, but it has failed. The result is two-fold. On the one hand the papers are throwing their columns open to correspondence on the matter, and we congratulate the editor of the *Weston Mercury* both on this and the general tone of the letters published. Next, the clergy have been driven to assume an apologetic attitude, and to explain the causes of the failure of the Churches. That is a considerable advance, it is bound to go further, and, indeed, the whole position is an object lesson which is an example of what may be done by persistent propaganda under even the most unfavourable conditions.

In the *Weston Gazette* for January 20 there is a letter from the Rev. John Holden, parts of which read much like an excerpt from the *Freethinker*. Thus, Mr. Holden quotes the following, with approval:—

The secret of the present crisis is the fact that certain forms which have been operative in the past have already been exhausted or have ceased to exercise their former power. For a thousand years our ancestors were drilled to go to church. Throughout the Middle Ages the Church of Rome made prominent her doctrine of purgatory and hell. The punishments of the wicked were pictured in vivid language which frightened men into obedience to the laws of the Church. That teaching in part was carried over into Protestantism, and far down into the nineteenth century the wrath of God was in many pulpits the supreme topic of discussion. Then there was the pressure of civil law. The State and the Church were united, and church attendance was a part of the duty of a respectable citizen. If a man did not go to church during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries he was suspected as a traitor. Thus it became the ingrained habit of the people to go to church, and there is a power in social custom which is not easily dissipated. Moreover, for a long time men were driven to church by the pressure of intellectual hunger. Ministers were the best read men in all the country, and men who were not interested in spiritual things went to church for intellectual stimulus

and for information not to be so easily obtained elsewhere. Now the printing press, newspapers, pamphlets, magazines and books, and the advance of education have changed all that. Men may come to church for impulse and uplift, and outlook, but not for information. So the old pressures have been removed. The force of the ancient habit has been weakened by the atmosphere of democracy and liberty. Never again will man be driven to church either by civil law, or by the fear of hell, or by intellectual hunger, or because it is the fashion.

In the main this is quite sound; but it is not quite the case that people do not go to church because it is the fashion. That and the force of habit will to-day account for a very large proportion of church-goers. Nor do we think that the factor of intellectual hunger was ever a strong factor in getting people to church. So soon as people begin to feel the needs of intellectual satisfaction they begin to stay away from church, for the reason that it is an enlarging mental horizon that awakens this, and the Church must always be out of touch with this. Habit, fashion, and fear are the great forces that send people to church, and so soon as these weaken church attendance declines.

Among the other letters published in the *Gazette* we notice one from our old friend Mr. John Breese, and also a well-written and lengthy letter from Mr. Arthur Mitchell. Both will do good. The obvious interest taken in the correspondence suggests that editors of local papers are not quite so "cute" as they imagine in shutting out Freethought news from their columns. There is a growing public that is interested in the topic, and it is the possible circulation that is the chief consideration with most editors.

Mr. Stephen Neil, of Trinity College, Cambridge, says "the urgent need of the hour is the evangelization of heathen England." Dear! dear! What a tribute to the work accomplished by 50,000 Christian priests!

The Pope has proclaimed Saint Francis of Sales the patron saint of writers. Papa need not have worried. Authors have always worshipped sales.

We are indebted to a recent issue of the *Nation* for a reprint of the following letter of Herbert Spencer's, written to Mr. Percy Alden during the South African War. As the editor remarks, it is not inapplicable to the situation to-day:—

Whatever fosters militarism makes for barbarism, and whatever fosters peace makes for civilization. There are two fundamentally opposed principles on which social life may be organized—compulsory co-operation and voluntary co-operation: the one implying coercive institutions and the other free institutions. Just in proportion as militant activity is great does the coercive régime (which army organization exemplifies in full) pervade more and more the whole society. Hence to oppose militancy is to oppose the return towards despotism.

But my fear is that the retrograde movement has become too strong to be checked by argument or exhortation. It seems the less likely that teaching can do anything considering how little teaching has thus far done. After nearly two thousand years' preaching of the religion of amity, the religion of enmity remains predominant, and Europe is peopled by two hundred million pagans masquerading as Christians, who revile those who wish them to act on the principles they profess.

All we have to object to in the latter is the expression "two hundred million pagans masquerading as Christians." We do not see where the masquerading comes in, nor do we think it justifiable to put pagans and Christians in opposition as representing peaceful and warlike tendencies. The Pagans were not more warlike than Christians, and they did not surround their wars with the religious cant and moral humbug that Christians have done. As a mere matter of fact there has been no religion more warlike than Christianity, and none have done more to foster war and to perpetuate warlike habits. After all, the use of peaceful phrases does not count for much if the whole tendency of one's attitude or teaching is to make for militarism.

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.

H. B. (Nottingham).—We should have no objection to visiting your town again if a hall could be obtained and the necessary arrangements made.

E. R. PIKE.—Thanks. Shall appear.

"FREETHINKER" Sustentation Fund.—A Friend, £2.

C. KEYWORTH.—Many new readers are obtained by passing on copies of this paper. That is as good a method of advertising as any if carried out on a sufficiently large scale.

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

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

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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.

We refer in the "Acid Drop" column to the efforts being made to induce the London County Council to reverse its decision concerning the use of the parks for Sunday games. Petitions are pouring in on the Council, and the Churches are seeing to it that every church and chapel, so far as it can be managed, shall send in a petition asking that the games shall not be permitted. It is very easy for the Churches to manage this kind of game, and we are writing this paragraph to urge the same kind of activity on the part of Freethinkers. The case must not be permitted to go by default. All London branches should at once send in resolutions to the Council protesting against any embargo being placed on the proper use of the parks on Sunday. Individuals should also send in letters of protest. If this is not done the members of the Council will be able to say that all the protests have been in the one direction. Freethinkers must get to work or they will wake up and discover that the Sabbatarians have won a notable victory on behalf of obscurantism.

We are glad to say that Mr. Lloyd is now recovered from his recent indisposition, and he will be lecturing at the Rusholme Hall, Dickenson Road, at 3 and 6.30 to-day (February 4). We hope that all Manchester friends will be making the meetings well-known among their friends.

We had hoped to have the first volume of Mr. Cohen's new work *Essays in Freethinking* on sale by now, but owing to a strike in the bookbinding trade its appearance has been delayed. So soon as the binders get to work again it will be issued.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings at Glasgow on Sunday last, and the interest of the audience at the evening meeting in the large hall was most marked. A striking feature of the audience was the large number of young men and ladies present—both omens of good augury for the future of our movement.

The West Ham Branch is holding another of its Saturday evening socials on February 10. It will be held in Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, at 7 o'clock, and there will be the usual songs, dances, and games. Admission is free, and all Freethinkers and their friends are assured of a hearty welcome.

Those of our readers who live in the neighbourhood of Broadstairs will please note that a debate is to take place before the Broadstairs Literary and Debating Society on February 13, at 7.30, on the Blasphemy Laws. The discussion will be held at the Yokohama Café, and the opener is Mr. H. E. Latimer-Voight, who proposes "That the Blasphemy Laws should be repealed." The proposal will be formally opposed and a vote taken at the end of the discussion. We should like to hear of a good majority in favour of the proposal.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti pays his first lecturing visit to Birmingham to-day (February 4) and will lecture in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, at 7. We hope to hear that the attendance was a good one. Mr. Rosetti will be a new speaker to many of the Birmingham Freethinkers, and we strongly advise them to take the opportunity of making his acquaintance. Admission to the lecture is free.

The attention paid to religion in the columns of the *Daily Herald* has evidently been getting on the nerves of some of its readers, and for some time letters have been appearing on the subject. One letter that was not inserted was sent by Mr. R. H. Rosetti who put some very plain questions to Labour leaders and their use of the figurehead of Jesus. We suspect that the reason for its non-insertion was that it attempted to draw from the Sunday-school section of the Labour Party a plain answer as to what they really did understand by the teachings of Jesus as addressed to the people. These people live—designedly we fancy—in a cloud-land of phrases, and plain answers to plain questions are not at all in their line.

The North London Branch is having to-day (February 4) Miss Elsie Morton who will lecture on "Proportional Representation." Miss Morton is, we understand, a very skilful speaker, and will no doubt be able to help those who attend to a clear understanding of what most people evidently find a not very easy subject to master. The meeting commences at 7.30.

The Waif.

God! I am tangled in a damnèd net
Of petty circumstance, necessity,
And brutish-base desire. To cut all free
And stand erect again, and quite forget
The drifting poltroon Fate has made of me!

We were not made to serve mean ends and small,
But some great Cause, for which the weakest die
In cheerful fortitude; and even I
Hear dimly still Youth's strident trumpet-call
To risk a lance for sweet-eyed Liberty!

JOHN ERNEST SIMPSON.

Christianity and Waste.

In a work published a few months before the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, Mr. Hartley Withers, one-time editor of the *Economist* and one of the leading financial and economic writers of the day, demonstrated the intimate connection existing between Poverty and Waste. He visualized the wealth of the world, piled up into one great heap, the size of which could not be enlarged, although the articles of which it was composed might vary from time to time. Since, then, he argued, the producing powers of man are limited, every superfluous and useless article manufactured is only at the expense of a certain amount of the necessaries of life required by persons actually in need of them.

We must all agree with Mr. Withers that enormous benefits to the human race would accompany the abolition of luxury. While men and women are starving and homeless through no fault of their own, there should be no over-fed and over-housed plutocrats. Waste, however, can be expressed in other terms than motor-cars or shooting-boxes or supper-parties. We have learnt only too well how wasteful of the national resources modern governments can be, and we have experienced the horrors of the greatest of all wastrels, war. But the Freethinker is prepared, perhaps, to denounce as wasteful certain phases of life, certain mental states, even, which the economist as such hardly feels called upon to discuss. I refer to religious phenomena, which, to my mind at least, have been productive of more waste of national and individual resources than has that love of luxury which Mr. Withers so effectively, and so rightly, denounced.

In the first place, let us consider the effect which the Christian religion has had upon the individual. Before the Reformation, and, indeed, even to-day in Catholic and Orthodox countries, when a man "got religion" he took monastic vows, and embraced a life of (presumed) celibacy. What effect this fact had upon the industry of the time can be easily imagined. Lecky has an interesting passage on this point:—

The spirit that makes men devote themselves in vast numbers to a monotonous life of asceticism and poverty is so essentially opposed to the spirit that creates the energy and enthusiasm of industry, that their continued co-existence may be regarded as impossible (*Rationalism in Europe*, Longmans Green edition, Vol. II, p. 331).

The men and women who entered the monasteries and nunneries of the different orders may, to a large extent, have been the visionaries and dreamers of a warlike age; but we must not forget that but for the influence of the Church and its hierarchy, much of the imaginativeness which was expressed in the form of visions of the saints and their counterparts, might have found an outlet in seeking solutions for problems in chemistry or in devising better and more generally accessible methods of intellectual intercourse.

Nor is the evil yet at an end. At the present moment thousands of men and women are passing their lives engaged in the repetition of useless and meaningless prayers to the unhearing gods. Could anything be more ridiculous in an industrial community? The Socialist tells us that the best way for the rich to express their sympathy with the poor is to get off the backs of the latter. Yet the rich idler of the clubs, parasite though he may be, is not so heavy a burden for the worker to bear as the prayer-monger in the cell. The former spends his money and influences trade, albeit only in luxuries, but the latter lives on the contributions cajoled out of the pockets very often of the poorest of the poor, and in return for which he utters up a few *Ave Marias* a day! Catholicism, however, is not the only anti-social

branch of the Christian Church. A member of the Establishment, or of any of the various Nonconformist sects, may say that *his* particular sect does not tolerate any such wasters of other people's product as I have just mentioned; and yet a moment's thought will suffice for us to realize that every priest, no matter what his brand or the cut of his clothes, is in exactly the same category as the friars. Clergymen inform us that they meet an expressed need, and perform very vital public duties. If such be the case, we can only marvel at the exceeding blindness and perversity of the greater part of the nation, and the extraordinary ingratitude towards their spiritual benefactors which they display. Apparently, too, the workman's opinion of the cleric is shared by his comrades in the Far East, who consider "Capitalist exploiter" and "Christian missionary" as almost synonymous terms.

The waste of men engendered by the carrying into practice of the tenets of the Church, is, however, paralleled, if not equalled, by the appalling waste of natural resources which it entails. Every monk and priest is a potential wealth producer deflected into the path of the wastrel; but what of the men and women who throughout the centuries have had to labour so that their spiritual chiefs might live in indolence and comparative affluence? Here in England for centuries the serfs filled the barns and the cellars of their masters, the abbots and priors of the numerous religious houses. For a still longer period, a period which has not yet come to an end, men and women of every creed and no creed at all have had to contribute, willy-nilly, to the maintenance of the clergy of a favoured sect; and still, Sunday by Sunday, the pennies drop into the plates for the propagation of a gospel (on which nobody is agreed) amongst the "heathen" who, at least, *are* agreed on the one point, that they will have no truck with Christianity.

Waste on the parsons; waste on the foreign missions; waste of the workers' products upon unproductive members of society. Still the story is not complete.

There is another class of waste, directly attributable to the existence of the Christian Church, which no economist or statistician can compute in terms of sterling. I refer to the ghastly series of crimes done to further the objects of the priesthood; to the damnable record of the most Christian Kings and the beloved Sons of the Church; to the wars of religion, and the horrors of the Inquisition. I think of the pure and gifted Hypatia, and of the gang of ruffianly monks who dragged her into their church, murdered her, tore her flesh from her bones with sharp shells, and flung her mangled, naked body into the flames. I think of the scenes enacted at the taking of Antwerp by the soldiers of that valiant defender of the Church, the Duke of Alva. In the vivid pages of Motley we see the marriage banquet in progress, then the horrible outcries in the streets signaling that the Spaniards had broken loose. The husband is struck dead, whilst the young bride is stripped to the skin, not from lust but from avarice, scourged with rods till her body was bathed in blood, and then, at last, naked, half-mad, sent back into the city. I think of Magdeburg—put to the sword during a war between opposing religious factions, and the scene, to use the words of Schiller—

of horrors for which history has no language, poetry no pencil; when neither innocent childhood nor helpless old age, neither youth, sex, rank, nor beauty, could disarm the fury of the conquerors (*Thirty Years' War*, Frederick Schiller).

With these things and a hundred like them in mind, I am firmly convinced that there is one form of waste which should not be tolerated in any civilized community—that which is represented by the hermaphrodite figure of the priest.

E. ROYSTON PIKE.

Animism.

II.

(Continued from page 43.)

AMONG tribes in which government has led to distinctions, we find these perpetuated. Brazilian tribes think the spirits of their chiefs and sorcerers enter a world of enjoyment, while others wander about the graves. Thlinkets will say when speaking of a well-to-do family, "When I die I should like to be born into that family." Natives of Tonga believed that only the upper classes had souls capable of going to Bolotoo, the land of ghosts and gods, after death. When Mariner told them of eternal hell fire, they said it was a bad look out for foreigners. These unprepared heathens had never dreamt of such a punishment for themselves. Among the Ahts, a lofty birth or a glorious death gives the right of entering a goodly land, where there are no storms or frost, but sunshine and warmth. The common people had to roam the earth in the form of some person or animal. "The New England tribes consigned their enemies to a place of misery, but they themselves had a very good time in the next world"; in addition everywhere we find the idea that the kingdom of heaven was for the strong, and could be taken with violence. Following on this comes the idea of punishment for cowardice or breach of duty to the tribe. To reconcile opposing beliefs, we find a theory of multiplicity of souls, as with Dacotahs, who thought each body had four. After death one wanders about the earth, the second watches the body, the third hovers over the village, whilst the fourth goes to the land of spirits. Egyptians also believed in four souls. The Dyaks of Borneo anticipated the modern Theosophists in making the number seven. Huxley has told how he and a friend were treated with great consideration by a savage who took his friend for the ghost, or rather re-incarnation, of a relative.

That the superstition of re-incarnation existed at the beginning of the Christian era is evident from it being related of Herod the Tetrarch, that when he heard of the fame of Jesus, he said: This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead (Matt. xiv, 2). Jesus countenanced the doctrine, declaring that John the Baptist was Elias (Matt. xi, 14), though John himself denied the imputation (John i, 21). Christ declared of himself "Before Abraham was I am" (John viii, 58). He taught "ye must be born again" (John iii, 7), and said the angels cannot die any more (Luke xx, 36), which may imply they had previously lived and died over and over again. The superstition of the resurrection of the body is an offshoot of the belief in the re-incarnation of the spirit, which needs some tabernacle wherein to manifest itself.

Belief in re-incarnation is not confined to Theosophists:—

In County Mayo it is believed that the souls of virgins remarkable for the purity of their lives, were after death enshrined in the form of swans. In Devonshire there is the well-known case of the Oxenham family, whose souls at death are supposed to enter into a bird (their crest?); while in Cornwall it is believed that King Arthur is still living in the form of a raven. In Nidderdale the country people say that the souls of unbaptised infants are embodied in the night jar. The most conspicuous example of souls taking the form of animals is that of Cornish fisher folk, who believe that they can sometimes see their drowning comrades take that shape. In the Hebrides when a man is slowly lingering away in consumption, the fairies are said to be on the watch to steal his soul, that they may therewith give life to some other body (G. L. Gomme).

The old wives cut the nails of the sufferer, tie up the parings in a piece of rag, and wave this precious charm three times round his head. Here we have an

undoubted offering of a part of the body in place of the whole, which is so frequently met in primitive worship.

Fairyland merges into Ghostland and both are provinces of Dreamland.

In dreams the savage fights his battles o'er again, or roams on expeditions in which the most surprising and magical adventures occur. His squaw tells him he has never left her side, and so he concludes he has another life, a spirit which can leave his body and act as he has dreamt, and that other animals have spirits which travel and encounter his own even while their bodies sleep.

Dreams to the savage have a reality and importance which only the large class who yet purchase dream books can appreciate. Mr. Herbert Spencer points out how "inevitably primitive man conceives as real the dream personages we know to be ideal." Mr. Dorman also declares: "The influence of dreams is so great upon the life of American Indians that every act and thought is predicated upon this superstition." An Indian dream is an inspiration. An Iroquois who dreamt he had cut off his finger did so when he awoke. Malays do not like to wake a sleeper lest they should hurt him by disturbing his body when his soul is out. The Chinese thought that the soul in dreams went out on a nightly ramble. Once when "the spiritual man" of a magnate named Tib Kevalu was out roaming, a wild beast found his body and ate it, so when the spirit returned it found only the mangled skeleton; fortunately near by was a beggar's corpse, black and lame; this he took as a substitute for his own body, and afterwards walked with a staff. Sir John Lubbock (Or. Civ., p. 220, *et seq.*) has traced this belief in the power of the soul to leave and return to the body all over the globe. Schweinfurth describes in his *Heart of Africa* how all the Bongs dispose of the dead. The corpse is bundled up with knees to chin, bound round head and legs, sown in a sack, and then placed in a deep grave. "A heap of stones," says Schweinfurth, "is then piled over the spot in a cylindrical form, and supported by strong stakes which are driven into the soil all round. On the top of the pile is placed a pitcher, frequently the same from which the deceased was accustomed to drink." Here we have the beginning both of the monument and the memorial urn. The forsaking of the hut or kraal where one has died is a widespread custom in Africa. Zulus say that at death a man's shadow departs and becomes an ancestral ghost; and the widow will relate how her husband has come in her sleep and threatened to kill her for not taking care of his children; or the son will describe how his father's ghost stood before him in a dream, commanding revenge upon his enemies. Fear of the dead, fear that they will return to plague the living, lies at the root of religion. As the spirit is still powerful and usually hostile, it must be appeased, deceived, or driven away. This is the aim of funeral rites and of periodical expulsion of evil spirits. Dacotahs beg the ghost not to disturb his friends. This fear probably accounts for heavy cairns, monumental tombs, deep graves and high fences round them. In Mexico, they employed professional "chuckers out" to evict ghosts from haunted places. Sometimes skulls are nailed down, and usually the eyes are closed that they may not see their way back. In Nuremberg the eyes of the corpse were bandaged with a wet cloth. Putting coins on the eyes is a very significant rite. For the same reason the body is carried out feet first. Barriers of water and fire are instituted to keep off the spirits, and fasting is observed for the same reason. Bohemians put on masks and play antics at funerals so that the dead should not follow them. In Siberia they give the ghost forty days' leave after which, if he is still hanging about, the Shaman "personally conducts"

the recalcitrant ghost to the lower regions, and takes brandy with him to secure a favourable reception to the ghosts by the spirits below. "The rudimentary form of all religion," says Spencer, "is the propitiation of dead ancestors." Ancestor worship, however, is not comprehensive enough to explain all the facts connected with worship of spirits, but it is the central point.

Dr. Tylor, who has collected facts bearing on early history from all quarters with enormous industry, and sifted them with critical care, points out that even among the most civilized nations language still plainly shows traces of early belief: as when we speak of a person being in ecstasy, or "out of himself," and "coming to himself," or when the souls of the dead are called *shades* (that is "shadows"), or *spirits* or *ghosts* (that is "breaths"); terms which are relics of men's earliest theories of life. Such expressions as "thank heaven," "heaven knows," etc., take us back to the time when sky-worship was an actual fact, as surely as the sacred stone-knife used in circumcision points back to the time when metal implements were unknown. Similarly, survivals of early faith may be found in most of our sanctified customs, as surely as signs of man's own animal origin are found in his structure and propensities. The irrational parts of our customs and creeds are survivals of an earlier condition, just as the useless parts of an organism refer us back to an earlier development, in which they had a recognised place and purpose.

Belief in spirits appears among all the low races with whom we have acquaintance. This belief naturally leads to some kind of propitiation and worship. Sir A. C. Lyall says (*Natural Religion in India*, p. 26): "It is certain that in India one can distinctly follow the evolution of the ghosts of men whose life or death has been notorious into gods." He mentions that General Nicholson, who was killed at the storming of Delhi, had a sect of worshippers; and in South India they adore the spirit of Captain Pole. In the instance of the natives of Tinnevely, who, after the death of a British officer, offered at his grave the brandy and cheeroots which he loved in his life-time, in order to propitiate his spirit, we see the beginning of a cultus. The temple is founded at the tomb. Mountains become sacred by chiefs being buried at the top. Caves for the same reason. The one suggests communion with the sky, the other with the underworld. A successful leader is first feared as a man, then represented as with supernatural power, and finally worshipped as a god. In Tanna, one of the New Hebrides, Mr. Turner tells us "the general name for God seemed to be *Armeha*; that means 'a dead man,' and hints alike at the origin and nature of their religious worship." Temples were built at tombs or shrines, or are dedicated to dead saints. Worship is first offered to the actual ghost of the person buried. The spirits of the dead are the gods of the living. Great men, ghosts and gods, are originally undifferentiated in thought. Ghosts are fed, propitiated, receive worship, and the fittest ghosts survive, becoming gods. Among the natives of India the deification of men is still active. In the instructive story of Saul and the Witch of Endor, she says: "I saw gods (Elohim) ascending out of the earth" (I Sam. xxviii, 8).

A touching scene is related by a traveller of an African woman placing a morsel of bread between the lips of her dead child. This artless expression of grief and desire shows the germ of woman's religion. The life was gone, but it returned in dreams; in yearnings of the bosom. The ghost must want sustenance. Its kin on earth must provide; how could it be reached; where was the messenger? At first others were dispatched, slaughtered as sacrifices, young girls being chosen as being least useful to the tribes; while in a wild state infanticide was religious

and useful; then with the discovery of fire, flame springing from earth to sky became the messenger to whom offerings and sacrifices were consigned. Fire was kept permanently on the altar, that so valuable an agent might never be lost, and it became the duty of virgins whose lives had thus been saved to preserve the treasure. Oil and fats which made the flame leap heavenward, became acceptable offerings. In the ever-burning lamps and candles of modern times we have the survival of a time when fire was precious and flame the messenger of the gods, while the candle preserves the shape of the symbol of reproduction. The Rig Veda opens with an invocation to Agni, the god of fire, the chief agent of sacrifice and itself a god. Fire is asked to accept the offerings and carry them to the ancestors, knowing the way; or the ancestors became embodied in the fire, as Jehovah manifests himself on Carmel and the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Here we see the early trinity, the ancestral Father in Heaven, the Son at once sacrificer and the victim, and the Holy Spirit that conveys the sacrifice.

The sacred fire was, and is to this day, made in the early manner by the friction of the Soma tree, called then the mother of fire. If by any accident the dire calamity of the extinction of the sacred fire befell the Romans, the Pontifex Maximus, the priest who sacrificed to the guarding spirit on bridges, reproduced the fire from two pieces of the sacred tree Arbor Felix. The Roman priests pretended that only through them could be obtained the holy fire; just as did the Jewish priests that only at Jerusalem could sacrifices be offered, and just as they everywhere pretend, that only through apostolic succession comes the power of remitting the Holy Spirit.

At the offerings to the dead the ancestors, chiefs and medicine men of the past, were invoked by their names, and as these names were known only to those initiated in the mysteries, they gave the sacerdotal class material for the establishment of power and influence.

From the worship of fire as a means of communication with the dead probably came the conception of the sun, moon and stars as their abode. Moon worship took a prominent position in connection with the measurement of time. The month was known long before the year, and, in connection with female periodicity, presided over women, who were time-tellers long ere the phases of the moon were observed. Savages suppose a fresh moon is created every month. Graves were usually laid to the east, as churches are still oriented. Though the Hindus cremate their dead, the Brahmin commences the ritual of the Sraddhas, as the architect plans a church. He forms the figure of a cross and the altar is placed in an eastern direction. In this earliest ritual of the Aryans, offerings of food are made to the ancestors and to animals. As the beatitude of the *manes* above depended on their descendants beneath, the latter were bound to take care their lines should not be interrupted. "Increase and multiply" is the voice of barbaric religion. Begetting a male child was a prime duty; and female infanticide, as among some tribes still, was supposed to help. This led to provision for adoption, which in India is so deeply religious that it can break the bonds of caste, which belongs to a later stratum of development.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.
(To be Concluded.)

In *Faust* we see, as in a mirror, the eternal problem of our intellectual existence; and, beside it, varied lineaments of our social existence. It is at once a problem and a picture. Therein lies its fascination. The problem embraces questions of vital importance; the picture represents opinions, sentiments, classes, moving on the stage of life.—George Henry Lewes, "The Life of Goethe."

The Eclipse of Evolution.

SOME fifty years ago an intellectual battle was lost, and won. Then, Huxley, using Darwin's "munitions," went out bravely into the open and met the ablest minds which early training and added wealth could marshal on behalf of the Mosaic cosmogony and defeated them utterly. They then, after the manner of beaten armies, retreated to the nearest ditch in the rear. They said that the Bible had been misinterpreted and that the Hebrew words really meant all that science had just discovered; there had been, on the part of Jewish and Christian scholars, some truly astonishing mistranslations of the inspired original; let us carry on just the same. So that the educated classes had given way and the opponents of "revelation" thought that the fight was finished for good and all. But all the while the crowds of the lower culture—or want of culture—remained the usual prey of the priests, and all the while the young minds were being steadily twisted in all the schools and grew up in a state of intellectual deformity. And now that the nineteenth century battles have been forgotten, the lower herd and their leaders are growing bold. Using the wealth inherited from the dead, they are attempting to cramp the views of the living. Popes and Presbyters are applying "tests" and forcing old shibboleths upon the teachers in colleges. "Lie or starve," is once more put before thinking minds. In earlier times it was "yield or burn," and the best men burned! But persecution is a very dangerous course to take. It is only successful when it is very ruthless and overwhelmingly powerful, even then, it generally fails in the course of time.

The present aggressive attitude of the Churches will, in the end, create an openly hostile force of educated people to fight against them. It will compel the more timid and easy-going to rally into organized opposition. And while the scrolls of the Jewish tribal god were written on parchment, the leaves of the great earth-book are written in strata, too deep, too wide, too vast, for obliteration by censors. They challenge us again to read and determine. The evidence is there before us: we will. TAB CAN.

Hampstead.

Correspondence.

SUNDAY GAMES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

STR,—The question of Sunday Games has once more cropped up, and I make claim to be one of the pioneers of Sunday sport. Perhaps a few observations on my part would be of interest to your readers.

In 1908 I founded the "Iconoclasts Sunday Cricket Club," and Mr. Foote in those days very generously mentioned my bantling in the *Freethinker*. Indeed, the original members were readers of your paper. But, of course, we soon threw the club open to all denominations as it is no use preaching to the converted. You will be surprised at the pleasure which this club gave to many people. The bachelor, living in lodgings was able to spend a nice Sunday in the fresh air, and so was the business girl. Families used the picturesque ground and really enjoyed themselves. How anyone but a lunatic could oppose Sunday recreation is a mystery to me. The point which the Sabbatarians make is that Sunday recreation involves extra labour, but that is not so. In any case, trains and trams or other conveyances have to run, and as regards the people employed on the recreation grounds, they are only too glad to have the extra work. For instance, our scorer was a boy of about fourteen or fifteen, who received 2s. per day, which is not bad pocket money for a youngster, especially in pre-war days. Incidentally, a boy of this kind is a budding cricketer, and

I could have got thousands to work for nothing had I wished. The same applies to the umpire, who was devoted to cricket and delighted to spend a day watching a decent match, for which, incidentally, he received 3s. or 4s. The same applies to the refreshment attendant. I believe we had two in the end, and both were most delighted to have the extra money and spend a day in the fresh air. Incidentally, I may say there was always a whip round for everyone employed by us, resulting in quite a nice contribution.

The main difficulty we had to contend against is that the governing authorities of all branches of sport in England are opposed to Sunday games. For instance, the Football Association not only prohibits Sunday play, but suspends any of their members known to have played on Sunday, and it will interest you to hear that the International Match between Norway and England has been cancelled as the Football Association refuses to play on Sunday and the Norwegians will not play on any other day. We hear so much about the decadence of sport in England, though pessimism in this direction is hardly warranted, that I believe that if we encourage Sunday recreation and Sunday sports it would once more place us at the head of the nations as regards athletics, but as long as the Football Association, the Rugby Union, the M.C.C. and other athletic associations prohibit or discourage Sunday sport, we shall be hard pressed to hold our own against other nations.

To the disadvantage of Saturday games I can attest. When I was in the City in pre-war days I used to play cricket and hockey on Saturdays for various clubs, but it was always a great nuisance having to rush off from business, especially if there was a lot of work to do, snatch a hurried meal at some railway buffet, and rush off to catch my train, whereas on Sundays one could take the whole thing leisurely.

Sooner or later Sunday sport will come, but we have a long way to go and must first convert the governing authorities of the various sections of athletics and sport.

H. E. LATIMER-VOIGHT.

LABOUR AND RELIGION.

STR,—As most of us in the Socialist movement think that whatever Mr. G. Lansbury says "rings true," it is regrettable to see him in the rôle of casuist as he unmistakably revealed himself in his Saturday article on "Labour and Religion." He speaks of those who "denounce religion and ethics." Why link the two? Who denounces ethics? Who denounces morality? If "God" and "goodness" are convertible terms, that implies that the man who has no use for belief in gods is lost to a sense of goodness, which is a libel upon the rationally-conscious non-Christian. Again "God" is synonymous with "rebuke of conscience," which is not the Christian interpretation. We are also reminded of the "Eternal Truths" of Christianity. Well, if it has any, we who are Labour-Rationalists are as anxious to preserve them as he. It is not the eternal truths, but the eternal falsehoods of Christianity and religions in general that we assail. We assail its delusions, its superstitions, its fairy tales, its mythology and other unscientific nonsense that it seeks to propagate, and because, as you have frequently pointed out in the columns of the *Freethinker*, hosts of good intentioned men allow their minds to wander along meaningless avenues, attempting to solve biblical funniosities which have no bearing on this or any other life, and which effort would be better diverted to improving life conditions here and now through the instrument which many of us, rightly or wrongly, think fit.

J. S. REYNOLDS.

In this age, the saturnalia of specialists, pedants are continually giving us theories of the effect of this or that institution, and show how the welfare of nations depends on a representative chamber or a free Press or adult suffrage. We are getting to feel that the welfare of the nations depends on a healthy social system which is the sum of a multitude of moral and social forces. We have yet to learn that the wealth of nations itself depends on a similar aggregate.—*Frederic Harrison.*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
JANUARY 25, 1923.

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Corrigan, McLaren, Moss, Neate, Rosetti, and Quinton; Miss Kough and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The Financial Statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Manchester, Newcastle, Plymouth, Stockport, Swansea, and the Parent Society.

The Propagandist Committee's Report recommending that arrangements be made for a speaker to visit the Tyneside and district for six weeks at the end of April was received and adopted.

Correspondence was dealt with from Birmingham, Fulham and Stockport branches and from the Metropolitan Secular Society.

It was reported that Stratford Town Hall had been engaged for March 11, 18, and 25, and an application for assistance from the Swansea Branch was considered and a grant of £5 made.

A highly successful Annual Dinner on January 16 was reported and the Secretary instructed to make enquiries as to the possibility of a social gathering at an early date, and to endeavour to arrange for a series of Sunday meetings in London.

Instructions were given for the issue of the usual circular to branches desirous of inviting the Conference on Whit-Sunday, and the meeting closed. E. M. VANCE,

General Secretary.

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Mrs. Charles Harwood, of 24 Tilson Road, Tottenham, which occurred, after a long and painful illness, on Friday, January 19, at the age of sixty-four years. Mrs. Harwood was a deeply convinced and zealous Freethinker, who brought up a large family of sons and daughters as loyal sharers of her own unbelief in Christianity. Both she and her husband rendered signal service to our cause as members of the Edmonton Branch of the N.S.S. Mrs. Harwood was not one of those who hide their light under a bushel. On the contrary, she placed her non-religious convictions in the forefront of her life, so that all who came in contact with her should see and know them. She advocated her views in a gentle, winsome manner, and was, as one who knew her well says, "a fine type of happy, intelligent womanhood." Her long illness she bore with amazing patience. Many will miss her, but most of all her sorrowing family, where she always played the part of exceptionally loving and devoted wife and mother. Her popularity was proved by the unusually large number of people who assembled at the graveside in the Tottenham Cemetery on Thursday, January 25, when a secular service was conducted by the undersigned.—J. T. L.

Bargains in Books.

THE ETHIC OF FREETHOUGHT.

By KARL PEARSON.

Essays in Freethought History and Sociology.
Published 10s. 6d. Price 5s. 6d., postage 7d.

KAFIR SOCIALISM AND THE DAWN OF INDIVIDUALISM.

An Introduction to the Study of the Native Problem.

By DUDLEY KIDD.

Published 7s. 6d. Price 3s. 9d., postage 9d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.1, side entrance down steps): 8, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "In-sults of Religion."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, S.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Miss Elsie E. Morton, "The General Election; Some Reflection; The Next Step to Reform."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9, three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. J. H. Van Biene, "When We Are Civilized." Discussion Circle meets Monday, February 5, at 8, when Mr. Howell Smith will open on "Mr. Wells and the Salvaging of Civilization."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, "The Meaning of Utilitarianism."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity's Harmony with Science—Anthropology."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 11.30, Mr. McNeil, "Theism." Questions invited. Silver collection.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S.—No meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Grand Concert, by Arcadian Orchestra and local artistes.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Rusholme Public Hall, over Free Library, Dickenson Road): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "The Fear of Death"; 6.30, "The Love of Life."

STOCKPORT BRANCH N.S.S. (191 Higher Hillgate): Thursday, February 8, at 7.30. A Lecture; speaker and subject announced later. All invited.

BRADLAUGH'S Splendid Bronze Bust on Pedestal (height sixteen inches), and thirty-two volumes of Selected Freethought Works; £5 lot; carriage paid.—B. CARSWELL, 210 City Road, London, E.C.1.

FOR SALE.—Violin and Outfit, complete in every detail, including a parcel of Music. Price £3.—J. WILLIAMS, 76 Portland Road, W.11.

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

LONDON.

E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate. M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking. W. H. Smith & Son, Seven Kings Railway Station Bookstall.

E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6 Byward Street. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Road. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch Street. J. J. Joques, 191 Old Street.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Road, Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Road (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Road, Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore Street, Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Road.

N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 316 Kentish Town Road. W. Lloyd, 5, Falkland Road, Kentish Town.

S.E.—J. H. Vullick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham. W. Law, 19 Avondale Road, Peckham.

S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.

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