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## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>With Damnable Iteration.—The Editor</i> - - -	225
<i>Via Crucis.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - -	226
<i>Cheated of His Childhood.—Mimnermus</i> - - -	228
<i>Easter.—J. M. Wheeler</i> - - -	229
<i>The International Movement of Freethought.—George Underwood</i> - - -	230
<i>Richard Carlile.—Guy A. Aldred</i> - - -	234
<i>The True Legislator.—A. Millar</i> - - -	235
<i>Manchester Branch N.S.S.</i> - - -	236
<i>The Garden.—Archie L. Pearce</i> - - -	237
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

## Views and Opinions.

### *With Damnable Iteration.*

At a meeting of the National Council of Socialist Sunday-schools the other day one of the speakers declared that it was utterly contemptible to go to church with the Bible in one hand and a rifle in the other. His disgust appeared to rest on what he conceived to be the anomalous nature of the association, and his indignation did—to use a common phrase—far more credit to his heart than to his head. It was also an illustration of the power of mere repetition on the average intelligence. What he was actually doing was taking Christians at their own valuation, which is never a safe thing to do. Christians have for so long been telling the world that their religion stood for all that was good and pure, that not only do they accept it as such, but apparently many of those who do not believe in Christianity are also inclined to believe the existence of some never-to-be located Christianity which exhibits these characteristics in a marked manner. Many times I have smiled quietly when listening to someone denouncing the actions of the mediæval Church, or recounting some story of religious brutality or persecution, and who has indignantly enquired where was Christianity when these things were done? The answer was, of course, that Christianity was there. What they were witnessing was Christianity in action. Apart from the self-advertising of Christians Christianity in practice has frequently been accompanied by brutality, oppression, and lack of consideration for others; and the association has been far too general and far too universal for it not to have some genuine connection with Christianity itself.

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### *Bibles and Bayonets.*

After all there is nothing strange in people going to Church with a Bible and a gun. It is quite in line with precedent. When a new battleship is launched it is usually blessed by some exalted member of the clergy, and when the battleship is at work the same clergy will offer up prayers for its efficient action. Our churches are besprinkled with battleflags and tombs of warriors, and no one sees anything incongruous in the association. It will be remembered that only three or four years ago there was a service held in St. Paul's

Cathedral with a big gun placed in full view of the congregation. It is on record that some of our most famous generals have been devoted to the reading of the Bible, and tract societies use the fact for an advertisement of their wares. I do not think that either guns or battleflags would be tolerated within a Buddhist temple, nor can I imagine a Buddhist priest blessing a battleship and wishing it Godspeed in its mission of destruction. But then Buddhism is not so accommodating a creed as is Christianity. It has no sacred scripture which provides for blessing peace in one place and glorifying war in another. The late Emperor of Germany was also another great admirer of the Bible, and before the war there was widely circulated by Christians in this country the glad tidings that he was a regular reader of it, that he consulted it whenever he was in doubt as to what to do, and never took an important decision without reading some of its pages. Soldiers have never at any time found the Bible offering any sort of obstacle to their profession, and why this particular Socialist speaker should be disgusted at the association of the Bible with guns passes my comprehension. It can only be that he was under the delusion that the Bible made for peace and amity, and that could only result from his taking what Christians say about themselves as being nothing but the truth. One hopes that his opinions on other matters are better based than are those upon the relation of the Bible to warfare.

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### *The Progress of the Meek.*

It is one of the profound hypocrisies of Christianity that it should so persistently brand Mohammedanism as a religion of the sword and proclaim itself to be the religion of peace. Of course Mohammedanism uses and has used the sword, but it has not done so more than Christianity, nor has it used it more remorselessly. Mohammedanism has at least to its credit a degree of liberality and toleration of opinion—during the height of its power—such as Christianity cannot show. For many centuries, during which time the Christian Church was busily engaged with flame and sword endeavouring to stamp out heresy, and when Christian prelates and priests were urging upon the heads of States the duty of killing or deporting all unbelievers, the Mohammedan countries of the world allowed differences of belief, with hardly more inconvenience than exists at present among ourselves. A payment of tribute brought unbelievers peace. The Inquisition, with its elaborate methods of espionage and terrorism, and its brutal torture, intended only for the maintenance of the faith, was entirely Christian in origin and application. Nothing like it ever existed among Mohammedans, nothing like it ever existed in antiquity. Torture as an aid to faith is one of the distinctive discoveries of the Christian Church. Wherever Christianity has established itself it has done so by force. All the arts of the gentle missionary only disguise, they do not alter, the fact. Once the preacher establishes himself it is not long before the Christian soldier is called upon to back up his claims, endorse

his pretensions, and beat down opposition. What standing would Christianity have in India or China without the prestige of the British soldier behind it? And force is the record of the establishment of Christianity at all times and everywhere. First the missionary "mewling and puking" of his gentle creed; then the trader tempting the natives with his cheap gaudy wares; then the soldier, upholding with threats of punishment the claims of his two forerunners; and then the Christian legislator demanding submission from the native in the interests of civilization and true religion. Next the established Christian Church, forcing support, direct or indirect, from the "heathen." Then the Government restricting the operations of native religions as a preliminary to their extinction. And, last scene of all, the Christian historian piling upon the *other* religion all the infamies his Christian trained imagination can imagine, and parading his own creed as the fount of all goodness and the source of whatever good the country enjoys. It is a kind of seven ages of missionary labour, *sans* truth, *sans* justice, *sans* everything that is decent and fair.

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#### The Church and War.

It is one of the claims of Christians that the Christian Church while it could not abolish war still managed to humanize it! The claim itself is an evidence of the low mental level upon which Christianity moves. You cannot humanize war. The way in which war is conducted will always bear a relation to the cultural stage of the people waging it, and will in every case be several degrees worse in display of manners than is normally the case. There is no humanization of war because it is waged with guns in the one case and bows and arrows in another. The last war was enough to show that when under stress of danger the safety of an army or a country is threatened there is no degree of barbarity to which resort will not be made. All soldiers know this well enough, it is only civilians who keep up the contrary delusion. Christianity did not either discourage or humanize war, what it did was to "rationalize" or to moralize it. It took the profession of the soldier and sanctified it—a thing which the religions of antiquity never thought of doing, a thing the suggestion of which would have horrified "heathen" China, the one country in the world which has persistently preached peace, which has placed the soldier at the bottom of the scale of social values. But China is being forced along the road of militarism by the pressure of Christian nations; and may soon prove no exception to the general rule. The Christian Church made the work of the soldier an act of service to God, and it used him on all possible occasions. It is precisely the cloak of morality and religion which the Church threw over the profession of the soldier that has hindered ordinary people from perceiving the real nature of militarism. Its glitter and fictitious glory captures the imagination of the careless, the cloak of morality and religion thrown over it lulls to sleep the moral sense of others. If the Christian Church had resolutely stood aside from war—in this respect imitating the example of the Buddhist priesthood—if it had said that war was none of its business, whatever might be the necessity or the conditions which drove people to make war, it might by this time, and with its influence and position, have created a state of general feeling on the matter that would have made war a practical impossibility. The only reply to this assumption is that if the Christian Church had acted in this way there would never have been a Christian Church with influence to do anything. With that I agree; but the defence only sustains and proves the truth of the accusation.

#### Seeing Things as They Are.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw says of himself that the only thing in which he differs from other people is in his having perfectly normal vision and in being able to see things exactly as they are. It is to this he attributes the saying of things which astonishes so many. Whether Mr. Shaw is right or wrong with regard to himself, it must be admitted that the capacity for seeing things as they are is a very valuable and a very enviable one. It is the lesson that I have now, for more than thirty years been trying to drive home to such of the public as I could get at with regard to Christianity. To say, as did this particular Socialist Sunday-school speaker, that people ought not to go to church with the Bible in one hand and a gun in the other, is to practically subscribe to the current Christian pretence that Christianity is in practice a religion of peace and brotherhood. The association of Bible and rifle is both historically and psychologically accurate. A far better perception of the truth was Heine's remark, when lying chained to his bed, that if he could get out on crutches he would go to church. His friends expressed surprise. "Well," he replied, "where else should a man go on crutches but to church? Isn't Christianity a religion for cripples?" Heine did not make the fatal mistake of taking Christians at their own valuation. It is no use talking to Christians when they act badly as though they were false to their creed. They are not. And our work is not to "purify" Christianity—whatever may be meant by that delightfully nebulous phrase. Our real work is to end it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### Via Crucis.

SUCH is the title of the leading article in the *Guardian* of March 29, which in some respects is a remarkable production. By the way of the Cross we are, of course, to understand the manner of life recommended by the Christian religion. A peculiarity of this article is that almost the whole of the first half of it has no direct bearing whatever upon the Cross of Christ. Unselfishness is a human virtue, which had been more or less practised throughout the world for millenniums before Christ was heard of. The writer informs us that "the principle of altruism announces itself more and more clearly as progress advances"; but we must bear in mind that altruism is by no means exclusively human. Indeed, we may safely affirm that it is a law of Nature which we find in beautiful operation even among ants and bees and birds. Is it not a well established fact that "the common crab, during the moulting season, stations as sentinel an unmoulted or hard-shelled individual to prevent marine enemies from injuring moulted individuals in their unprotected state?" In Nature there are two great laws in constant exercise, that of self-preservation and that of the preservation of others, and the one is quite as essential as the other. Life on this planet would have come to an end countless ages ago had it not been for the principle of altruism. And yet, in spite of the presence and power of the Cross in Christendom for nineteen centuries, the *Guardian's* leading article makes the sad admission that "we are for the most part slow to perceive and yet slower to welcome" that great principle. It says:—

Now and again, as we watch the children at play, we may see a child to whom it is really a pleasure to part with its toys and surrender its wishes for the sake of the happiness of another; but the impression that the sight makes upon us is in itself a proof that the spectacle is uncommon. Willingness to give up does not as a rule increase with age. The desire to get and to keep, to receive consideration and to have one's own way, is apt to grow stronger as life goes

on. No doubt we have to admit that, if society is to be held together at all, there must be a certain amount of mutual concession, which means that limits must be set to self-will and self-pleasing; but the necessity is a disagreeable one, and we are best satisfied when it can be reduced to a minimum.

The appearance of such a statement in an Anglican Church newspaper is a highly significant sign of the times.

At this point, however, the leading article turns to Christ and becomes thereby so much less true to life. It is undeniable that selfishness never leads to genuine happiness, and is in its very nature anti-social. By selfishness we mean exclusive regard and devotion to one's own interests, and thus understood it is a disastrous vice; but how are we to arrive at unselfishness, and how can we cultivate the altruistic spirit and aim? The writer admits that "there are unselfish forces within us, and that these will be elicited..... by an ideal which will captivate our hearts"; but he makes the mistake of imagining that the ideal is to be found not in human nature itself, but in the alleged perfect example which Jesus Christ furnishes. An ideal, in the ethical sense, is a mental product, in short, an idea touched by emotion, by which our social conduct is guided. According to the article in question, our ideal is a person, real or imaginary, even Christ, in whom "there were to be seen more and more evidently the marks of service and sacrifice." Much is made of the alleged fact of "our Lord's acceptance of the law of self-sacrifice," although in the Gospels we find no evidence either of the existence of such a law, or of his acceptance of it. As a matter of fact, we are prepared to deny its existence, and to declare that no one has a right either to deny self or to offer it up in sacrifice.

Assuming, for argument's sake, the historicity of the Gospel Jesus, we find no evidence whatever that he was given the slightest opportunity of choosing his path in life. He did not choose it; it had been chosen for him before he came. He is represented as saying (John iv, 34): "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." His claim was that he was doing the works which the Father had given him to accomplish (John v, 36). There was no choice left for him to make. He could have adopted the very words of the Psalmist (Ps. xl, 7,8): "Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book it is prescribed to me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." In the light of such glowing exclamations how can anybody reasonably speak of his "acceptance of the law of self-sacrifice?" According to the record, both his life and death, so far from being the denial or sacrifice of self, were its perfect glorification. It was his glad confidence that the crucifixion would result in his speedily becoming the ruler of the whole world. His body might lie mouldering in the tomb, but his "self" would go marching on to universal and everlasting sovereignty.

We regard the Gospel Jesus as a largely if not wholly legendary character; but in any case he is a character represented as using self in the service of others. And yet, after portraying Jesus as finding in such service both food and drink, the evangelists imagined that to serve or follow him involved the denial or renunciation of self, and so they made him responsible for the saying: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. xvi, 24). Curiously enough the meaning even of those words is determined by the paradox which immediately follows them:—

For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? (Matt. xvi, 25, 26).

The *Guardian* is not the organ of the straightest laced and narrowest minded sect of Christian disciples; but even the *Guardian* defines the way of the Cross as the path of self-sacrifice, which is supremely difficult to follow. It quotes with evident approval the saying that "the Cross is I crossed out," which is in reality a very silly saying, and then adds:—

The definition is simple, and it carries peculiar significance to an English eye and ear. It is not easy, but when we have said that we have not told all the truth. There are experiences, as we have already reminded ourselves, which prove to us the misery of selfishness. Not less certainly there are glimpses of joy and of recompense that follow upon deeds of unselfishness. If only we could believe it, there are wonderful lessons which the most ordinary among us may hope to learn. It was a wise teacher who bade his pupils remember that "life is first a sacrifice and then a miracle."

The article is well written, but its tone is despondent and its tendency depressing. There is not a single note of joyousness in it from beginning to end. It is music pitched in the minor key, without one strain of glorious triumph running through it. The inevitable inference to be drawn from it is that the Christian life is anything but a bright, songful affair, and that to undertake it is to shoulder a cross altogether too heavy to bear. And so it has come to pass that the clergy as a class are generally spoken of as joy-killers. They are notorious prohibitionists. This is not nearly so true of the Catholic and Anglican Churches as of the so-called Free Churches. These are still under the nefarious spell of Puritanism, and they frown upon most forms of carnal pleasure. Places of entertainment are under their ban. Dancing, though recognized, encouraged, and praised in the Bible, is scathingly denounced by them as a temptation of the Devil, a well-known Baptist minister being recently reported as saying that a young girl who attended a promiscuous dance should be flogged, showing that if these kill-joys had their way Tyburn and Smithfield would be still as flourishing as ever they were a few hundred years ago.

Evidences are multiplying that the Nonconformist conscience is entering upon a new season of rigorous activity. After a short period of comparative quietness it has just reawakened in defence of Sabbatarianism, which has been so seriously threatened by the recent action of the London County Council in permitting Sunday games in the parks and other open spaces under its control. It is a curious and highly significant fact that the campaign against Sunday games is being conducted almost exclusively by Free Churchmen, assisted by a few fanatics amongst the Anglican clergy. The whole thing is nothing but a recrudescence of Puritanism which would, if it could, make Great Britain once more the land of gloom and sadness and other-worldliness. These modern bigots pretend to be advocates and exemplars of the way of the Cross, utterly forgetting, or being wilfully blinded to, the fact that neither the Gospel Jesus, the alleged founder of their religion, nor the apostle Paul, the originator of their theology, was in any sense whatever a Sabbatarian. Jesus deliberately disregarded the Jewish law of the Sabbath, whilst Paul was a man to whom all days were alike. Unfortunately, present-day Sabbatarians seem to be actuated by selfish motives rather than by any genuinely humanitarian principle. In an outburst of angry denunciation of the very idea of Sunday games a Brighton Baptist minister exclaimed, "I am a Puritan and make no apology for it. It is difficult enough to get people into the churches. There are so many temptations to lure them from the true path." That passionate cry let the cat out of the bag with a vengeance. What unendowed parsons dread above everything else is Sunday competition for the

suffrage of the masses of the people. As they are already losing it more and more they are determined to fight for its recovery, or at any rate against the introduction of so fascinating a wooer of it as Sunday games would certainly prove to be.

Our summing up from its dark and dreary history through all the centuries, and from present-day experience and observation of the dubious methods by which it works, leads to the logical conclusion that the way of the Cross is not only difficult, even impracticable, but also anti-natural, anti-human, and anti-social. There is a better way, an infinitely better and nobler way, which is anti-nothing except superstition, credulity, bigotry, prejudices, privilege, and every form of injustice and wrong.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Cheated of His Childhood.

The genius that can stand alone  
As the minority of one,  
Or with the faithful be found  
Working and waiting till the rest come round.

—Gerald Massey.

THERE has been a distinct revival of interest in Egyptology, and booksellers' catalogues once more contain entries of Gerald Massey's famous volumes, *The Book of Beginnings*, *The Natural Genesis*, and other works, which expose the greatest religious fraud of all the ages. These books are high-priced and somewhat difficult to obtain, but they have had to be reckoned with. For Massey shows that the holy mother and child—the one a virgin, the other a god—were worshipped in Egypt many centuries before the Christian era. It was there that all the dogmas of early Christianity, and all its myths and legends, were manufactured. In a pregnant passage in *The Natural Genesis* Massey says:—

The writer has not only shown that the current theology is, but also how it has been, falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man and ignorantly mistaking them for divine revelation.

It was not an easy task that this self-educated scholar imposed upon himself. In the noble, dedicatory verses to *The Natural Genesis* he shows, with rare pathos, the isolation of a scholar's life. He compares himself to a diver whose friends watch anxiously for his return:—

Child after child would say—  
"Ah! when his work is done,  
Father will come with us and play"—  
'Tis done. And playtime's gone.

A willing slave for years,  
I strove to set men free;  
Mine were the labours, hopes, and fears,  
Be their's the victory.

When George Foote was suffering in Holloway Gaol for "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt," Massey wrote to Dr. Edward Aveling, the then editor of the *Freethinker*, and, referring to Foote, said: "I fight the same battle as himself, although with a somewhat different weapon." Massey wished clearly to be reckoned as a fellow-soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity. This was no idle vaunt, for in the maturity of his literary power, Gerald Massey deliberately put aside the laurel-wreath and the applause of his fellows, and devoted himself to the nobler work of the mental emancipation of his fellows. He turned away from verse writing and put all his energies to a scholarly and philosophic criticism of Christian Origins.

Massey's earlier life is the grimmest of comments on the "good, old days." The son of a bargeman, he was born in the grip of poverty. At an age when more

fortunate children were at school, he was working in a mill for eleven hours daily at the weekly wage of one shilling. This was not the worst. He became a straw-plaiter, and for three years lived in the black shadow of starvation, often prostrated by illness, the direct result of want. Writing of that awful, early life of his, he said afterwards, "I had no childhood." Think of it! A man with the heart of a poet, the sensitiveness of a woman, "had no childhood." It is a tragedy "too deep for tears."

At fifteen years of age Massey came to London and became an errand-boy. He read everything he could lay his hands on, "going without meals to buy books, and without sleep to read them." It was during that period that he laid the foundation of that wide knowledge which made him one of the noted critics and scholars of his time. What a picture of the past, the bad, old days of storm and peril, when the soldiers of freedom arose almost every day to meet a fresh difficulty or a new danger. For Massey lived right through the heroic age of English liberty.

The revolutionary movements of 1848 greatly impressed young Massey, and many of his verses are the direct outcome of this period of struggle. At twenty-one he was editing *The Spirit of Freedom*, a Republican periodical, in which he was both editor and staff. Then he contributed to Thomas Cooper's *Journal* and other democratic papers.

Massey's first book of verse was issued when he was but nineteen. Later came his *Voices of Freedom*, which showed a notable advance. Hepworth Dixon, of the *Athenæum*, was greatly attracted by the fiery and impassioned *Song of a Red Republican*. Other admirers which Massey's verse won for him were Landor, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Lytton. A still greater honour awaited him, for "George Eliot" made him her model for the hero of *Felix Holt*.

It was *Babe Christabel* which made Gerald Massey popular. With this he stormed the bastions of success at one leap. By the Victorians he was hailed as a rising star. The following lines give some idea of what pleased our forefathers:—

Babe Christabel was royally born!  
For when the earth was flushed with flowers,  
And drenched with beauty in sun showers,  
She came through golden gates of morn.

This was in direct contrast with the stirring music of his political songs, which recalls the effect of sonorous metal blowing martial sounds. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny roused Massey, and he never sang so finely as in his *War Waits*. He was never so near being a great poet. Withal he was modest. "I know too well what a poet should be," he said, "to imagine I am one." Despite his protestations, Massey had undeniable gifts. His verses came from his heart, and there is the true lyrical note. One of his poems, *Scarlett's Three Hundred*, indeed, challenges comparison with Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*.

Yet this man deliberately put aside his singing-ropes and donned the more sober dress of the scholar. He spent half of a lengthy life away from the public gaze, buried among old books. He did wisely. The instinct of Gerald Massey's maturity, which led him to forsake the slopes of Parnassus for the study of the scholar was a perfectly sound one. His poetry belongs to the Victorian era, and is now half forgotten; but his scholarly and exhaustive criticism of Christian origins has helped, and will continue to help, to free Democracy from the absurd aberrations of ancient ignorance.

MIMNERMUS.

Those who believe in a God of Love must close their eyes to the phenomena of life, or garble the Universe to suit their theory.—*Winwood Reade*.

## Easter.

### III.

(Concluded from page 221.)

THE most important of the old festivities, and one in a line with the ancient rites found in Congo, Corea and Aricia, was the appointment of a Carnival King. We read of its being practised at Lostwithiel, in Cornwall, near where the prince of Cornwall formerly resided. The freeholders of that town and manor having elected one among them as their king, he was gaily attired and gallantly mounted, with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand, while a sword was borne before him. Attended by a large retinue of equestrians, he rode to church in solemn state, where he was met at the porch by the priest, and treated by him with much pomp and reverence. After service was ended, the "king" repaired, with the same formality, to a house prepared for his reception, where a grand banquet was given, in keeping with the pseudo-monarch's assumed dignity. After dinner he was disrobed, and descended to his former level. In France this pseudo king became a court officer, the king of the ribalds. His robes cost 270 francs. In Russia the court fool mounted the imperial throne and the Czar appeared before him to give an account of his actions and receive the admonition that promotion should be according to merit. In many places it was customary at this time to elect a mock ruler. At Weston near Bath a mock ruler used to be elected. At Randwick an annual revel is kept on the Monday after Low Sunday, probably the wake of the church, attended with much intemperance and ridiculous ceremonies in the choice of a mayor who is yearly elected on that day, from among the meanest of the people. They plead the prescriptive right of ancient custom for the licence of the day and the authority of the magistrate is not able to suppress it (Rudder, *Hist. Gloucestershire*, 619). The *Gloucestershire Journal*, April 14, 1888, chronicles a mock election and says:—

The office is not much sought after, but if the villagers decide upon their mayor, and he hide himself, they seek after him and thrust the honour upon him.

It is stated that as the Emperor Charles the Fifth was passing through a village of Arragon, on Easter Day, he was accosted by a peasant who had been chosen the "Paschal" or "Easter King," decorated with a tin crown, and a spit in his hand for a sceptre. He demanded of the Emperor that he should take off his hat to him, "For, sir," said he, "it is I who am king." To which his sovereign wittily replied, "Much good may it do you, my friend; you have chosen an exceedingly troublesome employment."

It was in connection with the custom of the king abdicating for a time that we still have the custom of kings washing the feet of beggars and distributing Royal Maunday charities on Maunday Thursday, the day before Good Friday. Each year of her life Her Majesty gives two more silver pennies to one more poor man, and one more poor woman. One year there were seventy-six men and seventy-six women. This old custom represents a commutation for the surrender of the royal life. As late as the time of James II, the king on Maunday Thursday washed the feet of beggars; the Emperor of Austria and others did the same. The old ceremony in England was "washing and kissing the feet of as many paupers as they were years old; after which money and food was given them out of a basket" (J. Ecclestone, *English Antiquities*, p. 317). The king was supposed to be the representative of Christ washing the feet of his apostles. In Seville the archbishop gives a splendid dinner to twelve paupers clothed gaily at the expense

of their host and each is furnished with a basket to take away what they do not eat. In Rome the Pope washes the feet of thirteen priests to whom he gives a napkin and a flower.

Maundy is said to be from the *maunds* or baskets which were carried in procession and from which the royal gifts were given twelve baskets full. Possibly it is, however, from *mandatum*. It was also called Shere Thursday from the custom of making a sacrificial offering of hair. When the king dropped washing beggars' feet, the office was performed by the chief Almoner, who soon gave it up also.

In the old churches the Sepulchre Show was the important feature from Good Friday to Easter. Every church had a sepulchre, in which the figure of the Christ or the dead year was laid. The ceremony of watching the sepulchre was kept up in England till the Reformation. It was said the second coming of Christ would be at this period, and therefore the sepulchre was watched. Really it was the same ceremony as watching the gardens of Adonis. On Easter Day the "Resurrection at the Sepulchre" was performed, the *dramatis personæ* being monks, clothed in habiliments suited to the character they assumed. I doubt not that some such drama was performed before the Gospels were written. The lights at the Sepulchre Show formed no trivial part of the attraction. One massive taper, called the Paschal, was lighted in each church. That at Westminster Abbey, in 1557, weighed three hundred pounds; that at Durham Cathedral was made of pure wax, square in shape, and extended to within half-a-dozen feet of the roof. Every church in London had a "sepulchre." Prof. J. H. Middleton tells in *Christ's College Magazine* (No. 2, p. 9) how at Christ's College, Cambridge, the host and crucifix were placed on Friday in the sepulchre and guarded by living watchers; on Easter Sunday they were taken out and a solemn service performed.

Lady Morgan in her *Italy*, describes the sepulchres there as watched night and day by hundreds in deep mourning from the dawn of Holy Thursday till Saturday at mid-day when the body is supposed to rise, and the resurrection is announced by the firing of cannon, the blowing of trumpets, and the ringing of bells, which from the preceding Thursday had been carefully tied up to protect them from the power of the devil.

The use of eggs at Easter was universal, a custom still far from extinct. Throughout the North of England, *pace*-eggs—that is, Passover eggs hardened by boiling and tinged with the juice of herbs—were wont not only to be eaten, but played with in the fields, as though they were balls or bowls. In the Lake District and other places they send reciprocal presents of coloured eggs to the children of families between whom any intimacy existed. Sometimes eggs were "blessed" in quantities for distribution throughout the kingdom. The form of consecration appears in the Ritual of Pope Paul the Fifth. The Greeks also make presents of coloured eggs and cakes at Easter. In Russia, a routine of extensive visiting is adopted. An egg is given and exchanged at each visit. People go to each other's houses in the morning and introduce themselves by saying, "Christ is risen." The reply is, "Yes; He is risen." They then embrace, give each other eggs, and drink a great deal of brandy. A good story is told of a Czar who made the customary salutation to a Jewish soldier. The soldier grounded his arms and replied, "Christ is not risen."

At Passover, Jewish women place hard eggs on a table prepared for that purpose. Persians, also, present each other with coloured eggs on March 20 and following days, when they hold their great festival of the solar new year. To the philosophy and theology of the Egyptians, Persians, and other ancient nations,

indeed, may clearly be traced the practice of distributing and presenting eggs at Easter. Among these people, an egg was regarded as emblematical of the universe, as well as a symbol of fecundity and new life. "Dyed eggs were sacred Easter offerings in Egypt," says Mr. Bonwick. A festival took place in the new moon of the month Phamenoth (which, like the Jewish Nisan, began at March 8) in honour of Osiris, when painted and gilded eggs were exchanged in reference to the beginning of things. The transference of the beginning of the year to January, has, in France, been properly followed by the sending of eggs at that season. In Italy sometimes they are stained yellow, purple, red, green, or striped with various colours; sometimes crowned with paste-work, representing in a most primitive way, a hen—her body being the egg, and her pastry-head adorned with a disproportionately tall feather. These eggs are exposed for sale at the corners of the streets and bought by everybody.

The account of the blessing of a ship by Apuleius might almost stand for a description of the modern ceremony at Easter. "The high priest," he says, "carrying a lighted torch and an egg, and some sulphur, made the most solemn prayers with his chaste lips, completely purified it, and consecrated it to the goddess."<sup>2</sup> It will be seen that the significant customs at Easter take us back to pre-Christian times.

J. M. WHEELER.

## The International Movement of Freethought.

### ITALY.

For the instruction of those of our readers who cannot but have noted the world-wide resurgence of superstition due to the titanic struggle through which we have passed, we print below an article on the Italian situation by Prof. Pietro Pereda of Leghorn, which appeared in the Lausanne journal *La Pensée Internationale*. It is entitled "En Route Pour Canossa" (On the Way to Canossa). Canossa, it will be remembered, was a fortress at the foot of the Apennines, eighteen miles from Pavia. It was there that the Emperor of Germany, Henry IV, did abject penance for his revolt from the arrogant temporal domination of Pope Gregory VII, in the year 1077. Prof. Pereda's article underlines the not too obvious fact that the clerical party everywhere is prompt to take advantage of any slackness and indifference on the part of Freethinkers who imagine that there is now no need for militant action. Only the other day a sober paper like the *Guardian* was making capital out of the so-called conversion of the Atheist Giovanni Papini, who was never more than a temperamental or emotional Freethinker. He has lately attempted to strengthen his position as a devout believer by dressing up the mythical biography of Jesus—the Gospel narrative—in the preposterous garb of sentimental romance. I doubt very much the sincerity of Papini, and my dubiousness, I believe, will be shared by the congregation of the Index who are not likely to find that the novel is a support to sound doctrine. Anyhow, the book is selling like hot cakes, and, for the time, Papini, the Atheist, is back in the Dark Ages. We congratulate the *Guardian* on its refined taste in theology. It is another sign of the times.

A LITTLE while ago the Government of Italy was the expression of a secular and liberal policy. It is now on the way to Canossa. It has delivered itself into the foul hands of the priestly barbarians. We shall now see things more shameful than ever entered into the minds of the vilest reactionaries to conceive.

Why is this? Frankly, we must blame the indifference and indolence of the vast majority of so-called emancipated people, who have shut themselves up in a narrow circle of paltry egotism, and have refused to listen to the warning cries of the few real Freethinkers that have survived from the heroic age

of our national re-birth to which we owe our freedom from priestly power and the fall of the temporal domination of the Pope. It is impossible to knock any wisdom into the heads of such stupidly satisfied people. In vain we say to them: "Why do you give up the struggle? Why do you say that the cause of Freethought is definitely won, and that the clerical party is irrevocably condemned to impotence? Have you forgotten what Guerrazzi said: 'The priest is never more alive and active than when he is shamming death!' Do you not know that the first article of the constitution sets out that the Catholic religion is the religion of the State, and that the Curia of Rome will know how to make use of it when it serves their purpose?"

Such remonstrances I am afraid have no effect on superannuated minds, on people whose one idea is to live at peace, with no thought of what the future must bring. I hear them reply: "This article which seems to frighten you so much has no positive sanction. It is a purely platonic assertion of an obvious fact, to wit, that the vast majority of Italians are Roman Catholics." That is so; but some of us are not so foolish as to imagine that the articles of a constitution have no other aim than to spread abroad quite obvious notions of ethnology. On the contrary, we know for a fact that this State religion clause is the one argument which will be used by those whose aim it is to force the country into the Caudine forks of the Vatican.

This conspiracy against liberty of conscience goes back some time, to the third year of the great war, when the Roman Court, obliged to give up its illusions as to the triumph of the Central Powers, made a sudden face-about, and abandoning those whom it had always regarded as its best friends and protectors, ordered its clergy to make a show of patriotism the better to ensure the success of the work of seduction. In this the Church was well served. Priests, monks, and nuns were all over the place, in the hospitals and at the front. Black gowns were as thick at General Headquarters as were gorgeous uniforms. Theatrical commemorations of the dead were clever advertisements for religion, the clergy taking equal rank with the chiefs of the Army and Government. The upshot was that the priests came to be regarded as indispensable to the military force.

It was not long before we saw the effects of this dark and underhand work. In the Cabinets which survived that of Salandra towards the end of the war, and after the armistice, Orlando, Facta, and Bonomi gave the first pledges of submission to the Vatican, and their scandalous undertaking was further strengthened by Mussolini.

Now we see where we are. We have put back the crucifix in the schools, always under the same pretext, the Italian nation is in the main Catholic. But there is something worse. In our elementary schools religious instruction is to be re-established. And who will expound the catechism? Obviously the teachers. But what about teachers who happen to be Jews, Protestants, or Freethinkers? How will they stand? What becomes of liberty of conscience as far as they are concerned? Of course, it is said that they will not be forced to teach religion, and that the children of non-Catholic parents can be withdrawn. But do our emancipated friends consider the wretched position of such scholars who will be looked upon as children of the Devil by their fellow-scholars, and perhaps made to suffer?

As a pledge of liberalism the Government has decided to take a *referendum* on the subject. They will ask the teachers if they are in favour of it or not. But who has the inquiry in hand? The lay authorities? Not at all. This delicate task is in the hands of religious educational bodies. This is how the thing is worked here in Leghorn.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers' *Encyclopaedia*, article "Easter."

Yet there is something even more astounding. The Government has just enrolled a sort of National Guard, made up of *ex-fascisti*, and called *Volunteers for Public Safety*. In one of the regulations of this new corps, which will form a real army, we find this: The Voluntary Militia is dedicated to the service of God, and of the nation.

The service of God! Where will it all end? After that there is nothing else to do. There is no lower depth than these absurdities of the Dark Ages. After this we are not astonished to see that the Royal Commissioner of Rome who is governing the municipality now that the Communal Administrative Councils are dissolved, paid a visit the other day to the Cardinal-Vicar, that he was received with pomp and ceremony, preceded by flunkies, and municipal guards in uniforms, and that he had the felicity to kiss the hand of His Eminence the Vicar.

I have said that we are on the way to Canossa. I should have said that we are already there; and yet no newspaper has had the courage to protest.

Trans. by GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

### Acid Drops.

The solemn humbug of the King and Queen of Spain washing and kissing the feet of poor men and women on Good Friday took place in the Palace at Madrid. We suppose this is intended to prove how well Christianity demonstrates the equality of mankind. And yet? Well, in the first place the feet of all these people are very carefully washed beforehand, and the kissing of the feet is no more than a pretence. Next, if one of these same poor people ventured to approach either the King or the Queen without the proper ceremonies, or to treat them as though they were really equal, there would be the very devil to pay. The whole performance is part of the humbug with which the Christian Church has for centuries been fooling the people. What the people of Spain need most is a good system of education. They can readily dispense with this ceremonial foot-washing if they get that.

"For God and Our Sailors," runs an advertisement of a mission to seamen. As Edward Gibbon said on another occasion, the editor should have blushed to make the association.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr. Chuter Ede, M.P., said the first school he attended had originally been a stable of a famous Derby winner, and later had been converted into a school for educating the poor in Church of England principles. Other examples may be found of the Church's care for education.

Religion is losing its grip on the English people. During what is called "Holy Week" nearly all theatres used to be closed; nowadays they were, with few exceptions, all open, and doing good business.

The first Church Army excursion to the Flanders war graves left London recently, and others will leave at later dates. Is this business, or philanthropy, or a combination of both?

A man at Paddington made an attack upon his sister with a mallet, and afterwards cut his own throat. At the inquest it was said that he was all the time in a state of somnambulism, whereupon the Coroner opined that the somnambulist might be guided by some sixth sense. It is a pity that the Coroner did not take the trouble to make himself acquainted with the subject of somnambulism before letting loose on his court the stupidity of a sixth sense—which is a narcotic and not an explanation. The super-sensitiveness of existing senses under states similar

to somnambulism is a quite well-known phenomena, and the facts about such cases are easily to be got at. There was no need either for the Coroner to try to explain what he was obviously unable to deal with. All that he does is to give a lead to all sorts of stupid and crafty people to follow in the same direction as that indicated by his remarks. People in office should confine themselves to the functions the office entails.

The Archbishop of Melbourne and the Bishop of Bendigo have joined the Freemason's. Throughout Europe priests are opposed to Masonry.

An article in the *Church Times* deals with "The Finding of the Cross." The editor need not go very far. There are enough fragments of the true cross in Continental churches to satisfy the most exacting. If put together they would form a structure as high as the Nelson Column.

The income of the Church Missionary Society for the past eleven months amounted to £282,000 an advance of £14,000 on the previous year. This modest sum should keep hell alight among the benighted heathen for a few weeks longer.

We congratulate Lord Sheffield on his extremely sensible remarks on "Religion in School." Criticizing the proposed scheme of religious instruction put forward for England, he rightly pointed out that it was open to strong objections:—

The scheme put forward for England was open to all the criticisms made on the Welsh scheme, and to even stronger objections. They might possibly have Christian Scientists, Unitarians and Swedenborgians, to say nothing of more obscure sects, claiming representation, and the Labour Churches and Socialist Sunday Schools might also make their demand. It was to be hoped that the great majority in the country would not, through their apathy, allow sectarian and largely clerical cliques to re-open denominational controversies.

While these comments are quite to the point, we should have preferred the ground taken to be that of the rejection of the right of the State to teach sectarian religious opinions of any kind, whether representing a large or a small body. If one sect is admitted there is no reason why all should not be. We have surely reached the time when our political leaders should recognize that the question here is essentially one of principle, and that the only sound one to-day is what is known as the secular solution. Let the State leave religion completely alone. There should be no obstruction by the State to anyone teaching their children whatever religion they think fit, but the State should stand aside from it all. That is the only way of permanent peace. Many of our political leaders know this, but they are too afraid of the parsons to speak out.

Among the hair-raising news items in the Yellow Press is one headed "Archbishop's Fate," describing what may, or may not, be happening to some Russian ecclesiastic with a ten-syllable name. The fate of our own archbishops is quite as terrible. "Canterbury" has to live on the starvation allowance of £15,000 yearly; and his ill-fated brother of "York" ekes out a miserable existence on £10,000 per annum.

A good story of the late Mme. Sarah Bernhardt is told. Whilst on one of her American tours, the Bishop of Montreal forbade his flock to go to the theatre. The great actress wrote the Bishop a short note: "Dear Confrere,—It is not customary for persons in our profession to insult one another." The laugh was with the lady.

The mysterious death on Good Friday of the Royal Chaplain, Mgr. Vales Failde, who was found in his bedroom with his throat cut, has caused a great sensation in Madrid. The faithful have the consolation, however, that on that awful day even "God" got into trouble.

The Christian Church has always known when to fawn and when to bully. In this country it fawns mostly, bullies occasionally, generally promoting its schemes by more or less underground channels. In Italy it allies itself with Bolshevism in the person of Mussolini and his bludgeonaires, and in Spain it openly threatens the Government. Thus the Liberal party in Spain has on its programme an item which would amend the constitution to the extent of permitting a larger number of religious sects to be in Spain than is the case at present. But Cardinal de Soldevila has written the Government warning it that unless this is expunged from the programme the Church will "lay the faithful under a serious obligation not to vote for the Government candidates at the forthcoming General Election." It is believed that the power of the Church in Spain is still strong enough to force its views on the Government. Nor should it be forgotten that the Church in Spain was strong enough, before the war, to secure the death of Ferrer, and in these days of violent reaction, it is likely to have its way, and so long as it can get that it cares for little else. It was the Church that achieved the ruin of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and it knows that a real lifting of Spain in the scale of civilization means the decay of the Church.

We do not know the particulars of the execution of the Russian priest Bukevitch, nor that of the imprisonment of the Archbishop Cleplak by the Soviet Government. For our own part we think it is always a mistake to imprison or execute such men. It does no harm to the cause they represent, and little good to the cause they are fighting. All the same, it is curious how excited the world becomes when the person executed or imprisoned is a member of some royal family or a dignitary of the Church, and how very calmly the execution and imprisonment of thousands of ordinary men and women is taken. So far as one can see through the clouds of newspaper lying there seems little doubt but that the priests were engaged in plots against the Government, and this would be quite in line with the policy and practice of the Roman Church. It is worth remembering that all the governments of Europe where the people had not reached a certain level of enlightenment, have been compelled to keep a very wary eye on this same Church. The growth of Roman Catholicism is a threat to the well-being of the State wherever it occurs.

Again, so far as one can see, the fault of the Soviet Government appears to be that of not having yet learned the lesson that it has no right to interfere with religious opinion, one way or the other. We speak again under correction, because our generally lying Press prevents our knowing when and whether we are getting the truth. But it is not the business of any government to make laws for the regulation of religious worship, or to carry on a propaganda against religious opinion. Its business is to stand entirely on one side, giving the same freedom to all religious opinions, and providing the same protection to religious organizations that it gives to other organizations. Its business, in other words, is to "keep the ring." While it does that it should leave it to the education of the people to provide the legitimate antidote to opinions which it may regard as wrong.

Once more, so far as we can see, the trouble seems to rage around the "confiscation" of Church property. But so far as this was State property the Government was quite within its legal rights in putting that to any purpose it chose. Calling it robbery is absolute nonsense. It was already State property, and the fact of its having been ear-marked for religious purposes does not alter that fact. We have had recently a somewhat similar case with the Prince of Wales' Fund. This was raised at the beginning of the war for the avowed purpose of being devoted to the alleviation of cases of distress arising from the war among the civilian population. What happened was that some part of it went to pay other obligations, part of it went to one of the Colonies, and no one seems quite certain what has become of the rest. But it would be stupid to call this robbery. When it was given to the Government it was Government money, and the use of it

is a matter of wisdom or unwisdom. So with the property of a State Church. It is State wealth, and if the State decides that it will for the future spend that money on education or housing instead of on religion, it is a piece of impudence and an act of revolt against the Government for anyone to stand with his back to the wall defending what he calls the property of God. Our own Government might by a vote in the House of Commons decide that every State Church in the kingdom should be turned into a lecture hall, and all the wealth of the State Church spent on some other purpose. The vote might be wise or unwise, but it would only be doing as it liked with its own. Over and over again the State has actually done this. It did this at the time of the Reformation, and it has done it in other ways since. The whole legal point is that money given to the State Church is money given to the State, and the State may do as it wills with its own. To say that it often does very badly is only to say it is the State.

All students of comparative religion know how much Christianity is indebted to the Egyptian mythology with its Trinities, Virgin Births, and murdered and resurrected saviour-gods. A New York preacher recently gave his congregation what he said was an Egyptian religious service—more or less faithfully presented. But his reason for doing so was the usual Christian one—which is a mixture of folly and knavery. This was that he wished to show the unity of religion and that the people of all ages were making preparations for Christianity. So that when a man plagiarizes from another person's work he is, we suppose, simply using the other man's preparation for his own work. Usually people call this sort of thing stealing without acknowledgment, and the truth is that what is given in the Christian New Testament as a narrative of historic happenings is nothing more than a re-hash of ancient mythology. That is the truth the Christian Church has always striven to keep from the people.

We knew it would come, just so soon as we heard of the illness of Lord Carnarvon. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose credulity seems to be boundless, has informed some American reporters that Lord Carnarvon's illness was caused by "elementals" who had been hanging round the tomb for thousands of years. He also informed them that there was a mummy in the British Museum, guarded by one of these "elementals," and this brought disaster to anyone who touched the mummy. We should like to be introduced to that particular mummy. But it is depressing to see a man reduced to the condition that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle appears to be in. His comments on Lord Carnarvon's death read like the superstitious chatter of some Central African savage.

## 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.

J. SHEPHERD.—Yes, there were very many omissions in the work you name. To be done with anything like completeness such a work needs to be a labour of love and almost the task of a lifetime. There is a world of difference between writing a book and making one. Unfortunately there are too many books which appear to be no more than publisher's ventures. Really good works are seldom written to order.

R. N.—The funds of the National Secular Society are protected by Trust Deed. They are not under the personal control of anyone, but are administered by the Executive. A legacy to the N.S.S. is quite legal and beyond question. Mr. Cohen will be pleased to give you any further information you may require.

H. BLACK.—Thanks. Will deal with the matter next week. Some of the members of the Salford Borough Council evidently need educating as regards manners, truthfulness, and justice. Perhaps something may be done in that direction in the near future.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance, general secretary, acknowledges: F. W. Theobalds, 5s.

J. WOOD.—The average Christian has a very curious mental make-up. First of all he flies in the face of the New Testament teaching by ignoring the power of prayer and depending on medical science. He labels a hospital Christian which is built and maintained with the money given by all sorts of people, and then he wants to know where are the hospitals of the Secularists? Last of all, he imagines that the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is proved by the giving away of a little charity to alleviate a little of the misery that exists in his god-governed world. Such people are almost hopeless.

T. KERR.—We have some recollection of having replied to your query. We should like to see active propaganda in Coatbridge and district. Perhaps if you were to get into touch with the Glasgow Branch something might be done.

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

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

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

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

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### Sugar Plums.

The Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will this year be held in Leeds. It will be on Whit-Sunday, and as Leeds is centrally situated we are expecting a good muster of Freethinkers and of representatives from the Branches. It is an occasion on which Free-

thinkers from all parts of the country may meet each other, and it is good to see full advantage taken of the opportunity. Branches of the Society will by this time have received forms for the appointment of delegates, and these should be filled up and returned to the office as early as possible. Every Branch should be represented by one of its own members where possible, but where this is not possible they may appoint some other member of the Society to act as their representative.

Visitors and delegates who require accommodation during the Conference should write to the President of the Leeds Branch, Mr. H. Youngman, 19 Lowerhead Row, saying exactly what they require. There are other conferences being held in Leeds on Whit-Sunday, and for that reason ample notice should be given as to what is wanted. Some arrangements may be made for an excursion on Whit-Monday, but notice of that will be given later.

The morning and afternoon sessions of the Conference will be business meetings, and for members only. In the evening there will be a public demonstration for which the large and handsome Town Hall has been taken. This is about the largest Town Hall in the North of England, and we hope that it will be well filled to listen to the various speakers.

Mr. Cohen closed his winter lectures on Sunday last with two meetings at Plymouth. The audiences were not so large as had been anticipated, but the approach of the fine evenings probably had something to do with this. Still the interest displayed in the lectures was very gratifying, and with persistency there is every prospect of a strong Branch of the Society being established. There is an energetic band of young men associated with the work, and the secretary, Mr. Churchill, has his heart in the Cause. Mr. McCluskey officiated as chairman at both meetings, and it is good that his experience of Free-thought work should be at the service of the younger members. A fair report of the afternoon lecture appeared in the local Press.

The second of the Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place Institute will be delivered to-day by Mr. George Whitehead. Mr. Rosetti opened the course on Sunday last, with Mr. Moss in the chair. The attendance was only moderate in point of numbers, which was to be regretted as the lecture, we are informed, was both interesting and informative. This is not the best season of the year for indoor lectures, but we hope that our London readers will do their best to advertise these meetings among their friends.

The Executive has engaged the services of Mr. R. Atkinson for a six weeks' open-air lecturing campaign on Tyneside. He commences in Newcastle on April 29, and will lecture at various other places during the period named. Whether the time of Mr. Atkinson's engagement will be extended beyond the six weeks will depend upon various circumstances, but it will very largely depend upon the interest taken in the venture by local Freethinkers. If Freethinkers in Durham and Northumberland, whether members of the N.S.S. or not, desire to assist in the work, or would like some lectures in their district, they should write without delay to the general secretary saying what are the opportunities and in what way they are prepared to assist, and the lectures will be arranged. But they should write at once. We know this district very well, and we are quite sure there is excellent ground for propaganda.

One of our Manchester friends, Mr. H. Black, offered to supply two of the public libraries at Salford with copies of the *Freethinker* free. This was refused, and the discussion gave rise to some very pretty language on the part of those who objected to the *Freethinker* being read in the public library. We will deal with the matter at length in our next issue. We have managed to secure a report of the discussion, and we think the names of these valiant bigots deserve full publicity.

## Richard Carlile.

(Continued from page 219.)

### II.—CARLILE TURNS PUBLISHER.

CONTINUING the account of his career after his return to the London works, Carlile describes how events transformed him into a Freethought publisher and bookseller:—

I shared the general distress of 1816, and it was this that opened my eyes. Having my attention drawn to politics I began to read everything I could get at upon the subject with avidity, and I soon saw what was the importance of the Free Press. Then for the first time I began to read the *Examiner*, *News*, and *Independent Whig* newspapers, but fancied that they did not go far enough with it. I had the same opinion of Mr. Cobbett's twopenny sheets, of Hone's Register, and, indeed, of all that was published in 1816. In the manufactories nothing was talked of but revolution, and I soon became so far fired as to begin to build castles in the air. I attended the public meetings, and felt an attachment to Henry Hunt, as what I thought the best and boldest man, for he then took care to let no one go before him. As well as to read I began to scribble, as I wanted to be doing something in the great cause as I saw it then. I annoyed the editors of several papers with my effusions, particularly the editors of the *Whig* and the *News*, but every answer was that it was too strong or violent. From none except the *News*, could I get a notice as a correspondent. There I felt highly honoured with a couple of notices to correspondents. "A half-employed mechanic is too violent." And an answer to "Cincinnatus" about the propriety and existence of political tract societies. It was something to be noticed, though the pieces were rejected. Oh, if I could get a half-sheet pamphlet of my own writing printed, it was to be a novelty in politics, and my fortune assuredly made. I wrote something for Mr. Hone's Register with the motto: "Gold and silver have I none; but such as I have I give unto thee." This piece obtained me no notice even as a correspondent. Mr. Cobbett was annoyed with a very foolish poetical or rather rhyming effusion, an acrostic on the name of Hunt. Hunt himself was not spared, for I paced the front of his hotel in Covent Garden for a couple of hours one evening before I could muster resolution or put on a face to ask the waiter to give him a letter that I had written, and all I dreaded was being called before him! I soared higher, and addressed the Lord Chancellor himself, not in an anonymous letter, but with real name and address, and demanded, in what Mr. Cobbett would call an imperious tone, that he, as a Privy Counsellor, should advise a reform. I felt a poignant distress, and was ready to run at anything to relieve it. This was the beginning of my career, in 1816. I was an enthusiast, but with the best intention and anxiety to do more good than I saw doing.

In 1817 *The Black Dwarf* made its appearance, which happened to be much more to my taste than Mr. Cobbett's Register. Having purchased the first two numbers, and lent them to as many of my fellow-workmen as would read them, and got them almost illegibly black, I wrote a letter, and enclosed them to George Canning, and requested him, after he had read them, to hand them over to Castlereagh for the green bag that was then on the table of the House of Commons, particularly pointing out to him how well they had been read as was evident from their appearance. Mr. Sherwin next made his appearance under the title of *Republican*, but I found more in his title than in his pages.

Mr. Sherwin was once the keeper of Southwell Bridewell in Northamptonshire, in succession to his father, who filled that office many years so much to

the satisfaction of that town that at the death of his father, Mr. Sherwin, although but fourteen years of age, was appointed to the office under the superintendence of the parson justices. Prior to this he had been sent to an attorney's office. He continued in this situation for above three years, and in the course of this time being much addicted to study in literature, as well as the arts and sciences, he met with some portion of the writings of Paine, and was so much struck with them as unhesitatingly to avow himself the disciple of Paine in politics. This, of course, gave great offence to the magistrates who superintended the Bridewell, and Mr. Sherwin's politics occasioned his removal from this place. Being then under eighteen years of age, and a strong political feeling existing in the country in 1816-17, Mr. Sherwin came to London and presented a political pamphlet he had written to Mr. Hone and other publishers, and they were all afraid of it as too strong. The pamphlet was thrown by, and Mr. Sherwin soon perceived that he could do nothing in his political career unless he got a printing press and turned printer and publisher himself. This an ardent mind soon accomplished. Disappointed, but not damped, having some property, he took a portion of an auction room in Fleet Street, at 183, the windows of which were not wanted for the auctioneer. Here he commenced his *Republican*, but finding the title objectionable to a few friends, he, without giving it a fair trial, changed it in six weeks to *Weekly Political Register*. Thus originated Mr. Sherwin, who was certainly my coadjutor in getting me fairly before the public. Nor can I see how I could have got on without him.

The Habeas Corpus Act being suspended, and Sidmouth having sent forth his circular to the magistrates, all was terror and alarm, but I take credit to myself in defeating the effect of those two Acts upon the Press, I saw nearly all the political tract-sellers of 1816 shrink from the sale even of Cobbett's Register. This was a matter of astonishment to me, as I looked upon it as a mere milk and water paper compared with the *Black Dwarf* and some of the newspapers. Mr. Cobbett's own writing exhibited evident alarm, and this made me indignant. I resolved to get into the front of the battle and to set the best possible example in the trade of Political Pamphlets. These were the reasonings of my individual mind, then unconnected with and unknown to every public man. Of imprisonment I made sure; but I felt inclined rather to court it than to shrink from it.

On March 9, 1817, I borrowed a pound note from my employer and went and purchased 100 *Dwarfs*, stating to Mr. Steill, the publisher, what my object was. The *Dwarf* was then at an almost unprofitable number, and it was a question about giving it up. However, I traversed the metropolis in every direction to find new shops to sell them, and called every day to see how they sold, and the same with Mr. Sherwin's *Republican*, not forgetting Southey's twopenny *Wat Tyler*. My ardour was not to be damped by any danger or difficulty. I persevered, and many a day traversed thirty miles for a profit of eighteen-pence. I soon found myself a welcome hand, both to Mr. Sherwin and to Mr. Wooler's publisher, and here I can give proof of my singular spirit on this occasion. Though I knew that Mr. Cobbett's Register outsold the other publications beyond all comparison, I refused to carry it, or did not apply for it, because it was not strong enough and did not come up to my notions of right. "Why don't you bring us Cobbett's Register?" said many of the shopkeepers. "You will get more by carrying that about than these." "No," said I, "I shall have nothing to do with that." Nor did I, until I had a shop of my own.

I had not carried round the *Black Dwarf* many weeks before there was an *ex-officio* information against the

publisher, and Mr. Steill was arrested. I instantly offered my services to fill his place, but found that they were not exactly wanted, as Mr. Steill, by consent, giving up the editor, Mr. Wooler got off himself.

Up to April 1817, I continued in my avocation of journeyman mechanic, although I had commenced the sale of pamphlets on March 9. I did not leave my employ on precarious ground and not until Mr. Sherwin had informed himself of my disposition and views, and came into the manufactory where I spent part of my time to make me an offer of his shop and the publication of his *Register*.

This, I felt, was a grand point gained, and henceforth I saw my way clear. I embraced his offer without hesitation, and the consequence is well known. At near eight years distance I remain a prisoner!

I entered the shop, 183 Fleet Street, in April, 1817, not as a servant or partner of Mr. Sherwin's, but in addition to the publication of his *Register*, I was to make the best use I could of it, as the rent of £3 per month fell entirely on me. As the publisher of Mr. Sherwin's *Political Register*, and as the person responsible for the publication, it was I who urged him on to that strength of writing and sometimes even violence which he subsequently assumed, and which I knew was calculated to keep up the other political writings to something near the standard. I may look upon myself as the author of all bold writing, for it was the work of my responsibility, and he was always encouraged by me to go his full length under a pledge that I would never give him up as the author unless he wished it. This fearless responsibility on my part brought the *Gorgon* into existence, and evidently led to many other spirited publications.

Mr. Hone published his parodies early in the year 1817, but as soon as they were denounced in the House of Commons as blasphemous because they imitated the style of some holy writings, he withdrew them from sale, carefully gathering them up from every shop that had required them for sale. However, this did not screen him from the Attorney-General's informations. He was prosecuted and imprisoned in the King's Bench Prison for want of bail, at the same time with Mr. Wooler. Mr. Wooler was brought to trial and defeated Mr. Attorney-General; and Mr. Hone obtained his liberation with the understanding that the prosecution would drop. However, the parodies were suppressed, and there was a great demand for them. This did not suit my taste and object at all. I resolved to reprint the Parodies, and so valuable were they considered from the suppression, that I found some difficulty to get at copies. I was then transacting business and known well at Mr. Hone's shop, but I could not get a set from that quarter, and I believe the same conduct was uniformly observed to every inquirer, for I knew that great prices were offered for them, even £1 for each two-penny pamphlet, and I also know that a gentleman in Lincoln's Inn gave five guineas for the five parodies that Mr. Hone had suppressed. Mr. Hone was liberated about the end of June, or beginning of July, and the parodies still suppressed. At length I obtained copies and put them to Press instantly, and on August 7 I hoisted my placards and announced to the astonished public the suppressed parodies for sale, and I believe that I am right when I say that this was the first time that ever an individual bade defiance to the veto of the Attorney-General upon any publication whatever.

I was menaced by Mr. Hone for having infringed his copyright although he had relinquished all idea of profit from it! I was threatened with a process in the Ecclesiastical Court, in the Spiritual Court, by injunction in the Court of Chancery, in the King's Devil's Court, and I know not what other courts, but I laughed at all menace, kept my colours flying, and

the parodies selling; and on August 14 I was arrested on three judges' warrants, and, in default of £800 bail, was sent to the King's Bench Prison; but Mrs. Carlile continued the sale of the Parodies in defiance of all prosecution. I continued in the King's Bench Prison until December 20, a period of eighteen weeks, when on the successive acquittals of Mr. Hone I was liberated on my recognisances of £300. During this period of my confinement I was condemned by all persons and parties for being so violent, but I have always felt the inward satisfaction that whatever good arose from Mr. Hone's defence and acquittals, I was the mainspring of producing that good. I felt disgusted to see the charge of blasphemy brought against such simple, such ridiculous publications, and I soon resolved to put the question to an issue, and although it occasioned me a great loss, and Mr. Hone a very great gain, both he and the public are indebted to me for having brought him into court. He would have made any concession or compromise to have avoided the prosecution, but it was in vain. He was the first publisher, and although he had completely suppressed his own publication, still the copies of them were in full sale at my shop.

Fairly before the public as a publisher, I began to care less about writing scraps of my own, seeing that I was in the right channel for improvement and ultimate distinction. Through 1817 and 1818 I wrote nothing but a few prefaces, the contents of placards, two or three articles for Mr. Sherwin's *Register*, signed "Plebeian," and while a prisoner in the King's Bench Prison for the publication of the Parodies on the Liturgy—a parody on the Communion Service, entitled *Loaves and Fishes*, etc. In 1819 I had not an idea of becoming a regular writer before my imprisonment for the publication of the *Age of Reason* and *Principles of Nature*. The starting of the *Republican* was the work of a moment. Mr. Sherwin, seeing me likely to go to prison, and himself likely to be more exposed, having then got married, was induced to give up all the dangerous part of his career with me, and when matters began to look serious after the Manchester massacre, he came to me to say that he should give up his *Register* and that I might take it up with the same or any title, as I liked. I did not hesitate a moment, but gave it the title of *The Republican*.

This brings me to the commencement of my career as a public writer.

*Abridged from Carlile's own writings by*

GUY A. ALDRED.

(To be Continued.)

## The True Legislator.

Majority rule is purely a political maxim. It is inevitable because it is the lesser of evils. But in intellectual matters the rule of the majority should be strictly taboo. For it means here the rule of the more ignorant and the less informed over the wiser and the better informed.

—*Freethinker*, November 3, 1913.

THE average Freethinker, much like the average Socialist, the one a religious and the other a political truant from the "orthodox" schools may, as in my own unhappy case, read so much and so unsystematically that he gets lost in a forest of ideas, and, as it is said, cannot see the wood for the trees, cannot see life steadily and see it whole. Labour speakers, who seem to be fast becoming a formidable force, at least in numbers, in and out of Parliament, are for the most part earnest, eloquent, and well-informed on the immediate, more superficial, aspects of the social question. Their appeal is direct rather than fundamental, and when the deeper, more vital issues are put before them, say in the form of a question, they display a quite lamentable unacquaintance with the scientific

conceptions of sociology, and in their replies confuse alike themselves, the questioner, and the audience. The words quoted at the head of this article form a case in point and seem to echo a consideration that has haunted my own mind ever since I looked into the positive politics of Auguste Comte, and which might give a useful lead to our Labour stalwarts if they would but take the time to give even a cursory glance into this and other authorities. The late Frederick Harrison was once complimented on being a second Comte, upon which G. W. Foote, with all due respect to the famous editor of the *English Review*, and with his fine estimation of intellectual values, remarked that it was like comparing Mont Blanc with Primrose Hill. There was, he added, sufficient material in the works of Auguste Comte to set up five such philosophers as Mr. Harrison; and, I might add, as much left as would set up a whole House of Commons, with the House of Lords thrown in. Apart altogether from particular political, religious, and philosophical creeds, it is notorious that with the great mass, even the "educated" mass, of the people, the real masters of thought are seldom consulted. Nor is this so because the masters are tedious or dull, mysterious or incomprehensible, for while profound and significant the best of their work is simple and understandable, and would be enjoyed by the commonest intelligence were it not warned off the path of truth and reason by professors, preachers, and politicians:—

Of good and evil much they argued then,  
Vain wisdom all and false philosophy.

—Milton.

We have also Omar's complaint of doctor and saint. It is refreshing to turn from these conventional and transcendental speculations to the grave, calm, simple, orderly Positivism of Auguste Comte. As already suggested it may help us to a better understanding of social questions if we lay to heart a few outstanding remarks of the great Frenchman. Comte notes the evolution of ideas through the theological, the metaphysical, the positive or scientific stages and notes what he called the "stationary system," such as we find in our present political arena—one that fixes society in a contradictory position between retrogression and progress, a kind of *placebo* (please ourselves) polity. It will shock the superficial Socialist to find the philosopher quietly smashing his three main dogmas: First, liberty of conscience with the liberty of Press and speech. Second, the dogma of equality. Third, the sovereignty of the people. These dogmas are dear to us all, till we learn better, till we learn that they are provisional only, and transitional, not the *ne plus ultra* of wisdom. So the dogmas of religion are dear to its votaries till they learn better—which they so seldom do! As our author says:—

It cannot be held that every man is competent to form opinions in social and political questions, and that all opinions are equally valuable. All society is based on faith in the opinions of others and in reciprocal confidence. Continual discussion of the foundations of society must render it impossible to lay sure foundations firm, and the disorder produced by free opinions on all points by all people is seen in the fierce and feeble sectarianism of Protestantism..... Meantime we may note that fine motto of the Catholic Church: In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity. Equality sufficient to permit a man to use his faculties aright is allowed by all; but men cannot be made equal physically, and much less can they be made equal intellectually and morally—to assume liberty of conscience without equality of intelligence would be to stultify the assumption. The sovereignty of the people is in essence revolutionary, condemning the superior to be ruled by the inferior. A fourth dogma, the dogma of national independence has also been serviceable in separating the nations in preparation for a new union

where individual opinion is unhampered, individual prejudice and individual ignorance must be rampant.

Positive philosophy will regard social phenomena as it regards other phenomena, and will apply to the renovation of society the same scientific spirit found effective in other departments of human knowledge. It will bring to politics the conception of natural laws and deal with delicate social questions on impartial, scientific, principles. It will show that certain wrongs are inevitable, and others curable, and that it is as foolish to try to cure the incurable in social as in biological and chemical matters. A spirit of this kind will encourage reform, and yet obviate vain attempts to redress necessary evils.

One is tempted to quote still further, but sufficient for the moment. The better read Freethinker will be familiar with these fragments of a true philosophy and many of our legislators, left and right; others they may tempt further afield, or amplified in the context, may lead to a sounder conception of sociology unencumbered by past or passing theological and metaphysical mysteries; they may, like Comte, find the true social unit and analogy in the *family*, and in its spontaneous subordination, mutual regard and help, the best model for society as a whole. A. MILLAR.

### Manchester Branch N.S.S.

THE Annual General Meeting of the Branch was held on Saturday, April 7, at the Cromford Court Café, at 3.30 p.m. Mr. F. E. Monks occupied the chair.

There were present: Mrs. Ballard, Messrs. Bailey, Bentley, Black, S. Cohen, Collins, Gateshill, Greenall and Jackson, Miss Jones, Mr. Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Mapp, Messrs. A. C. Rosetti, Sefarian, Turner, Willis, Miss E. Williams, and the Secretary.

The balance sheet was presented, and although it showed that the Branch was not strong financially, it was a decided improvement on the previous year. The Secretary took the opportunity to point out that without the assistance of ladies who had organized social gatherings, the work could not have gone on like it had, and everyone who had attended them deserved the thanks of the Branch in no lesser degree.

Mr. F. E. Monks was re-elected President, and reference was made to the very able manner in which he had carried out the presidential duties. "Whatever I may belong to," said Mr. Monks in responding to his election for the fifth time, "I shall always look on office in this cause as one of the greatest honours it is possible to receive."

All the Vice-Presidents were re-elected, and Mr. D. Mapp was re-elected librarian for the second time.

In thanking the meeting for the confidence placed in him by electing him for a third year, the Secretary mentioned his indebtedness to Mr. W. Collins for his willing help during the session, and Mr. Collins was again elected Assistant Secretary.

The meeting was distinctive in that every member spoke, and varied opinions were expressed. This zealotness for the Branch's welfare should mean that the Branch, with so many stalwarts, is entering upon an unparalleled year, and arrangements are now in hand for the summer activities.

Reference was made to the progress of the Discussion Circle, and any member interested is invited to attend the meeting to-day (Sunday) at 6.30 p.m., at Mr. Mapp's, 1 Leopold Avenue, West Didsbury, when Mr. F. E. Monks will speak on "The Case Against Capital Punishment." If any members wish to attend who have not previously attended they should just advise Mrs. Mapp accordingly. Nothing more is necessary.

HAROLD I. BAYFORD,  
Hon. Secretary.

No one can be a great thinker who does not recognize that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead.—John Stuart Mill.

## The Garden.

A garden is a lovesome thing—God Wot!  
 Rose plot,  
 Fringed pool,  
 Fern grot—  
 The veriest school  
 Of peace, and yet the fool  
 Contends that God is not.  
 Not God in gardens? When the sun is cool?  
 Nay, but I have a sign!  
 'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

—T. E. Brown.

"A PRETTY, ingenious, little verse, isn't it?" queried a friend after he had handed me the above to read.

The ingenuity of style is indeed pretty, but that by which God is associated only with the beauty of the writer's garden is, to put it nicely, facile, clumsy, humorous and, in fact, most disingenuous. But so few take notice of the ethical side of these spineless contentions. A popular, sentimental fancy, more or less daintily expressed, and it is quoted widely under the heading, "Poems You Ought to Know"! So long as the veneer has a pleasing polish, what matters the dry rot beneath?

What I want to know is where God gets to when this "veriest school of peace" loses its harmony and when the sun is hot. No doubt his tools would find him in some more soothing place, under a cooler sun—at best, a most uncomplimentary solution. True, Mr. Brown does not say God is absent when there is discord, but, remembering the sort of mind to which he appeals, we know that suggestion is more powerful than the written word.

I cannot help thinking of my own rose plot, the budding beauty of which has so often been despoiled by that pest the green fly. On such occasions God was, no doubt, walking in Mr. Brown's garden.

Many are the pleasant hours I've spent by fringed pools, where that godly peace, bred of Nature, temporarily veils remembrance of the poisonous city. In reflective mood I have looked on the placid water and suddenly wondered how many fish on that instant were paying the penalty of youth—providing meals for their elders!

The fern grot has an ardent admirer in myself. Like the majority of wretched Freethinkers I have a warm love for the country. One day I remember, while enjoying one of Nature's quiet, contented moods, my dog started a rabbit squatting in the bracken, lazily at peace with all things in the midday heat; quite a youngster. The dog triumphed after a hard chase, catching the rabbit within a few yards of its burrow; I came up as the rabbit succumbed to the teeth about its throat. Turning from the warm, twitching, bleeding form, the dog looked proudly up at me. I wonder now, could this possibly have been a sign that the deity was near?

As a compliment to style I append "the sincerest form of flattery":—

LIFE'S GARDEN.

Beneath the veil, a loathsome thing—God plot,  
 Men wot!  
 A school  
 Of rot—  
 Death: deceptive pool  
 Of peace, of which the tool  
 Contends the guilt is not  
 His God's—except the surface beauties! Fool!

God leaves with the sunshine?  
 A knowing God! A sorry sign!

ARCHIE L. PEARCE.

Never have anything to do with those who pretend to have dealings with the supernatural. If you allow supernaturalism to get a hold in your country, the result will be a dreadful calamity.—Confucius.

## Correspondence.

PYTHAGORUS AND COPERNICUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A week or two ago a statement was made in the *Freethinker* to the effect that Greek philosophers and astronomers existed who were aware of the heliocentric constitution of the universe or rather of what is called the solar system, a constitution regarded as a statical verity, to be accepted with a large grain of salt.

It is just possible that the clerical element from professional motives managed to exclude this important fact from the purblind vision of the classic world presented to budding England at public school and university, but I doubt it. Without claiming more than a very superficial knowledge of Greek and Latin exact science, I must say explicitly that subsequent reading has not given the smallest motive for suspecting anything of the kind, but the exact contrary. The *Freethinker* should therefore obtain from some real competency in the matter an exact translation of the passage or passages in Greek literature that justify the statement or withdraw it.

In an article on Copernicus in an American paper I read as follows: "Although Pythagorus and others in ancient times hinted at the supremacy of the sun as the central body, yet no one brought forth the proof." This is a good instance of the way English writers delight in reducing a plain subject to a fog of uncertainties where their own superstition may wallow unchallenged. Naturally the importance of the sun as light and life-giver was recognized by the ancients. They call it the "heart of the Cosmos," and some of them thought all the stars on the Aplanes borrowed their light from the sun. But all of them, so far as I am aware, believed that the sun ran round the earth, in which case the interpolation "as a central body" is dishonest and inserted to obscure the whole question. The real fact seems to be that they often all but guessed the riddle of their Cosmos, but the primitive ancient error of *terra firma*, as a central motionless globe, formed of the scum and dregs of the heavenly bodies and their concentric spheres, which it attracted to itself by its force of gravity, of *terra firma* as "this inferno" or "vale of tears" always put them off the scent and closed their eyes.

As to Pythagorus he was most likely the greatest mathematician that has yet been born, his famous problem is the foundation of half our modern mathematics, his invention of the scales, of all our western music. Still, never was there a case where *sutor ne crepidet ultra* was more to the point. He almost founded a religion, and if it had not fortunately died still-born, it would have surpassed in absurdity the idle dreams of the Platonists and the borrowed madness of the early Christians. It was entirely based on the geocentric delusion and crazy ideas about numbers, along with a dualism on a par with Dahomey or Timbuctoo. The immortal human soul had been dragged down by the force of gravity from its heavenly sphere to "this inferno" and the whole business of life consisted in purifying it "from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" and getting it back "to its house not made with hands eternal" on the Aplanes or Milky Way.

The celebration of the 450th anniversary of the birth of Copernicus on February 19, 1473, draws attention to a fact I have often tried to insist upon, and is a good antidote to the excessive racial vanity of the Anglo-Saxon and German people, viz., that in no great branch of science, neither in astronomy, physics, nor biology, have these races ever taken the first step opening out a new world of thought. They have never possessed either the intellectual originality or the moral and physical courage. This is also true of practical geography. The English though exceptionally favourably placed never made any great geographical discoveries. That was exclusively, almost, the work of the Latins and the Hollanders. But they showed a rare aptitude for stepping into the discoverer's shoes and "exploiting" the races the discoverers had never intended to be exterminated. In the case of scientific initiative let us be just and admit that they have amplified and established the discoveries of others with admirable skill and patience.

Still the three great revolutionizers of scientific thought in modern times, have all been Slavs in the field of physics, *viz.*, Sobatschovski in geometry and mathematics (one might almost perhaps add Mendelieff in chemistry), Copernicus in astronomy, and the Curies in practical physics and in biology, French or Latin, *viz.*, Vesalius in anatomy, Lamarck and Pasteur in evolution and scientific medicine.

I. a Paz.

W. W. STRICKLAND.

#### THE MIRACLE WORKERS.

SIR,—Sunday, March 25, was Palm Sunday, and all true believers in Ireland were decorated with sprays—after it was duly blessed and converted from yew and other shrubs into “Palm” by the peasants and publicans’ sons, who are able to turn porter into gold, yew to palm, and supposed sensible people into doped superstitious slaves.

Recently a wonderful discovery was made in one of Dublin’s slum areas. The Rev. Father John, O.S.F.C., found the Grandmother of Jesus, and after the usual beautiful sermon, a “solemn unveiling” of her statue took place, and no doubt Saint Anne will draw the spare shekels from the pockets of the slummers into the hungry maw of the Mother Church. The statue was made by an Italian, and I suppose it bears as much likeness to poor St. Anne as the yew to the palm, or a coconut to a potato. Templemore, with its bleeding plaster of Paris statue, is now a thing of the past, and as the “Little Flower” did not send down her shower of rose leaves from heaven, the Dublin clerical showmen have to keep their programme filled, especially as at this moment the Holy Father has a “peace delegate,” also an Italian, from Rome in Ireland. Unable to keep the people of Rome from cutting each other’s throats, the Pope is now pulling the diplomatic wires which are fast getting cut by his “faithful Irish” irregulars.

Dublin.

P. MURPHY.

#### Obituary.

We report with regret the death of Mr. J. H. Early, of Brighton, one of the old Bradlaughites, who did so much good work at a time when the advocacy of Freethought meant much more discomfort than it does at present. Mr. Early was in his 81st year, and of necessity has been unable of late years to take an active part in the propagandist work. But his interest in the Cause never flagged, and in noting the broadening of thought that has taken place, and the very many modifications in religious ideas that the last generation has seen, he was seeing some of the fruits of his own labours. We respectfully salute the passing of one of the old guard.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.1) : 8, Mr. Saphin, “The Origin of Christianity.” Lantern lecture.

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. F. Shaller, “Freethought Martyrs.”

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2) : 11, Hamilton Fyfe, “The Manufacture of Public Opinion by the Press.”

SOUTH PLACE (Moorgate Street, E.C.) : 3.30, Mr. G. Whitehead, “The Religious Philosophy of Bernard Shaw.”

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants’ Rooms) : 7, Mr. Walker, “Flogging a Dead Horse.”

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Mr. Mapp’s, 1 Leopold Avenue, West Didsbury) : 6.30, Mr. F. E. Monks, “The Case Against Capital Punishment.” Members who have not attended before please advise Mrs. Mapp that they intend to be present.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Hut, Madras Street, Simonside) : 6.30, Mr. Atkinson’s Campaign; other business.

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