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Views and Opinions.

The Decay of Belief.

The editor of *Pearson's Magazine* has been struck by the fact that people are losing interest in religion. A discovery of that kind to-day does not imply unusual powers of observation, and when said in one of our popular magazines it means little more than that the decay of religious belief is now so patent that no great risk is run by its being noted. So the editor sent a letter to Mr. H. G. Wells asking him what he thought about it, and then sent Mr. Wells' reply to fifty bishops asking them what they thought of Mr. Wells? All this spells a hunt for saleable "copy," and, as a study of our delightful Press shows, it matters little whether it is a question of the character of Jesus Christ or the escapades of Mrs. Thompson and Bywaters, so long as more copies of a particular publication can be sold, it is enough. In his letter to the bishops the editor says that "signs of indifference to religion are to be noticed in the literature, art, and music of the country," but as that is immediately followed by the comment that "we have no great religious writers such as Dean Farrar, whose book, *The Life of Christ*, made a tremendous appeal," this description of that farrago of bad history, emotionalism, and religious fiction does not impress one with the editor's critical ability. However, of the fifty bishops who were invited to give an opinion on the decay of religion only five responded. Perhaps they who remained silent showed more wisdom than those who spoke.

* * *

Mr. Wells and the Churches.

The letter of Mr. Wells to which the bishops were invited to reply has the usual quality of his deliverances on matters of religion—it begins anywhere and ends up a tree. When Mr. Wells says that to the question of "What must I do to be saved?" the Churches "give a confused, unconvincing, and unsatisfying answer," he is saying something that exactly describes his own deliverances on the matter of religion. He has a number of phrases about Christianity, but nothing either definite, satisfying, or convincing. Thus, to say that an increasing moral impotence is a phenomenon common to all the organized Christian Churches is to not only say that which is obvious, but it is a phenomenon that has been obvious all through Christian history. There has never been a

period in the whole history of the Christian Churches when preachers have not been lamenting the fact that people would not, in the mass, pay attention to Christian teaching so far as its moral injunctions were concerned; and in saying this they were confessing its moral impotence. Mr. Wells, in repeating this to-day, serves only to continue the confusion of thought in which most move in regard to Christianity. He implies that there was once a time when the Churches did exercise a moralizing influence over the people; and that is just one of the historical superstitions which the Church has created and which Mr. Wells has either not outgrown, or does not care to challenge. As a matter of fact, so far as moral teaching is concerned there was never a period of Christian history when the Church showed to better advantage than it does to-day; and this not because of any inherent good in the Church, but simply because forces which the Churches cannot control have forced it to humanize its teaching and to drop a deal of its supernaturalism. Had Mr. Wells made this clear he would have performed a real service. As it is, his assumed air of a scientific historian only serves to delude those whose analysis of the factors at work in relation to religion is as imperfect as his own.

* * *

Misleading History.

Here is a fine example of the way in which Mr. Wells perpetuates superstitions in the apparent act of teaching people to think correctly and scientifically. He says:—

Within a few score years of the crucifixion, Christianity had become hopelessly involved with ceremonies and superstitions of immemorial antiquity, and with a theology embodying the imperfectly embalmed philosophy of Alexandria. In a less critical age it was possible for many to live holy and noble lives within the terms of these old formulæ, but to-day when intellectual integrity is being recognized as a primary moral obligation this can be done no longer.

Now what is one to make of a person who sets out to give his readers a rational and scientific conception of things and who, in a short paragraph, asserts: (1) That the crucifixion is an historical fact; (2) that Christianity is something distinct from superstitions of immemorial antiquity; and (3) ignores the historic fact that it was precisely because men tried to live "within the terms of these old formulæ" that there occurred the greatest distortion of man's moral sense that civilized history is acquainted with? To begin with, Mr. Wells ought to know quite well that we know nothing at all dependable of Christianity within a few score years of the crucifixion, and to refer to that as though it were an historical happening fixed as definitely as the conquests of Alexander the Great is in the highest degree misleading. Next, we may challenge Mr. Wells to produce evidence of any form of Christianity known to history that was not mixed up with ceremonies and superstitions of great antiquity. The crucifixion itself, embodying as it does the idea of a dying Saviour-God, is one of the

oldest of religious superstitions. The Christian teaching of demonism goes back to the most remote periods of human history. The story of a virgin-birth belongs to the time when man was as yet unacquainted with the true facts and nature of procreation. The belief in the power of petitions to work miracles belongs to the lowest and oldest strata of religious history. The belief in angels and devils and in an after world to which the dead go belongs to all primitive forms of religious belief. What is the use then of Mr. Wells writing as though there were some pure and primitive form of Christianity that afterwards became entangled with and corrupted by Egyptian and other superstitions? That is not telling the people the truth about Christianity. It is not teaching them to think correctly about Christianity. It is simply perpetuating the fictions of the pulpit. Mr. Wells does no harm when he pens his fancies about the future. They may amuse, and occasionally instruct; but it is harmful when he carries his romancing into the past and presents the products of his imagination as actual history to readers who are not all in a position to correct his inaccuracies.

* * *

The Fetish of "Religion."

Here are two other deliverances in which confusion runs riot. The fact that the Churches are losing their power over the people does not imply, he says, "that there has been a decline in religious feeling and aspiration.....The desire for a peace of mind such as only deep and pure conviction can supply has never been so strong and so widespread." Now the only intelligible meaning that can be given to such an expression as "religious feeling and aspiration" is feelings connected with God and a future life; and if Mr. Wells means that these feelings are not weaker than they were then he is stating that which is demonstrably untrue. Whether it be a good thing or a bad thing there can be no question that there are more people who disbelieve in both God and a future life than there ever were, while even those who believe in these things do so with less certainty than was once the case. There is universal and deeply implanted doubt about the very fundamentals of religion, and that doubt tends to become stronger rather than weaker. Mr. Wells' illustrative comment that religion is not weaker because there is a widespread desire for peace of mind and for deep and pure convictions, strikes one as just so much verbal nonsense. The desire for peace of mind is not a peculiarity of religion, the appreciation of the value of deep and pure convictions certainly is not. Nor are deep and pure convictions to be gained by playing fast and loose with the meanings of vital words in the way in which Mr. Wells does in these passages. Religions are not at all concerned with the value of convictions, as such. Their concern lies solely with our being convinced of the value of specific beliefs. No matter what may be the purity and strength of our convictions religions neither value nor respect them so long as they are not convictions as to the truth of a specific religious doctrine. This habit of taking hold of something that is admittedly good and labelling it as religion is nowadays a very common pulpit trick, it serves to distract attention from the uglier and essential aspects of religion. That kind of confusion should be avoided by one who, like Mr. Wells, aims at being a teacher of the people in methods or rational thinking. Sight really is essential to those who would lead the blind.

* * *

Why Not Tell the Truth?

There is one sentence in Mr. Wells' deliverance with which I heartily agree. He says, "People know more than ever was known before.....of the origins of the creeds and symbols of Christianity." The only qualification I should feel inclined to make in this

sentence is to preface it by "Some." Some people know, the mass do not; and it is the mass that need telling the truth, instead of being lulled into a state of unintelligent belief in Christianity by being talked to about "pure Christianity," and the overlaying of some imaginary early ideal of Christianity with a mass of superstitions. We do know more of the origins of Christian creeds and symbols than was ever before known. This knowledge has been with us for many years, and yet those who have the ear of the public keep it more or less to themselves. Some of our leading anthropologists write bulky volumes about the religious beliefs of savages; they show, to those who can read with intelligence, the beginnings of the Christian beliefs in the ignorance of the savage, but they will not dot the i's and cross the t's of their own writings. They will not say plainly and openly that the chief value of their writings is because they show Christianity in the making, and that unless we are willing to take up the mental standpoint of the savage we cannot believe in Christian doctrines; and apart from these specialists our leading writers, who also have access to the public, will not tell the people that all this identification of Christianity with moral and intellectual virtues is so much humbug, so many attempts to get the people to support Christianity by pretending it is something which it is not. What is the use of vapouring about the value of truth and of "deep and pure convictions" so long as one is—consciously or unconsciously lending a hand at this game of deception? Our greatest need at present is for our leading scientific men and publicists to tell the world what they believe to be the truth about Christianity and about religion in general. They do not do this; they dare not do this. They are courageous so long as it is some unpopular superstition that is being demolished; and all the time by paying it compliments which it in no wise deserves they yield their meed of deference to the greatest superstition of all.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

On the Right Road.

HASTINGS RASHDALL, D.D., D.Litt., D.C.L., Dean of Carlisle, is one of the most accomplished scholars in the Anglican Church. He is a Fellow of the British Academy, and was successively Fellow and Lecturer at Hertford College and New College, Oxford. He is the author of several learned works, such as *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, *The Theory of Good and Evil*, and *Philosophy and Religion*. As leader in the Modernist movement he has for many years been subjected to a considerable amount of acrimonious criticism, which occasionally degenerated into positive persecution. Chief among his detractors have been two Bishops, the infallible Bishop of Zanzibar and Bishop Gore. From their point of view his main faults are that he has openly broken with tradition and had the temerity to criticize the Creeds which to them are infinitely above criticism. The Catholic party in the Church regards all Modernists as dangerous heresiarchs, into whose lot no ecclesiastical preferments, at any rate, should ever fall.

In our estimation Dr. Rashdall is certainly on the right road, and the only fault we have to find with him is that he has made a halt before getting to his only logical destination. As an apt illustration of the wholly illogical position of the Modernists, we will take an address, entitled "What is the Church?" which the Dean of Carlisle recently delivered under the auspices of the Modern Churchmen's Union, of which there is a verbatim report in the *Christian World Pulpit* of February 1. First of all he gives the

orthodox conception of the institution and nature of the Church, which we reproduce in his own words:—

The Master from the first conceived of himself as deliberately founding a great world-wide society, membership in which and submission to which was an essential, perhaps the most essential, part of what is meant by being a Christian. He appointed twelve Apostles, and afterwards seventy others, and conferred upon them authority, not merely to preach and to teach, but to rule and especially to determine what was to be the means of becoming a Christian. He enjoined that the Apostles should have power by the laying-on of hands to transmit their powers to successors, who were hereafter called Bishops, and to confer subordinate powers upon the successors of the seventy, who came to be known as presbyters or priests, and upon others who were called deacons. Without these three orders no Church could be a Church.....According to this conception, a man can no more be a Christian without being a member, an obedient and submissive member, of the Church than he can be a soldier of the king without belonging to the army and obeying its officers.

To those who believe that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God no other conception of the Church is possible, orthodoxy being the only permissible doxy. Even to cast a shadow of doubt upon the orthodox conception of the Church a man must be himself already unorthodox; and so it turns out in Dean Rashdall's case. He repudiates the traditional doctrine of the Church because he has succeeded in convincing himself that the only references to the Church in the Four Gospels, which occur in Matthew xvi 18, xviii 17, are late interpolations. He avers that some quite conservative scholars would say that Matthew's Gospel belongs, in its present form, to the early part of the second century. Then he adds:—

At all events, it was most certainly not written by St. Matthew himself. Many of the passages, which are found only in this Gospel, bear indications of having been coloured or modified by later traditional amplification, by the usages and organizations and beliefs of the later Church; and of no passage in the Gospel surely can this be said with more confidence than of these passages about the Church.

That is sufficiently candid, but it is also sufficiently heterodox to justify the traditionalists in characterizing it as extremely dangerous. The admission that the Church was not founded by the Gospel Jesus is tantamount to conceding that it is a purely human institution. Thus, at one stroke, a main bulwark of the Christian religion crumbles into dust. The Gospel Jesus not only did not institute the Church himself, he did not even "contemplate the existence of an elaborate, organized, world-wide society, with a fixed and unalterable constitution, with its officials, assemblies, Church courts, and the like." The Dean exclaims: "There is not the slightest trace of anything of the kind. The notion is completely unhistorical." We are in enthusiastic agreement with him in these firm repudiations; but the moment he begins to affirm this and that concerning the Church we lose all touch with him. He declares that all Churches are organizations which realize their ideal so imperfectly "that a man can be quite a good Christian without belonging to any of them or associating himself with any of their corporate activities." At this point we have two questions to ask him. The first is, what does he mean by "quite a good Christian?" Is a good Christian anything more than a good man? But there are multitudes of thoroughly good people in Heathen countries, particularly in India, China, and Japan; and more than once has the present writer come across magnificent specimens of the noblest character among untutored savages. Dr. Rashdall says that Christianity needs the Church, which is perfectly true. As Matthew Arnold maintains in his

Literature and Dogma, Christianity would have died long ago had it not been for the Church and the clergy. Surely the Dean is guilty of wicked trifling in his use of terms, especially the words "Christianity" and the "Church." He knows perfectly well that by Christianity he does not mean the organized religion of the Churches, or historical Christianity. He mentions with regret that M. Loisy is now lost to the Roman Church and to all Churches; but he omits all allusion to the most important fact about M. Loisy, namely, that he regarded Christianity as fundamentally different from the religion preached by Jesus, whom it transformed from a Great Teacher into a supernatural Saviour-God. As Bishop Gore has often asserted, it is impossible to learn from the language he employs what his conception of Christianity really is, or of the Church which he says is necessary to it. Take the following strange and self-contradictory utterance:—

The moment you identify any outward and visible corporation, its members, its organization, its hierarchy, its peculiar institutions and manner of life, with the Church; directly you say, no matter how far short that society falls of its true ideal, that society and that alone is the Church; the moment you say that you are losing sight of all that makes the Church of Christ different from other human societies. The Church is neither invisible nor visible. It is an ideal. The true ideal Church is to be a society of all who love Christ and one another.

The second question we wish to put to the Dean is, what moral right has he to remain in the Anglican Church? Its Thirty-Nine Articles he cannot honestly uphold, and he has to recite Creeds at public worship in the truth and religious value of which he does not believe. Besides, the Established Church is anything but a society in which the ideal of brotherhood can be fully realized. There are in it at present at least three irreconcilable parties which can neither think nor speak well of one another. No Church has ever been a power-house for the generation of brotherly love. Both the Catholic Church and the almost innumerable Protestant sects have been and largely are the battle-fields of conflicting and mutually destructive creeds rather than the nursing-homes of philanthropy.

We have not seen the late Professor Royce's book, entitled *The Problem of Christianity*, though we have read several of his philosophical works. The practical portion of this book is highly eulogized by the Dean because it sets forth the essence of the Christian ideal "with extraordinary force and insight"; and yet it is not a work he can indiscriminately recommend because it almost entirely ignores "the other side of the Christian life, communion with God as revealed in Christ." We, too, entirely ignore that "other side of the Christian life" because we look upon it as utterly non-existent except in the imagination of those who vainly believe that they experience it. That this view is right is proved by the fact that "communion with God as revealed in Christ" does not bear fruit in the realization of the ideal of the human brotherhood. Christians do not love one another as a brotherhood, for if they did enervating riches and grinding poverty would not exist side by side as they do at this moment. In practice God is not an object to love and imitate, but to argue and quarrel about, and that because he, too, has only an imaginary existence.

Yes, the Modernists did start on the right road, but before they had travelled many leagues they came to a sudden and incomprehensible stand still. The road they are on leads straight to Atheism, but for some unknown reason they are making a long halt. Meanwhile Supernaturalism is steadily losing its hold upon the people, many of whom are becoming Secularists; and we are confident that when the Modernists do move it will certainly be in the direction of the only logical and ethical destination.

J. T. LLOYD.

Arnold's Centenary.

The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away.
—Matthew Arnold.

The most efficient, the surest-footed poet of our time.
—Swinburne on Matthew Arnold.

The times are ripening for his poetry, which is full of foretastes of the morrow.
—Augustine Birrell on Arnold.

THE centenary of the birth of Matthew Arnold has been commented on in the Press with mixed feelings. The younger critics complain that his work was Victorian, which it was not; and the older men remark more justly that Arnold's poetry is better stuff than is produced to-day. Although Arnold's work always attracted the attention of cultured people, he never was a popular poet. With the exception of *The Forsaken Merman* and *Desire*, which are met with frequently in anthologies, he cannot be said to have gained really extensive notice. The bulk of his verse, outside intellectual circles, is little known; but his work stands in a remarkable way the wear and tear of the years, gaining rather than losing as time passes. Its admirers, while they avoided invidious comparisons with Browning and Tennyson, whose work appealed more powerfully to the general reader, yet thought that in Arnold's pages they found something which attracted them.

Arnold possessed an exquisite tact, a self-restraint, which is only paralleled by the great writers. He is so free from the straining after perpetual metaphor. This perfection of style is a much higher merit than is usually acknowledged. Listen:—

His eyes be like the starry lights—
His voice like sounds of summer nights—
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe.

Once more:—

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze;
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.

In Arnold's verse there is an ever-present sense of the largeness and austerity of Nature:—

The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars and the cold lunar beams,
Alone the sun arises, and alone
Spring the great streams.

Matthew Arnold had too great and sincere a love for the great classical writers to have been long enamoured of the Victorian version of the Christian religion with its sentimental insincerities and evasions. The world in which his favourite classical writers lived, their views of life and death and necessity, met his instincts better than the popular superstition as presented by Stanley or Spurgeon. It must always be borne in mind that he himself belonged to a very orthodox family, and, in religious matters, his foes were those of his own household. Yet he held his own way manfully. Writing to his mother in 1863, he said:—

One cannot change English ideas so much as, if I live, I hope to change them, without saying imper- turbably what one thinks and making a good many people uncomfortable. The great thing is to speak without a particle of vice, malice, or rancour.

In a letter to his sister in 1874, he said:—

The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away. This I say not to pain you, but to make my position clear to you.

Nobody can doubt that Arnold was quite sincere, and the irresistible inference is that in all his theological works—if, indeed, such charming works can be so called—he intended to work to that end. In the highest and noblest sense of the word, Matthew

Arnold was a Secularist. How essentially his imagination had become secularized is seen in his language concerning death. Thus, in his splendid monody on his friend Arthur Clough, he sings:—

Bear it from thy loved, sweet Arno vale,
For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
Their morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery deanders pale.

In *Geist's Grave*, his fine poem on the death of a dog, he strikes the same iconoclastic note:—

Stern law of every mortal lot,
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.
But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love did throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.
Thy memory lasts by here and there,
And thou shalt love as long as we.
And after that thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee.

In his magnificent lines on *Dover Beach* he is explicit enough:—

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore,
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear,
And naked shingles of the world.

His language concerning man's place in Nature is equally striking:—

Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightning go aside
To give his virtues room;
Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's
Nature, with equal mind, [barge.
Sees all her sons at play;
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweeps man away;
Allows the proudly riding and the foundering bark.

Here is an example of his didactic manner:—

The sophist sneers: Fool, take
Thy pleasure, right or wrong.
The pious wail: Forsake
A world these sophists throng,
Be neither saint nor sophist led, but be a man!

Although no one understood better the value of reticence in literature, Arnold knew the worth of ridicule as a weapon. He realized, as well as Voltaire, that there are delusions for which laughter is the proper cure. With a strong, careless grace, he compared the Christian Trinity to three Lord Shaftesburys, and he never showed weariness of the pleasant pastime of bishop-baiting. He was all his life girding at the Nonconformists, and he used to quote his own front name with humorous resignation as an instance of the sort of thing one had to put up with.

Arnold was inimitable. He combined with great poetic gifts the resources of the scholar, a philosopher, and a man of the world. His literary work was done in the scant leisure of a busy life; but he found time to write prose and verse of enduring value.

MIMNERMUS.

After the Holidays: A Prayer.

I THAT have walked with Beauty these long days,
And held her hand in silent woodland ways,
Seen in still pebbled pools her image clear,
On cairn-crowned mountain summit known her near—
Now I return to where my living lies,
Amid the city's every-hurrying throng,
Grant me the power to recognize
Her winsome shadow pass along.

JOHN ERNEST SIMPSON.

Animism.

III.

(Concluded from page 76.)

THE child in patriarchal times was a slave. Its duty extended to every service, to every sacrifice that could be made, extending to the surrender of life itself, as in the cases of Abraham and Jephthah. The relationship did not close with life. It was the part of the son "to serve his parents dead as he had served them living"; to this day this is the prime religious duty among the masses in India, China, Africa and many other parts of the world, where the doctrine of leaving father and mother and letting the dead bury the dead, is regarded as shocking impiety.

The first sacrifices, in the form of gifts of food and drink, corn and wine, to the dead, pass into the sacrifices of homage and of abnegation. Funeral rites are among the most prominent religious ceremonies among savages, and these consist largely of provisions for the return to life of the dead person. The Rev. Duff Macdonald, of Blantyre, in Central Africa, says significantly, "The ordinary offerings to the gods were just the ordinary food of the people." Servants, horses, weapons, food and clothing, are buried or dispatched at the grave for the use of the dead. This custom has been well-nigh universal, and has occasioned many barbarities. When a god or a messenger to the gods was wanted a man was killed. By Mexicans the number of victims was proportioned to the grandeur of the funeral, and amounted sometimes to two hundred. In Peru when an Inca died his attendants and favourite concubines, amounting sometimes to a thousand, would voluntarily immolate themselves. In Africa it was the same. Formerly in Congo, when the king was buried, a dozen young maids leapt into his grave and were buried alive to serve him in the other world. These maids were so eager for this service to their deceased prince that, in striving who should be first, they sometimes killed one another. Ximenes tells us, concerning the Indians of Vera Paz, that "when a lord was dying, they immediately killed as many slaves as he had, that they might precede him and prepare the house for their master." In savage belief the future was expected to be a counterpart of the present, the master continuing a master, and the slaves slaves. This feeling evidently survived in the French countess who declared that "God would think twice before damning a woman of quality." Speaking of East Central Africa, Mr. Rowley says:—

If the deceased belonged to the common sort of people, the expression of grief on the part of his relatives was not less demonstrative than that with which his betters were honoured, but he was left to shift for himself in the world of spirits, and a dreary life he was supposed to have there; but if he belonged to the great ones of the tribe, not only was he supplied with abundance of food, etc., but women were sacrificed to minister to his wants and pleasures.

No modern has so intense a belief in immortality as the ancient Britons, who would lend goods under expectation of being repaid in another life. Yet the belief was often a direct incentive to cruelty and callousness. Herodotus tells of a tribe of Getans, or Goths, on the Danube, who believed themselves immortal. They used to send messengers to heaven to acquaint their god of their special needs. They would fling a man aloft and catch him on their spear points; if he died quickly it was a good omen; if he happened to survive he was reviled as rejected by the god and a second victim was found to despatch as his substitute. The Hindoo custom of suttee, in which a widow was burnt on the funeral pile of her husband,

was another offshoot of the belief. Terrible pictures of this barbarous custom are often drawn at missionary meetings, when the auditors are not usually told that the sacrifice was a *voluntary* one, unsanctioned by the Vedas, or that it arose from the strong belief of the widow that she would pass through the fire and rejoin her dead husband in another world.

Murray, in his *Travels in Asia*, tells of a region in Thibet, where, as a religious practice, a sacred boy sallied forth equipped with sword and arrows to kill at pleasure whomever he met. No one resisted him, for it was believed that to be thus slain would be a signal blessing for them in another world.

The atrocities of human sacrifices largely depended on savage man's crude conception of another life, and the belief that it is the duty of the living to supply the needs of the dead. In Dahomey, the king sends constant messages to his dead ancestors by ambassadors who are killed for the purpose. They are well treated beforehand as important functionaries, and their death being almost painless they are quite contented and cheerful about their journey. The Rev. Duff Macdonald says: "A chief summons a slave, delivers to him a message, and then cuts off his head. If the chief forgets anything that he wanted to say, he sends another slave as a postscript." Mr. Rowley says: "The annual custom of human sacrifice at Dahomey was inaugurated in order to do honour to the lately deceased king, by sending him a yearly number of attendants befitting his rank." Human sacrifices also prevailed among the Ashantees. In October, 1881, some sixty girls were put to death that their blood might be used in cement to repair the royal palace.

Such customs remind us of the question of Plutarch in his treatise on Superstition:—

Had it not been far better for those Gauls, Scythians or Tartars in old time to have had no thought, idea or mention at all of the gods, than to think they delighted in the bloodshed of men and to believe that the highest and most holy service of the gods was to cut men's throats and to spill their blood?

Diodorus Siculus (xxi) tells us that:—

The Carthaginians offered as a sacrifice two hundred sons of the nobility; and no fewer than three hundred more voluntarily offered up themselves.

In the stories of Abraham and Iphigenia and the similar tale in the Aitareya Brahmana of the substitute of a horse for a man, an ass for a horse, a sheep for an ox, a goat for a sheep, and rice for a goat, we see a transition from human to animal sacrifice. Plutarch says:—

On the occasion of a plague at Falerii an oracle required that a virgin should be sacrificed to Juno. When Valeria Luperca had been chosen by lot for the sacrifice, and the sword was already drawn to slay her, an eagle came down from heaven and carried it away and laid it upon the head of a young heifer which was feeding near the temple, and which was sacrificed in her stead.

According to Plutarch (Is. et Os., xxxi) Egyptian animal victims were marked with a seal bearing the image of a man bound and with a sword at his throat. Conversely there is some evidence of fathers sacrificing their children, saying they are not children but beeves. In Micah vi, 6, we read "Shall I come before Him with beast offerings, with calves of a year old." The Hebrew reads "sons of a year." (See *The Passover* in my *Bible Studies*.) In China, paper figures are substituted and burnt at burials. The priests soon put forth a theory that in the sacrifice of animals the spirit only was to be given to the gods, the flesh being for themselves. The Ostyaks, when they kill an animal, rub some blood on the mouths of their

idols. Blood, in some cases, has been replaced by red paint. Leading a horse in the funeral procession of a soldier is a survival of an earlier custom which required the horse to be killed and buried with his master (which was done as late as 1781 at Trèves). This slaying of the horse was itself a survival from still earlier times, when it was believed that by this means the animal would be made available for his master in the next world.

Animism is not only responsible for sacrifices but for all the superstitions connected with sorcery, witchcraft and demonology, superstitions which have resulted in the slaughter of millions and which have been a bane and blight on countless myriads of lives. In my pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft and the Bible*, I have shown how deeply engrained these superstitions are in the volume which is still regarded as a fetish book by so many. Christians yet believe that Jesus was tempted by a personal evil spirit, who carried him to a pinnacle of a temple and to the top of an exceeding high mountain from which could be seen all kingdoms of the world; and that Jesus cast out devils, sending some of them into the bodies of over two thousand pigs. This power he is said to have delegated to his disciples. Forms for exorcism still exist in the Canons of the Church of England as well as in the Church of Rome. The latter Church has a special form of ordination for exorcists, and exorcisms are used over all candidates for baptism, as well as over the holy water itself, a very ancient survival of savagery. Bourne says of the Church of England clergy of his day that the vulgar think them no conjurers, and say none can lay spirits but Popish priests. We still speak of a man being "possessed" and "not himself." The word "epilepsy" means *seizure*, and takes us back to the time when convulsions were supposed to be caused by a demon seizing the patient. Within the civilized world the old philosophy which accounts for disease by the intrusion of a malignant spirit still remains, and accounts for such open superstitions as the belief in drastic pills and purges. White men, especially children, even practise the old religious rite of exsufflating it, or blowing it away, a rite which remains in both the Greek and Roman Churches.

The doctrine of the Trinity may trace descent from Animism. The Gods, as has been noted from Xenophanes to Feuerbach, have always been fashioned after man's image. There was a time, preserved among some Indian races, when man conceived himself as three-souled. There was the life of the son on earth, identified with the ancestral father above, and the returning ghost, and these three were one. Perhaps the idea displayed in the ideograph of the triangle survived in the Roman *manes, anima, and umbra*. Mr. Gerald Massey thinks the mother, child, and virile male was the first trinity in unity, and certainly this is earlier. But the subject of the evolution of the doctrine might fill a volume.

Animism passes into positive science through metaphysics. In this stage it is chiefly found now, and people talk of spiritual principles where formerly they spoke of the operation of spirits. It survives, however, in the imperfect theories of childhood and of the uneducated classes, and is preserved in the metaphors of the most cultured.

Hobbes declared that religion was superstition in fashion, superstition religion out of fashion. Researches into the genesis of religious beliefs confirm this, for therein may be discerned the elements of the most enlightened religion. A few years ago, five hundred devotees visited and prayed round the tomb of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, and in their zeal even chipped away portions of the shrine as relics. Necromancy is still a religion. The medium at the present day occupies the position of the Red

Indian medicine-man or the Highland ghost seer, and the highest in the realm visit his drawing-room to consult the spirits without the disguise that Saul used when resorting to the witch at Endor. Modern spiritism is a direct revival of ancient philosophy. Dr. E. B. Tylor says: "It is pure and simple savagery, both in its theory and the tricks by which it is supported." A savage witch-finder scarcely mixes up his subjectivity with the evidence of his senses in more hopeless confusion than the mystical-minded individuals who attribute to spirits the writing on slates at dark séances.

Savage and modern alike worship they know not what. God is only a bigger ghost, "a magnified, non-natural man," removed to the nebulousness of an Unknowable, with a big "U." When ghosts and goblins have utterly vanished, gods will follow suit. So far from universality of belief in spiritual existences being an argument in its favour, it is the reverse. The same argument could be used for the existence of witches. The genesis of the animistic theory is bad. The history of opinion shows it to have been conceived in ignorance and born of fear. It still holds its place for those provinces of phenomena which have not been satisfactorily explored, and is a sort of protecting genius of dark places from the desecrating light of accurate knowledge. Even when the cruder "spirit" is abandoned, it is frequently only refined and modified into some occult "principle" or "essence," theories of "psychic force," "subliminal consciousness," "telepathy," etc. Metaphysics is decaying animism offering us "the meat roasting power" of the jack as an explanation of its rotation. The doctrine of evolution provides us with a sure key, and a study of the genesis of faiths enables us to understand our customs and beliefs, which, however once adapted to our mental development, now only impose upon us by virtue, not of inherent truth, but of inherited prepossessions. To civilized man, as Dr. Tylor says:—

No indwelling deity now regulates the life of the burning sun, no guardian angels drive the stars across the arching firmament; the divine Ganges is water flowing down into the sea, to evaporate into cloud, and descend again in rain. No deity simmers in the boiling pot, no presiding spirits dwell in the volcanoes, no imprisoned demon shrieks from the mouth of the howling lunatic. There was a period of human thought when the whole universe seemed actuated by spiritual life. For our knowledge of our own history, it is deeply interesting that there should remain rude races yet living under the philosophy which we have so far passed from, since physics, chemistry, biology, have seized whole provinces of ancient Animism, setting force for life, and law for will.

On Animism, first and foremost should be consulted Dr. E. B. Tylor's great work on *Primitive Culture*. Dorman's *Origin of Primitive Superstitions* illustrates it effectively from American sources. Dr. J. G. Frazer's article on "Burial Customs" in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv, 64, seq, is notable. The article "Animism," by A. O. L., in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* also deserves reading. Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* shows the importance and illustrates the development of dead ancestor worship.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Everywhere nations are compelled to prepare to fight at any moment for the defence of their chattels, of their soil, of their liberty, even for the very preservation of their physical existence. More menacing still seems the future. For this apparently desperate state of things there is happily a discernible cause and a possible remedy: it is that there can be no international morality save by knowledge and practice of natural and positive international morals.—Henri Lambert.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Headlam, the new Bishop of Gloucester, has just published a life of Christ. Of the intellectual character of the Gospel Jesus he says:—

On any subject in which discovery or advance was possible for the human mind He added nothing to thought. It was not his work or function. The religious phraseology, the conception of the universe, the psychology, the scientific ideas, the social conditions, are all those of His own generation. Jesus speaks in the language of the day; He is concerned with the thoughts and aspirations then current.

Now that is a very pleasant way of letting some of the truth out. It would not have done to have said quite plainly that Jesus was as ignorant as the people around him. It sounds better to say, "It was not his work or function" to add to the thought of the time.

The plain truth is that the Jesus of the Gospels was not even abreast with the moderately educated thought of the time. The educated Greek and Roman world had very nearly given up the theory of "spirits" as causing disease. Jesus held the belief in demonism in its crudest and most ignorant form. There was a science of physics in existence, but Jesus knew nothing of that. The heliocentric theory of astronomy was known—Jesus believed in a flat earth. He believed in angels and demons, in the sudden interposition of some tribal deity, with all the fervour of a central African appealing to his numbo-jumbo; and what is the good or the value of the repetition of a handful of mere moral platitudes at the side of a teacher who is admittedly incapable of adding anything to a single thing that means discovery or advance for the human mind? Some time ago no clergyman would have dared to make such an admission as to the mental limitations of Jesus. But Freethought work tells, and one admission after another is forced from them. We shall be getting a genuine valuation of Jesus one of these days—when the truth can no longer profitably be concealed.

The Bishop of Gibraltar, says the *Evening News* (London), wants an aeroplane for use in his diocese of 3,500,000 square miles, extending from the Sahara to Switzerland, and from Portugal to the Caspian. It is noticeable how readily these "spiritual" leaders demand all the equipment of a civilization which they are ready enough, when it suits them, to denounce as "materialistic."

"I prefer the unexpurgated Psalms to any modern hymn-book," said Professor B. Pike at a meeting of London church people at Westminster. We wonder if the ladies in the congregation fainted.

There was a lengthy discussion on the West Ham Council the other day on the opening of the public parks for games on Sundays. Councillor Allison moved a resolution in its favour, and a deputation headed, of course, by some parsons, made its appearance. We see no reason for any body of tradesmen being refused a hearing when their professional interests are threatened, but we prefer they should put it on plain and obvious grounds, rather than upon the hypocritical plea of concern for the moral well-being of the community. On the Council there appears to have been a good deal of cross party voting and speaking, but in the end the principle was approved and the matter was remitted to committee for further consideration. So if there is any increase in the number of burglaries or murders in West Ham we shall know that it is to be attributed to the boys being allowed to play cricket and football on Sunday.

We see that the income of the Salvation Army Assurance Company, last year, was nearly three-quarters of a million. Few people are alive to the fact of what a large trading concern the Salvation Army is; and one would like to know, in face of its constant begging, exactly what becomes of its profits—and it takes care to make them in many directions.

We see from the *Fakenham Post* that the Young People's Society had a debate at their weekly meeting on the subject of "Should Capital Punishment be Abolished?" On a vote being taken a large majority were in favour of its continuance. We are not surprised. Christians have always been in favour of brutal punishments, including Hell.

The Queen has sent £50 to the Church Army. The Salvation Army officers will be using biblical language.

The Rev. G. K. S. Marshall, Vicar of Fulham, declares that the clergy are the most healthy and long-lived class in the nation. Their sons have as good a record as any in the athletic world. These things would not be possible if they did not receive a living wage. Yet the Bishop of London, and others, will persist in saying that the clergy are living on grass.

Twice within three months Thornton Heath Vicarage has been broken into by burglars, and each time the Vicar caught the burglar and handed him over to the police. A capital example of Christian non-resistance!

The discussion on the proposed revision of the Ten Commandments is adjourned by the National Assembly till July. Until then the pious will not be quite certain what it was the Lord meant to say; but they will swear by it after that date. Canon Barnes says that the Commandments will gain in force by being shorn, and says that "the Christian faith has no connection with Jewish folklore, in which neither men of science nor scholars can continue to profess belief." We are surprised. If the Christian faith has no connection with Jewish folk-lore, what basis has Christianity for the fall of man, which gives the reason for the atonement? Is it quite true that scholars can no longer profess belief in the Old Bible? Some Christian scholars certainly do. We do not say whether they really believe, but they certainly profess to; and we are quite certain that if all of them said exactly what they believe the rest of the world would open its eyes. For it is impossible to believe *all* that the Christian clergy are quite blind to the sham that their religion is, and how utterly it lacks foundation in modern knowledge.

Fancy a Canon of the Church of England referring to the Old Testament story as "Jewish folk-lore!" Contrast that statement with the position of fifty years ago, and one will have a measure of the extent to which Christianity has been beaten to its knees; and yet there are those who talk of the ineffectiveness of Freethought propaganda! Would the dignitaries of the Church make the admissions they do make if there were not going on all the time an active propaganda which is opening people's eyes as to the nature of the Christian religion? So long as they can the clergy teach all the old falsehoods; it is only when exposure is imminent and when the truth cannot be quite hidden from even church-goers that they come forward as "advanced" thinkers and begin to whisper some of the things we have been teaching for several generations.

The revising committee suggest a number of new prayers for various things and occasions. We suggest there should be one for honesty of speech in the pulpit. It is needed, and if it were answered it might do something to revive belief in miracles.

A Canadian reader, noting the number of clergymen who are attacking the Christian faith, asks whether the Archbishop of Canterbury will be the next. We hardly think so; but we are quite sure if Freethought held open a number of well-paid jobs, with a certain amount of social prestige attached, there would be scores of exoduses from the pulpit. But a work that means soldiers' rations at best, and not always that, does not appeal to the crowd.

A leaderette in the *Weekly Dispatch* of January 28, speaking of the proposed reformation of the Book of Common Prayer by the Church of England National Assembly says:—

It is a very serious question for Churchmen.....There are many High Churchmen and Low Churchmen who will find common ground in resisting any attempt to whittle down the Ten Commandments, or to alter the marriage service in deference to the views of those who find it "not quite nice." Religion is a matter of faith, and attempts to popularize any creed by concessions to its critics are likely to have an effect entirely the reverse of what is intended.

It is certainly a sign of the times and of the growing strength of Freethought and criticism when the Church of England begins to whittle down the "Word of God" and to tinker with the Ten Commandments.

This is the kind of thing which some papers provide for the glorification of the clergy and the benefit of its readers. It is taken from the *Leeds Mercury* of January 26. The Bishop of London, runs the story, was visiting a dying girl in an East End garret. The girl cried for water, and the Bishop could find none in the hovel. So he walked half-a-mile to his own house to get a drink of water for the girl. Now we should like to know the part of East London in which one has to walk half a mile to get a drop of water; and we should also like to know who told the *Leeds Mercury* of the occurrence. Was it the Bishop? In that case the tale reflects rather peculiarly on either his truthfulness or his sense.

After enlarging on the joys of a Turkish Bath, the Rev. F. B. Myers, writing in the *Manchester Daily Dispatch*, says:—

Yes, I am sorry they call so wholesome a process Turkish. But it is a curious fact that, although we say that cleanliness comes next to godliness, cleanliness has never been peculiar to Christianity. Ancient Greece and Rome luxuriated in their beautiful baths, but in the days of their decadence the baths, which had once been the homes of philosophic discourse, became the haunts of vice. No Christian, therefore, could enter them; and I fear that some of those saints of old would in our day have gone in danger of the Verminous Persons Act. *It was a choice between sanctity and soap.*

Cleanliness is quite modern as a Christian virtue, and bathrooms are by no means universal even yet.

Those who know the facts are aware that Mr. Myers is putting the case very mildly. The Christian Church not merely did away with the public baths of antiquity, but to take care of the body was a sure sign of sinfulness. What the Church preached was the sanctity of dirt, and the habit of being dirty has not yet been outgrown. It was all part of the immoral teachings of the Church that this world mattered nothing so long as man could make sure of the next. Perhaps the historian of a thousand years hence may write of Christianity as it actually was. The pictures of it as it is now presented would do credit to the *Daily Mail* when the late Lord Northcliffe was in full control.

The World's Christian Students' Christian Association intends holding a conference in China. Of course the purpose of the Conference is to consider how to promote the spiritual welfare of China. On that matter the Chinese may well ask whether a people who are so largely given up to the worship of brute force and the lust for money are in a position to teach the rest of the world anything on the plane of morals. And the Chinese do not forget that all these Christian approaches to China have usually meant another attempt at grab. At any rate, the Chinese are apparently hitting back. The Chinese Students' Association have issued a manifesto calling the attention of the Chinese to the Conference in which they say:—

We brand this conference to be a conference of robbers, humiliating and polluting our youth, cheating our people and robbing our economic resources.

It is inexcusable that Chinese should talk to Christians in this manner. How is the Lord to show his preference for his followers if he does not promote their exploitation of the "Heathen"?

The *Church Times* continues to fulminate against Mohammedanism as a religion of the sword. Certainly Mohammedanism has used the sword. But what religion has not? We invite the *Church Times* to give us the name of a single country in the world where Christianity has not established and maintained itself by force; and when it has done that—or attempted to do that—we should like our pious contemporary to compare the wars engineered by the followers of the Prophet with those engineered by the followers of Jesus. If that is done it will be seen that there is no religion in the world that has so persistently used the sword as has Christianity. Its followers have never sheathed the sword for a single generation during the whole history of modern Europe; and they remain to-day the standing threat to the peace of the world.

Perhaps the *Church Times* does not mean exactly what it says, but it is curious to find it remarking as a defence of the prayers for the dead that "a commemoration of the faithful departed is preferable to the driving of weak-minded persons to spiritualistic seances." It sounds anything but flattering to the extremely religious person, although we should be the last to deny that it contains a solid chunk of truth.

Lord Buckmaster, referring to the attacks made on him by the clergy because of his attitude towards divorce, says that his daughter happened to stray into a village church and found the parson praying for him. We can only say of this as Hume said when told that someone had called him St. David. "Never mind, there's many a better man than me been called a saint."

Dr. Lyttelton told a Gateshead audience the other day that what was needed was to give children a knowledge of God as a living truth. But why only to children? If there is any knowledge of God to be given we for one should be glad to get it. The trouble is that what passes for a knowledge of God is nothing more than mere fancy.

Atheism, said Canon Quick, speaking in St. Nicholas' Cathedral, Newcastle-on-Tyne, cannot account for "our moral and religious consciousness." All we have to say to that is that Canon Quick is speaking pure nonsense. There is nothing mysterious in either morals or religion to anyone who really desires to understand the subjects. Anyone who will study the evolution of society with a moderate degree of understanding will soon discover that the development of both morals and religious belief is as fully accountable as other forms of social and individual development. We do not expect the clergy to either welcome or advertise this explanation. They are mystery-men first, last, and all the time.

How to Help.

There are thousands of men and women who have left the Churches and who do not know of the existence of this journal. Most of them would become subscribers if only its existence were brought to their notice.

We are unable to reach them through the ordinary channels of commercial advertising, and so must rely upon the willingness of our friends to help. This may be given in many ways:

By taking an extra copy and sending it to a likely acquaintance.

By getting your newsagent to take an extra copy and display it.

By lending your own copy to a friend after you have read it.

By leaving a copy in a train, tram or 'bus.

It is monstrous that after forty years of existence, and in spite of the labour of love given it by those responsible for its existence, the *Freethinker* should not yet be in a sound financial position. It can be done if all will help. And the paper and the Cause is worthy of all that each can do for it.

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.

R. I. HIRST.—You are not the only one who has written to the *Daily Herald* protesting against the pandering of the Labour leaders to a certain type of religionist. It is a pity that people do not see nothing is gained in the long run by such tactics. But politics opens up the way to all sorts of temporising policies.

A. RUSSELL.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Glasgow Herald*. With you, we should like to know why the policy of Secular Education has disappeared from the Labour programme. Some of the earlier Labour leaders would rub their eyes.

T. O'NEILL.—A Freethought Society consists of men who are banded together in virtue of something which they hold in common. That is the root fact of all organization. There is nothing to prevent a member of an organization joining as many others as he agrees with; but it is unreasonable to ask that any one society shall advocate all the opinions in which he happens to believe.

A. MILLAR.—Sorry not to see you at Glasgow. Next time, perhaps.

C. F. RUDGE.—Sorry the matter was overlooked. It has now been attended to.

H. COPE.—We hope you will be able to do what you aim at. It is doing the cause a service to get the *Freethinker* displayed as widely as possible. Thanks.

P. MURPHY.—Thanks for article. Glad you are now getting your paper regularly.

A. E. THOMAS.—Pleased to know that Mr. Ammon promised to vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws when the occasion offered. We hope there will soon be an opportunity for him to do so.

J. HAMPSON.—Of course, no editor can put in all the letters that are sent him, but it is strange that so small a proportion putting the Freethought side are published.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

We hope our readers are not forgetting the matter of Sunday games in the parks to which we called attention last week. The Sabbatarians are moving all they can to get the L.C.C. to reverse its policy when the matter comes up in two or three months' time; and if they are to be

checked we must all get busy. Individuals should write their member, and those belonging to organizations of any kind, trade unions and the like, should get resolutions passed and sent in. The Sabbatarian move is quite artificial, it is worked up in mother's meetings and church parties, and the number of people who join in the protest appear and reappear like the soldiers in a stage army. It is for those who value a free and civilized Sunday to make their wishes known. The Christian Sunday has up to now been responsible for a greater degree of demoralization than any other day in the week, and in the interests of the physical and moral well-being of the younger generation we must do what we can to remedy the evil.

Members' subscriptions to the National Secular Society are now due. The Secretary informs us that they are coming in very well, but as usual, there are some who delay sending because "it is their nature to." We hope this paragraph will supply the necessary stimulus to get them to send before the books are made up for the year. If they care to add to their usual subscription by way of a self-imposed fine, no one will complain. The N.S.S. can do with all the funds it can get. There is always plenty of work to be done, and expenses are not so light as they used to be.

"A diverting collection of good things," says the *Salisbury Times*, "may be found between the covers of *Realistic Aphorisms and Purple Patches*. Some persons may be displeased with some of the epigrams, *bon mots*, and purple patches, but the bulk of mature readers will find delight, and continuous delight, in chuckling over the mordant wit and humour in which the whole are steeped." We are glad to say that the work is selling beyond expectations.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd had two good meetings at Manchester on Sunday last. There were many questions asked, an unusual number of Christians appeared to be present, and the Secretary writes us that there was a very good sale of literature. So everything was as it should be.

Miss L. Loat, Secretary of the Anti-Vaccination League, will speak on the question of Vaccination at the St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, Kentish Town, under the auspices of the North London Branch N.S.S. The meeting will commence at 7.30. As the subject of vaccination is very much in the air just now, a good attendance is probable and desirable.

Mr. W. Marriot will lecture to-day in Glasgow under the auspices of the local Branch of the N.S.S. In the morning, in the City Hall (Saloon) his subject will be, "The Scientist and the Spiritualists." In the evening in the large City Hall he will speak on "Is Spiritualism a Fraud?" with lantern illustrations. Admission will be by silver collection.

While attention is directed on ancient Egypt, thanks to the recent discoveries, those of our readers who have not yet read Gerald Massey's striking pamphlet, the *Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ* would be well-advised to secure a copy. Massey was a man who studied the Egyptian Mythology for over forty years, and he draws a series of deadly parallels which show how much of the Christian religion originated in the religion and symbology of ancient Egypt, and which Christian ignorance foisted on the world as an historical happening. The pamphlet is a veritable "eye-opener" and may be ordered through any bookseller, price sixpence, or direct from our publishing office for three-halfpence extra postage. It is certainly a pamphlet that should be read by everyone whether Freethinker or Christian. The pamphlet comes with the authority of one who made a life study of his subject, and who went direct to the fountain head for his information.

Mr. Cohen had a very pleasant meeting at Weston-super-Mare on February 1, and except for the interruptions of an Irishman who seemed half-crazed, the audience seemed interested in what was said, and so far as one could judge the majority of those present appeared to find the lecture to their taste. There was a shower of questions at the end, women as well as men joining in. A local gentleman took the chair, and he performed that function so admirably that we hope to see him in the same position on future occasions. Some Sunday lectures will be held there next season if it is at all possible to arrange them.

We are asked to again call attention to the "Social" of the West Ham Branch which will be held on Saturday evening, February 10. It will be in the Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, at 7 o'clock; admission is free. All Free-thinkers and their friends are welcome.

Some of our readers who take an interest in modern verse will be glad to add to their collections the first book of poems by Mr. Hubert Stone who, it will be remembered, has contributed occasionally to our columns. *From Northern Shires* (A. H. Stockwell, 1s. 6d. net) is a sheaf of lyrical poems which possess what we may call the fundamentals or raw material of poetry—imagination and emotion. But we are afraid it must be said, at least by the conscientious critic, that they have not quite enough art or craftsmanship. The poet's imagination and feeling do not "get across" to the reader. It is, we are afraid, too often forgotten that the poet is as much a conscious as an unconscious artist. He may be born, but he is also made. Mr. Stone, if he will pardon us for saying so, would have done better to have studied and practised more diligently the difficult art of verse. His metres suffer from wrench accents, his diction from awkward inversions and faulty syntax, to which is added inattentive proof-reading.

But these are faults that can be corrected, the faults of a poet in the making or experimental stage. We give ourselves the pleasure of quoting a poem, which, by its metrical scheme revives quite pleasantly the old-world impression we get from the popular verse of a hundred years ago. It is called *Evening Strains*:—

The strains of Apollo, with cadence delightful,
Light-bridged the far distance and captured my soul,
As the first infant moments of rainbow-garbed evening,
Upon any pinions towards earth did roll.

Yet, how can my harsh sounding language re-awaken
Those sweets that e'en now to the memory cling?
What anthem harmonious could render the pleasure
I gained from the notes of Apollo's fair string?

Still all the delights and the sweets of that evening
I'll capture ere memory's current shall cease,
And in one fair word of our language I'll gather
Those charms of Apollo and write them thus—Peace.

An attempt was made at a meeting of the Mountsorrel School Managers to get the meeting opened with prayers. A. Rev. Mr. Shakespeare was the gentleman who tried it on, and we are glad to see that he met with stout opposition from Mr. A. R. Wykes, which is what we should expect. These encroachments by the clergy should be resisted at every turn. Give a clergyman an inch and he takes an ell. Once upon a time he gave 'ell to his opponents.

An absolute creed, salvation through Christ, of necessity tend to an anti-human work; they forgive the rapacity of the trader; they inflame, instead of checking, the rage of war. Christianity in practice, as we know it now, for all the Sermon on the Mount, is the religion of aggression, domination, combat. It waits upon the pushing trader and the lawless conqueror; and with obsequious thanksgiving it blesses his enterprise.—*Frederic Harrison*.

The Protestant Reformation.

II.

(Continued from page 69.)

Probably more books have been written about the Reformation than about any other period of history. Yet since the time when history emerged from the mist of legend, such a mass of myth has never grown up to obscure all true examination of fact. Not only is this myth the predominant element in popular lives of Luther, but its influence may be continually traced in works having far greater claims on the consideration of scholars.—*Prof. Karl Pearson*, "The Ethic of Free-thought" (1901), p. 193.

The doctrines of Luther, taken altogether are not more rational, that is, more conformable to what men, *a priori*, would expect to find in religion, than those of the Church of Rome; nor did he ever pretend that they were so. As to the privilege of free inquiry, it was of course exercised by those who deserted their ancient altars, but certainly not upon any theory of a right in others to judge amiss, that is, differently from themselves. Nor, again, is there any foundation for imagining that Luther was concerned for the interests of literature. None had he himself, save theological.—*Hallam*, "Introduction to the Literature of Europe" (1855), Vol. I, p. 307.

IN 1503, at Erfurt University, then the most renowned university in Germany, Luther had taken his Bachelorship of Arts, and the extreme toil of gaining this degree brought an illness upon him which nearly ended his career. Two years later he took his degree of Master of Philosophy; the laureation of the first scholar at Erfurt University was no unimportant event, and it was celebrated by a torch-light procession.¹ Everything seemed set fair for a great career for the brilliant young scholar who was now only twenty-two years of age. This was probably the happiest time of Luther's life, although, even at that time, he was liable to fits of gloom and depression:—

Unlike his frivolous comrades, he was often beset with heavy thoughts, no doubt largely due to the after-effects of his gloomy youth. Among his chums he was known as "Musicus," on account of his learning to play the lute, and as the "Philosopher," owing to his frequent fits of moodiness.²

Luther in after-life coarsely described the town of Erfurt as a "beer-house" and a "nest of immorality." There is no evidence, nor is it necessary to believe that he took part in it, although he was always fond of company and social life. There is a famous saying widely attributed to Luther: "Who loves not woman, wine and song, remains a fool his whole life long." But Hartman Grisar tells us:—

These verses are found neither in Luther's own writings nor in the old notes and written traditions concerning him.³

And if Grisar could not find any record of them we may confidently rely upon it that they are not there, for Grisar's knowledge of Luther's writings is minute and exhaustive. His monumental life of Luther runs to six stout volumes of an average of 400 pages each. Nevertheless there is no reason to suppose that Luther would have disapproved of the sentiment, for he loved all three; he loved his wife when he was married and was fond of the company of women; he was fond of wine and could drink a great deal without becoming intoxicated, and we must remember, as Grisar points out:—

The drinking habits of the Germans of those days must be borne in mind. A man had to be a very hard drinker to gain the reputation of being a drunkard.⁴

¹ Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, Vol. I, p. 233.

² Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. I, p. 8.

³ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 293.

⁴ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 298.

In after-life Luther declared that, while he "drank Wittenberg beer with his friend Philip and Amsdorf," God, by his means, had weakened the Papacy and brought it nigh to destruction.

Luther had a famous bowl, used for drinking wine at those social evenings at home with his wife and friends which he so enjoyed in later life. This bowl, known as the "Catechismusglas," was painted in sections, placed one below the other and separated by three ridges; at the top the Ten Commandments, in the middle the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and at the bottom the Catechism. Grisar tells us that:—

On one occasion Johann Agricola could get only as far as the Ten Commandments at one draught, whereas Luther was able to empty the bowl right off down to the very dregs, *i.e.*, "Catechism and all."⁵

There is no record, however, of Luther's ever being intoxicated, in spite of the charges of his Catholic enemies, and many of his sermons are charged with denunciations of the vices of drunkenness and gluttony so prevalent in his time.

But to return to the young Luther who, at the very opening of a brilliant career, threw it all over and announced his intention of taking the vows, becoming a monk and retiring to a monastery. Luther's friends were struck with stupefaction, his father with disappointment and rage. His father had toiled and denied himself in order to educate his son, and had seen him win one honour after another, and already, in imagination, saw him discharging the highest duties and assuming the highest dignities of the State. Now he saw his hopes swept away in a moment, and his son's brilliant career extinguished under a monk's cowl. But his father was helpless in the matter, his son was twenty-two years of age and he had no authority over him.

On July 16, 1505, Luther who was a favourite in his own circle at the University, invited his friends and acquaintances to a farewell supper, for he wished to see them about him for the last time before his retirement to the cloister. His friend Justus Jonas says that "honest, virtuous maidens and women" were among them, and outwardly Luther was "beyond measure cheerful" and showed himself so light of heart that he "played the lute while the wine-cup circled round." On the following morning some of his fellow-students accompanied him to the gate of the Augustinian monastery, and then, with tears in their eyes, saw the doors close on him,⁶ as they, and no doubt Luther, thought forever. His friends and many members of the university waited for two days outside the monastery gates in the hope of seeing Luther and persuading him to retrace the foolish step; but although Luther was aware of this, the gates remained closed and he declined to appear. The brothers of the monastery, on their part, rejoiced at the acquisition of the highly gifted and promising youth who had already taken his degree as Master of Philosophy at the great university. Yet never was a man less qualified by Nature for the life of a monk than Luther was.

Luther himself has given the reason for his action. He was returning to Erfurt after a visit to his parents' house, when, near Stotternheim, he was overtaken by a thunderstorm, terrified by a blinding flash close beside him, he made a sudden vow: "Save me, dear St. Anne, and I will become a monk." At this time he was also in a great state of grief and alarm by the sudden death of a dear comrade and fellow student who had been stabbed, either in a quarrel or a duel. This gave rise to a morbid sense of the insecurity of life, which was accentuated by the lightning flash.

We must bear in mind that before the Reformation the mediæval ideas of the future life were still taught in all schools, and, as the Rev. Baring-Gould observes:—

The mediæval world was oppressed with the terrors of Purgatory and of Hell, far more than relieved by hopes of Heaven.....The child stared with horrified eyes at the huge open jaws of Hell, and at the devils pitch-forking miserable beings into that flaming, gaping gulf.....There was not much attractive on the other side of the picture: the heavenly Jerusalem represented as a closely walled-in city, doubtless with malodorous narrow streets, and the angels by no means beautiful and attractive as companions.⁷

The storm probably occurred during one of those fits of depression and moodiness which gained for him the title of the "Philosopher" from his friends. Luther suffered periodically all his life from these attacks. O. Scheel says:—

We possess statements from Luther's own pen during his life in the monastery which show that the thought of death and Divine Judgment moved him deeply. The words, that the countenance of the Lord is upon us, are [to him] terrible.....We see one fear succeeding the other in face of sudden death.....the thought of God the Judge inspires him with horror.....It is possible that the manner in which these feelings express themselves was connected with morbid dispositions, that the attacks of fear which suddenly, without apparent cause, fell upon him, were due to an unhealthy body. That the assaults reacted on his bodily state is probable. The root of the fear, however, lies in the lively conviction of the righteous Judgment of God.⁸

Scheel here knocks the nail on the head. The cause of Luther's distress is pathological, and we can put our finger upon the actual cause, for Luther frequently refers to the constipation from which he suffered.⁹ Now scholars and writers are peculiarly liable to constipation, through their sedentary occupation and neglect to take exercise, and it is well known that this complaint does give rise to depression; the alimentary canal becomes clogged with fermenting excreta, the poisons arising from which are absorbed into the blood and reach the brain, where they cause the depression and moodiness which characterizes this malady.

What Luther really needed, if he had only known it, was a course of the waters at one of his native spas to cleanse his system, and then healthy out-door exercise to keep him in health. Instead of which he crouched down before the dreadful spectres of gods and devils evoked by his pathological condition.

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

As soon as the enmity of Julian deprived the clergy of the privileges which had been conferred by the favour of Constantine, they complained of the most cruel oppression; and the free toleration of idolaters and heretics was a subject of grief and scandal to the orthodox party. The acts of violence, which were no longer countenanced by the magistrates, were still committed by the zeal of the people. At Pessinus, the altar of Cybele was overturned almost in the presence of the Emperor; and in the city of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, the Temple of Fortune, the sole place of worship which had been left to the Pagans, was destroyed by the rage of a popular tumult.—*Edward Gibbon, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."*

⁵ Baring-Gould, *The Evangelical Revival* (1920), p. 2.

⁶ Cited by Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. I, p. 189.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 81.

⁸ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 219.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 3.

"Crime and Punishment."¹

For a burning thought was in his brow,
And his bosom ill at ease;
So he lean'd his head on his hands and read
The book between his knees!

He strain'd the dusky covers close,
And fixed the brazen hasp;
Oh, God! Could I so close my mind,
And clasp it with a clasp!

Aye, there's the rub! There is the punishment of the *conscientious* criminal; but the great majority of wrong-doers are, perhaps, little troubled with moral or religious qualms, for it is difficult to imagine a man of moral and mental rectitude stooping to, say, the crime of murder—unless one happens to belong to the sacred, often stupid, domain of legal jurisprudence in which, to quote Hood in another vein, there are:—

A great judge, and a little judge,
The judges of a-size!

It will be noted, with edification—if the "book between his knees" was the Bible, and from other suggestions—that Hood's educated murderer was a profoundly religious man, seeking comfort but finding none even in the much vaunted book of books, the source of so many all too facile expiations, the easy refuge of little futile cowardly minds, a selfish comfort rejected by what there remained of nobility in the soul of Eugene Aram!

Let me recall to the lover of Burns how he wrings the truth out of this melancholy subject in his fragment *Remorse*:—

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.

Oh, burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonising throbs;
And after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
Oh happy! happy! enviable man!
Oh glorious magnanimity of soul!

Dwelling for a moment on the last line of this emotional outburst, I think that some of us might be inclined to look upon the man who remembers, suffers, and, let us hope, reforms, as more "magnanimous" than one that finds it all too easy to forget. There is, without a doubt, a magnanimity alike Pagan and Christian implied in forgetfulness of self, of its good and evil, in self-effacement in the cause of humanity, a sacrifice which is too often made in vain by Christian and Atheist alike, the heroism of love, friendship, social service, urges or impulses that were before and will remain after all religions, something entirely human which we misname divine, born of human relationships, surviving in human needs.

There is an element of dramatic intensity in the story of Eugene Aram, in prose or verse, but the theme is simple, superficial, commonplace, compared with a wonderful Russian story which I hasten to recommend to anyone who has not read it. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* was published in Russia as long ago as 1866—the year in which *Felix Holt* appeared, and some years later than Meredith's *Rhoda Fleming*—and had an instant and prodigious success; no sure proof of merit, indeed, but such proof is superabundant in the book itself. It is a book "sensational" enough to stir the most torpid reader, yet a purely psychological and philosophical work, every

line of which, even in the most commonplace detail, vibrates with intensity and significance. Dostoevsky has lowered the lamp of his sympathy and intelligence into the obscure abysses of the mental and emotional underworld—of rich and poor alike—revealing, examining, explaining, in startling yet simple suggestions and situations, the multiform psychology of subconscious life in these flashes of nobility and depths of baseness often mingled in one human breast. Such as are manifested in the desperate expedients of a soul struggling vainly among the dire necessities of material destitution; or mentally, morally, no less fearfully, in the case of others, well off as the world goes, who find themselves "in the fell clutch of circumstance" from which the only escape may seem to be murder, suicide, or whatever folly the devil of despair, or discord, may suggest to them.

In our own time and country much of the stupid and sensational crime is the work of degraded and negligible minds. The same kind of mind, still innocent and virtuous, but quite as silly, is intensely interested in the ugly details of, say, the Bywaters-Thompson tragedy which so lately thrilled our great newspaper-reading public—a morbid curiosity, by the way, not confined to the "vulgar herd," but shared by "the highest in the land."

In *Crime and Punishment* the deeper, and, if we may use the word, nobler aspects of crime are considered. Shelley has said: "There is no portal of expression from the cavern of the spirit.....into the universe of things," but in "the fierce glow of Dostoevsky's powers, in the vast and dreadful flickers of his imagination," the miracle is wrought. The style is conversational, but what conversation! Deep answers unto deep in easy, ingenuous, ordinary talk. It is not the tongue that speaks but the soul. The ordinary vehicle of expression becomes a transparent veil through which we see the naked soul and heart of man. It is Nature's plan, I suppose, to veil from himself man's mental, moral and social poverty in a well-nigh incredible mantle of egotism and illusion, but Dostoevsky gently penetrates every veil, illuminates every beyond, and what is mean and what is mighty stands confessed.

Those of us given to literary and philosophical studies may, by concentrating on the past, recall the more deeply marked footprints on the sands of time, form the first faint infant tracings to the heavier, surer markings of sadder and wiser men. Perhaps, indeed, the way has led into a wilderness at last, where we find what oases we can, getting somehow some little hand-to-mouth happiness from day to day, and occasionally stumbling upon fullness of joy and inspiration. Where the footsteps have faltered, or erred, or where we have fallen, deep abased, the drifting sands of time have hid them, forgotten in the waste of things; or forgiven, reconciled, in the compensating balances of mental life. As for myself, after many stages in novel reading I seem to have stepped directly from Scott and Dickens to Victor Hugo and Eugene Sue. What "stage of culture" I had reached, progressive or retrograde, I am not prepared to say, but I mightily enjoyed the great French authors and felt they were a kind of *ne plus ultra* in fiction. It may have been "a childish ignorance," and I am unwilling to be wiser even now. There intervened many masters in many Freethought works when I again stumbled upon a great novel, maybe the greatest of them all, seeming at least to put foundation under, and glittering dome above, the temple of all my past reflections. The simplest mind may unconsciously strike down at times to the profoundest thoughts. A great writer like Dostoevsky, especially in this greatest of his works, the greatest I suppose of Russian novels, infinitely dwarfing even the great Tolstoi, can show us the source and significance of the feeble

¹ A quite good edition is, or was, published by *Everyman*.

flickerings of lesser minds. The calm, clear, modest grandeur of the Russian, with his instincts of humility, repentance, self-abnegation and self-sacrifice, with his fierce fires of moral and intellectual passion and pity, reveals to us, as in a mirror, the hidden workings of the secret and suffering soul of man.

In *Crime and Punishment*, it is said, the plot is amorphous, and there is much recourse to expedient, but these matter little when, in between, every line is alive with fire and meaning. As to motive for the work, there is ever the insistent urge of sympathy with the material and spiritual distresses of human kind. In depth of thought, felicity of expression, gentleness of mind, of one who has himself suffered, the Russian creative artist, it seems to me, much resembles Leopardi, with, of course, great differences. Nor is he without a rare and qualified humour, "thoughtful laughter," we might say, and with a Shakespearean aristocracy and universality of thought, never prolix or stilted, never flippant or vulgar, always charmingly, arrestingly simple and natural.

As to expedients, the wildest, perhaps not an impossible one, is his making of Roskolnikoff, the poor, proud student, a double murderer in the early chapters. The crime is acted from a complex of motives and a peculiar temperament on the part of the hero—a strange mingling of love, need, even morals, with contempt rather than hatred: Why not kill one, an old extortionate female usurer, mere "vermin," when a Napoleon could kill millions on his path to honour and glory? The murder is done at last dazedly, amateurishly, with a hatchet in a feeble hand. The confused assassin becomes robber quite as clumsily, and takes some booty—which afterwards he never uses, but merely hides or scatters to conceal his crime. He has even omitted to close the door, and turns to find the old woman's half-witted sister gaping over the corpse. There is nothing for it but to brain her too, and then, by a chance in a thousand, escape down the stairs unseen. The murderer's punishment begins at once. His crime haunts him in dreams by night, in dread by day. He is suspicious of everybody and everything. He even becomes sullen and cunning. He is appalled when a stranger in the street hisses in his ear the word "murderer!" The examining magistrate, on whom he makes "friendly" calls, seems to know "he is the man," and they probe each other to the depths. The magistrate explains genially, psychologically, how it will be. The criminal will come round and round in ever lessening circles and finally fall upon his knees and confess. Only irresolution or accident prevents Roskolnikoff from confessing there and then. No more amazing and terrible, though bloodless, duel has ever been conceived by any writer. But it is mere garrulity to retell a story we have read. No one can tell it so well as the author himself—as this author at least. That Freethinkers may be induced to read the book for themselves these notes are mainly written.

Here, then, is a book beyond everything of the kind I have yet read: the hero an assassin, the heroine a harlot—or as heroine we can have the lovely and loving, pure and proud Dvunia the murderer's sister, between whom and her brother a deep and noble affection exists. Other powerfully drawn characters include the two men who made love to Dvunia; the one, Looshin, cold, polished, mean, vindictive; the other, Svidrigailoff, rich, reckless, passionately lustful; great enough to blow his brains out at last under and after amazingly conceived situations; both men revealed to the innermost core in the consummate art of the Russian master. The confessions of the fallen state official to the student murderer are true to life. Again it is the soul speaking, deep communing with deep: the sentimental *sot* who ever contritely whines about the beauty and goodness of his family, con-

demns his own abandoned sottishness, who loves to be beaten by his wife Catherine as atonement and repentance for, but without reformation of, his useless life; whose daughter, the pure and sweet and gentle Svnia, is, by the distracted reproaches of her step-mother, driven into the streets to make money for the hungry children, all of which poor Marmeledoff eloquently deplores! What a paradox is this man, in what contrast his language and his life, unworthy he, as he grovellingly confesses, of his office and his culture, but yet what smouldering fires of nobility in his being, now damped and soaked for evermore! Sitting in the dramshop, in what was then St. Petersburg, where he meets Roskolnikoff (also a man of sorrows), he approaches the latter for company and confession, giving him minute details, in elegant language, as for instance: "It was after about eighteen months of disappointments and peregrinations that we settled down in this magnificent capital, so rich in monuments....." What superb irony in that simple remark!

The story of the poor, struggling, high-spirited, heroic Catherine, type of millions more, her children's "band" in the streets amid the jeers of the "gabies," can only be read with a bleeding heart. For a parallel one must turn to the incident of Esmerelda and her mother in Hugo's *Notre Dame*. Here I am tempted to remark that, while less imposing, *Crime and Punishment* is in many ways a greater book than *Les Misérables*, which in my intent is praise superlative.

In a final scene, that most lovable of criminals, Roskolnikoff, after many secret emotional expiations, strengthened in his growing resolve or resignation by the pleadings of the saintly little Svnia, "with a look such as angels have"—"I heard my sweet Svnia's voice say gently: But, Catherine Ivanovna, how could I do that? What! (returned Catherine). You must have a fine treasure indeed to preserve it so jealously. Catherine beats her children even when they are crying with hunger.....I saw Svnetchka rise, put on her burnous, and leave the house.....She returned, and going up to Catherine Ivanovna, laid thirty roubles in silver upon the table before her without saying a word.....then lay down on the bed with her face to the wall, but her shoulders and whole frame kept quivering." Thus the compassionate, helpless, hopeless, yet lovable Marmeledoff. His little daughter was an angel still, most angelic when "dressed up for the streets with a parasol though it was night!"

Picture it, think of it, dissolute man! The sacrificial Svnia's pleading induces her lover to give himself up, which, in some dazed, irresolute way he does at last. Svnia accompanies him to Siberia, where "atonement" succeeds, and where the author leaves them with the suggestion of a possible "resurrection."

He knelt before the street girl Svnia: "What are you doing? And to me!" stammered Svnia, growing pale with sorrow-smitten heart.

"I did not bow down to you, my dear one, but to suffering humanity in your person."

ANDREW MILLAR.

We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages or idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.—*Shelley*.

Correspondence.

A CORRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—On page 840 you allude to "the constellation Vega." I supposed Vega to be the brightest star in Lyra. What do you mean by "solar year?" The soul going to its final abode would require (at 100 miles per second) 1800 years to travel a "light year," and Vega is ten or more light years away, the journey would require at least 18,000 years. I think you are mistaken about the provisions; a soul needs none, and would not mind the several hundred degrees below zero.

Let every soul ask itself: Is such a journey worth while? Better stay here and help abolish war and poverty.

I recently noted another error: that "America is a Christian country." What portion of America? "The United States is not in any sense a Christian nation," said President Washington in a treaty with Tripoli. The population is only 40 per cent. Christian, and God is not in the Constitution, because the freethinking founders voted him out.

C. F. HUNT.

Los Angeles, California.

OUT TO KILL.

SIR,—Just now, whilst Messrs. the Gentlemen and Mesdames the Ladies of the Whaddon Hunt are so dignifiedly squealing as to whom in future shall lead them "first in" at the barbarous death of a little red "varmint," it appears to me an opportune moment for some protesting move by the R.S.P.C.A.

Whether "Bill Lowndes hunts Whaddon Hounds," or a scion of the House of Primrose is retrieved from his inherited "lonely furrow" for the job, the objective of this "civilized" mob is one and the same. Joining the glad throng in all its gorgeous paraphernalia will be found the hunting parson (not the "poor" Bishop of Winchester, of course), the gallant major, the *nouveaux riches*, tallow-"marge" chef, young Diana (just left school), and her *blazé passé* idol, the "Daughter of a Thousand Earls," etc.

A practically helpless dumb, red animal, much less able-bodied than those higher animals who are chasing it, is to afford a "fine run" for an hour or two by its terrible, long-drawn, attempt to escape a cruel agonizing death. The "brave" M.F.H. will fulsomely flatter the faultless horsewoman that arrives in time to witness the fox's death convulsions, and the life-blood rushing from its "riven side."

Why in the name of manhood do not Col. W. Selby-Lowndes, Lord Dalmeny and the "subscribers" to this barbaric sport (?) adjourn to a big field and fight each other with bare fists—the "ladies" with manicured finger-nails? Each loser to write a cheque in aid of hospital funds.

Oh, yes, Sir, it might hurt them a bit! The Essex Union hounds hunted by Mr. E. L. Heatley of the Old Rectory Ingrave (his kind old father was a respected rector there for over forty years, let it be recorded) were followed a few days ago by a man who in 1917 professed conscientious objection to killing Germans, etc. To any sincere opposition to war's homicidal frenzy I lift my hat every time, but it did occur to me as I saw this chap's appetite for a view of "the kill," embodied by the smashing up of hurdles, gapping the hedgerows, and the horse's foam and lather, that our "Conchie" could turn on or turn off the tap of humane conscience just as the safety of his own precious skin, or the greed for excitement demanded.

D'ye ken that a fox with its very last breath
Cursed them all as he died in the morning?

Let the R.S.P.C.A. do their duty here.

FRED WHITBY-EDWARDS.

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.

DISCUSSION CIRCLE N.S.S. (62 Farringdon Street): Tuesday, February 13, 7 p.m.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (19 Buckingham Street, Charing Cross): 3.30, Dr. Chatterton, "Monism." All invited.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.1, side entrance down steps): 8, Mr. Maurice Maubrey, "Speeding the Death of the Gods."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, S.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Miss M. Loat, "The Vaccination Question."

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. A. Hyatt, "Christianity—The Worship of the Sun."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Collapse of Pacifism."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (City Hall Saloon): 11.30, Mr. William Marriott, "The Scientist and the Spiritualists"; 6.30 (Grand City Hall), "Is Spiritualism Fraud?" Illustrated (lantern). Questions invited. Silver collection.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants' Rooms): 6.45, Mr. J. T. Ashurst, A Lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Francis P. Corrigan, "The Message of Science to Our Age."

STOCKPORT BRANCH N.S.S. (191 Higher Hillgate): 2.30, Mr. H. Boden, "Darwinism and Natural Selection." Questions and discussion. Will members and all interested note, future meetings of the Branch will take place on Sunday afternoon, commencing at 2.30 prompt. The Thursday meetings will be discontinued for the present.

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. M. A. Gremson, 23 Westbury Avenue, Wood Green, N.22.

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.

W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King Street, Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82 Seaford Road, West Ealing.

W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

COUNTRY.

ABERDEENSHIRE.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS.—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.

BATH.—C. F. Sutton, 16 Union Passage, and 22 Wells Road.

BECCLES.—C. Chase, Station Road.

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker"—Continued.

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