

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLIII.—No. 49

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1923

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

(Continued from page 754.)

Defending the Faith.

My chief object in dealing with the booklet recommended by the Rev. Clement Rogers to readers of this journal was that it purported to be some sort of reply to my strictures on the sermon which I criticized in the *Freethinker* for November 18. In that article I made two statements. One was that the methods of Mr. Rogers reminded one of the old-fashioned policy of the Christian Evidence Society, which was always a mixture of misrepresentation, suppression, and hardly veiled slander, the other that Mr. Rogers was terribly old-fashioned and never came within speaking distance of a criticism of up-to-date scientific Free-thought. Mr. Rogers' pamphlet fully justifies the first statement, and it does nothing to disprove the other. Once upon a time it was the general rule, among even highly placed Christians, to paint the unbeliever as a monument, if not a miracle, of infamy, with the purpose of inducing Christians to steer clear of him. That was a simple policy so long as Freethinkers were very rare. But the plan became less profitable when Freethinkers became more numerous, and as Christians usually drop a policy when it no longer pays, the more alert type of controversialist discarded that method. Mr. Rogers, however, appears to be still in the early Victorian stage, as witness the following. Christians believe:—

.....because of the obvious association of Christianity with morals, as seen in actual sins of the world that rejects its authority.

Where thirty years ago people earnestly argued that Christian morals could be retained without the Christian creed we now see that as a matter of fact repudiation of the marriage law goes with reduced Christianity and Bolshevism and Anarchy, are definitely associated with a Secularist creed.

I am not sure what Mr. Rogers means by "Christian morals," but so far as Christianity has a morality that is peculiarly and distinctively Christian, I am emphatically of opinion that the less the world has of it the healthier it will be. Unbelief, we are told is often due

to mere mental and moral laziness, to a refusal to study, to an indulged disinclination to take trouble

to think, to a lack of purpose to sustain enquiry, to unwillingness to accept the responsibility of conviction.

The present generation is witnessing the natural consequence of repudiation of the Christian law—notably that of marriage and all that goes with it—as the natural sequence of the repudiation of Christian belief.

Where a theory of Determinism is adopted it is generally, in the masses of men, due either to confused thought which cannot distinguish between freedom and omnipotence, which thinks that if a man's life is limited it has no freedom at all, or else to a practical desire to find excuse for conduct deliberately chosen, though known to be wrong.

There is more of this kind of thing, but here we are back in the gutter-mongering activities of the lower type of Christian Evidences of the early Bradlaugh days. And this by a King's College lecturer who actually repeats the lectures several times in order to gratify the cultured and deeply reflective listeners at Hyde Park meetings. The *Freethinker* is a low-browed, evil living, unthinking scoundrel—or if he does think it is only to find some philosophy that will excuse his evil conduct. And the Christian is by contrast a high-minded, pure living person, whose brow is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," bowed down with the sense of responsibility arising from deep thinking, and setting the world a shining example of pure living. Every Christian listener at King's College or in Hyde Park will thank Mr. Rogers for the delineation. No wonder they wanted to hear the description more than once. They could hardly have believed it to be true on the first occasion.

* * *

The Origin of the Gods.

I think enough was said last week concerning Mr. Rogers' fantastic description of "faculties" and "instincts" to give readers a fair idea of his value as a psychologist. It remains to point out the grounds for saying that he never once faces the real question at issue between Christian and Freethinker. It will be remembered that in my original article I called attention to the fact that it really did not matter whether we had or had not a string of believers in the Christian miracles going right back to the times of the Jesus of the four gospels. The question of the historicity of the gospels had now given way to the question of the psychological conditions which make the belief in the miraculous possible. So, too, with the belief in God. It is not a question of whether there is evidence for the existence of a God or not. The issue has been changed by the growth of knowledge concerning the origin and development of the god-idea. It is at least an unquestionable historic fact that the belief in God among all existing races of men with any marked degree of civilization is fundamentally an inheritance. They did not originate the belief in God, it was not a truth discovered as a consequence of reflection acting upon well based knowledge. It was something which they found already established, with an army of men pledged by training and self-interest to keep the belief

alive, and in very many cases armed with power and influence to obstruct—sometimes to positively and forcibly suppress all teaching to the contrary. And when the history of this belief was traced, it was found to never have had the slightest foundation in positive verifiable knowledge. Careful observers were able to point to the existing conditions among primitive people which placed the belief in God and Gods upon exactly the same footing as the belief in good and evil spirits, of witches and warlocks, of fairies and salamanders. Of this, too, there is no doubt whatever. We can say with absolute certainty that all existing ideas of God have come from pre-existing ideas of Gods, and as we trace these backwards we find ourselves with nothing but the sheer ignorance of primitive mankind as the source from which all ideas of gods and ghosts, angels and devils, are ultimately derived. That is the universal teaching of a genuinely scientific anthropology.

* * *

Evading the Issue.

Now if that be a fair statement of our knowledge concerning the actual origin and development of the belief in gods, is all the talk of evidence for the existence of God anything better than a fantastic absurdity? And would not a genuinely impartial writer or speaker deal with the idea of God from this point of view, challenging or admitting the truth of the generalizations laid down by a host of competent observers, instead of treating us to a tissue of absurdities about "faculties" and "instincts" in the way that Mr. Rogers does? For all his readers know, so far as his lectures are concerned, the question of the belief in God is where it was a century ago. But if what has been said above is only approximately true, there is nothing to discuss in the nature of evidence. One might as well sit down in solemn argumentation as to whether the giants that figure in fairy tales exist. If we know that the root of a particular belief is ignorance and nothing but ignorance, if we are able to show that but for this universal ignorance the idea of God would never have come into existence, we have nothing to discuss but the conditions that gave this false belief being, and the conditions that encouraged its development. If we may trust the teachings of modern science the history of the idea of God is the history of a delusion. It began in a misunderstanding of Nature by primitive man, and by no possible logical process can you derive anything but error from error. If Mr. Rogers does not know the state of modern knowledge concerning the God-idea, he is unfit to lecture students on the subject. If he does know the truth, we should be glad to know why this important aspect of the matter is left untouched. More and more the choice for the professional champion of religious ideas is that of giving his case away by telling the truth, or casting doubts upon his own intelligence by championing a view of religion that is contradicted by all we know of the facts of the case.

* * *

What Ought to be Done.

One point in conclusion. Mr. Rogers has much to say about Christianity meeting human needs, and about the evidence of human experience. Mr. Rogers is not alone in emphasizing these subjects, and yet with very rare exceptions what is said on both these heads is pure rubbish. What a man "needs" is only a certain indication of his habits and education. The whiskey drinker's need for whiskey is, as evidence, as good as the religious man's "need" for religion. A genuine need can only be established by proving that men cannot be as wise, or as good, without religion as they can be with it, and hardly anyone will claim that to-day. So, too, with the so-called experience of the believer. What is needed here is not a detailed account of his

experience so much as an analysis of it. When, for example, a man says that he has experienced certain sensations or emotions which he calls communion with God it is sheer stupidity to take his account of the nature of his emotions as literal fact. When a savage says that pains in his intestines are due to some little spirit gnawing them we do not question the reliability of his feelings, but we do query the accuracy of his analysis. So, too, with the Christian's account of the intercourse he has with deity. We do not question that a Christian experiences certain feelings, but we do, and with reason, question whether he has correctly analysed their nature. So, if Mr. Rogers was really qualified, by training and education to deal with the psychology of belief he would take what are called the religious feelings and emotions, analyse them and show either that they could not be explained in any other way than in the religious way, or that they might be explained as misunderstandings of feelings and emotions which all had in common. But that, I am afraid, would be to credit Mr. Rogers with greater scientific acumen than he gives evidence of possessing.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Theology and Modern Thought.

THE Rev. Alfred Ernest Garvie, M.A., D.D., Principal of New College, was born in Russian Poland, where he received his first education, which he completed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Oxford. In 1893 he became a Congregationalist minister at Macduff, and two years later went to Montrose. In 1903 he was appointed professor at Hackney and New Colleges, London, and principal of the latter college in 1907, a position he still occupies. It is stated that "for one so young he has had the most distinguished career of any Congregational principal. He has published several books, such as *The Inner Life of Jesus*, *The Christian Certainty Amid the Modern Perplexity*, and *A Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, the object of which is to defend Christianity against the attacks made upon it in the name of modern thought. He has been closely connected for many years with the Christian Evidence Society, and he actually attended the last annual meeting of that society, held a few weeks ago in the Caxton Hall. Most of our readers have long ago formed their opinion of the nature, character, and work of the Christian Evidence Society, which is not at all a favourable one; but with that we have nothing whatever to do in this article. What is of significance to us is that Principal Garvie was present at the last annual meeting and spoke in glowing terms of the Society and its work. His address was considered of so great value that it appeared in most journals, and now it is published in the *Christian World* of November 29.

Principal Garvie admits that "Apologetics" is a word that has a bad reputation, chiefly, perhaps, because it is regarded as connected with the word "apology," as it undoubtedly is. "Apologetics," according to the dictionaries, deals with the defensive facts and proofs of Christianity, and is the science that purposes to vindicate by defence or defensive assault, the truth and absoluteness of the Christian religion. In other words Apologetics is the science of making a philosophical and practical apology for the religion of the Cross. And so inefficient are all the apologetic works ever issued that each succeeding age needs piles of fresh ones. With this fact in mind it is unquestionable that apologetics "stands for a most important part of Christian works." Dr. Garvie tells us that apologetics is:—

.....the stating of the faith, not merely defensively, but persuasively; not only holding our own but seek-

ing to convince those who do not believe the Christian faith that they may hold it with us. The special task of Apologetics is to relate our tenets to the growing thought of any age. In order to meet difficulties, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, the apologist must be constantly on the watch, and it is essential that he should be thoroughly up to date. We recognize that the attack on Christianity varies from age to age, and therefore the defence must adapt itself to meet the attack.

Principal Garvie does not inform us why these difficulties, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, should exist and make belief difficult, or why a Divinely given religion should have to relate itself anew to every successive age. This is a point wholly unexplained in his own very able work on Apologetics. One would have thought that the mission of such a religion would have been to convert every age into glad acceptance of itself as the only remedy for all human ills and the infallible harmonizer of all human differences. More amazing still, there is nothing like agreement among Apologists as to what Christianity really is. Scarcely any two of them are at one on the person and work of Christ. Instead of confining themselves to such stupendous themes they waste their time and energy in the discussion of the Bible and geology and the theory of evolution. Principal Garvie says that we no longer trouble ourselves about the Bible and geology, and then adds this mystical and perplexing sentence: "We know that if we use Genesis for the purpose for which God gave us the book, it will not trespass on the sphere of geology." How in the world has the Principal discovered the purpose for which God gave us the Book of Genesis, or that God ever did give it at all? On the subject of evolution he speaks more sensibly, though still, of course, as a theologian:—

The next trouble came from biology through Darwin. Personally, I am not such a snob, biologically, as to be ashamed of having some connection with the lower animals. I do not see the hand of God less in the method of evolution than in the old conception of creation. It matters less whence we came than what we are and whither we are going.

The only comment on this astounding avowal that we wish to make is that if God preferred the method of evolution to that of creation he thereby deliberately robbed himself of the slightest claim to be regarded as a moral and tender-hearted being. The theology of a Christian evolutionist is a damned tissue of inconsistencies and blasphemies.

We come now to the alleged bearing of psychology upon religion. The Principal openly claims that he and those who agree with him "owe much to psychology." As a matter of fact, however, it is a rash conjecture, founded upon no fully ascertained fact, to declare that religion owes much to psychology. It is perfectly true that such great men as Lotze and Ladd believed in the soul theory, and to them the soul was believed in the soul theory, and to them the soul was a different substance from matter. According to them "there exists a spiritual substance, a soul, that acts in all the processes of consciousness. The soul is the immutable principle that unifies all the phenomena of consciousness; in other words, all mental processes are but manifestations of the soul's activity." This is clearly the conception of psychology which Principal Garvie has adopted, and it is without a doubt entirely erroneous. Dr. Boris Sidis, an ardent disciple of William James, rejects the soul-theory as follows:—

The argument of Spiritualism, that because mental facts differ in kind from material facts, a spiritual substance must be assumed to exist, is certainly fallacious. Phenomena may differ fundamentally and still we have no right whatever to conclude that they require two different substances. Time is different from space, but are they two different substances? Consciousness may differ widely from matter and still re-

quire not one single substance for its existence and activity (*Normal and Abnormal Psychology*, pp. 51, 57).

Dr. Garvie says that "a little psychology is a dangerous thing," which is a complaint from which he himself suffers judging by the present short address. He recognizes as genuine psychologists only those who advocate the soul theory. He says:—

There are some psychologists who seem to be much more comfortable in the "cellar" than in the "upper room," and the dirtier the cellar the happier they seem to be there.

Who are the psychologists who prefer the cellar to the upper room, and who made the cellar dirty for their special comfort? We are virtually told that the psychologists of the cellar are those who "attempt to reduce human life to the level of animal existence." We know of not one of the great psychologists who advocates that view, though they all alike reject the soul theory. We positively deny that man has attained a soul, or ever will. To the great psychologists man is the highest of the animals, with fine possibilities of growth and development, but he is nothing more than an animal. And the Principal knows him as nothing more. As a sheer dogmatist he asserts that "man has risen above all visible phenomena to apprehend invisible and eternal reality." He makes fun of the psychologists who advocate the rationalization of instincts. "But we have something better," he exclaims, "than rationalization." J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

The Priest in Our Midst.

The services of the clergy are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description.

—G. W. Foote.

Presbyter is but priest writ large.

—Milton.

ENGLISH people are apt to point the finger of scorn at such foreign countries as Spain and Italy on account of the supremacy of Priestcraft, and to boast that in England we are free from such a clerical caste. Yet, in our midst, there are about fifty thousand men, each bearing the title of "reverend," who occupy a unique position in the nation. Who are they? In what way are they superior to other citizens who are simply "misters." These are questions which, in these democratic days, are worth the consideration of working people.

It may be contended that this reverence is paid to these men because they have chosen as their business the supervision and direction of the religious habits of the English people. In reality they are medicine-men engaged in similar work to their dark-skinned prototypes in savage nations. They tell us of gods who get angry with us; of a dreadful Devil who must be guarded against; of angels who fly from heaven to earth; of saints who can assist if supplicated. Nearly fifty thousand men are engaged in this business, to say nothing of their assistants and satellites. They are entwined in the national life, as George Meredith said, "like poisonous ivy." These fifty thousand men in this country are maintained at an enormous expense, although their profession is no more honest than fortune telling. Many a poor old woman has been sent to prison for taking money from a servant-girl, after promising her a handsome husband and four fine children; but these fifty thousand men are allowed to take large sums of money for promises of good fortune in "the beautiful land above."

The average "reverend" enjoys a comfortable livelihood, and lives in a nice house. He has just as

much, or as little, work as he likes to do, and if he chooses to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting, there is no one to say him nay. He can count on invitations to dinner and other congenial hospitality all the year round, which is no small saving in the household expenses. The higher ecclesiastics have an even better time. As an example, thirty-nine archbishops and bishops share £180,700 yearly; and the bachelor Bishop of London enjoys a salary of £300 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep fifty ordinary families in comfort.

Seeing that little merit attaches to the clerical profession, are we to assume that reverence is due to the exemplary lives led by those belonging to this favoured class of the community? Police Court records and Divorce Court proceedings show that the clerical character in no wise differs from any other class. They may retort that there are black sheep in every fold. True, but people who are not professional religionists do not pretend to be a class apart, "ordained by God." They do not ask to be known as "reverend," nor by any other title implying special respect. It is precisely because these priests expect us to look up to them that we are compelled to compare their behaviour with their boastings.

It appears also that many of these priests are perjurers. They subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of religion. These Articles include the belief that Christ went down bodily to "hell"; that a spirit can be at the same time a father and son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost; that Adam was the father of the human race, and that he ate forbidden fruit, in consequence of which humanity is damned; that Roman Catholic doctrine is a vain invention; that the Jewish Bible is the Word of God; and that King George V is the head of Christ's Church. To these Articles of Faith twenty-five thousand priests of the Anglican Church subscribe. We know that numbers of them do not believe them, or observe them, and that their main reasons for remaining in the Church are "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral expressed it. And the right to appoint priests to benefices is sold for money in the open market, as if it were so much coal or bacon.

Some of these priests are legislators, having seats in the House of Lords. As law-makers they have been the despair, not only of politicians, but of the plain, average citizen. In the long struggle of Roman Catholics, Jews, Nonconformists, and Freethinkers, for civil liberty; in the humanitarian crusade for amending criminal laws and reducing the death penalty; in the efforts of the people to obtain a voice in national affairs; and in the slow building up of a system of National Education, the House of Lords has ever been in conflict with the House of Commons. In that age-long conflict these priests have almost invariably stood with the aristocrats against the people.

The records of Parliament prove that these priests have constantly been against the best spirits of the age, blindly suspicious of democratic aspirations and desires. Fifty years ago Lord Shaftesbury asked the question "Of what use are the Bishops in the House of Lords?" He saw quite clearly that these priests used their position to maintain the rights and privileges of aristocracy. Half a century later the Bench of Bishops still sits in the Upper Chamber and works its evil influence, and they are supported in the country by the thousands of petticoated priests who take their orders from the Lords Spiritual of a reactionary Church.

MIMNERMUS.

Slaves and tyrants are mutually distrustful.—*Beauchêne* (1748-1824).

The Bell Ringer.

GOD is everywhere, at all the ends of the earth, in every clime, tropical or frigid, or between the two, barren or fruitful places:—

I know not where the islands lift
Their fringed palms in air,
I only know we cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

What blessed assurance. There he is: in the Great War, in the earthquake in Japan, in the Redding Plague, among the cattle with his awful and mysterious foot and mouth disease; in the innumerable crimes, calamities, and moving incidents so faithfully recorded in our daily Press. God is everywhere, but he might as well be nowhere. Like modern earthly kings, he is a constitutional monarch, and is subject ever to the parliaments of man. The king can do no wrong. God save the king. His providence can reach even unto this last, the Atheist, even in the "queer street" of his purely human extremity: "I have now to tell you," writes a friend from a distant land, "of an extraordinary experience I had some fifteen months ago. I had been some months out of work, from the time I came out of hospital, where I had been for six or seven weeks with pneumonia, and things were not good with us. The grocer at the corner, who is an Elder in the kirk—which fact does not prevent him from robbing his customers in the way of business—interested himself in my case, and got me a post as Beadle in his kirk at forty dollars a month. My duties consisted of ringing the bell twice a week, and four times on the Sabbath, handing out hymn books, standing at the 'plate,' and making myself generally useful. Imagine me if you can, clothed in my right mind, with your remembrance of my ample form and features and imperturbable smile, standing thus amongst the godly and their offerings, a respected and veritable pillar of the Church, or pulling at the bell-rope, 'ringing the damned souls out and the saved souls in!' Had I not been 'rotten at the core,' with no good in me, what an asset to that church I might have been. I might even, in the parson's absence, have preached in his stead with great acceptance. But, alas, I was ever a 'conscientious' rogue and so were restrained my ambitions of being a popular churchman. Zion's courts were a welcome haven from the imminence of 'Queer Street,' where by the Lord's will, I had so desperately found myself....."

My friend is back in a snug secular occupation. He has not told me when, or "why he left the Church." He may be there still for all I know. And, certainly, his will not be an isolated instance in the house of God, even in the pulpit. Any port in a storm. A man may be constitutionally honest, but the world will not thank him for parading his honesty. In spite of its Christian humility it will not suffer gladly moral or intellectual superiority: To the drowning man clutching at a straw moral maxims seem as useless as religious texts. "Philosophy triumphs over future evils, but present evils triumph over philosophy." Had the world's so-called "plums" been always earned by merit and honesty, civilization to-day would have been different. The man who finds himself in "Queer Street" must recall, for the moment at least, Emerson's famous saying: "A foolish consistency is the bugbear of little minds, beloved of little statesmen, philosophers and divines." The poet says very splendidly: "What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted? thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just; and he but naked, though locked up in steel, whose conscience with injustice is corrupted." And which is paralleled by the great Milton: "He that hath light within his own clear breast may sit i' the centre and enjoy bright day; but he that hides a dark

soul and foul thoughts benighted walks in the noon-day sun, himself is his own dungeon." Again, from Beaumont and Fletcher we read:—

An honest soul is like a ship at sea,
That sleeps at anchor on the ocean's calm;
But when it rages, and the winds blow high,
She cuts her way with skill and majesty.

Yes, but amid the reefs and storms and currents of a lee shore, where the finest navigator may find himself, he must save ship and cargo how best he may. The elements are non-moral; and morality itself is only valuable as helping towards the survival, happiness, and soldering of society. Those lines of Shakespeare and Milton are noble, and inspire to noblest issues, and easy it is to mouth them "when destiny proves kind," but of the man in "Queer Street," though armed so strong in honesty, yea, cap a pic, the world may take but little notice, he may starve with all his virtues and his merits thick upon him!—No, no, a thousand times no, I am *not* advocating the philosophy of that modern pest, the business journalist, *ie.*, "Get on or get out." Even so ordinary a Freethinker as I am sees a little beyond himself, feels for others; in a shipwreck he would hardly "thank God" for being the sole survivor, he would—if he could not save them—rather perish with those hapless others; and not because he was a Freethinker, not because he was a Christian, but because of the natural humanism and heroism of common life. A friend of mine in a foreign port was lifting the end of a steel rail, a Russian at the other. By a wrong move on the part of his mate my friend lost his little finger, upon which the Russian, saying nothing, took him in his arms! Surely a most eloquent and sincere demonstration of sympathy, affection and regret.

However, my friend "the bell-ringer" sends me his experience for the fun of the thing. I hope I will be pardoned for suggesting the serious side. It is a jest, indeed, but tinged with tragedy as all things human are; just as the poet of the skylark said:—

Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Mushrooms.

At dawn the flats are grey with mist
Before the fields are sunrise-kissed,
And hopping field-fares stray and stir
About the mushroom-gatherer.

Whiskered, swart-grey to match the fruit
That best in dank green meads can shoot,
When dawn is young and birds awake
He hurries through the dripping brake.

Light fungi from the sopping fells
The mushroom-merchant dourly sells,
And when at length they come to you
The sun is high, the sky is blue.

Through running streams, by sodden trees,
At dawn of dewy harmonies,
The flapping hat and pipe grown rank
Pass where the mould is lush and dank.

O children of the morning mist
Before the world is sunrise-kissed,
You're borne, when day is well astir,
By the old fungus-gatherer.

And when the sun is hot and high
The mushroom-merchant will come by;
He saw the first gold sun-streak stir,
The old grey wrinkled gatherer.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

Spiritism and Photography.

SOME years ago it was a popular idea in America that crime could be unfailingly discovered if photographs of the accused's actions were produced as evidence. The camera and the phonograph were brought into use for this purpose, and it was said, with a nasal twang, "the camera can't lie." Like many other popular notions this one has proved fallacious. It is quite easy to deceive by means of pictures, and even amateur photographers are able to produce "faked" negatives.

These thoughts have come to me by seeing, in most respectable newspapers, a reproduction of a photograph purporting to be a veritable "snapshot" of the scene at the service at the Cenotaph on November 11, 1923. Surrounding the heads of a large number of men in khaki are trees and bushes making the whole somewhat of an indistinct character. This is claimed to be a "spirit" photo, and is put forward as a proof of the existence of a life after death and the work of an earnest "seeker after truth." To anyone with a knowledge of photography it is merely a source of humour and a bye-word for ribaldry. Such results can easily be obtained by a double or treble exposure of the plate and frequently happens accidentally to amateurs who forget to change the plates when taking another "snap." The Spiritists, who put forward these pictures, are evidently quite aware of the ease with which deception can be practised and how pictures can be "faked," for they back up the production with declarations of veracity; it is stated that the packet of plates was opened in the presence of unimpeachable witnesses; the camera was loaded and sealed; the exposure was made under circumstances which precluded any deception; and that the development and printing was carried out in an equally careful manner.

Verily, they do protest too much. The very fact that these asseverations are considered necessary, proves that the work is highly suspicious and leads me to declare my firm conviction that somebody (not necessarily the actors in the farce) is knowingly practising deceit upon the ignorant section of the community for immediate or future gain. It is a swindle like every other enterprise to prove the existence of soul or spirit. It reminds me of the usual seance in a darkened room where the audience is required to hold hands so that none may attempt to discover the means by which the manifestations are produced.

Carlyle was once asked, so it is said, whether he believed in ghosts. "No," said he, "I have seen too many of them." This, I take it, was meant sarcastically to throw ridicule upon the questioner. It was on a par with his dictum that the people are mostly fools. Probably the Spiritists are of this opinion and fancy their silly claims are likely to be admitted by many people. Perhaps they will be, but why should mankind concern itself with an imaginary future life? There is a kink in humanity which precludes the love of truth. A child will be hurt if you should tell her that her pretty doll is only stuffed with sawdust. No royalist will stand the statement that his pet king or emperor is liable to err or to oppress the people he reigns over. It is not enough for some that we live one life, that there is one universe only known to us, that the dead know not anything, that when the body is disintegrated into the elements of which it is formed, existence ceases and the brain with all its functions is *non est*. The soul, spirit or ghost, are merely figments of the imagination, poetical if you like, but absolutely without the firmest evidence of entity. They are like the stuff dreams are made of, without reality. Our little life is rounded by a sleep, at once deep and dreamless. The life within us is a condition of matter. The

matter cannot be destroyed, it changes and the conditions change. New conditions appear, the old gives place to the new and never returns.

Scientific knowledge of the universe which we inhabit is our best guide to happiness, and haply the day will dawn when ideas of a future life will be discarded for efforts to make the present one better worth living.

E. ANDERSON.

The Mysterious Moral of the Kapek Dramas.

THERE have been a good many theories advanced about the Kapek plays. Of course those who made the theories were affected by their own experience and opinions; more, they were affected by what they felt about life.

If anyone who went to the Kapek plays was a confirmed optimist, there is no doubt that a difficulty would arise. It would be almost impossible to understand what these dramatists were driving at, and if it were understood, it would seem so very unpleasant that it must necessarily be ignored. Why should anyone be told that the importance of the individual is non-existent? It is only useful to say that when nations are at war, and the individuals are to be asked to take the chance of immediate death or maiming. Then it is necessary, but in peace it is unnecessary. Only a few people die suddenly in peace time, and these by accident. All the rest will die, but that is not an immediate danger. At least no one thinks so until they are dead.

Meantime what each person is doing is important. The world's work must go on. That the world's work would be equally well done if any particular ego were destroyed, if its consciousness ceased to operate and its body to move, is a horrible thought, its horror being measured in the exact ratio of the pride possessed by the thinker.

The Kapeks have got beyond being shocked. They have seen life, not as it really is, because no one can hope to do that, but they are satisfied that the function of life is reproduction. They preach this gospel crudely and callously. All the rest is nothing says the Insect Play and R.U.R. While they are preaching this platitude they are administering a series of heavy shocks against the thickly armoured hide of the ego; but they cannot hope to succeed. Only those who have more or less effectually abandoned hope will be convinced, and they are convinced already.

If that is all there is in the much discussed plays, however, it is unnecessary to produce them, because the optimists will not believe, and the pessimists do not care. But that is precisely what these authors imply. They preach the vanity of human endeavour, and yet they endeavour. The incidental indictment of the futility of the average kind of labour is what so appals the general or normal intelligence. The ultimate aim of life being, say the Kapeks, the successful breeding and rearing of the next generation, the major portion of the efforts made by men and women are a misdirection of energy. They are unconsciously subserving this reasonable end, but since their labours are uncorrelated and they are unaware of their own purpose, they are futile. Being so, quite a lot of what is done simply preserves one kind of life at the expense of the others. Civilization has not advanced very far when there are still the slaves and owners of the lamp. But the endeavours of the idealist to make mankind happy at the expense of the Robots is obviously doomed to failure.

Mankind must make itself happy, presumably by laying a greater emphasis than ever upon the beauties and delights of legitimate sexual love. It must learn to arrange for the proper care of every child, and it must devote its ambitions and ideals to the end of the preservation of all children of every race in the world. The confusion of mind that leads to the self-appreciation of the self-applied value of the ego and its puny unrelated forces must be abandoned. All effort is worthy, but only so far as it assists the future generations.

But both the plays point out that future generations occur or life persists in spite of the activities of the present. The exegesis of the R.U.R. proclaims that with the destruction of all life, as it was known by the conscious men of the play, excepting for the builder, who was only male, and unable to reproduce himself, or to teach the Robots how to reproduce themselves mechanically, a new provision of life in the new "Adam and Eve" is bound to develop. It is inspired with hope, although the whole story is pessimistic so far as the actions of men are concerned. The fallible men of the play, seeing only the object they aimed at and desired, overlooked the greater possibility. They did not take into consideration the hopeless inhumanity of their creations, and it was only when they had proved the pudding that they found out their essential mistake.

The same thing is shown more definitely and precisely in the Insect Play. No one could possibly conceive that the Tramp was the desire of life to express itself. He is the philosophic dreamer; he looks at life and fails to understand it. The various pictures he sees are inconsequent and inconclusive. They show the activities inspired by different ambitions, but as they are only partial and incomplete, they do not afford him a complete insight. It is only when the butterfly comes out of the cocoon and dies that he begins to believe that he has seen a glimmering of reason. It is too late then; but life persists and the children must be protected from the sight of death.

Of course much is said of the preservation of the individual, much is said of the preservation of the State, and despite the destructive measure that these disintegrative half-realized ambitions inspire, life goes on. And all that is treated with so marked and obvious a satirical method in these two plays is relevant to that end.

In the one play the conscious effort of the scientist to preserve life is depicted as futile; his efforts are negatived in a very few years. In the other the ordinary activities of men, which are so essentially selfish, are satirically shown to serve no conscious and general end, and to be disjunctive because so far as they are conscious they take no account of the requirements of the other lives outside the ego or the family. So that the ultimate of these plays simply amounts to a statement that whatever man does is insignificant alongside the basic assumption that life persists.

That does not bring us very far. It is a statement of the obvious, but incidentally a very clear emphasis is laid upon the necessity for a broader vision and a more developed conscious effort towards something more than limited selfish ends. It is an ancient sermon in a new guise, and during its course many of the truths that are well-known to but ignored by humanity are restated. The moral of the Kapek drama is no mystery; it is no aspersion on human effort; it is only a clear definition of what is already known, and, although it may be pleasing to the idealists of many kinds, and horrible to the common-sense of the day, it postulates little or nothing that can be helpful towards a new civilization simply because it is essentially negative. G. E. FUSSELL.

Acid Drops.

We hear a great deal of the good done by missionaries among the natives, accounts which are always taken with a grain of salt by those who know something of these things. Public opinion is formed on most faulty ground, and on material generally supplied by the missionaries themselves. Travellers who halt at a station for a day or so are treated hospitably by missionaries and repeat the stories told by them. Or the Prince of Wales attends during a parade of natives, hears what is told him by interested parties, and then comes home and says he has seen the great good done by the missionaries. Really, he knows nothing at all about it. The laymen who live for years in these places are never so enthusiastic. They know the tricks of the natives and are able to judge the value of the reports prepared for home consumption.

A striking confirmation of what has been said appears in a special article in the *Melbourne Age* for October 2. It is concerned with Papua, and is written by Mr. Lucius Conolly, F.R.G.S., F.R.C.I. He says that he and his party reached the mission village as the natives had organized a big dance. Large fires had been lit, and there were a number of pigs, tied by the legs, being slowly roasted over the fires. But the air was rent with the cries of the animals, *they were being roasted alive*, and the cries of the tortured animals arose "to the God whom the missionaries claim these men had made their own." Mr. Conolly acted with promptitude, and seized hold of some of the natives and threatened to throw them on the fire unless the pigs were killed. That was at once done. This, says Mr. Conolly, took place in the village of Guinilababa, on the island of Kiriwana, where the missionaries have had a station for twenty-six years. Papua is one of the places which missionary reports cite as witnessing the beneficent effects of missionary work. We wonder what the dupes at home would think about it?

After returning home one of the party wrote to the missionary in charge describing the tortures inflicted upon the animals asking for it to be stopped. From this letter we take the following passages:—

Cannot the methods which are applied to induce the natives to attend divine service be also utilized upon the more important matter of eliminating the barbarous cruelties already alluded to?

I have heard so much of how the missionaries have converted the savage into a decent member of the human race, yet I go into Guinilababa wherein is situated a mission school, and witness the most ghastly and revolting cruelty it has ever been my misfortune to look upon, not excepting the battlefield, what time your native missionaries look on regarding the roasting of live pigs as an amusing diversion.

We are not dealing now with savages, but with a people who have been under the close influence of the mission for nearly thirty years, consequently it is natural that I should appeal to that section of the white people (the missionaries) who are purported to possess the greatest influence with the natives.

We wish we had the opportunity of bringing this piece of evidence before the Prince of Wales, who quite recently was induced to pay the missionaries a high flown compliment as to what they had done in these areas, on the strength of a few minutes' inspection of natives paraded for the occasion and the lies told him by the workers in the Lord's Vineyard.

At the conclusion of his article Mr. Conolly sums up his impressions of missionary work in Papua:—

The mission-trained native seems to acquire the arts of lying and stealing in proportion to his knowledge of the heavenly graces.

If I were asked to suggest some remedy for the evil I would advise that the missionaries, as missionaries, be banished from the country for fifty years, and that their place be taken by a band of men who would devote themselves to the teaching of personal cleanliness and the

English language. I have asked dozens of white men the question, "What does the native benefit by his mission teaching?" and the reply is almost invariably, "Nothing."

The few exceptions—all Government officials, by the way—have gone into lengthy explanations of what the missionaries hope to do some day, and anyhow they cannot do much harm. They say that the missionaries tend the sick and prevent suffering, but I have seen little children in mission villages so covered by fly infested sores as to be revolting to the sight. The whole system cries aloud for reform, and reform must come.

But while the power of the Churches at home is what it is, it is very difficult to get reform accomplished. Very many papers dare not attack the missionary system. We have actual proof of that. They are afraid of the religious prejudice that might be stirred up. And right or wrong, the Churches have the means of making those pay who excite their displeasure by attacking their agencies. And with many thousands of professional Christians in the pulpits spreading lies about missions, and only a voice raised here and there against them, it is a very hard fight. As in other directions, the real cure is to go on making Freethinkers. That is the only certain way of ending one of the biggest impostures of history.

The Young Women's Christian Association is a typical example of orthodox philanthropy. The latest piece of self-sacrifice of this body is the organization of Seaside Christmas parties for "lonely women." Incidentally, the charges for their compassionate sympathy rangè from two guineas a week.

The Rev. E. H. Murdoch, Vicar of Knuzden, Blackburn, died suddenly whilst travelling in a tramcar on Sunday. There is no moral, but if it had been a mere parishioner there would have been a very solemn one.

An American revivalist rejoices in the name of "Jazz-band James," on account of his opposition to dancing and music-halls. This brother-in-the-Lord ought to be introduced to our own "Woodbine Willie." They both represent the dignity of religion.

Anti-Semitic students have prevented Jewish professors at Vienna University from lecturing. More Christian charity!

No one would regret more than ourselves the disappearance of the *Daily Herald* from the ranks of daily papers. Without agreeing or disagreeing with its main teachings, it represents a distinct point of view, and so fills a gap that no other paper could fill. We like to see all sorts of opinions placed before the public, and if we were a millionaire Freethinker, and there were no Christian papers in existence, we fancy we should be inclined to finance one just to give the other side a show. But if the *Herald* is ever going to do the work of teaching the democracy how to think clearly and sanely, some restraining hand ought to be placed on the "sloppy" religion that appears in its columns. A people who can be brought to believe in the Jesus Christ of the New Testament as a modern labour leader whose ambition is to get this life organized on a Socialistic basis, can believe anything, and hardly be expected to act with wisdom in the face of political and social crises.

Thus a recent article in the *Herald* proclaims that the Labour Party bases itself upon the "sublimely practical wisdom of Jesus Christ!" The article is unsigned, but we should like to know the name of the genius who wrote that. If it means anything at all it means that the Labour Party endorses the practical wisdom which taught men to cure disease by faith, to expect angels to come to their help, or devils to their torment, which taught them to take no thought for the morrow, to turn one cheek when the other was smitten, and to subordinate this world to

the next. Perhaps the reason for writing the article is found in one of the paragraphs which proudly announces that the Free Churches think the Labour Party comes nearest to its own ideals. That may be, although we trust that the Labour Party is not quite so time-serving and opportunist as are the Free Churches. But if the *Herald* followers really believe that the policy of the Labour Party is on all fours with the "sublime wisdom" of Jesus Christ, there must be something in Lord Hugh Cecil's query as to whether Labour is fit for government. We have a little higher opinion of the mental ability of Labour than the *Herald* article would lead one to have.

The humorous side of Prohibition is again illustrated by New York Government statistics showing that during the past year over eleven million doctors' prescriptions ordering liquor for patients were issued. These included whiskey, brandy, gin, rum, wine, and other forms of alcohol. No mention is made of the use of alcohol in the communion services of the various churches. Perhaps they are using red-ink.

An outbreak of rinderpest, a deadly cattle fever, has caused heavy mortality among dairy herds in New South Wales. Foot and Mouth disease is spreading in this country. "Doth God care for oxen?"

A large chandelier and a part of the roof crashed down on a congregation at a church at Caumont, France, and the worshippers rushed in panic into the street, many being severely injured in the stampede. It is curious to what lengths Christians will go to avoid entering heaven.

We have said more than once in these columns that we looked forward to the political development in Ireland to do something to weaken the power of the Roman Catholic Church in that country. Hitherto, thanks to the opposition to English rule, the nationalist and the religious issue has been fused, and the priest has taken full advantage of his opportunity. In the South the majority were opposing the rule of a people with a different form of religious belief, and it resulted that the priest put himself forward as the representative of both movements. Now that Ireland is going its own road, the people, or some of them, are beginning to look at the rule of the priest from another angle, and some of the papers in Ireland do not like it. Thus, a recent issue of the *Cork Examiner* in a leading article laments that while hitherto the Catholics of Ireland have been noted all over the world for their obedience to the priest, now "things have come to such a pass that a bishop or a priest can hardly make a reference to a public question—political, social, or industrial—that he is not severely taken to task by somebody." From the point of view of a Catholic editor and a Catholic priest this is of course a very serious state of affairs. All the same if it is an indication that the Irish people are losing their foolish and stupid fear of the priest, and beginning, with regard to religion, to behave more like grown men and women, most unprejudiced observers will regard this as one of the best outcomes of the new constitution.

Mr. Bertrand Russell delivered a series of Fabian lectures which have been published in the *Daily Herald*. In the last one he sums up and concludes that science has not given men more self-control, nor more kindness, nor more power of discounting their passions, etc. Surely one of our foremost philosophers should know that these are virtues to be acquired by character training, and that he should guard against using the word indiscriminately. Science invents a steam engine, but we do not expect it to plant potatoes. Science invents poison-gas and bombs, and Christian not savage nations use them; if Mr. Bertrand Russell persists in his misuse of the word, he will find himself surrounded by many undesirable supporters drawn from all Churches.

All advertising goes into the cost. The illuminated signs that warn us of our wicked ways have to be paid for, but we haven't the remotest idea as to how the advertisers will recover. You can neither wear it nor eat nor drink it as is the case with the other advertisements. Bible Texts and Rubber Heels—ye gods! At any rate that is something for which Freethinkers cannot be prosecuted.

Speaking on a political platform, the Rev. Mr. Curtis, of St. Barnabas' Church, East Ham, described the Labour Movement as "the most Christlike thing" he knew. Mr. Curtis ought really to read the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, which he signed and solemnly agreed to observe on his ordination. Where does he expect to spend eternity?

A little sense of humour would not be amiss in the make-up of the Rev. H. J. Thompkins, Vicar of Wrangthorne, Leeds. This gentleman has nothing to say against jokes, but when people make jokes at the expense of religion and Christianity, then he thinks it is evidence of ignorance and depravity. Now that strikes us as being really funny. For a parson to get up and state with the utmost gravity that anyone who laughs at him is exhibiting ignorance and depravity, is enough to raise a wrinkle on the face of the lions in Trafalgar Square.

After all, the only way to make sure that a thing shall not be laughed at is to make it so that it is not laughable. As it is we defy any unprejudiced mind to have set before it the Christian religion in all its native savagery and ignorance, and to be told that millions profess to take it as quite a matter of sober history, we defy anyone to listen to this for the first time without laughing. The only thing that enables men and women to keep a straight face in the face of such a grotesque illusion is that they have been trained from childhood not to laugh at it. With training and education you can do anything—even listen to the Bible stories without laughing. But it needs training all the same.

This question of taking religion with the utmost solemnity has more in it than appears on the surface. It helps to keep alive the illusion that in some way or another religious beliefs must be placed in a category by themselves, and they must be treated differently from the way in which other beliefs are treated. The claim of Christians in this direction is too often conceded by even non-believers. They will also profess that religion is a matter of tremendous importance, whereas it is of all subjects the least important, and they will even profess grief at being compelled to give up believing, etc. The net result of all this is that the ordinary Christian is confirmed in his own belief that his religion is of supreme value to the world, and continues to look down with pity, if not with contempt on those who are without it. When every Freethinker summons up courage enough to treat religious beliefs as they should be treated, we shall then see Freethought coming into its own.

Christians in Britain may congratulate themselves on the fact that they are not the only believers on the face of the earth who may justly be written down as humbugs. In this country we have at present a man and his wife who are awaiting trial for manslaughter for carrying into practice the plainest teachings of the New Testament. At the Kimberley Quarter Sessions Mr. Justice Howell Jones inflicted a fine of £25 or three months on a man and his wife, because they "being of the Apostolic Faith," had trusted to prayer to save their sick child, instead of merely believing that prayer would do it and calling in a doctor. And the parsons there, like the parsons here, stand quietly by and say nothing in defence of these poor wretches, who are only what their teaching has made them. It is left for Freethinkers to point out what an indictment of the power of God and the truth of Christianity such a sentence is.

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.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Bishop W. Brown, £11; R. W. Cracklow, £5; G. Brady, £3; E. R. Baulkes, 5s.; D. Smith, 3s.; A. Thompson, 2s. 6d.; W. Thompson, 2s. 6d.; J. Thompson, 2s. 6d.

Correction: "10s., W. Judy," in our issue for November 25, should have been, 5s. W. Judd, and F. Hayes, 5s. "J. Thackray, 2s.," should have been J. Thackray 1s., S. W. Wood 1s.

H. PARKER.—Pleased to hear from a new reader. The form you enclose has often been used by various churches and chapels. It is, as you say, cheek. But you will observe that the clergy are gracious enough to put under two distinct headings, what people spend on pleasure and what they spend on religion. There is no pretence that the latter is a form of pleasure.

H. T. WILKINS.—Thanks. Shall appear as soon as possible.

W. P. ADAMSON.—We note your candidate's—Sir C. Barrie—reply to your questions on Secular Education and the Blasphemy Laws. To say that he would give these matters his attention was only another way of saying that he would either vote against justice being done, or would not trouble himself about them. Politicians are, we agree with you, very poor cattle, and the quality does not improve. As for titles, we are surprised that any self-respecting person accepts one.

J. R. BATA.—We feel with you that you are fortunate in having had parents who brought you up without religion. That relieved you of a very heavy intellectual handicap. Old Sir Thomas Browne advised people when thanking God for his multiplied mercies to thank him for their having had pious parents. We feel that those who have had parents who let them grow up free from religious beliefs have much more to be thankful for. Pleased to know that after two years experience of the *Freethinker* you think so highly of it. But we have readers of thirty and forty years standing whose love for the whole paper is as strong as ever. There is no paper in Britain which has so many warm and disinterested friends as has this one. That is a fact which inspires one all the time, and makes one proud of one's association with it.

A. ARMSTRONG.—You ask for the book which in our opinion offers the strongest evidence for the existence of God. There is no book published which gives any evidence for the existence of God. There are thousands of volumes which offer more or less elaborate excuses why people ought to be permitted to go on believing in him.

L. MASON.—Thanks for cuttings. Sorry to learn that you have been unwell. The weather of late has been very trying.

H. O. BOGER.—Sorry that want of space prevents our publishing your letter, but we were not "riled" at what the papers said about the late Mr. Rawson and his prayer business. What they said was quite justifiable. The point of our criticism was that Rawson was neither better nor worse than thousands of others that are engaged in the same trade. The fact that one is an ordained priest and the other a private practitioner does not in our opinion make any substantial difference. And if those papers which attacked Rawson did not say this much, it was in the main due to their fear of offending the organized "prayer-fakers."

J. A. MOFFAT.—Sorry, but we are unable to use the lines sent.

R. SMEDLEY.—These advertising "practical psychologists" are nearly always practical humbugs living on public ignorance.

W. CHALLIS.—You are doing good work in bringing the question of the Blasphemy Laws and Secular Education before candidates for Parliament. It is educating them as well as the general public. We are not surprised at your receiving evasive replies. Lack of ability to see or of courage to face questions of principle is characteristic of the political species.

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.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communi-

cations should be addressed to the Secretary Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press" and crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

We have received several letters on a future policy with regard to our Sustentation Fund. Our old friend, "Sine Cere," promises ten guineas per year for 5 years, two others promise £20 and £10 respectively, and we have the original promise of £50. Mr. F. Becker writes from Switzerland suggesting that we keep the fund open all the year, and so see what can be done to advertise the paper. On the whole we have not received any distinct lead, unless the assurance of support for whatever course we think best in the interests of the movement be taken as such. We never had any doubt of this, but we confess that we should have felt relieved had that side of the work been taken out of our hands by a responsible committee. But we shall see what the present year brings forth. Meanwhile we have once more to thank those who have so generously stood by us when help was needed.

To-day (December 9) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the afternoon and evening in the Palace Theatre, Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare. There is no place in Britain where the gospel of Freethought is needed more than at Weston-super-Mare, and a course of lectures there may have a refining and liberalising effect. Next Sunday Mr. Cohen will visit Nottingham and will speak twice, in the afternoon in the Mechanics' Hall, and in the evening at 7 in the Victoria Baths, Sneinton.

The Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society will be held on Tuesday, January 8, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras. Judging from the opinion of last year's function the success of the dinner is assured. But for the sake of smooth running and the complete comfort of all it is essential that early application should be made for tickets. It is impossible to manage things as well as they might be managed if people will leave application for seats till the last moment. The price of the tickets will be as before, 8s. Application to be made to either the *Freethinker* Office or to Miss Vance, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

We are glad to hear that in spite of the elections and bad weather Mr. R. H. Rosetti had a very good meeting at Birmingham on Sunday last. The audience listened with great interest to his address on "Is Religion a Social Necessity?" and there were a number of questions put after the lecture. These were answered in Mr. Rosetti's usual convincing manner. We congratulate both the lecturer and the Branch on having had a good meeting under the most disadvantageous circumstances.

The anonymous author of *Everlasting Gems*, by the form of criticism adopted, challenges comparison with Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, and while he does not possess the suave deadliness of Byron's satire, it must be admitted that he can pen some very sharp and biting lines which will rankle with those against whom they are aimed. The *Everlasting Gems* is a running-rhymed criticism of more than a dozen of modern writers

—we had better not say “poets”—in verse, such as Alfred Noyes, Robert Bridges, John Masefield, William Watson, G. K. Chesterton, Kipling, Zangwill, etc. Those who, like ourselves, do not make a close study of modern verse will probably be surprised at the abundance of false lines, banalistic sentiments, and faulty metaphors picked out by the author, and if at times it appears as though not enough scope had been allowed for genuine poetic licence, there remains quite enough to justify the caustic treatment meted out. And in an appendix the author gives full references for the lines quoted.

On one point there seems ample justification for what is said. This is the manner in which certain groups of writers with friends on the Press, or themselves journalists, form a little mutual admiration society and write each other up. At least two plays have appeared within recent years which would never have enjoyed the popularity which was theirs, or received the helpful Press notices they did receive, but for the fact that they were written by men who were also journalists, and whose friends on the Press took care to see that due advertisement was given. And in payment they will each get their reward in the same way when their turn comes to appear before the public as playwright or author. The practice in many newspaper offices of writing notices of books with an eye on the advertisement revenue is yet another cause of the public not getting the unprejudiced and informed criticism it might otherwise get. At any rate the author will have done a service if he leads those who read his satire to reconsider the verdict passed by the Press and many uncritical readers upon many of our modern literary lions. The *Everlasting Gems* is published by G. and J. Elliot, price 3s. 6d.

We are asked to announce that the lecturer at the St. Pancras Reform Club, St. Pancras Road, to-day (December 9) will be Mr. J. W. Graham-Peace, of the Commonwealth League, who will open a discussion on “The Betrayal of Labour.”

The West Ham Branch is holding another of its popular “Socials” on Saturday, December 8, at Earlham Hall, Forest Gate. There will be the usual programme of songs, dances, etc., and the gaieties will commence at 7. Freethinkers and their friends are all welcome.

Shelley's Latest Critic.

MR. GEORGE UNDERWOOD'S sage literary criticisms have often proved fascinating and illuminating. He writes without bias and he has before him the fear neither of God, the editor, nor his readers. That is the ideal spirit. We owe him a considerable debt of gratitude for some very valuable help in directing our minds to sources of delight and sometimes in asking us to revise our old judgments.

His work is particularly admirable when directed to literary values, and I for one should be delighted to see more of his remarks instead of the occasional column he contributes.

When Mr. Underwood, a fortnight ago, declared, echoing Matthew Arnold, that Shelley was a “splendid failure” as regards much of his poetry, most of us, I hope, prepared ourselves in a receptive mood to attend to the evidence. When Mr. Underwood has time I hope he will produce his evidence. So far it is merely the pontifical utterance of a literary dogmatist—an attitude quite alien to Mr. Underwood's style. The complaint of his readers on this point is simply that the “splendid failure” attitude requires proof. We cannot be contented with a *phrase* of condemnation where the favourite poet of the people is concerned. I do not press the point unduly, because it is easy to see from Mr. Underwood's article that he, too, is an idolator of Shelley's music, like the rest of us.

The absence of humour which Mr. Underwood mentions is just as likely to account for Shelley's good work as to explain the less good work. Why should all our writers and thinkers be funny? It is at least conceivable that the modern English demand from everybody that they should have a sense of humour has led to some very appalling levity. If our masses could be led to study Shelley and other non-humorous thinkers, instead of being encouraged to a disproportionate enjoyment of “humour,” our newspapers, our political policies and our humane education would be the gainers.

When, however, Mr. Underwood leaves the literary for the human side of Shelley he ceases to credit him with “moral worth.” In his opinion “it is hopeless to try to vindicate Shelley,” and we are left with the indictment against Shelley with which every Christian Evidence platform has rung for years, and which has been answered over and over again by every Secularist lecturer.

What is Shelley's crime? Put briefly, and (as far as possible) without prejudice or whitewash, it is this: Shelley was married to a woman, whom he had loved devotedly but whose temperament was incompatible with his own. I dismiss as irrelevant as well as unproven all the statements made (I think on flimsy foundations) which in any way tend to inculpate Harriet. Equally I ignore as irrelevant the ties Harriet formed after Shelley's desertion of her. But in doing this I must also dismiss Shelley's responsibility for her suicide. Harriet was and is a case for our sympathy.

In any country where religion does not dictate laws, Shelley would have asked for and have obtained a divorce. In the absence of a wise divorce law Shelley had to act on his own judgment. He met the one woman who answered to all his needs, and he decided, after the utmost agony of thought, that he must follow his love. The evidence shows that he did all he could for the material needs of Harriet, both then and henceforth, but he lived with Mary Godwin who inspired him and filled his life with the fullest happiness of love.

What vindication does Shelley need from Freethinkers who reject the divine authority of irrevocable marriage?

Even Sir Thomas More, the Catholic Chancellor centuries ago, made divorce easy in his Utopia. It is only in a world rendered inhuman by divine ethics that divorce has been refused; except, of course, to rich men who can afford Papal dispensations and the like. More, of course, as a Catholic, accepted the religious view in a world which he himself did not create.

Freethinkers accept marriage in many cases because Christians make life uncommonly hard for children born out of wedlock. Shelley secured Harriet against this abomination by taking great trouble to legalize a union which had already been consummated, but which was of doubtful legality.

It was not as if Shelley had deceived either of these women. Harriet knew his views on marriage perfectly well. Mary not only knew them but was prejudiced against marriage by her ancestry as well as her own judgment.

In those dark days of Shelley's wretched uncertainty he carried about with him a bottle of poison which he would in all probability have used if the continuance of his relations with Harriet had been inevitable. Mary Godwin brought sunshine, love and life to a very unhappy man.

I cannot understand Mr. Underwood's remarks about Shelley's apparent delinquency in following “the first woman who attracted him.” I am anxious to avoid verbal quibbles, but surely, from Mr. Underwood's point of view, there would have been no moral

gain if Shelley had followed the second, third, or hundredth, instead of the first woman. From many points of view it is noteworthy that Mary Godwin was *everything* thereafter to the man who saw and loved her.

Mary Godwin was unquestionably the "one woman" for this great man. Her beauty, her intelligence, and her knowledge made her his fit companion; and the world, as well as Shelley, gained from the partnership.

Shelley's act so far from requiring our vindication marks the dividing line between the pious conformist and the thinking human being. If Shelley (or another, under even less excusable circumstances) had committed suicide, extenuation would be easily forthcoming. Even homicide is excused and forgiven under certain conditions (not only in war where it is apotheosized). Are we to claim smugly that Shelley's determination to live a clean, decent, moral life happily with the woman of his choice was simply "the outcome of his nervous and cerebral erethism, the abnormal irritability of consumption?"

I hope Mr. Underwood's second thoughts will convince him that this superior attitude towards Shelley is neither enlightened, nor humane, nor consistent with the Freethinker's view of morals based on the needs of mankind.

John Addington Symonds' noble words may fitly conclude my comments:—

Great as his life-work was, he, the man, was somehow greater.....to the world he presented the rare spectacle of a man passionate for truth and unreservedly obedient to the right as he discerned it. The real lesson of his life and writings is not to be sought in any of his doctrines but rather in his fearless bearing, his resolute loyalty to an unselfish and, in the simplest sense, benevolent ideal. It is this which contributes his supreme importance for us English at the present time. Ours is an age in which ideals are rare and we belong to a race in which men who follow them so single-heartedly are not common.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Sob-Stuff From Stamford.

After the manner of, and with apologies to, "Gadfly" of the *Daily Herald*.

LIKE the poor, the politician is always with us. Sells, frinstance! Who is Sells, Henry? Tut-tut, your ignorance of notable personalities is almost as comprehensive as that of Mr. Justice Darling. Know ye, then, that Mr. Arthur Sells is the Parliamentary Labour Candidate for the Rutland and Stamford Division. A bright lad is Arthur!

I gather, however, from the *Daily Herald* (tells the truth, id.) that—despite the fact that he has made many friends and admirers by his speeches and "the ready and lucid way in which he deals with questioners"—Arthur has not found it all plain sailing at Stamford. Nope! Not on your life! The said sheet devoted to the principles so admirably practised by the late George Washington (exactly, Henry, the hatchet incident) waxes indignant over what it terms the "anti-religion bogey." If you have tears to shed, Henry, prepare to shed them now. It appears that the Tories of Stamford—aghast that any party should propose to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment without consulting the Holy Trinity (wait for it, damn yer, wait for it), and setting at nought the Church of England injunction that they should be content to stay in that place to which it has pleased God to call them—have actually (s'a fact) been telling the dubbocracy of Stamford that Labour is out to destroy Religion. (Sensation.)

Of course, Arthur is the wrong man to take that sort of thing lying down. Especially as it may jeopardise his chances by alienating the religious vote. He therefore worked himself up into a high state of righteous indignation and went forth to battle with the bogey of unbelief. I have already observed that he is a bright lad; he is also a Churchman it appears. (To what Church he belongs he did not say, but probably, like the gentleman who represents me, he opens bazaars for them all in turn.) "And as a Churchman," he said, with one hand on his heart and the other on the Jew book, "Labour's policy would not have attracted me had it meant an attack on religion."

His address appears to have ended here, so that I can only conclude that he sat down to the accompaniment of fervent applause and the singing of the doxology. Probably the birds outside took up the chorus, to a heavenly accompaniment: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." At any rate his place was taken by a lady, one Dr. Marion Phillips, who also said a mouthful.

"Those who deliberately accused Labour of trying to destroy religion," said she, adjusting her pince-nez, and slipping an aspirin into her mouth, "should bear in mind that there was nothing anti-religious in Labour's demand that babies should be protected, the aged not left destitute, the sick cared for, the unemployed found work, the——" Yes! Yes! I know, Henry. I quite see the force of your objection that God might himself extend to them the same assiduous care that he does to the sparrows, and the lilies of the field; there is also much truth in your suggestion that by attempting to solve human problems by human means we are taking the job out of God's hands and showing our lack of faith; if this is not anti-religious work it is at least non-religious; but let the lady proceed.

"Labour had the same desire for righteousness, justice, and religious liberty as leaders of Churches." What's that, Henry? If that's all the desire they have you'll see 'em in hell first afore you vote for 'em? Really, Henry, you are incorrigible, and your profanity is appalling! Alas! Arthur's stand for God and Stamford availed him nothing on polling day. The electors would "ha' none on him."

Election Agent: Come, Arthur, leave off crying; it's sno use,
Since crying will not alter this abuse.
You know the Tories told a wicked lie—
So blow yer nose, my duck, and do not cry.

Arthur: Alas, alas!

(Exeunt weeping.)

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Correspondence.

MEDICAL SCIENCE IN THE ANCIENT EAST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In an article, "Medical Science in Sinhalese History," in the last issue of the *Freethinker*, I see that while Mr. Maddock has some fun out of King Buddha-dasa's supposed surgical adventures, he incidentally makes a sweeping allegation that educated Orientals consider their past achievements as the "effulgence of superhuman knowledge and the wisdom of the gods." Their "natural feelings of envy towards the marvellous achievements of modern Western science" are supposed to "carry them to the length" of making absurd claims. Mr. Maddock probably knows more about Ceylon than I do, but as he generally refers to the East and the educated Oriental, I might, perhaps, be allowed to reply to his criticism.

In the following few lines I refer to the Hindu or, say, modern Indian Orientalist. I have read a few books on

the culture-history of the ancient Hindus, written by them, and am not aware of a single one who has ever claimed that the Hindus had said the last word on philosophy or science. Their only and quite legitimate complaint is that just as the official historians of Europe and particularly of England have painted the political past of the East in black colours, so have the historians of science ignored the contributions of India towards the growth of exact sciences. Mr. Maddock, in his search, has hit upon the mythical tales of "Snakes Appendix" to find out the state of the medical science in the Ancient East, and no wonder, he has made a valuable discovery. This reminds me of a remark that Mr. Cohen once made in Liverpool, that if one was expecting to see a cow, he would do for one. Confining myself to medical science I will venture to make a few statements on the authority of prominent Indian and European Orientalists.

Superstition dies hard, and the progress of rationalism is slow. In Europe, even so late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, diseases were regarded as punishments of God. The age of talismans, amulets, the fetish of the royal touch, etc., is yet fresh in human memory. Really scientific medicine is very recent. It is in this perspective of the history of medicine that Hindu contributions to its science and art have to be read.

Two great names in Hindu medicine are Charaka, the physician (600-400 B.C.?) and Sushruta, the surgeon (first century A.C.). They were not the founders of their respective sciences but the premier organizers of the cumulative experience of the previous centuries. Both these schools were in existence about 500 B.C. (Hoerule).

In the third century B.C. Asoka opened hospitals for human beings as well as animals at State expense. The Hindus were the first in the world to advocate the internal use of metallic preparations, particularly mercury (Ray). Its use in Europe was introduced by Saracens, whose authors admit their debt to the Hindu literature. According to Royle, the earliest of the Saracens had access to the writings of Charaka and Sushruta. Prescriptions of Vaghabata were translated into Arabic in 800 A.C. The *materia medica* of the Hindus influenced the earliest scientific investigations in pharmacology in Europe, through the Saracens.

From Hippocrates (450 B.C.), Theophrastus (350 B.C.), to Paulus Ægineta (seventh century A.C.), they were familiar with drugs exclusively found in India, and in some cases adopted the original names. Hindu physicians were superintendents of Saracen hospitals in Baghdad. Serapion, Rhazes, and Avicenna, the Saracen writers, mention Charaka with admiration (Playfair).

Regarding surgical practice, here are a few quotations from one of the ancient text books:—

Surgery is the first and best of the medical sciences, less liable than any other to the fallacies of conjectural and inferential practices, pure in itself, and perpetual in its applicability.

The first, best, and most important of all implements is the hand.

Surgery is one of the oldest medical sciences in India. The Hindus performed Lithotomy, extraction of the dead fetus, removal of foreign bodies, etc. They were used to paracentesis, thoracis, and abdominis, the art of cutting, setting bones, etc. Dissection was a normal fact in medical India. Sushruta says: "Dissection is necessary for correct anatomical knowledge and intimate knowledge of the diseases. It also helps in surgical operations to avoid vital parts." The operation theatre consisted of about 127 instruments.

About the fifth century B.C. the Hindus had described 500 muscles, 300 bones (counted all teeth, nails, bony protuberances) and knew of the ligaments, sutures, lymphatics, nerve flexuses, fascia, various tissues, digestive canal, synovial membranes, etc.

As Hoerule remarks: Its extent and accuracy are surprising when we allow for their early age—probably the sixth century B.C.—and their peculiar method of definition."

Educated Orientals have the highest praise for modern science and, so far as I know, none has made the absurd claim that the East knew all this long ago. They hold that along with the Greeks and other nations they were also the pioneers of science and made contributions of absolute value. What Mr. Maddock mistakes for "feel-

ings of envy" is an indignant protest (quite justifiable) against the use of applied science to keep the East in a state of political and economic subjection.

J. R. BHATIA.

SHELLEY'S HUMOUR.

SIR,—After gently chiding Freethinkers for their lack of knowledge concerning the poet Shelley, Mr. Underwood calmly suggests that the poet lacked humour. This is by no means accurate, as a glance at the rhymed "Letter to Maria Gisborne," the lively parody on Wordsworth's "Peter Bell," and many of Shelley's letters to his own familiar friends, will prove. The critics, quoted by Mr. Underwood, who appear to know Shelley by means of volumes of selected poems, might do worse than turn to the complete works of the poet.

MIMNERMUS.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

SIR,—Your correspondent "Javali," in your issue of November 18, uses the old argument about specialists. He points out that some people believe that because a person is an authority in one department of science his utterances in other departments are necessarily of worth. Apparently "Javali" is one of the people who make this mistake, for he quotes Sir E. Ray Lankester and others, approvingly, on subjects outside that in which they are specialists! Because they are great in biology, "Javali" seems to accept their opinions on a branch of psychology. But, sparring apart, are we not all agreed that the man most likely to be right is the man who has really studied a thing, if we can feel reasonably sure that he has ability and is not prejudiced in favour of this or that conclusion? Sir Oliver Lodge is a great physicist, but he has done so much psychical investigation in the last forty years that he is a specialist in that subject also. It does not follow that because a man is a specialist in one subject he is ignorant or possesses no more than a "dilletante" knowledge in another. But there is no evidence that Sir Ray Lankester has given years of study and investigation to psychical things, and unless such evidence is forthcoming it seems most reasonable to regard his opinion on these things as of very little value. The instructed person is the one most likely to be right.

But neither Sir Oliver Lodge nor any other investigator would ask people to believe anything on his word. Truth wins its way gradually, and it is best so. Discoverers are necessarily in a minority at first.

"Javali" says that "scientists are frequently less competent than ordinary hard-headed business men to pass judgment on what is or is not trustworthy evidence." Perhaps so. I am a business man myself, and I agree with "Javali" that I may be more competent than—for example—Sir E. Ray Lankester to decide what is or is not trustworthy evidence.

J. ARTHUR HILL.

AMERICAN RELIGION.

SIR,—In his disquisition on "American Religion," W. Mann seems to be of the opinion that we here in America are more cursed with religion than people in England. I am not going to disagree with him on this point, but will, nevertheless, take issue with him in regard to some of his criticisms of our base superstitions—endemic to America.

The large daily papers in the City of New York and other large cities like Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, are not in accord with the man or monkey ideas proclaimed by our "peerless leader," William J. Bryan. American papers, on the whole, have nothing unfavourable to say of the Darwinian theory of evolution. However, there is the Fundamentalist religious press which has much to say against those who cannot quite endorse the old Book (Bible) from cover to cover.

The Methodists are the largest Protestant denomination in this country, and none other than John Wesley brought that belief over here from England. Billy Sunday, our greatest gutter evangelist, is only following in the footsteps of the Methodists revivalists from the days of Wesley down to the present time.

The next largest denomination is that of the Baptists. Roger Williams was the founder thereof. So say those

who are not Baptists. But whoever founded this particular sect—even though it was John the Baptist himself—Roger Williams was the first prominent Baptist in America, and he came here from England. The large majority of the members of the Baptist Church accept the Bible literally; they call themselves Fundamentalists, and everybody that disagrees with them is necessarily a heretic.

William J. Bryan is a Scotch Presbyterian, and so is ex-President Woodrow Wilson. Mr. Wilson, pro-British that he is, while President set aside a day of prayer just before America went into the war, that we might all pray for the war to cease. Lloyd George, during his recent visit to this country, gave us many a Divine precept.

Then Sir Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle came over here that we might be converted to Spiritualism. Every year there is a number of evangelists over here from the British Isles, and they are just a little more stupid than the kind that is already here. There are others more favourably known who come to our shores from over there, but I can't see but we would be better off without them. Indeed, if you could keep that kind of man at home, or duck them in the sea, poor, stupid America would be better off—methinks.

There is no such thing as a progressive religion anywhere. Every country in the world is cursed with a modicum of stupidity, and a corresponding desire to espouse some kind of foolish creed. Oh, that the pot could see itself—then it would not call the kettle black.

There is little difference between St. Paul's Cathedral with the "gloomy dean" as its protege—over there in London—or, over here in America, where Billy Sunday makes us "hit the sawdust trail" for fear that we go to hell before the morning sunrise.

It is a short time ago when Mr. Gott was serving a prison sentence in England for blasphemy. If my memory serves me right, he died there. In New York City, Free-thought lecturers speak on the streets, and the *Truth-seeker*, our national Free-thought weekly, is sold along the crowded thoroughfares—the vendors thereof go unmolested.

Mr. Mann cites the fact that there is a lot of undesirable immigration into this country—which is very true. But his conclusion that this is the cause of so much rotten religion in America is not true. The large majority of undesirables coming over here are Roman Catholics, and he made no reference to that denomination whatsoever. The people who are carried away with the kind of religion that he refers to are mainly of Anglo-Saxon stock.

Yes, our American cities are infested with the Salvation Army, too, and I wonder where that "Army" originated if it came not out of the slums of London. May the good Lord be merciful—and save us from the religious fanaticism that spreads over our land by prevailing on his chosen ones in England to either drop dead or stay at home. We have enough of pious brethren already.

WALTER MERCHANT.

404 E. Fifteenth Street, New York.

BISHOP OF BRENTWOOD ON REINSTATING THE POPE.

SIR,—You have no doubt read the pious report of the Bishop of Brentwood's statement at Stratford, London:—

We members of the Catholic Evidence Guild are out to reinstate the Pope. We want him to be the spiritual and ethical leader of this country, and we are not hiding the fact at all.

The first thing we have to do to bring this about is to let the people know about the Pope, for if we only get the people of this country to know the Pope, and submit themselves to him, then all the other difficulties we talk about will vanish.

Our Scarlet Prince of the College of Cardinals evidently considers that the average intelligence of the people outside the Church is on a par with the gross ignorance of confessing Roman Catholics who must never question whether they are content or not with their abject submission to the pragmatic tyranny of the Vatican.

My journey from Roman Catholicism to Secularism has made me fully aware of the deep significance of the Cardinal's statement and for the urgent necessity for the progressive campaign of Secularism.

CHARLES S. WALLBRIDGE, A.M.I.E.E.

THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN.

SIR,—The reason I pointed out that Taylor does not even mention the words "the phenomena of the heavens" in the *Prolegomena* to the *Diegesis* was because I wanted to lead Mr. Aldred gently back to something like our original argument. Unfortunately he prefers wandering in the land of chaos and inflicting on me a veritable hotch-potch of irrelevancies. Frankly, I do not care what is thought of Spinoza or Socrates or Stirner or how many Omars or Fitzgeralds there are, but I am quite certain that if I had said Joanna Southcott was a silly old woman (which she was), Mr. Aldred would have jumped to her rescue and insisted that she was the mother of a Messiah or would have been if she hadn't died first. I do not think Taylor's work is "little pointed." On the contrary, I have the greatest admiration for the Devil's Chaplain and his work. What a holy mess he'd have made of the *Rebel and his Disciples*—yea, even in its "revised and republished" form with the new title, *Communism and Religion*. And, by the way, I do hope that the famous toast to Jesus is explained as rhetoric for a toast to humanity, and that humanity is a myth.

The anxiety Mr. Aldred shows to get me to debate with him on a public platform is touchingly pathetic. I am not altogether clear as to what the debate would be about unless Mr. Aldred wants to prove *without* the aid of the Gospels that there really was a Jesus who really was a Communist and an Anarch. What good would such a debate do for Free-thought? I prefer him expounding the beautiful story to his own comrades with the pious hope that they will see the light of salvation in—in—well, whatever is expounded.

H. CUTNER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
NOVEMBER 28, 1923.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Moss, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels and Silverstein; Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Financial Statement was presented. New members were received for Finsbury Park, Pontypridd, Preston, West Ham and the Parent Society.

Application for permission to form a Branch at Finsbury Park was received and permission granted.

Results of meetings at Stratford and Friars Hall were reported and instructions given for future hirings.

A draft letter, setting forth the requirements of the Executive in regard to the scheme for training new speakers was read and approved and ordered to be prepared and sent to Branch Secretaries.

The date of the Annual Dinner at the Midland Grand Hotel was fixed for Tuesday, January 8, and instructions given for a social gathering to be held early in the New Year.

The meeting then adjourned until January 3.

E. M. VANCE,
General Secretary.

Obituary.

Manchester.—It is my painful duty to announce the death of Joan, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Langford, of Heaton Mersey. The child who was in her eighth year, was taken ill a little while ago. Constant care and attention failed to save her, and she died on the 29th ult. The interment took place on Monday. We extend to her parents our deepest sympathy in their great loss, especially under the tragic circumstances.—H. I. B.

The Way of the World.

CHRISTIANITY'S DEBT.

The great contribution of Rome to medicine—and it is a very great one—is the hospital system.—*Mr. Singer in chapter on "Roman Science" in "The Legacy of Rome," edited by Cyril Bailey.*

THE MODERN DIVES.

Of course the successful capitalists remain religious, partly because they have every reason to thank God for their blessings, and partly because religion is a conservative force, tending to repress the rebelliousness of wage-earners. But industrial wage-earners everywhere tend to lose their religious belief.—*Bertrand Russell, "The Century Magazine."*

TRUE, TRUE.

Mr. Asquith says that modern biographies are ponderous and diffuse. He might well have added that they contain too much soap.

The popularity of certain autobiographies once more raises the interesting question, "Why is it that the romantically immoral are always more interesting than the well-living and the good?" I shall not attempt to answer the question. I leave it to you.—*Lord Riddell, "John O'London's Weekly."*

SAFE PATRIOTISM.

No patriotism is so intense as women's patriotism—unless it be the patriotism of elderly men.—*Philip Guedalla, "T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly."*

AN ORACLE DISROBED.

Carlyle's sexless, drab, and sterile philosophy (published in 1838) suited the mood of the early Victorians. It heralded the age of ugliness. It is an acceptance of the gospel of eternal gloom. Its philosophy is adolescent and meekly evasive, meandering on indefinitely and shrieking timidity. The atmosphere is that of the sick-room, where the end is approaching of one from whom there are no expectations.

"Sartor Resartus" reeks of the religion of subjection. Carlyle is so frightened of God that every moment one expects God to eat him up. The book takes at least a fortnight to read if one is diligent, and after two long weeks of Carlyle's fear of eternity the only fear one is left with in life is another fortnight of Carlyle. How his God must have laughed at him; laughed in generosity, or otherwise, to save Himself from feeling insulted at His fear-stricken image.—*Dennis Bradley, "The Eternal Masquerade."*

YOUTH REVOLTS.

"Why should we be legislated for, disciplined, regimented, by old men and women whose spirit and outlook are not merely out of touch, but out of sympathy with the present, and who are more or less indifferent about the future because, of a certainty, they will not have to live in it?" There is something fundamentally wrong and unfair, says Youth, about the insistence of Age not merely upon respect and veneration, but also upon something like unquestioned assent to counsels which fail utterly to work and to fit in with a rapidly changing planet.

Insurgent Youth, alive and alert, is under no sort of mental delusion as to what exactly it wants, what it stands for.

Such, then, a little bewildered still, and not always clear in its expression, but certainly always aware of its revolt and the reason, is the mind of Modern Youth. Old Age may dislike it and say so, and may find difficulty in appreciating the change which, to be quite candid, appears to have all the elements of intellectual revolution. But Youth is not to blame. The revolution is the product of our time, and he who cannot see that will not.—*George A. Greenwood, "The World's Work."*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.—INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (19 Buckingham Street, Charing Cross): 3.30, Lecture in French by Mr. Bugnon on "Emblemes et Figures."

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 7.30, Mr. J. C. Greengrass, "Charitable Institutions for the Blind." The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at the "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, J. W. Graham Peace, "The Betrayal of Labour."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9): 7, Mr. F. Shaller, "Reminiscences of a Freethinker (A Retrospect of Fifty Years)."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, W. Kent, "Mark Rutherford."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, "Fiscal Ethics."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Upton Labour Party Hall, 84 Plaslet Road, Upton Park, E.13): 7, Lantern Lecture, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "The God Idea."

OUTDOOR.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Marble Arch): 3, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Derricourts, 45 High Street, Birmingham) 7, a Concert.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Shop Assistant's Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 6.30, Mr. R. Parker, "O. Henry."

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Mr. H. Warner, "The Human Situation in Nature."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): Mr. F. P. Corrigan, 3, "The Sermon on the Mount and Life in the Valley"; 7, "From Roman Catholicism to Secularism."

WESTON-SUPER-MARE (Palace Theatre, Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "Can We Have Morality Without Religion?"; 7, "Religion and Life."

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Secretary : Miss E. M. VANCE.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are :—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society. Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

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