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## Views and Opinions.

### Progress and the Churches.

When Hobbes said that the Christian Church was only the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting enthroned on the ruins thereof, he summarized a chapter of history in a sentence, for many of the most prominent features of the Roman Catholic Church—which is the oldest and the most important of the Christian Churches—are but a carrying on of some of the characteristics of the old Roman Empire. That Empire ruled the whole of the Western civilized world. From Aberdeen to Babylon the Roman law was supreme, the people being technically under the sovereignty of the Emperor of Rome, and when the Christian Church came into being it made the same claim to universal rule, it claimed the same right to issue laws for the inhabitants of the civilized world, and in a number of different ways aped the manners of the Roman Government. But in some respects there was a marked difference. It might be said on behalf of the Roman Empire that wherever it went it took settled law and a passably just government. It exhibited a wise tolerance, and sowed the seeds of a higher culture among the less civilized of its conquests. The Christian Church brought to the people of whom it claimed obedience a crass superstition, a hatred of learning, and a ferocious intolerance. Of the Roman tradition it held fast but to one thing—the claim to universal rule; it helped to keep alive the dreams of a world empire, the lust of conquest, and the pride of power. The Christian Church became the incarnation of some of the worst features of the Roman civilization.

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### Rome and Civilization.

So far I agree with Dean Inge, who, in an article in the *Evening Standard*, traces the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to universal rule to the old Roman Empire. There may also be substantial agreement in the following:—

Some human institutions are strong, mainly by their power of evoking a fanatical *esprit de corps*. They can drill their adherents like an army; they can command their votes, their purses, and their consciences. Whatever other interests or duties they may have, these will be subordinated to the require-

ments of the institution. They are a State within the State, and their first duty is to the institution.

The Roman Church is the great example of such an institution. It is no wonder that other bodies look at its achievements with envy. It can make hard bargains with politicians, to whom its chiefs come with a large bundle of safe votes in their hands. The Church humbled Prince Bismarck in the *Kultur-Kampf*; it foiled his policy in Poland; it turned Ireland into a rodent ulcer poisoning the political life of Great Britain; it largely directs the cynical policy (not the domestic policy) of France; in Italy, Spain, and Belgium it is one of the chief forces with which the Government has to reckon. In America it exercises a power out of all proportion to its numbers. It holds the Press by the throat; no American editor dares to expose the plots and the tyranny of that Church. One of the chief American lawyers was asked quite lately why he did not reveal a flagrant case of injustice perpetrated by the Romanists. "I dare not," he replied, "they would ruin me." At Montreal nearly one-third of the house property belongs to the Roman Church. It pays, I am told, no rates or taxes whatever. In the Great War the priests resolved to stop recruiting in Canada, which they did so effectively that only 16,000 out of two million French-Canadians responded to the double call of France and England, which was obeyed by 350,000 British Canadians. These are the rewards of perfect discipline and absolutely uncompromising obedience.

That is a picture which should give any thoughtful student of social phenomena much food for thought, but it is not the aim of Dean Inge to dwell upon these aspects of the rule of the Roman Church. His purpose appears to be that of exalting Protestantism as something of an altogether superior kind. But is it? Or is it only that the Roman Church does, at least in theory, what every other Christian Church aims at achieving to the limit of its opportunities? It is the latter view which, I think, gives us the more accurate summary of the situation.

### Rome and Dissent. \* \* \*

I quite agree with Dean Inge that in Protestant countries there is a greater proneness to change, and a readier recognition of the right of individual opinion than is the case in Catholic ones. But to attribute this to some active principle of Protestantism is to take a terribly superficial view of the situation. The greater liberty in the one case than in the other is entirely due to the fact that Protestantism is itself a bye-product of intellectual unrest and of the spirit of revolt. The fact that there is a revolt against an established church is so much to the good, no matter what direction the revolt takes. But that revolt being accomplished there is no instance that I know of where Protestantism, given the opportunity, has not been as intolerant of dissent as the Roman Church has been, and has not striven as hard to make its power over the individual mind. Historically, Calvinism in Geneva and Presbyterianism in Scotland are the classical examples; but there are instances to be found wherever a Protestant Church finds itself firmly established. Even in this country, where the divisions of religious opinion make



it so terribly difficult for the bigot to do as he would wish, there are scores of places in which men dare not let their opinions be known for fear of the ruin that would follow. Men in public posts—particularly where promotion depends upon the good-will of their elected superiors—are afraid to identify themselves with a distinctly anti-Christian propaganda because of the effect it would have on their promotion. There is hardly a council, or a school, or a government office in the country where this does not hold good. It is curious if Dean Inge does not know this to be the case, and quite as curious if, knowing it, he says nothing at all about it.

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#### Two Policies.

Now I, for one, decline to admit that the kind of intolerance practised in every country where Protestantism is established and practised under the shelter of the rights of individual conscience is less obnoxious than the official and open intolerance of the Roman Catholic Church. On the contrary, it is in many ways distinctly worse. Against open and public intolerance, against the armed force of Church or State a man may submit without any sense of personal degradation. The force is openly applied, the submission is equally public, the submission is to a force that is patently too strong to resist, and there is little real attempt to deceive the observer. But where the intolerance is made a matter for the individual to exercise, where the pressure is not open and public, but covert and mean, where a man does not give way with the plain confession "I submit to the rule of the Church," but submits while disguising the fact that he is submitting, where the punishments risked are not those of prison or stake, but the mean ones of social advancement or public promotion, the degradation is the individual's own, and there is nothing to give it dignity or to draw forth courage. The Roman Catholic policy which burnt men at the stake could leave a Bruno unharmed in all that mattered to his own personality. But the Protestant plan which enables a man to crawl from office boy to Prime Minister provided he keeps his opinions on religion to himself, but demands his official head if he is honest enough to say exactly what he thinks, cannot be submitted to by anyone save at the cost of a deep and inescapable personal degradation.

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#### Intolerance in Office.

"There is," says Dean Inge, "no Protestant vote. The Protestant may be a Conservative or a Liberal or a Socialist; but he votes in accordance with his own conscience, not in obedience to orders from the hierarchy." That again is only true so far as Protestantism represents a number of warring Christian Churches instead of one as is the case with Roman Catholicism. Naturally, all Protestants cannot be drilled to vote in the same way because the interests of all Protestants are not identical. But let Dean Inge start a campaign that has a tendency to injure the prestige of the Churches as a whole, and then let him see whether there is a Protestant vote or not. What of the Churches and the Sunday question? What of the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws? Is there not a Protestant vote on these questions? There is a Protestant vote as there is a Catholic vote, and it is exercised just as far as circumstances permit its being exercised. The Roman Church can do no more. And after all the Church with which Dean Inge is dealing is a Christian Church—one might almost say, *the* Christian Church. It is the great Church of European history, and we should like to have Dean Inge's explanation of how this Church, with the divine power behind it, founded by the divine will, aiming at the elevation and purification of the human race, has always been associated—

so far as it is clearly known to us—with practices and teachings of which all decent men and women are to-day ashamed? The influence of Jesus was such that they who knew him best and came most under his influence behaved the worst and presented us with the greatest caricature of his teaching. Brought down to plain language that is really the case made out by Dean Inge. Of course he does not say plainly what his argument implies. Perhaps he does not see. But, then, if highly placed clergymen, drawing comfortable salaries, saw all their arguments implied and stated these implications so that all could understand them, there would not be many of them where they are.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Theology and Modern Thought.

(Concluded from page 771.)

PRINCIPAL GARVIE makes the curious claim that "man has risen above all visible phenomena to apprehend invisible and eternal reality." When has man transcended the visible sphere and got into contact with an invisible and eternal one? What evidence is there that the latter sphere exists at all? The Principal advances none. He simply asks, "What monkey or dog has done that, or even approached to that." It is impossible for us to know what monkeys and dogs can do. It is undeniable that many of them display a marvellous degree of intelligence, and there is certainly nothing to show that man is anything but an animal. He may be the highest and most complex of all the animals, but he and they are subjects of the same kingdom. It is perfectly true that many men believe that they have discovered and are in daily communication with invisible and eternal realities; but that is no proof whatever that they actually exist. At different periods man has held numerous beliefs the non-reality of which has ere now been abundantly demonstrated. At no time whatever has there been supplied to us the slightest demonstration of the actuality of an invisible and eternal world. No denizen thereof has ever made his appearance on earth, and in the entire absence of any evidence of its existence we do not hesitate to refuse to believe in it. The Principal employs the word "apprehend," which means to take, lay hold of, or seize. Of course, there is a sense in which intense believers in a spiritual world may be said to apprehend it; but it must be borne in mind that their apprehension of it is merely by faith, not at all by knowledge. Dr. Garvie says that "the process by which men apprehend the invisible, eternal realities may be described but cannot be explained away. The reality is there, and if not, there would be none of the processes." If the reverend gentleman would calmly reconsider that sentence he would be bound to recognize its absurdity. It compares beautifully with another sentence in this address:—

It is assumed by some persons that to admit evolution is to deny creation; but evolution deals only with the method of creation.

Surely the Principal must be aware of the fact that the leading men of science believe in the eternity of matter, dismissing the idea of creation altogether. So, likewise, the apprehension of an unseen and eternal world is the offspring of faith, of which science knows absolutely nothing. Dr. Garvie is one of those men of God who endeavour to amalgamate theology and science, which no one can do except at the expense of being at some points disloyal to both.

We now return to the Principal's treatment of



psychologists whom, as a class, he so heartily despises. He says:—

Some of these psychologists have a very great affection for the instincts. Of course, man has instincts, and in this way has a certain kinship with the animals, but man deals with these instincts in other ways than animals do. When these psychologists attempt to reduce human life to the level of animal existence I always fall back on the argument of Dr. Fairbairn, my old teacher: "Think of what animals have remained and man has become." Man has attained a soul, has built cities, shaped science, philosophy, literature, art, and has formed the ideals of truth, holiness, beauty, and love.

We do not know what Dr. Garvie means when he admits that man has instincts but that he "deals with them in other ways than animals do." Does man treat the food instinct so very differently from the way the lower animals do? Judging this point by the amount of health and strength produced by the consumption of food the conclusion is inevitable that the animals deal with this instinct more wisely than man does. The lower animals generally enjoy much better health than we do. Is man's dealing with the sex instinct very superior to that of the animals? Indeed, in some respects, the palm belongs to the animals here also. The social or gregarious instinct is possessed by human beings and animals alike, and the uses to which it is put by the former, are not so much better and nobler than those put in practice by the latter. Perhaps the Principal had in mind the antagonism between the instincts, and if so he cannot be ignorant of the fact that the conflict between them is more conspicuous and disastrous in the human world than in that of animals.

The late Principal Fairbairn's argument, "Think of what animals have remained and man has become," is as false and misleading as it can be. Evolution has been and still is a universal process. The late Professor Huxley went to New York to deliver a series of lectures on the evolution of the horse, and he supplied illustrations of the different stages in the development; and what is true of the horse is equally true of all other animals. What men and animals will be a million years hence no one can tell.

At this point the Principal has another dig at the psychologists. He says:—

These psychologists talk of the rationalization of the instincts, which really means giving a respectable reason for a bad desire. But we have something better than rationalization. We hear a great deal about suggestion, auto-suggestion, and M. Coué..... But how can any suggestion, or auto-suggestion adequately account for our Lord's miracles of healing?

What is the objection to the rationalization of the instincts? Our divine does not take the trouble to inform us, but contents himself with saying that "we have something better than rationalization." If we are to look for that "something better" in the character and conduct of the Churches we shall be bitterly disappointed, for they present us with innumerable instances of the antagonism of the instincts and of the fact that the lower and less worthy ones are often in the ascendant, as, for example, during the four years of the diabolical World War. How infinitely better it would have been during those dismal times if the individual and gregarious instincts had been rationalized? Dr. Garvie may sneer at the psychologists to his heart's content, but they are far more valuable servants of the community than ministers of the Gospel. Their one aim is to put the just claims of Reason before their readers—to sing the praises of a rationalized conception of human life. Instead of doing that Principal Garvie talks about the alleged miracles of healing performed by the Gospel Jesus.

He firmly believes in their actuality and ends his address in the following curious fashion:—

I should say that inasmuch as our Lord did not know the theory of auto-suggestion he worked miracles through his absolute confidence in God, allied with his natural passion for man; and we have in these miracles nothing less than the saving work of God reaching down through him to meet the needs of men.

Here we are actually assured that the core of Christianity is to be found in those miracles which in the judgment of not a few liberal theologians never happened at all. Matthew Arnold used all his logical ingenuity to demonstrate that miracles never do and never did happen. And yet here is a trainer of would be preachers who has the audacity to say that "we have in these miracles nothing less than the saving work of God reaching down through him to meet the needs of men." Is it any wonder that the saving work of God has never reached down to meet the needs of men? Is it surprising that man is still unsaved by the Christian religion? But science is at last permitted to teach mankind that the way of salvation is to be found not in supernatural belief, but in the knowledge and practice of the truth about life which these despised psychologists and others are pouring out upon us in such abundance. Modern thought condemns theology in all its forms and is gradually undermining and discrediting it.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Price of Priestcraft.

Nothing useful can be poured into a vessel that is already full of what is useless. We must first empty out what is useless.  
—Tolstoy.

WHEN the World-War started the clergy hailed the event as the happy harbinger of a spiritual awakening, and quietly had themselves exempted from military service. Subsequent events have discounted the hope of these skin-careful priests. The war, which tested so many men and institutions did not spare the Christian Churches. It did, indeed, bring out strongly the unselfish sacrifice of hundreds of thousands who were utterly indifferent to the Churches, but it also revealed, on the part of the clergy, and their leaders, a spirit of cant, compromise, and cowardice that tended to lessen what influence the Black Army possessed with the mass of ordinary citizens.

Freethinkers do not need to be reminded that this priestly influence is diminishing, and has long been on the ebb. The clergy themselves have not been slow to perceive the waning allegiance of their flocks and the indifference of people who do not often trouble the pew openers. Deeds often speak more loudly than words, and recent happenings in clerical circles are of no small importance. Realizing the growing disfavour of the clergy, and the anachronism of mediæval prelates in a democratic country, the ecclesiastical authorities have sought to restore something of the Church's balance of power by the creation of many more bishops and no more prelates. These astute Churchmen naturally wish to keep the present Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords to safeguard the political position of the Government Religion, but they wish to shepherd the democracy by the creation of many new bishops. This new line of defence of working bishops, many of whom are doing lip-service to Democracy, still leaves the titled and begaitered prelates to maintain an efficient barrage against all progressive legislation in Parliament. This piece of strategy is hoped to act as a soporific to the working



classes, whilst the actual power of the Church is maintained in matters of government.

Is it strange that there should rise a note, not so much of remonstrance as of revolt, which suggests that the nation is restless at the behaviour of the Anglican clergy, from the wealthy bachelor occupant of Fulham Palace to the rotund tenant of Little Pedlington Vicarage? At a time when the civilized world was in convulsion, whilst Europe was a butcher's shambles, these petticoated priests busied themselves with discussing the claims of that padded and pig-headed monarch, King Charles the First, to the highest ranks of sainthood in the Church of Christ. They busied themselves in other tasks of splitting hairs and chopping straws. They spent weeks in altering gross expressions in the Marriage and Burial services in the Book of Common Prayer. And they spent months in attempting to gloss and to camouflage the barbarities and indecencies in the "Book of Psalms," so that a young curate might recite them without getting red in the face. On the incomparably greater issues of the happiness and well-being of the working-classes of this country they showed a complete and shameless indifference, worthy of the bad record of the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords.

This Church, which is ironically called *the Church of England*, possesses an army of 25,000 priests, who take their orders from the be-gaitered Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords. This country is parcelled out in parishes, and in every parish there is the satellite of the Anglican Church. All this absorbs much money which could be far more usefully employed. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners control a very large amount of property, valued at many millions of pounds. In addition, they own mining royalties, drawing from Durham alone over £300,000 yearly. Further, the Church takes tithes, and obtains relief from ordinary rates. What such property really means may be gauged by the fact that the ground on which nineteen derelict churches in the City of London are built is worth at least a million of money. The Church of England is a creation of Parliament, and what Parliament should do is to exercise control over so much useless expenditure. What France and Russia have done with ecclesiastical property England must also do. This money must be released for use in living channels, and not be restricted to the sole use of perpetuating out-worn superstitions. These priests pretend that they are of profound importance to the well-being of the country, but they are in reality medicinemen with their prototypes in savage nations. Their doctrines and dogmas are rooted in a barbarous past, and their perpetuation is a disgrace to a country pretending to civilization. These priests claim to be sacred persons in a naughty world. Unless a citizen accepts them and their dogmas, he is threatened with ostracism in this world and damnation in the next. That is the Anglican Church's teaching for the masses, tempered with polite reservations for the Royal Family, the aristocracy, and the classes. It is a grievous and a bitter thing that millions of money should be spent in the service of a superstition, which, in the last analysis, is an insult to the spirit of Democracy. For, in all democratic activity, the influence of the Anglican Church is cast against the workers.

MIMNERMUS.

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One of the best proofs of mediocrity is not to recognize superiority wherever we happen to come across it.—*Jean-Baptiste Say* (1767-1832).

To be absolutely self-sufficient you must be either a plant, a polypus, or God.—*Kératry* (1769-1859).

## A Freethinking Judge.

JUDGE PARRY is a wise and witty judge. His latest book, *What the Judge Thought*, is full of good stories connected with the legal profession. But it is not with Judge Parry that this article is concerned, but with the very interesting account he gives of Mr. Justice Maule. The story is well known of his remark—after eliciting from a little girl witness that if she told the truth she would go to Heaven, and if she told an untruth she would go to the "naughty place." "Let her be sworn," said Maule. "It is quite clear she knows a great deal more than I do."

Judge Parry says that Maule was a very dangerous person to interfere with; he gives an account of one Counsel who was foolish enough to do so, with disastrous results. The case was that of a Bible reader and Sunday-school teacher charged with a serious offence. A lot of evidence was called as to the man's good character, but the evidence was overwhelming, and Maule summed up for a conviction. At the conclusion the prisoner's counsel pointed out that the judge had not referred to evidence as to his good character.

"You are right, sir," said his lordship; and then, addressing the jury, he continued: "Gentlemen, I am requested to draw your attention to the prisoner's character, which has been spoken to by gentlemen I doubt not of the highest respectability and veracity. If you believe them and also the witnesses for the prosecution, it appears to me that they have established what to many persons may be incredible—namely, that a man of piety and virtue, occupying the position of Bible reader and Sunday-school teacher may be guilty of committing a heinous and grossly immoral crime."

Freethinkers are well aware that the law and justice are not always synonymous terms. The Blasphemy Law, for instance, is a case in point. The Bigamy Laws of that time often inflicted very great injustice, especially upon poor men. Maule's address to the bigamist Hall was the starting point, says Judge Parry, of the reform of the Divorce Law, which has taken place since then. The judge cites the case from *Atlay's Victorian Chancellor's* as follows:—

Hall was a labouring man convicted of bigamy. Maule, in passing sentence, said that it did appear that he had been hardly used.

"I have, indeed, my lord," called out poor Hall.

Quoth the judge: "You must not interrupt me. What I say is the law of the land which you in common with everyone else are bound to obey. No doubt it is very hard for you to have been so used and not to have another wife to live with you when Mary Ann had gone away to live with another man, having first robbed you; but such is the law. The law in fact is the same to you as it is to the rich man; it is the same to the low and poor as it is to the mighty and rich, and through it, you alone can hope to obtain effectual and sufficient relief, and what the rich man would have done you should have done also. You should have followed the same course."

"But I had no money, my lord," exclaimed Hall.

"Hold your tongue," rejoined the judge, "you should not interrupt me, especially when I am only speaking to inform you as to what you should have done, and for your own good. Yes, Hall, you should have brought an action and obtained damages, which probably the other side would not have been able to pay, in which case you would have had to pay your own costs, perhaps a hundred or a hundred and fifty pounds."

"Oh, lord!" ejaculated the prisoner.

"Don't interrupt me, Hall," said Maule, "but attend. But even then you must not have married. No; you should have gone to the Ecclesiastical Court



and then to the House of Lords, where, having proved that all these preliminary matters had been complied with, you would have been able to marry again! It is very true, Hall, you might say, 'Where was all the money to come from to pay for all this?' And certainly that was a serious question, as the expenses might amount to five or six hundred pounds while you had not as many pence."

"As I hope to be saved, I have not a penny—I am only a poor man."

"Well, don't interrupt me; that may be so, but that will not exempt you from paying the penalty for the felony you have undoubtedly committed. I should have been disposed to have treated the matter more lightly if you had told Maria the real state of the case and said, 'I'll marry you if you choose to take your chance and risk it,' but this you have not done."

And so poor Hall got three months, or as some say, four, because he had not told Maria.

Maule had a great prejudice against clergymen. "It is curious," says Judge Parry, "how Maule's desire to score off clerics crops up in the strangest places." One such case occurring during a murder trial was, as Judge Parry remarks, considering a man's life was at stake, wholly inexcusable.

The case was one of wife murder, the defence one of insanity, in which Maule did not greatly believe. The vicar of his parish was called as to character, and testified that the accused had been a regular attendant at church until, without any apparent reason, he became a Sabbath-breaker, and after that the murder took place. Maule then had a few words with the witness:—

"You say you have been vicar of this parish for four-and-thirty years?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Did you have any week-day services as well?"

"Every Tuesday, my lord."

"And did you preach your own sermons?"

"With an occasional homily of the Church."

"Your own sermon or discourse with an occasional homily. And was this poor man a regular attendant at all your services during the whole time you have been vicar?"

"Until he killed his wife, my lord."

"That follows. I mean up to the time of this Sabbath-breaking you spoke of. He regularly attended your ministrations and then killed his wife?"

"Exactly, my lord."

"Never missed a sermon, discourse, or homily of the Church, Sunday or week-day?"

"That is so, my lord."

Maule then made some calculations, and after a few words of mock courtesy to the parson read out the following results to Hawkins—who was defending the prisoner—who at first thought all this interest in the vicar and his sermons looked well for the plea of insanity.

"This gentleman, Mr. Hawkins, has written with his own pen and preached or read with his own voice to this unhappy prisoner one hundred and four Sunday sermons or discourses, with an occasional homily every year. These, added to the week-day service, make exactly one hundred and fifty-six sermons, discourses, and homilies for the year. These, again, being continued for a space of time comprising, as the reverend gentleman tells us, no less than thirty-four years, gives us a grand total of five thousand three hundred and four sermons, discourses, or homilies during this unhappy man's life. Five thousand and three hundred and four," he repeated, gazing sternly at the vicar, "by the same person, however respected and beloved as a pastor he might be, was what few of us could have gone through unless we were endowed with as much strength as power of endurance.

"I was going to ask you, sir, did the idea ever strike you, when you talked of this unhappy being suddenly leaving your ministration, and becoming a Sabbath-breaker, that after thirty-four years he might want a little change? Would it not be reasonable to suppose that the man might think he had had enough of it?"

"It might, my lord."

"And would not that in your judgment, instead of showing that he was insane, prove that he was a *very sensible man*?"

Another case of Maule's grim and sardonic humour, says Judge Parry, was that of a prisoner found guilty of a sensational murder, and being asked in the usual way why sentence should not be passed upon him, exclaimed dramatically in a loud voice: "May God strike me dead if I did it!"

There was a hushed silence throughout the crowded court. The spectators gazed at the prisoner in horror. Maule looked steadily in front of him and waited without a movement.

At length, after a pause of several moments, he coughed and began to address the prisoner in his dry, asthmatic voice as though he were dealing with some legal point that had been raised in the case: "Prisoner at the Bar, as Providence has not seen fit to interfere in your case, it now becomes my duty to pronounce upon you the sentence of death."

Maule was an unsparing enemy of all hypocrisy and humbug.

W. MANN.

## The Early Scottish Church and the Papacy.

It is a frequent complaint that history is too often a mere chronicle of kings and courts, a method which, it is urged, gives an entirely wrong perspective. Whilst there is a considerable amount of truth in this objection, this method of computing the progress of nations and countries is, on the whole, quite justifiable, for after all, these kings and courts form points of survey without which history (at any rate in the Middle Ages) could not be written. Just as a trigonometrical survey of a country may perhaps be best conducted from the high altitudes, so an historical survey may be best accomplished often from its most important institutions. At the same time, institutions are sometimes stressed out of proportion, a fault which arises from taking any single institution *per se* without reference to social and cultural conditions. Indeed, there are many points in history that can only be understood by the application of this criterion. One of these especially, is the relation of the early Scottish Church to the Papacy.

The external facts in Scottish history of the period would seem to show that Scotland was not "a daughter of Rome by special grace," as the Papacy was pleased to designate her. Indeed, most of the time we see the nation, to use a homely phrase, "chafing the bit," and even occasionally with the "bit between the teeth." Let us enumerate the most important of these external facts in Papal relations. (1) The Scottish defiance of Papal wishes and fiats in the War of Independence, (2) The denial of Papal claim to Right of Presentation to benefices, (3) Support of the Anti-Papacy, (4) Parliament's restriction of Papal legal rights, (5) Opposition to Papacy in the question of archiepiscopal and metropolitan rights. Yet we must not look upon these things as the result of an Anti-Papal movement pure and simple. They were really the expression of far deeper forces, both social and political, which were compelling acquiescence, not merely in Scotland but in Europe. This latter view is what Buckle recognizes in Scottish history of the period, where he says, "the whole march of affairs is



governed by general causes, which, owing to their largeness and remoteness, often escape attention."<sup>1</sup>

Independence was an old-standing claim of the Columban Church. This was the Church which had introduced Christianity into Scotland in 563. From the very first it gave no allegiance to, and expected no interference from the Papacy. The Columban Church has therefore been stigmatized by the historians of the Papacy as "alien and schismatic."<sup>2</sup> "It seems to have exercised little influence in national affairs, but the persistence of its individual life indicates that it possessed a real hold upon the people of Scotland."<sup>3</sup> This is borne out by the fact that in spite of the Synod of Whitby (664), the efforts of Nectan (717), and the reforms of St. Margaret (eleventh century), all of which were made to establish Roman supremacy, the old Celtic Church survived until the fourteenth century. Although conformity to Roman usage finally came about, there is every reason to believe that the "alien and schismatic" spirit still persisted, and perhaps formed the foraging ground for Protestantism.<sup>4</sup>

The social and political conditions which emphasized and developed this "independence" were manifold. In Europe we have the struggle between the Empire and the Papacy, which in spite of the victory of the latter, was virtually the end of the Church's claim to be the only sovereign power possessing an inherent right to exist, in virtue of its assumed divine origin, and its permanent principles of government. Out of the struggle grew two important factors: (a) the rise of the people as a political force, and (b) the rise of nations and monarchies. That Scotland was affected by this general European tendency can scarcely be questioned, and both the War of Independence (1291-1371) and the War with the Barons (1371-1513) were influenced by two wider movements sweeping through Europe, prompted by the idea and sentiment of liberty, and the baronial opposition to the centralized state respectively. With a grasp of these important fundamentals, we can now with better discernment, proceed to deal with Scotland's attitude towards the Papacy during the period under discussion.

"By the outbreak of the War of Independence, the Scottish Church had become thoroughly national," possessing "a unity and cohesion which enabled it to defy not only England but also Rome."<sup>5</sup> This "unity and cohesion" had been brought about by its insistence on "independence." At the beginning of the twelfth century, the Scottish Church had opposed the jurisdiction of York and Canterbury, and, in 1188, Clement III found it necessary to decree that the Scottish Church was subject to the Apostolic See alone. Within a half-century yet another conquest of "liberties" was to be gained by this Church. Hitherto, ecclesiastical councils could only be summoned by the Papal Legates. These people were rarely popular. The King disliked them because they interfered with temporal affairs, and the clergy and the people regarded them as "tax-gatherers for the Pope." This state of affairs, together with the Scottish ideas of "independence," resulted in a Papal Bull of 1225 which gave to Scottish bishops the power to manage national ecclesiastical affairs by means of Provincial Councils. The Papal view in promulgating this ordinance was probably that it would more easily get its policy carried out by the removal of the legates, the popular mistrust of whom spoiled Papal plans. In this, however, the Papacy was soon to be disillusioned, for it was the Provincial Councils who were the means

of building up a strong National Church which was soon to defy Papal authority.

At the opening of hostilities in the War of Independence, the clergy, who espoused the national cause, were backed by Rome, and when Edward I invaded Scotland in 1300, Pope Boniface VIII intervened by reminding the English king that feudal superiority over Scotland belonged only to the Holy See, and that he had no right to homage from the Scottish crown. Two years elapsed, and by that time the Papacy had changed its "convictions," and now Scotland, by a letter addressed to its bishops, was desired to desist from opposition to English claims. In 1306 the murder of Comyn by Robert Bruce, brought the latter into open conflict with Rome, for he was now excommunicated. Yet, in the face of the Holy See, the clergy stood by Robert, and they not only absolved him from blood-guiltiness and helped to crown him, but openly preached war against England, all of which were in defiance of Rome. In 1310 they took the oath of fealty to Robert, and were repaid for their loyalty both to the king and the national cause by the victory of Bannockburn (1314). In 1317-18 Pope John XXII sent legates to Robert with a view of restoring peace between England and Scotland, but they were denied audience, since he refused Robert his kingly address and title, although he was pleased to call him "our well-beloved son." The Pope replied in 1320 with another Bull of Excommunication, and English bishops were commanded to curse the Scottish Robert, the erstwhile "beloved son." In 1323 the Papal tone became conciliatory, and an offer was made to acknowledge his regal claim if Robert, in return, would restore Berwick. Robert refused; yet, in spite of this, Robert's sovereignty was recognized, but it was not until 1328, that the famous Bruce was fully accorded absolution from the Church's censures. It is highly improbable if the first struggle in the War of Independence would have been brought to its successful conclusion had it not been for the support of the clergy, who for over twenty years "had tenaciously pursued a policy condemned at Rome." No doubt the national cause was the primary cause of their adhesion to Robert and their defiance of Rome. At the same time "adversity makes strange bed-fellows," and there is a possibility that they realized that if the cause of national independence failed, their ecclesiastical independence would go by the board. Even if the Apostolic See would not take from them their privileges, it was fairly certain that England would assert its claim for the jurisdiction of York, for indeed it was revived in 1472 and in 1513 after Flodden.

The next important struggle with the Papacy was concerned with the claim of the latter to Right of Presentation to benefices. The points with which Scotland and the Holy See were at variance may be divided under two headings: (1) the Papal claim to "providing" as it was technically called to benefices, and (2) the regal claim to the personalty of deceased bishops. In regards the first claim, it is highly probable that it was originally a Papal "right," although the nomination would scarcely be made "without a discreet regard for the wishes of the King."<sup>6</sup> By the year 1107, we find the King "with the approbation of his clergy and people" making these appointments. With the exception of the Papal attempt in 1178 to force John Scotus, as Bishop of St. Andrew's, upon William the Lyon, most ecclesiastical appointments were made in the above way. In the fourteenth century, however, we find a growing practice of the Pope claiming to "provisions" in these appointments. That it was actually enforced on occasions is evident from the chronicler Bower, but the

<sup>1</sup> Buckle, chap. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Bellesheim, *Hist. of Catholic Church in Scotland*, I, xi.

<sup>3</sup> Rait, *Scotland*, 116.

<sup>4</sup> Both the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians claim the Celtic Church as their forbear.

<sup>5</sup> Rait, 122.

<sup>6</sup> Dowden, *Medieval Church in Scotland*, 19.



fact is that since the struggle with the king and clergy at the beginning of the War of Independence, the Papacy seems to have been in no mood to interfere with the "independence" of either. So strong must the position of the Scottish Church have been that again and again we find the Papacy confirming appointments made by the Chapter with the king's consent, but always reminding the chapter of its "rights," which it assumes had been overlooked "in ignorance." It occurs, however, too often to carry any other conviction than that of the impotence of the Papacy to object. Possibly, the Statute of Provisors (1351) which the English had passed to protect themselves from this Papal interference with "free elections," had made Rome cautious. In 1585 Parliament definitely declared against these Papal "provisions."

H. GEORGE FARMER.

(To be Concluded.)

### Acid Drops.

We quite agree with the protest of the *Church Times* against the organized disturbances which appear to have taken place at some meetings during the election. In our view there is nothing of greater importance than the right to a quite free expression of opinion, whatever that opinion may be. If that goes there is nothing between the people and the most complete governmental tyranny. And with the gathering of the Press into one or two large combines, serving out to the people what these think it good for them to know, and the readiness of large numbers to be thus spoon-fed the value of free expression in public meetings becomes accentuated. Interruptions at public meetings will occur under any conditions, but so long as these are quite spontaneous a speaker can usually manage them, and they often add to the interest of the proceedings. But it is intolerable that gangs of men should roam from meeting to meeting with the set intention of making the expression of views with which they do not agree impossible.

So far we are with the *Church Times*, but there are one or two considerations we venture to suggest to our pious contemporary. So far as freedom of discussion is a fact it is to be noted that it is on the field of secular life that it has become so. We have, generally, managed to get here the recognition of the right to express disagreement and also that in the end disagreement leads to enlightenment. In the field of religion that has yet to become an accomplished fact. In this respect religion as a civilizing force is clearly behind secular life. In politics we ask the other fellow what his opinion is, and we expect a difference to exist. In religion we say what our belief is, shrink from those with opposite beliefs, and decline discussion as an attack where none should be made. In social affairs we know that we have to make up our minds on the facts as we see them, and to modify our conclusions from time to time. In religion—particularly the Christian religion—we start with a "sacred" book, with "Thus saith the Lord," which damns all discussion from the outset. There is nothing to learn, nothing to modify, we have but to settle what the Lord said and act on it. And, finally, this has been the case right through human history. The tendency of the pressure of secular life is for toleration, for a give and take in mental as in other affairs. The tendency of religion is all along for intolerance and to suppress differences by brute force. So we leave the *Church Times* with this generalization upon which to reflect. Intolerance is a quality of the mind which is accentuated and developed by religion, and reacts on secular life by making intolerance a more or less constant feature of it.

A series of Church thefts have taken place at Esher, Weybridge, and Hersham. The things taken include a valuable Persian rug valued at £65, brass ornaments, and

the contents of the offertory boxes. So far no one has been turned into a pillar of salt.

The official figures of the casualties in the Japanese earthquake of September, received at Tokio, show: 99,375 dead; 113,071 injured; 42,890 missing. Christian Evidence lecturers please note.

One of the cathedrals is in need of a first-class tenor singer. The advertisement in a London daily offered a salary of £100 a year, "with house in due course." We wonder if the latter expression means a mansion in the skies after the singer's death.

A meeting was held recently in the Albert Hall, London, to affirm belief in the "full inspiration" of the Bible. The building was packed, and the speakers included Sir William Ramsay and the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young. It was a meeting of "whole-hoggers." There was no compromise anywhere. The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, was the note of the meeting. "We affirm," said one speaker, "that the whole Bible is the word of the living God. If God does something that is beyond the calibre of our reasoning faculties, so much to his honour and glory." In other words the more outrageous the statements of the Bible are, the greater the credit in believing them. Man is saved by believing, not by understanding.

We agree with the *Christian World* that the speeches were less impressive than the meeting itself. There are a number of people who are continually telling us that Christianity is dead, that the old forms of Christianity are no longer believed in, etc., and who practically invite us to cease our attacks on the Christian Churches. These people either do not or will not recognize that it is only a small minority of Christians who are sufficiently astute, or sufficiently liberal, to realize that the older orthodoxy is played out. Huge meetings such as those of the Albert Hall are not made out of idle curiosity. Organizations such as the Bible Students' Association are not maintained on nothing, and there are still many parts of the country where men who are in any way dependent upon public opinion for their livelihood dare not let their unbelief be known. There are many Freethinkers in Parliament, but it is only one here and there who dares to let his opinions be known. And all this means that all we have done is as nothing to what has yet to be done. We have won a breathing space, but no greater mistake could be made than that of assuming the fight to be over. They who think so, and act on it, are paving the way for a disaster similar to that which centuries ago overtook the old Roman Empire.

"Dr. Marie Stopes was one of the greatest philanthropists of the age," said Sir Arbuthnot Lane at a dinner given at the Hotel Cecil by the Society of Birth Control. Medical men did not say such things of Mrs. Annie Besant nearly fifty years ago, when she advocated the same humanitarian ideas.

Cardinal Bourne, in his Advent letter to the clergy, points out that on fast days Roman Catholics should eat "one full meal" and "two light meals." Poor people will regard this as feasting, not fasting.

Miss Ethel Carnie Holdsworth is the authoress of a serial story now appearing in the *Daily Herald*. If anyone doubts the influence of the *Freethinker* let them turn to her story, *This Slavery*, where the writer in question puts elementary Freethought into the mouth of one of her characters. The Spaniards (national pastime bull-slaughtering in public) who thought they had destroyed Ferrer's ideas by killing him cannot even keep his ghost out of a penny daily paper.



There is much talk in the Press about the millions made out of smoking; there are millions also made by priests who preach roasting, but we doubt if they would be missed as much as tobacco.

A Johannesburg paper, entitled *Umteteli Wa Bantu*, has a column in praise of the use of castor oil by the Italian Fascismo. The matter is as crude as the method commended, and it would be more consonant with the best British tradition to endeavour to replace bad ideas with better ones. The paper in question might publish Mill's *Essay on Liberty* before flying to Italy for assistance in their real problems of native labour.

Dan Leno has made his appearance at a Spiritualistic seance. Now if the mediums could get a number of departed music-hall celebrities to make their presence known at a special performance to be given at the Albert Hall, with each one of the departed singing a well remembered song, we could guarantee a packed house every night. And as there are whisky and cigars in the next world—on the testimony of the son of Sir Oliver Lodge—we see no reason why there should not be comic songs also; and we have not the slightest doubt but that if there is a generally expressed opinion that the next world would not be worth living in if there are no free and easy concerts there, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will before long get a communication to that effect. Man cannot remould this world nearer to his heart's desire, but he has always succeeded in shaping the next world to that end.

Someone has been supplying the Press with accounts of the superstitions of politicians. Why not? There is nothing in the make up of the average politician that should lead one to credit him with a greater measure of intelligence than the average man in the street. And among these there is no lack of belief in signs and charms and omens. Besides a people who have been saturated with Christianity generation after generation cannot get it all out of their make-up in a generation.

There is an epidemic of foot and mouth disease in South Cheshire, and in many of the churches prayers are being offered up to the Lord reminding him that it is time he looked into the matter. But, after all, the Lord sent the foot and mouth disease, if he had anything to do with it at all. The proper Christian attitude would be to believe that it is sent for the good of the people, or as a punishment for their sins. All the same we really believe that the disease will weaken after the prayers have been offered. But the farmers should see that they get these praying experts on the job to get the Lord to keep the disease away altogether. Prevention is better than cure.

According to a letter from Messrs. John Knight, Ltd., Royal Primrose Soap Works, E.16, this country consumes 7lbs. of soap per head per annum less than the United States. That means a lagging behind of this country to the extent of seven pounds of Godliness per person. What are the bishops and their armies going to do about it? As cleanliness is next to Godliness, the Americans appear to be able to beat us to a lather in these matters.

Dr. R. Vaughan Thomas, a former music-master at Harrow School, says that "sloppy, sickly sentimentality pervades popular songs." The remark is as true concerning popular hymns.

At Bentle, Yorks, there is a fight going on with regard to Sunday games. It was proposed that these should be permitted, but the religious bodies in the town have joined hands and appointed deputations to wait on the Council and protest. This is a good comment on Dean Inge's statement that there is no such thing as a Protes-

tant vote. There is a Protestant vote in every case where Protestants are united enough to act together. The fortunate thing is that they are seldom so far agreed; and honest men benefit when they of another variety fall out.

A London newspaper states that the Order of Crusaders, which recently held a service in Westminster Abbey, made a payment of £105 to the Abbey authorities. Thus doth God and Mammon run in double harness.

When the earthquake happened in Japan a very pious gentleman wrote to some of the religious papers saying that he saw the hand of Providence in the fact that it occurred while most of the Europeans were absent from Tokyo. God had been looking after the welfare of the European Christians, and could not be expected to bother about "heathen" Japanese. It does not appear that "Providence" was quite so careful of the lives of European Christians in the case of the terrible disaster which followed the bursting of the reservoir in Italy. Out of one village of 400 only 17 were left alive, and there were many other casualties. Providence distributes its favours in the most casual style, and only the very godly seem able to understand it. We confess it is quite beyond us.

Spain has a body of men, modelled on the Italian Fascists, who have adopted a blue shirted uniform. Blue is a useful colour; it saves washing.

Official statistics show that children in elementary schools cost £11 8s. 6d. each per year. For this modest sum they are taught that Adam was the first man, and that Freethinkers go to hell.

Canon Dormer Pierce died in a tramcar at Brighton on Sunday whilst on his way to conduct a service. What an outcry there would have been had he been an ordinary citizen going to Sunday football.

A telegram from Rome contains the information that no foreign Cardinals will be appointed this Christmas. It is decidedly curious that the Holy Ghost should have this steady preference for Italians.

We deal elsewhere in this issue with Dean Inge's article on Roman Catholicism. On one point, however, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle offers a word of comment. He says he knows the Roman Catholic Church is correct in its teachings about Purgatory since he has had numerous communications from the other world which prove that the next life is one continuous process of purification. Of course, if Sir Arthur really has had hundreds of communications from those who know, that settles it. Only one would like a little better proof than Sir Arthur offers on that point. But in any case this is not what the Roman Catholic Church meant by its doctrine of purgatory. It was a state for those who were neither bad enough for hell nor good enough for heaven, and after a period of punishment they were transferred to the upper chamber, and that was the end of it. It was not a continuous purification—whatever that may mean—it was not even a purification in the real sense of the word. The purging was the bearing of a punishment for a certain term, and was in line with the crude vindictiveness that underlies Christian teaching. We are afraid that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is a very poor guide on these matters.

An Eton College War Memorial consists of a tapestry woven to represent incidents in the life of "Saint George." This seems singularly appropriate, for, according to the historian Gibbon, the saint was an old-time war-profiteer.



### 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.—Regular Reader (per Miss Vance) £10; Anonymous (per Charles A. Watts), £5; David Leahy, 5s.; T. Mackerron, 10s.

W. REPTON.—Thanks for suggestion but we do not see anything at the moment we can add to what others have already said. The Crusaders is a grotesque movement, although it might be easily a dangerous one. But the fact of grown up men dressing themselves up like a pantomime procession and doing it with the utmost solemnity is evidence of the poor mentality of those engaged in it. Of course, it may also be a reflection of the mentality of the general public, and that is a danger to which we are always exposed.

J. MATTERSON.—We do not think that books on the art of formal reasoning are likely to be of much use to you. Probably a book such as Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Letters on Reasoning* (Watts & Co.) would help you. Dietzgen's books are quite worth study. They represent a point of view that the more orthodox writers are apt to ignore.

A. ARMSTRONG.—Yes, we received an invitation from the Society you name to lecture for them. But we are far too busy with our own work to be able to give much time to outside societies. If there were more workers in the field of militant Freethought we might have more time to spare. But the work has to be done, and if we can get a little time off now and then we do not want to spend it on a "busman's holiday." And we are not getting younger. We hope to publish a second volume of *Essays on Freethinking* soon.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Sorry we shall not be seeing you at the Annual Dinner. We are afraid you under estimate the cost of a Society dinner at the place you mention.

V. J. HANDS.—The literature is being sent. Mr. Cohen is writing you. We are quite certain that if work will do it the lectures will be successful.

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 communications 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.

Mr. Cohen had two very good meetings at Weston-super-Mare on Sunday last. The attendances were good and there was no mistaking the keen appreciation of the listeners. Each meeting lasted for two hours, and all seemed as interested at the close of the proceedings as they were at the commencement. Those who know Weston will realize how much has been done in the town to educate the public for this to have come about. The town is very much under the control of Nonconformity of a not very liberal type, and great indignation was expressed in many pulpits and in the local press when Mr. Cohen first lec-

tured there. Persistent propaganda has so far accustomed the people to the name of Freethought that it appears to have lost its terrors for many. It is getting known, and there is nothing equal to that for securing appreciation. One marked feature of the meetings was the absence of a chairman. Owing to certain local circumstances Mr. Cohen dispensed with a chairman at both meetings, but he was on excellent terms with the audience throughout, and this harmony was not in the least disturbed during the many questions that followed the close of each address. He will be lecturing there again early in the New Year.

To-day (December 16) Mr. Cohen will speak twice in Nottingham. In the afternoon he will open a discussion at the Cosmopolitan Debating Society on "Are We Civilized," and in the evening he will speak at the Victoria Baths, Sneinton, on "A Candid Examination of Christianity." Both meetings have been well advertised, and it may be taken that good audiences are assured.

Mr. W. Robson writes:—

A friend, newly acquired, writes me: "I have decided to take the *Freethinker* because of the high and very instructive nature of the articles contained in the two copies which I have fully enjoyed."

"This praise," says Mr. Robson, "sends us on our journey very cheerfully." We are pleased, but not surprised to know the effect of reading the *Freethinker* on one who had never before met it, and we are sure that many readers would have a similar experience if during the next month or so they made it a rule to send a copy to a likely friend or acquaintance.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will visit Manchester to-day (December 16) and will lecture twice in the Engineering Union Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, at 3 and 6.30. His afternoon subject is "Some Peculiar Toilers in the Lord's Vineyard," and in the evening "An Evening with the 'Golden Bough'—a Study in God-making." We hope that Manchester friends will make the lectures as widely known as possible and see to it that the hall is filled. Mr. Rosetti will always repay attention.

We again remind all concerned that the Annual Dinner of the N.S.S. is fixed for January 8 at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras. As was the case last year the number of tickets will be limited and those who wish to be present should apply to the general secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, as soon as possible. All who were present on the last occasion are likely to be present again, and these will look forward to another very enjoyable evening. Fuller particulars will be announced later, but we write now to remind all that early application is necessary. The price of the tickets is 8s. each.

At Birmingham Mr. F. E. Willis winds up the session—this side of Christmas—by lecturing in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, to-day (December 16) at 7, on "The Birth of a Saviour." Birmingham friends will please note.

We were glad to see that among those returned again to the House of Commons was Mr. Harry Snell. He had a very handsome majority of over 2,000, and has evidently made himself fairly secure with the electorate. We are, of course, specially interested in Mr. Snell's return because he has had charge hitherto of the Bill for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, and we assume will again take charge of that measure. We can always depend upon Mr. Snell doing what he can in that direction, although the opportunities of a private member are very limited. Still, it is good to have in a congregation of politicians one upon whom we can depend when it comes to a fight for principle. We congratulate Mr. Snell upon his return, and Freethinkers on having him there.

When a Bill for the establishment of Secular Education does come before the House it will be interesting to watch



the votes of the Labour members. Very many of the Labour members believe in it—the overwhelming majority probably—and many of them have given explicit adherence to it. When it comes to the point we shall see how far the fear of offending the chapel interest will operate. For the moment the chapels are coquetting with the Labour movement, but it will be a disastrous thing for it if it allows the prospect of doubtful help from the chapels to modify its actions in relation to a measure which has a every vital bearing on the well-being of the democracy.

We are asked to announce that Mr. R. Brown will lecture for the South London Branch to-day (December 16). Mr. Brown is coming up to London for the special purpose of delivering the lecture and the Branch would like to see the hall well filled. We understand that Mr. Brown is a very able lecturer, but his business engagements make his appearance on the lecture platform rare. Full particulars of the meeting will be found in our Lecture Guide.

### A Dangerous Illusion.

THERE is a tendency in many quarters to-day to regard the apparent indifference to religion on the part of the great majority of the population of London and the country as a victory for Rationalism and Freethought over the forces of clerical obscurantism and superstition. If this were a thing for academic debate it would, of course, be of merely historical or philosophical interest, and no great matter for our concern.

As, however, a very positive danger lies hidden under this illusion, it is, one thinks, of the greatest importance for the maintenance of the none-too-secure position won by Freethought that we should probe this complacent attitude to the quick. The subtle forces of clericalism, in no age taking the form of the preceding, so far from being scotched, have merely retracted their hydra heads and are now waiting a fitting moment to strike.

The recent Anglican statistics as to church-going throughout the country estimated the faithful at approximately one-third in the country, and under one-sixth in London. They left the inference to be drawn that the remaining two-thirds of the population are wallowing in an outer darkness of Paganism and Atheism. This, of course, is begging a very large question. Let us, without generalizing too far, test this assertion by putting a question to the average non-church or chapel goer of our acquaintance. Go into the streets of the working-class areas in the metropolis, into the club-rooms of Piccadilly or Pall Mall, in tram, train, omnibus, the bar of the public-house, the customary haunts of the man in the street, of the man whom Matthew Arnold once called the average sensual man. Say to him, "Do you go to church, or chapel?" He will grin, or he will sneer, or he may trot out a time-worn joke about the curate or the Bible-thumping gospel shark. Then ask him, "Are you an Atheist?" You will probably find that a shade of fear, a frown, a horrified gesture of hasty dissent is a more frequent answer than a straightforward "Yes!"

Why, then, have the Churches lost their hold on the majority—that majority which does not like the trouble of thought; whose reading is confined to the daily newspaper or the sporting print; which cannot endure the mental concentration necessary for the reading of a book, "the life-blood of a master," or indeed of any book? It is obvious that one is not here thinking of that quarter of a million of our population who, it is estimated, are to-day influenced by the play of ideas and accessible or have access to culture and the best thought of our time. Parenthetically one may say England has made some intellectual advance since the

days when Dean Swift said he could not find even 1,000 moderately learned persons in the universities and among the aristocracy of the so-called Augustan Age. Is it, think you, rational to suppose that this indifference on the part of the majority of our population—victims of mal-education or no education—has really a basis of free-thought? War disillusionment, the "pragmatical" failure of Christianity to "deliver the goods," a variety of social, political, and other factors combine to make their attitude one of indifference and apathy.

Goaded by the unwonted pietism of a workmate, during the war, a Secularist friend of the writer implored the Deity. "For Christ's sake, Sam, don't say that!" said the other, actually "touching wood" to ward off the evil eye. The writer also remembers his grammar-school headmaster, sixteen years ago, commenting on the ignorance of secondary school-boys of biblical history and mythology. Are or were either of these things indications of the impact of Rationalism upon virginal minds? The answer would be a lemon!

No man or woman may become a Rationalist merely by an emotional reaction. It would be as reasonable as to expect rare and refreshing melons to shower down on one's head from a crab-apple tree. Who has ever said that Freethought is a device to save people the trouble of thinking? Yet, in essence, this is what people say when they ask us to believe that this attitude of indifference to religion characterizing the great majority is a sign that Freethought and reason are at last victorious in the thousand-years battle against *l'infâme*, the supernatural, transcendental wrecker of many civilizations.

If this phase of the popular mind were a portent of rational significance, we should now be entering on the dawn of a new age. Would that it were so, and that what we are witnessing is aught else than one of those spasmodic reactions, non-rational at base, of a population apparently moving away from orthodox Christianity, but which reaction, as Shaw has said, may be presently and as suddenly reversed by calculated methods of obscurantist propaganda.

Let us beware how we complacently nurse the delusion, fostered by an unsleeping enemy, that Rationalism and freedom of thought have undone the sinews and sapped the fibre of the Churches and the Christian religion. They neither slumber nor are caught napping. By the protean creeds, mental and spiritual attitudes and mumbo-jumbo fetishism of *swamis*, new and higher thoughters, theosophists, and Christian scientists, the subtle enemy gains its end; and if the old machinery of the organized and historical Christian Churches will not serve, there is always Mussolini or some other Vatican "bully boy with a glass eye."

HAROLD T. WILKINS.

### The Longevity of Error.

ORTHODOX financial purists and critics of the New Economics not infrequently uphold the substantial inerrancy of the existing economic and financial system on the ground that, did the system involve any fundamental error or defect, it must have been discovered long ago.

They will admit that the system requires some readjustment in certain directions, but they point out that captains of industry and financiers to-day are remarkably astute men, and would most certainly have discovered any radical and basic defect in the system, did such exist.

Leaving on one side the fact that the alleged defects have only become acute within the recent machine



age, there is more implied in this line of argument than those who use it are generally aware of; and the Free-thinker, when he meets it, is apt to cast his mind back along the ages for parallels.

He recalls a time when the acutest intellects of the day never questioned that the earth was flat, and it seems highly probable that the first men to question the accepted view must have been told that any such radical error in it as would be implied by the suggestion that the earth is a sphere would certainly have been discovered before their time by wiser men.

He recalls, again, periods when such beliefs as demoniacal possession, the causation of disease by evil spirits, witchcraft and wizardry, and kindred errors were widely held not only by the illiterate multitude but by the educated and mentally alert sections of the populace. These beliefs were not merely speculative hypotheses; they issued in action on a colossal and drastic scale, as the records of countless wretched victims testify.

He will recall further the widely held belief, up to the middle of the last century and even later, in special creation as opposed to evolution. But there is no need to multiply instances; the whole history of mankind presents one tragic record of trial and error, more trial and more error, with only here and there a short step in the right direction. The point to emphasize here is the radical and fundamental nature of the errors which obtained and held such widespread credence. And a consideration of such cases will perhaps incline the investigator to admit that there is a *prima facie* case for the reconsideration of such popularly held beliefs—often regarded as axioms of the existing economic system—as, for instance, that industry exists to provide employment and thereby distribute purchasing power; that prices to the consumer must of necessity include all costs; that money is a commodity that may be traded in—bought and sold for money; or that the poor can only be made richer by making the rich poorer.

But the problem may be approached from another direction. When we consider, on the one hand, the enormous capacity for production that exists to-day, the vast wealth of raw materials in and upon the earth, the skill and ability to extract and grow them and to convert them into the forms required, the wonderful contrivances for accomplishing such conversion, and the magnitude of the forces which man has discovered and brought under control—when, we repeat, we try to grasp the magnificence of this potential wealth, and then, on the other hand, realize the comparative paucity and insignificance of the actual goods and services which form the daily portion of the large majority of the community to-day and the hopeless inadequacy of the general standard of living, we do at last begin to realize that the defects and errors in the financial and economic system cannot be of a superficial or secondary nature.

Our enormous capacity to produce is constantly being added to by scientific research, but the effect of this growth on the mass of the people is startling. It is well expressed by Messrs. Cumberland and Harrison in their work, entitled *The New Economics* :—

Under any rational system, each increase in the potential productivity of the industrial machine, whether by plant extension or the introduction of fresh labour-saving devices, would be accompanied either by an increase in the spending power of the population, sufficient at least to meet the possible increased output of consumable products, or, assuming the output of consumable products to be already sufficient, by some method of shortening the working day of those employed in production without decreasing their purchasing power.

Whereas, at present, the effect of the introduction of any new labour-saving process will be either to

throw a number of men out of work altogether or to divert their energies from the manufacture of ultimate consumable goods to constructional work or plant extension, thus increasing the supply of money without, at the same time, increasing the supply of consumable goods, and consequently raising prices all round.

*So that society is actually poorer, in purchasing power or ability to consume, for every increase in its potential wealth or ability to produce.*

The italics are mine. Such a hideously irrational result can surely be produced only by a system which is fundamentally defective.

Consider the large number of brainy people now engaged in trying to find some solution of the "unemployment problem," and succeeding only in proposing palliatives which most of their co-investigators pronounce to be hopelessly inadequate. Surely this is proof in itself that the problem is insoluble *so long as the premises of the present capitalist-financial system are accepted.*

We require constantly to bear in mind the two outstanding factors; on the one hand, the enormous capacity to produce the goods and services which the people require, and, on the other, the enormous unsatisfied need of the great mass of the people. And the link between these two factors is the ticket-system which we call money.

Now, if it be admitted that money is a tool—a most useful and necessary tool for facilitating the process of barter—then, if the necessary land, raw materials, plant, machinery and ability are available for any project which the community desires to accomplish, it is absurd to say that there is no money available. Mankind, in his evolution from the brute, has figured very largely as a designer and maker of tools. When he is unable to accomplish his desires by the use of his own limbs he makes tools. He now appears urgently in need of this tool which we call money. But to-day this tool can be manufactured by such simple and inexpensive processes as writing numerals in a ledger or printing designs on slips of paper.

We shall be reminded, however, that tools may be dangerous articles even in the hands of those who habitually use them. In the case of a modern machine-tool, for instance, many working parts have to be securely screened and guarded, as such parts have an unpleasant knack of damaging an operator's fingers or clothing if unprotected. And money, if unprotected—if issued without safeguards—has a similarly unpleasant knack of damaging prices. But effective safeguards for this purpose have already been designed, and the mechanism can be studied in the technical literature of the Douglas Scheme.

From the point of view of its capacity to produce the goods and services required by its people the British Empire is to-day enormously wealthy; what is required is a system which will equate the consumer's need to the producer's capacity. If it be desired to irritate a new economist tell him that this is a poor country and that we must cut our coat according to our cloth. He will reply that he intends to cut his coat according to his ideas of what a decent coat ought to be, and if there is not sufficient cloth to go round under an economic system which permits the co-existence of idle raw materials, idle manufacturing plant and idle hands, then that system stands self-condemned.

It only remains to be seen how long it will take to convince our rulers of the inefficacy of the various palliatives which they are now discussing. European civilization is disintegrating before our eyes. The problem before us to-day is not one of production—production presents no physical difficulties worth discussion at this moment. The problem is the distribution of the products to the individual members of the community who need them.



For the solution of this problem we cannot afford to await the wisdom that might result from such longevity as is contemplated in the gospel of *Back to Methuselah*. Wisdom sufficient unto the day is at hand with a practical solution, and unless soon adopted it appears by no means improbable that ".....we shall go the way of the mastodon and the megatherium and all the other successful experiments." A. W. COLEMAN.

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## Drama and Dramatists.

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WHEN Pantagruel was a few days old, he took his Cradle and broke it into more than five hundred thousand pieces with one blow of his fist, swearing that he would never come into it again. If Rabelais was as well known in England as Charlie Chaplin, *Original Sin* might receive its death-blow, for the immortal Doctor in unmistakable language defines the ascent of Man. We are told that the altar of the Church was the cradle of the Drama. In this series it is our purpose to find out how the Pantagruel of humanity is faring now that he has definitely burned his boats behind him by smashing his cradle. We trust to be forgiven for this Irishism, but, in our opinion, one very useful function of the liberal minded is to keep the ring clear to allow humanity to grow. Science is slowly thrusting religion from its position, and although science is idyllic in many aspects, there appears to be something more needed to satisfy the two qualities in mankind—the intellect and the emotions—or thought and feeling. The drama is a more potent instrument to reach the emotions than a sermon, and, when we look at the cradle in five thousand pieces, we will be charitable and say that as a cradle it served its purpose. For every piece lying on the floor of history there is a creed, but we are more concerned about the human being who grows and has no further use for it.

For our sins, we presume, we were inveigled into seeing "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" with Mrs. Patrick Campbell taking the part of Paula. The play itself, in the present dispensation, appears to be as much out of place as a hansom cab in the streets of London. It is an ironic comedy of manners with a messy suicide "off" to help Sir Arthur Pinero to get rid of a troublesome character. For its period with those cast iron rules of caste and its relation to servants it would no doubt be very acceptable. Our modern kings of cement, soap, and railways now reign where the professions no doubt tried to talk like Aubrey Tanqueray and Mrs. Cortleyon, and all are in false positions. Love and Right are two axioms of Greek drama; they are still axioms in the life of mankind, on either side of the curtain.

The story is no doubt perfectly familiar to my readers; we shuddered at the daring joke about the size of the parson's nose—what courage it must have demanded! What reckless daring!—but it was a safe joke, safer than a downright statement that all parsons were lackeys of the class to which Aubrey Tanqueray belonged. It was also safer than stating that parsons had no use for a woman with a past. Eilean, played by Miss Chris Castor with much insight in a convent type of girl, was a superfine little prig, true to type, in the grip of the Catholic ghost Fear. As Paula said, Eilean could forgive Captain Hugh Ardale for his murky past, but she could not forgive her for the same thing. Here we thought would be a fine chance for Pinero to transcend that great feud existing between women—which they themselves may do one day, when Pantagruel puts the cradle pieces on the fire of oblivion.

Let us now see how Pantagruel grows when measured by this play. Society will not give a woman another chance. Thomas Hardy, if he has done nothing else, has knocked the bottom out of that hateful nonsense, and he has done it through the mouths of farmers, shepherds and dairy-maids—probably because he does not look at the world through the eyes of caste. Would this play have been acceptable to society if Paula had been given another chance? Success—or a dominant and positive note in favour of the wayward woman? Our dramatist chose the former, and his one time audience would depart from the theatre to supper thoroughly satisfied.

Paula had made the supreme sacrifice; the gods of respectability had taken their victim, and the dramatist, with his boisterous joke of the parson's nose, was simply staggering about the stage with "Original Sin" disguised. If he were not, Paula would have lived and welcomed her one time paramour as a son-in-law—and so, let us bid good-bye to this play. No human forgiveness of sins, no mercy for the repenting Paula; no Love and Right as axioms; it is a play for what were once known as the professional classes. As the demon of finance is making a vivid red line between Don Quixote's "haves" and "have-nots," we now see the "Second Mrs. Tanqueray" as a pale shadow of that generation when it was considered funny to joke at a parson's nose, but vulgar to insist on rights such as those fought for by Charles Bradlaugh.

Swift, in his "Modest Proposal," suggested that in the case of famine in Ireland, the babies should be eaten. Defoe, another writer for children and grown-ups, startled England with his pamphlet "The Shortest Way With Dissenters," which was, of course, to hang them. We venture to timidly indicate that Sir Arthur Pinero might seriously consider the disposal of all Mrs. Tanquerays by bonfire; he would have many supporters in the modern Press and Pulpit. The type cannot be obliterated by suicide, and the dramatist was cornered with his character, of whom Malthus wrote: "Herself the supreme type of vice, she is ultimately the most efficient guardian of virtue."

As a Freethinker, looking for what is best in the world and trying to find it in the dramatist's message to Pantagruel, we see nothing in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" that even scratches the surface of mankind's heart. We put it away, and cannot be bribed to see it again. In the musty cupboard, where spiders have made their webs, we put it away, with anti-macassars, face fungus, class distinction founded on money, and the many other atrocities that flourished in that era of respectability during the reign of Queen Victoria.

We have nothing but praise for the acting of Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Paula. She dominates the stage with her old magic of voice, movement and gesture, and we look forward to seeing that play which shall portray man's greater association with woman whereby he obtains an increase of human trust, and woman's sacrifice to her home shall stimulate his sacrifice to the welfare of Pantagruel or Mankind. Mrs. Campbell, the literary sweetheart of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, should be able to take the part of the woman in such a play when written, and, as the professional classes have only residences—not homes—the play will not be addressed exclusively to them, and we doubt if it will be written by Sir Arthur Pinero, who knew the kind of goods to deliver for the correct answer from the Pay-Box.

WILLIAM REPTON.

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Experience has about the same value as a lottery ticket after the drawing has taken place.—C. F. A. d'Houdetot (1799-1869).



## "The Mystery of Existence."

READERS of the *Freethinker* may remember some notes of mine on an essay on Mark Rutherford since they appeared in the paper as recently as November 18. A copy having been sent the essayist, he very kindly replies as follows:—

I have to thank you very much for sending me copy of the *Freethinker*. I had no idea that this little effort of mine would have awakened interest enough to inspire such an able article. I can quite appreciate your point of view although I do not altogether share it. We are all more or less Agnostics nowadays whether we acknowledge it or not, this spirit prevailing with those who affirm as well as with those who deny. Such questions, however, have no attraction for me as matter for public discussion; and in connection with such a subject as "Mark Rutherford" it would be utterly repugnant to me to treat it in any other manner than I attempted to do, namely, give a picture of the man as a writer and describe his intellectual outlook without using it as a means of advocating any views I may hold on religious subjects. I quite recognize this attitude may be scorned by "stalwarts," but I have to confess I am not of this type, rather a humble inquirer who finds great interest in the greatest of all questions, but indulges no hope that the mystery of existence will ever be revealed to him. Thanks, however, for your friendly criticism; it is encouraging to know that what I had to say did not fall on deaf ears.

I have, while I transcribe my friend's letter, a subconscious vision, or sense of the reality of existence, persisting, pervading, comforting, often delighting, even inspiring my individual being; compounded of waters, woods and wilds, of suns and winds and scenes of natural experience; a mingling of past and present, of gladness and regret, an ever maturing, enriching, all sufficing, purely mundane humanism; the "mystery of existence" neither troubles nor delights me any more; sufficient for me, "hell's out and the devil's dead," and that for all people of any common-sense Agnosticism is the inevitable attitude of mind. The "mystery of existence," I think, is not the "greatest of all questions," not by any means. The great and immediate question is how best to use the abundance of what we do know. Nor, if we must inquire still, need we be "humble"—that is to say, frightened—but *accurate* in our inquiries about the unknown; a too solemn, reverent, religious, what you will attitude is not conducive to useful, unbiased researches. The greatest discoverers of new truths have been scientific not theological. They have argued from the known to the unknown, not *vice versa*, and so far, the weight of, indeed, the only, evidence is on the side of the purely scientific conceptions. Our essayist is interested in what he is pleased to call "the mystery of existence," but shrinks from expressing his views upon what he considers "the greatest of all questions," rather preferring to remain a humble, and one might suppose, reverently religious inquirer, and, as it might seem, quite at one with Herbert Spencer in the view that the "Unknown" was also the unknowable. A Freethinker can understand, and to a certain extent share, this attitude but refuses to worship "this mystery," which is only a priestly apotheosis of human ignorance. The college-bred clergy, however, are less blameless than my friend inasmuch as they profess to know what is beyond knowledge, such assumption being the sole justification for their existence—secular welfare in general being self-necessitating, or in the meantime amply provided for.

Not to labour the point, and not hopeful, or even desirous, of "converting" my courteous friend and neighbour, and who has already read widely of the very best in literature and philosophy, I would just re-

tain my own position clear. As to intellectual honesty my friend must have the benefit of the doubt. The civilized world is not thirsting for truth and goodness. It has already more of both than it knows what to do with, sufficient if wisely used to make the earth, comparatively, a paradise. This "Unknown," this great "mystery of existence," has so long and so deplorably been a Pandora's box of plagues that it might very well, at last, remain a sealed cabinet in the house beautiful of humanity and trouble mankind no more. We, of course, believe it is but an "empty cupboard," or at most containing only such things as are similar to the "open presses" of our knowledge; natural also, not supernatural, secular not "sacred"; not to be speculated upon with superstitious fear, or the childish terror of the Blue Beard's chamber of an ogreish fairy tale. In the words of Ingersoll: "Let the ghosts go, let them cover their cycless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade for ever from the imaginations of men." Speaking of a haunted path he had travelled at night, the old Scot was asked if he had seen anything? "Na, na," he said, cannily, "I saw naething waur than mysel'!" And so it is that common-sense concludes we had better right those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of. The poets are almost unanimous in advising us to "make the most of what we yet may spend." True to their creed, the theologians would have us sacrifice the actual world for one that is hardly even problematical.

ANDREW MILLAR.

## Correspondence.

### THE CAPEK BROTHERS AND THE DRAMA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your contributor, Mr. G. E. Fussell, does not appear to do justice to the Capek Brothers in his article entitled "The Mysterious Moral of the Capek Dramas." To begin with, he puts in "Mysterious" only to knock it out again. There is neither mystery nor mistiness in the two plays, and the dramatists are not satisfied that the function of life is reproduction as Mr. Fussell states; if it was, there would be no point and no reason for the plays, as reproduction, fortunately or unfortunately, according to one's point of view, can very well look after itself.

What the Dramatists are interested in is the *direction* of Mankind, or the Great Man, or Pantagruel. They do not *preach* (being dramatists) the vanity of human endeavour. They *depict* the futility of human endeavour in certain defined directions such as obtains in what, for charity's sake, is now called society, along with finance and religious militarism. In this way, a cathartic is administered from the stage as effective as the Freethinker's leavening influence in social life. They show the audience the ultimate and logical end of present existence labouring under false standards of value. Much against my will I am led to the conclusion that your contributor contributed the solution of "legitimate sexual love." The Capek Brothers do not imply this; Priapus is where you look for him.

In the "Insect Play" the Tramp states that Mankind can make a plan; this was very clear to me after the inevitable mess and wreckage in the insect world which is our own at present. We do not ask from Shakespeare which way Mankind is to take, but he tells us what happens if it takes the wrong one. The Capek Brothers have done this effectively. When Lord Grey made his speech about the next war, he saw that which our dramatists have tried to point out to the common man. When Mr. Garvin of the *Observer* says that unorthodox means will have to be found to solve our troubles, he sees the point of mankind's misdirection. For Nurse Cavell, patriotism was not enough. Lord Carson has now emphatically thrown up the political sponge. Major Attlee, a few weeks ago was advocating the "United States of Europe."



Mr. Baldwin was telling us a few days ago that he knew the affection existing among shepherds and agriculturists, and he was one of them, and so we could go on for ever. For me, Sir, all these signs point one way; the heart of humanity is sound; if we do not affirm this with all the strength of our being, we may as well lower the curtain for the last time. In conclusion I agree with Mr. Fussell that the Capek Brothers moral is negative; so is a bucket of water on a fire that threatens to destroy us.

Readers may be interested to know that Karel Capek is now writing a novel in which Mankind's view and way is clearer, and in our opinion, human, finite, and probably solitary, the Capek Brothers are the dramatists of the New Age, when men will no longer dance to tunes called by cosmopolitan ruffians termed financiers, or carry in their lives the ghost of fear called religion.

WILLIAM REPTON.

#### AMERICAN RELIGION.

SIR,—Mr. Merchant counters my criticism of Billy Sunday by stating that he is "only following in the footsteps of the Methodist revivalist from the days of Wesley down to the present time," who came over from England. I was not aware that the early evangelists in America—those austere puritans—practised the steps indulged in by Billy Sunday. Certainly they did not introduce the antics of a baseball player into the pulpit.

Why Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Conan Doyle, and Sir Oliver Lodge are dragged into the argument I do not know. Surely Mr. Merchant does not put them on the same plane as Billy Sunday!

Then as to the comparison between the prosecution of the late Mr. Gott and the freedom of Freethought lecturers in the streets of New York City, I very much doubt whether the authorities of that city would have countenanced Mr. Gott's manner of advocacy. The Secular Society officially and emphatically condemned his methods, and while providing his legal expenses, made it quite clear that they were not defending Mr. Gott's methods, but fighting blasphemy prosecutions. For the rest, our lecturers speak in the streets and parks of London throughout the summer without interference.

I do not know of any large representative body outside the Salvation Army in this country who could be induced to discuss, or even entertain, a proposition to suppress all evolutionary teaching, as was done by the Legislative Assemblies of Kentucky, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The proposition would simply be laughed down.

Mr. Merchant concludes by praying the Lord to be merciful and save his country "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 hope the Lord will give ear to his servant. In the meanwhile I would suggest that if the "chosen ones in England" are any worse than Billy Sunday they should be examined by a mental alienist. In any case they found their peculiar talents unappreciated in England, and they knew where to go. W. MANN.

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NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Debate: "Is Prohibition a National Remedy for Intemperance?" Opened by Mr. E. S. J. Coldwell.

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WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Upton Labour Party Hall, 84 Plashet Road, Upton Park, E.13): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, a Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

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