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Views and Opinions.

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What Am "I"?

Last week we tried to show, with what success the reader must be left to judge, that the theory of a "soul" left us no wiser than when we started, concerning the nature of the self. Moreover, it was quite clear that the only foundation of the belief in the "soul" as an independent entity, or as something separable from the body, was the primitive theory, which held that besides the man who could be seen there was another little man, a copy of the other, that was not seen, and which could get out of the body and return during life, but which ceased to return at death. From this beginning the conception of a "soul" passed into philosophy, where under various forms it has maintained itself ever since. But of verifiable facts in support of this belief there is not a trace. On the contrary, every known fact is dead against it, and the more we know of the nature of the organism, the more carefully we study the manner in which the "self" is built up, the more carefully we examine its manifestations in health and in disease the more impossible does this primitive theory become. Consciousness, which is so often called in to express a judgment where it really has no authority, cannot help us here. All that we are ever conscious of is a sensation, or the memory of a sensation, of the relation between certain sensations, past or present, and of the flow of ideas. But of the nature of this process, in what way the past is linked to the present, in what way the stream of sensible experience is forged into an organic whole, consciousness can tell us nothing at all. And unless the larger part of recent psychological research is altogether wrong, consciousness covers but a fragment of our mental life, and is but an indication of the larger and deeper and more fundamental neural and mental processes that are proceeding "below the threshold."

* * *

A Changing Unity.

Is it any more true that the actual identity of the "self" is maintained over a long period of years than that the physical identity of the body is maintained over the same term? Or is it true of the mind in a sense in which it is not true of the body? There is unquestionably a physiological unity with the body

that is obvious and unquestioned. In spite of the ever-changing material of which the body is composed, in spite, too, of the radical changes that take place in the bodily structure from birth to old age, there is maintained a physical identity. This is because the gradual changes which take place are affiliated to those which already exist, much as the new-born baby, which makes its appearance in a given social group inevitably takes its impress from the society into which it is born. Why may not the same be true of the mind as a whole, and of the particular group of settled characteristics which go to make up the "self"? To speak of the "self" of the present moment as being absolutely identical with the "self" of twenty or thirty or forty years ago is simply not true. Our ideas, our feelings, the range, the direction, the application of our emotions all undergo profound modifications, sometimes drastic changes, with the passing of the years. We recognize these changes, sometimes with pride and sometimes with mortification, and our friends recognize them also. The ego, says Dr. Henry Maudesly, very pithily, "is not a constant, but a variable." It is not something independent of time and experience, but the product of time and experience, even though to be accurate we have to take time by generations and the experience of the race. The "self" is built up from the experiences we undergo from babyhood onwards. There is, of course, a unifying link, but it is not the mysterious indivisible "ego" of the metaphysician and the theologian.

* * *

The "Self" and Immortality.

The composite nature of the "self" is seen clearly enough if we study the organism in seasons of health. It is seen even more clearly in seasons of disease. In health we can watch the "self" being built up. We can see the child imitating the life around it. We can see it going out into the little world of school life and gathering further characteristics from there. We can see it in the world of adolescence, and later in the world of adult men and women undergoing change after change, learning lesson after lesson, the whole forming the specialized bundle of physical and mental characteristics which we know as John Brown or Thomas Smith. Just as we can watch the building up of this "self" under the various forces of life, so we can watch its disintegration and disorganization under the influence of disease or the stress of abnormal conditions. In cases of dual personality we have the phenomenon of two persons, two distinct "selves," showing themselves alternately, each with its own set of memories and its distinct character pattern. It is quite clear that the advocates of an independent entity can offer no explanation of these things. Why should the "self" undergo these marked changes? Why should the presence of disease change a good-tempered, easy-going individual into a querulous, fretful personage with whom it becomes almost a torture to live? Why should the "self" which usually evinces one set of characteristics suddenly and alternately exhibit a different and contradictory set? Of course, if we regard the "self" as, so to speak, the function of some-

thing else, the case becomes understandable, but not otherwise. When we link this question of the "self" with that of immortality it becomes a moot question as to which of the "selves" which a man manifests in the course of his life is to survive death? Is it that of the child, or of the adult, or of the old man weakened by disease and with his faculties robbed of their strength and clarity? There is no reason apart from our prejudices why the one should survive rather than the other. And if all do not survive, why any?

* * *

The Nature of the "Self."

It must be borne in mind that I am not questioning that the term "self" stands for a fact, and a very definite fact. We do recognize that John Smith differs from Peter Robinson. We know that if Smith is brought up against one set of facts he will react in one way, and if Robinson is brought up against the same set of facts he will react in an entirely different manner. It is not like a case of chemistry, where the reactions are in each case identical. There is what we may call the personal equation which will come in, and which we imply when we speak of the difference between the personality of Smith and that of Robinson. It is not at all a question of denying the existence of "self"; the materialist has a quite definite meaning for the word and a quite definite use for the thing itself. It is entirely a question of what we ought to understand by the "self." So far as my consciousness of "self" is concerned it would appear to be wholly and entirely a matter of memory, or, as it has been called, a question of memory-synthesis. We are told that the testimony of consciousness is final because I know that, in spite of all changes, "I am the same person that existed twenty or forty or fifty years ago." But we should all agree that "I" am the same person that a certain definite number of years ago made my appearance in the world as a helpless new-born baby. We believe this on the testimony of others, and from what we see daily going on around us. Yet this period of infancy enters not at all into our consciousness of personal identity. Neither in feeling nor in memory am I any more identified with that far-away baby than I am with the President of the United States. As there is this gap in my consciousness of self, so there are gaps occurring throughout the whole of our lives. My consciousness of personal identity and continuity is made up entirely of memories of past experiences. Where these do not exist, the consciousness of personal identity ceases to exist. If people were in the habit of going straight to the facts and asking their meaning, instead of first stating a belief and then fighting for it, there would not be nearly the mystery about the question that now exists.

* * *

Memory and "Self."

Personal identity means, then, the bringing together of a series of memories so as to form a definite and stable pattern. It is the memory of what has been, the sights seen, the sensations experienced, that give us the feeling of persistence and continuity. Where this memory does not exist, neither does the sense of the persistence of the "ego." While I write there lies before me the newspaper report of a man who has been found wandering about unable to give his name, ignorant of all details about his past life, and who is unable to recognize the members of his family who have reclaimed him from the hands of the police. What is lacking in that man? What has become of his indivisible and independent "ego"? In some way or another the memory synthesis has been disturbed. If that synthesis can be restored the man's "ego" will reappear. If it cannot be, it will be gone for ever. Yet there is the curious and illuminating fact

that there may be built up a new memory synthesis which will re-create another "ego" altogether. We can, if we will, actually observe this mysterious "self" being built up on a basis of change and continuity. There is no reason for believing that a newly-born baby has any consciousness of self. One can observe it discovering itself, most probably through the sense of touch. It discovers its limbs, and gradually the notion of a physical "self" is elaborated. There is a corresponding elaboration of the psychical "self." The experience of home, of friends, of the outside world, makes each of us what we are. The "self" is not something that comes into the world seeking expression through the mechanism of the human body. That idea is wholly fantastic, and for all purposes utterly useless. The "self" is a concept that we can see being elaborated before our very eyes.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Continued.)

A Significant Sign of the Times.

It is an interesting sign of the times that the *Morning Post*, the organ of Die-hard Conservatives of the Northumberland order, should associate itself with the philosophy of the Dean of St. Paul's. We should have thought that between the Duke of Northumberland and Dean Inge there was a great gulf fixed. The Duke at least believes in the principle of authority, and to him the Reformation represents politically the opening of the flood-gates for the billows which have submerged the feudal castle. Moreover, his Grace sees also in the aristocratic literary movements of the eighteenth century that gave the world Voltaire and the French encyclopædists, the German Aufklärung and the Illuminati, a dark masonic conspiracy for "red ruin and the breaking up of laws," a conspiracy that after a century and a-half is still vigilant and active. To the Dean, on the other hand, the revolt against Catholicism, alike in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, means intellectual emancipation and progress.—*Church Times*, June 20, 1924.

THE *Church Times*, as is well known, is the organ of the Catholic Party in the established Church of England; "our leading comic paper," as Mr. Robert Arch calls it. Its editor, Mr. Sidney Dark, is a marvellously adaptable individual, for he was once a staff writer to Lord Northcliffe and others of the same type. He is now a mediævalist of the jolliest sort; or, as Mr. Arch describes him in the July number of the *Literary Guide*, "a professional purveyor of Mediævalism to cheery chaps in chasubles and throaty High Church curates." Personally, we know nothing of him save as he reveals himself in weekly issues of the *Church Times*; and the quotation at the head of this article is from the first leading article in the *Church Times* for June 20. At present it does not concern us in the least what the politics or theology of our pious contemporary may be. It is in its treatment of Dean Inge as compared with the Duke of Northumberland that we are so profoundly interested. The Duke hates the Protestant Reformation, because it has had political results which at last menace the safety and continuance of the class of which he is so prominent and able a representative. Hitherto it has been a class hedged round with privileges, of which the world's trend threatens to despoil it. Dean Inge, on the contrary, "in spite of his aristocratic sympathies, dislikes mediævalism, and would probably hold that the reunion of Christendom on Catholic lines would be too high a price to pay for the restoration of social order and the security of crowns." Of course, we are firmly convinced that the reunion of Christendom, on any lines whatever, is an utter impossibility. The peculiarity about Christian sects, which number many hundreds, is that each one of them believes that it is

absolutely in the right, and that it would be high treason against its Lord and Master to sink a single one of its convictions for the sake of reunion. The Protestant Reformation introduced a fundamental cleavage between itself and the Catholic Faith which can never be done away with, except at the expense of renouncing dearly cherished principles on both sides, which means that the reunion of Protestantism and Catholicism is but a fond dream that will never come true in any sense yet cherished by the religious mind. The irresistible tendency of religion is hopelessly to divide its devotees: never to bring them together into the bond of mutual agreement and delightfully fruitful peace. Any one who says that "the thirteenth century is commonly regarded as the Golden Age of Europe," and that he is convinced that if by any miracle he found himself back in that century he would not have to change his mind about many things to be in complete harmony with the people among whom he should live, is inevitably an immovable obstacle to the reunion of Christendom. And yet, in spite of such a foolish declaration by its editor, the *Church Times* has the temerity to write thus:—

A century ago the Duke and the Dean would have been steady antagonists. To-day they walk together as friends; or, to be strictly accurate, the newspaper with which the Duke is associated gives the Dean a platform to expand his views on such subjects as "The Religion of the Future," and in a leading article extols the wisdom of his philosophy. The explanation, we suspect, is that the Duke and the Dean are united by a common pessimism. Both feel a doubt whether or not they are on the winning side, and both dread, though for different reasons, the trend of popular feelings.

The suggested likeness between the two men is scarcely borne out by the facts. The Duke is a proud aristocrat and the sworn enemy of the so-called common people whose ambition it is to rise to power and abolish royalty and the aristocracy, and this is not in the smallest degree surprising. The Dean, on the contrary, is bound by the very nature of his profession to be the sincere friend and benefactor of the people at large, for whose salvation Christ died upon the cross. It must be admitted, however, that Dean Inge has not always been true to his profession. Both in spoken and written words he has expressed his cruel scorn of the working classes. We by no means hold a brief for the latter, but we do accuse the Dean, as an official representative of the ever-loving Christ, of shocking inconsistency whenever he looks down upon and despises the poor who have to work very hard for scarcely a living wage. As a Christian minister he has no moral right to cherish "aristocratic sympathies," because in the sight of the God in whom he believes and whose servant he claims to be, all men are equal. Yet he finds fault with his own Church because it now "grovels before the working man and supports every scheme of plundering the minority" (*Outspoken Essays*, p. 30), forgetting that down to the year 1824 his Church and the law of this Christian land supported the plundering of the working man by his Christian employers, and also ignoring the fact that the wicked Combination Acts were repealed not by the direct action of the Church, but largely as the result of the vigorous agitation against them conducted by prominent Freethinkers. The greatest Churchman of that time, Wilberforce, enthusiastically defended those inhuman Acts. Our point, however, is that Dean Inge is guilty of high treason against his Divine Lord and Master every time he takes the side of the rich against the poor. Surely it is his duty to do his utmost to discourage and severely condemn class-hatred and class-partisanship as a heinous sin against heaven; a duty which he, alas, seldom if ever loyally discharges.

Again, the Dean has professionally no right whatever to "feel a doubt whether or not he is on the winning side, or to dread the trend of popular feeling." The religion, whose minister he is, is essentially optimistic, from which it necessarily follows that to characterize a Christian minister as a pessimist is to be guilty of a contradiction in terms. Believing his Gospel to be gloriously true, Paul was a glowing optimist. The Dean is not an optimist after that order. He candidly concedes that hitherto Christianity has been at least a partial failure, but firmly believes that ultimately it will conquer and win the hearts and consciences of the entire race. The *Church Times* confesses that in some respects it is at one with the Duke and the Dean, saying:—

On some points we are one with them. We agree that civilization is in a parlous state, and with the Dean we do not think that the motor omnibus or the telephone will save mankind. We dread, as they do, that the European proletariat divorced from property and in great measure lost to religion may some day strike civilization a mortal blow. We hold with the Dean of St. Paul's that it is by no means probable that the optimism of Dr. Eliot, of Harvard, which sees in the religion of the future the triumph of Modernism, will be realized. We may add that a creedless Church, devoted to social reform such as Dr. Eliot contemplates, would at the best be, in Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith's words, a temple of goodness without God; at the worst, a hypocritical tyranny. We are at the same time far from feeling that the path for Catholicism in this country is as smooth even as Dean Inge in the bitterness of his soul apprehends.

Some years ago the Dean preached several sermons in which he expressed distrust in the alleged historical facts upon the truth of which, according to Catholic teaching, Christianity securely rests. If those facts happened as described in the Gospels and as interpreted in the Epistles, the Catholics are right. But if modern literary criticism is justified in treating the Gospel narratives as largely, if not wholly, untrustworthy, the interpretations of the Epistles and the theology of the Catholic Church fall to the ground as utterly worthless. In many respects we are great admirers of Dr. Eliot, ex-President of Harvard University, but at the same time we cannot dispute the fact that the philosophy he advocates is much more like primitive Buddhism than Catholic Christianity. On this point we are in agreement with the *Church Times*, though with that organ's theology we are in complete disagreement, and which we are determined to oppose with all our might. The difficulty about the Dean is that it is practically impossible to tell where exactly he stands, either theologically or philosophically. J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

DETERMINISM AND FREE WILL.

The Freedom of the Will! 'Tis the device
Which crafty theologians frame, to free
Their God from his responsibility
For his poor creatures sins, and does suffice
To gull the ignorant. But those whose eyes
Have shed religion's veil, can plainly see
That all our actions from heredity
And our environment perforce arise.
Determinism's rigid law must reign
Over our acts, which each must have its cause.
Cause and effect, like links in iron chain
Stretch back and forward to infinity.
No end and no beginning and no pause
In this eternal process can we see.

—H. D.

John Davidson's Deliverance.

Our reformers knock off the head from Jupiter; thunder-bolt and sceptre stand.—*Landor.*

I would have all men come out of Christendom into the universe.—*John Davidson.*

THE reproach has often been levelled against our insular art that it is Philistine. The French artistic sense lifts itself out of that ruck. It may go to the dogs, but it is not narrow nor conventional. As a fact, art in France, in all its phases, is Bohemian. There is no risk that the bulk of our English writers and artists will ever be Bohemian. Miss Ethel Dell and Sir Hall Caine are eminently respectable, and Mr. Rudyard Kipling is a hard-shell Tory. Nowadays, with us, James Thomsons are very exceptional; but so is the genius of that gifted poet who sang of *The City of Dreadful Night*. If any foreigner shall throw this up in our faces we may take refuge behind the broad backs of Algernon Swinburne and John Davidson. Neither of these singers dwelt beside the still waters and green pastures. To think of their literary careers is to think of alarms and excursions, of the goddess Grundy in hysterics, of tabernacle calling unto conventicle, of manifold recriminations and vituperations. We may wish that these two poets had not been compelled so often to exchange their pens for their swords; but on their careers all will look with pride to whom the glory of English literature is dear. The bright flame of their enthusiasm always burned for right issues and noble causes. Their eagerness for battle was ever in the cause of Freedom against conventions and traditions. Swinburne is already a classic; and John Davidson deserves attention as he so worthily carried on the splendid tradition of his illustrious predecessor.

John Davidson won his separate place in English literature by his *Fleet Street Eclogues* and *Ballads and Songs*. The appearance of the latter volume raised a storm, for the placid Victorians could not endure his *Ballad of a Nun* and *Thirty Bob a Week*. Admirers of the sugary inanities of Lewis Morris were not accustomed to the beauty or the freedom of John Davidson's poems. It was, indeed, a far journey from the pretty *Epic of Hades*, which was irreverently called the "Hades of an Epic," to Davidson's powerful muse.

Like most pioneers, Davidson had to "cultivate literature on a little oatmeal." In one of his last books, *The Triumph of Mammon*, published in 1907, he told his readers he was fifty years old, and that nine-tenths of his time, and that which is more precious, had been wasted to earn a bare living. He also complained that the age was too commercial, too entirely in the grip of economics, too violent in its pleasures, to care for poetry. The imagination of our time was too debased for the highest in literature. So Davidson looked to a court of appeal, "the dozen superior persons scattered throughout Europe," as it has been called wittily.

Small wonder that Davidson's books brought him little profit. In glowing language he said that Christianity was nearing its end, and it was upon the great change that this involved that he based his poetic visions. Possessing genius, he dreamed glorious dreams of:—

The world
Emerged from Christendom, like love's beloved
With April from the wrinkled womb of death,
Delivered fresh to Aphrodite's arms.

With all its thunder and earthquake, John Davidson's verse never fails in the sweeter and kindler note. There are scores of passages which are glories of charm and imagination, as, for instance:—

High hearts and youth are destiny enough.

The little child
That lives a year and holds its parents' hearts
In dimpled hands for ever.

And thunder of the thought shall seem to wait
Upon the nimbler lightning of the dead.

Life's heavy fruitage and imperial nights
When naked darkness gluts the sky with stars.

These are but hasty glimpses of the genius of a poet who found eclogues in the rawness, hugeness, and noise of London. As a dramatist, John Davidson was unlike others. He hated Christianity, and he wrote plays with the deliberate object of converting people. This had a curious result. When, for example, you read Davidson's *God and Mammon*, you do not greatly care what befalls the characters; what you care for is the beautiful language, oftentimes as resistless as the honeyed perfection of Kit Marlowe. When you think of a really great play you do not think of any single person or passage. The glory of that perfect tragedy, *Othello*, is neither the Moor, nor Desdemona, nor Iago, but each and all. To recall Davidson's plays is mainly to think of isolated passages of great charm.

The explanation lies in the fact that Davidson's own life was a tragedy. He never had the tranquillity to entirely recapture his emotions. He possessed ability that would have enabled him to make plenty of money had he prostituted his talents. But his mind was set on something higher, and he dedicated himself to the service of principles. It was an act of rare courage; as brave, in its way, as the action of those stout-hearted men whose bones lie in the dreadful paths that lead to the Poles, or the mountaineers who calmly staked their lives against the awful heights of Mount Everest. In our small and safe daily rounds we are apt to overlook the importance of such acts of courage. The soldier in battle is inspired by the very heat of the struggle, but there is nothing theatrical in the ordeal of the pioneer. Yet Davidson's free choice of hardship was well done. For he looked beyond the tumult and shoutings of the day, and was inspired by what Shakespeare calls "the prophetic soul of the world dreaming on things to come."

MIMNERMUS.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

Our report from Bolton this week is one of strenuous work, and gives great satisfaction. Eight meetings have been held; every meeting bringing one or more platform opponents as well as opposition meetings. A Catholic councillor, a Labour agent and a prominent speaker endeavoured to get the meetings stopped; and the local press reports the squashing of Councillor White by the Mayor, who refused to listen to his diatribes. Altogether the Catholic opposition only succeeded in increasing local interest. Large quantities of literature have been sold and distributed. Thanks are specially due to Messrs. Sissons and Norman Wood, and last, but not least, to the veteran Mr. W. Addison, who, although over eighty years of age, attended every meeting and took the chair at several. Such interest and energy cannot fail to be an inspiration to the younger members of the Party. It has been necessary to make a slight deviation from the Guide Notice. In place of visiting Wigan on the 28th, Mr. Whitehead is spending the week in Blackburn, at the request of local friends. From Blackburn he proceeds to Bury, as already arranged, where his meetings will be held in the Market Square every evening, the first being on July 5. We earnestly appeal to readers and sympathizers to give him their support.

What is Freethought?

SOME NOTES OF A LECTURE.

WHAT is Freethought? To recall the words of Ingersoll, it is all a question of intellectual development. As he says:—

Who ever has quit growing, he is orthodox, whether in art, politics, religion, philosophy—no matter what. Who ever thinks he has found it all out, he is orthodox. Orthodox is that which rots; and heresy is that which grows for ever. Orthodoxy is the night of the past, full of the darkness of superstition; and heresy is the eternal coming day, the light of which strikes the grand foreheads of the intellectual pioneers of the world.

Most of you may know, in that famous lecture of his entitled "Skulls," how he traces from the first and lowest to the highest human skull—from Neanderthal to Shakespearian. The greatest of American orators said:—

After all, it is a simple question of intellectual development. There was the same difference between those skulls that there was between the *products* of those skulls, the lowest and the highest skulls, that there was between the dugout and the man-of-war (and the same *lack* of difference) between the club and the Krupp gun, between the yellow daub and the landscape, between the tom-tom and an opera by Verdi.

All this is evolution, and Freethought is its handmaiden. Such was the past. We feel sure the same progress will be made in the future.

The religious world is very fond of the word "infinite." It thinks it alone dwells in and is in harmony with the infinite. But thought, Freethought, is the only infinite we know. Mere existence in some unchanging, unending earth or heaven would, to most of us, be unendurable—

We live in deeds not years
In thoughts not breath
In feelings not in figures on a dial
He lives most who thinks most,
Feels the noblest, acts the best.

That is Freethought. How often when tired, or sad, or worried, etc., we wish for sleep, for forgetfulness. And death is sleep, a deeper repose, in that serene country—

Where the wicked cease from troubling
And the weary are at rest.

And if they should re-awaken, say, in the Christian heaven, in a little time, or a little eternity, they would pray for sleep again! After all, nature is well planned (if we may use the word): we have day and night, heat and cold, work and rest, life and death; admiration, hope, and fear, a little illusion with our Freethought, like jam on our bread to make it palatable—these are the provisions of Nature as we know it. We, as Freethinkers, cannot imagine, and, I fear, would not enjoy any other. So the Christian has nothing to offer us that we have not already; but we have a universe to offer him.

Voltaire makes one of his characters talk in this fashion—the question has been asked: "But why is it said that man is ever prone to sin?" The answer is:—

He is so to his own gratification, which is not an evil except when he oppresses his fellow-men. God has bestowed upon him self-love, which is useful to him; benevolence, which is useful to his neighbour; anger, which is dangerous; compassion, which disarms anger; sympathy with many of his fellows; antipathy to others; many wants and much industry, instinct, reason and passions. This is man; and when you are one of the gods just try to make one on a better model.

So, you see, Nature and man are as they must be. We cannot change this "great scheme of things," but only improve and modify it. Man's efforts here to adapt himself to Nature; his desire for comfort, happiness, etc.; his love of life itself, becomes, of course, but part—the emergent, the intellectual, part of the eternal process of Nature. Or, as Mr. Cohen has put it in his admirable little masterpiece, *Determinism and Freewill*:—

Man cannot escape the domination of his own mental life. Its unfettered exercise supplies the only freedom he is capable of realizing, as it constitutes the source of his influence as a link in the causative process of determining his own destiny and moulding that of his successors.

There was first the material medium—unless, with the Christians, we think of "nothing" as the raw material of the universe—which gradually transformed itself into what is substantially a psychological medium.

Freethought, then, is a formidable thing; far come as the footsteps of anthropology itself; from the dull, sullen, dimly-brooding primitive brain of the cave man up to "the light which strikes the grand foreheads of the intellectual pioneers of the world."

The philosophy of Freethought is wide as the world, deep as the sea, distant as the stars, near and dear as the heart of man. It is in harmony with all the aspects of Nature. If silence means consent, then it has the consent of God. Nightly the stars look down upon the earth—and have done so for millions of years. Daily the sun rises and sets—and has done so for millions of years. Behold I stand at the door and knock—there is no answer—only the silence of God.

The Freethinker no longer hopes or seeks for counsel there. He forms his own opinions. He turns to and cultivates his garden, enjoys the fruits of his labour and philosophy; and is in the fair way of knowing better and enjoying more the manifold benefactions of his Mother Nature.

No wonder the clergy are afraid of it—and there is no doubt but they are afraid of it—some are afraid of it through the fear of God; some through the fear that Othello's occupation will be gone! It is said prayer is the touch of an infant, but on the arm of the Almighty. The touch of the Freethinker on the arm of a clergyman, we might say, is also the touch of an infant, but with a red-hot finger! The good, easy man scents brimstone at once, and whether honest or hypocritical, is alike distressed. Is it not pathetic? And is it not inconsiderate, cruel, of the Freethinkers—rough work Iconoclasm! when the poor, meek and timid, humble soul has just managed to compromise with his intellect and his conscience and believes, or believes that he believes, that all's for the best in the best of all possible worlds; when all is going well with his "ministry," or he is clinging desperately to the last shifts and shreds of his faith—or profession of faith—wer't not a shame, wer't not a shame to see his struggling soul with the touch of that red-hot finger?

Directly challenged, most clergymen, aware of their weakness, take it lying down, preferring to "answer" you in the seclusion of the manse; some show fight, others blandly agree with you, and profess a great respect for the eminent Freethinkers you may have mentioned, adding: "They were before their time, you know, before their time!"

I recall an adventure I had in a railway carriage long ago. It was in my younger, more enthusiastic days. I was coming down from Aberdeen, a book-reading gentleman was my only companion in the compartment—I had not noticed he was a clergyman—the book he was reading was *The Philosopher at the Breakfast Table*, by O. W. Holmes. He read it very

slowly, as if learning it by heart, no doubt stealing the author's brains with which to mix his Sunday's sermon. Certainly a book, like our own little *Freethinker*, d—d good to steal from. It is a commonplace that much of the world's best literature is tinged with Freethought. When we talked we went on from Holmes to Paine, Ingersoll, and others. He beamed upon me as though admiring my taste and agreed they were great and good men, but "before their time," etc. What a fatuous phrase it is! Must the pioneer wait till knowledge overtakes him, till it is safe to speak, till there is no need for him to speak at all? Was my clerical neighbour merely compromising with a provisional lie. A Vicar of Bray? Exactly—that and nothing more. He got out at a station, and with his soft goodbye could not conceal a baleful and triumphant glare of truly Christian love!

Why, he was a man of God, and I thought I had been speaking to a mere human being like myself! That parting look of his revealed the spirit that lighted the fires of the Inquisition. You are all familiar with the past history of Christianity—a history of persecution and superstition. I am not going into that, though it might show you how necessary, inevitable, Freethought was, and is. Here is an instance, one of thousands, referred to by Ingersoll:—

There was a man, a mild heretic, they put this man on the rack, and priests began turning these levers, and kept turning until the ankles, the hips, the shoulders, the elbows, the wrists, and all the joints of the victim were dislocated, and he was wet with agony.....Had it not been for a few brave, honest souls, we would have been naked savages at this moment, with pictures of wild beasts tattooed upon our naked breasts, dancing round a dried snake fetish. And I to-night thank every good and noble man who stood up in the face of opposition and hatred and death for what he believed to be right.....And then they screwed this thumbscrew down as far as they could and threw him into some dungeon, where, in throbbing misery and the darkness of the night, he dreams of the damned.

This is an awful picture, but true. No mercy in the heart of God! How could there be when he put none in the heart of his creature man? Recant! what a blessed word! who among us here would not have recanted, lied, said or done anything to avoid this torture! Just so progress was and is retarded. But these things are past. So is the "Great War." Religion has changed for the better, but there are people stupid enough to be brutal still.

When brutality is motivated by superstition, then we have again the barbarian of the thumbscrew and the rack. And of these torturers of the past, says Ingersoll:—

God did not send any devils into their death rooms to make mouths at them. He reserved them for Voltaire, who brought religious liberty to France. He reserved them for Thomas Paine, who did more for liberty than all the Churches. But all the inquisitors died with the white hand of peace folded over the breasts of piety. And when they died the room was filled with the rustle of the wings of angels, waiting to bear the wretches to heaven.

Elsewhere Ingersoll says: "I want you to know that the religion of Christ was established by murderers, tyrants and hypocrites." And the highest bliss these monsters could conceive, for the average Christian whom their terrible menaces scared up to heaven, was for the abject creature to crawl into paradise and grovel before his august creator. Freethought breeds a different spirit. The Freethinkers insist on his human rights here, and if there is another world he will insist on his rights there. There, too, God may forgive him, though he may find it hard to forgive God—especially for the behaviour of his so-called servants on earth.

"The religion of Jesus Christ was established by murderers, tyrants and hypocrites!"—a sweeping and terrible indictment, but substantially true. No doubt the names of many good and great men have "honoured this corruption"; and countless millions of the common people have seen their own earth-born sweetness reflected in the religion of Jesus Christ, mistaking it (as millions still do) for an objective perfection. The Freethinker and the moral philosopher know the real source and significance of this goodness, this heroism in the heart of man; qualities that will shine more brightly, and lead mankind in wiser ways, when at last it is unmixed with the baser matter of the Christian and other superstitions.

Lopsidedness is the hall-mark of Christianity; its Jesus is the very extravagance of perfection. Beside him the saintliest man on earth is but the epitome of evil; the Church is reduced to a single hero, the Lord Jesus Christ, on whose empty grave "the lone Syrian stars look down."

The late G. W. Foote asked:—

Why should millions of men be constantly bending over the tomb of a single dead young Jew? Is not the whole world a sepulchre of poets, artists, philosophers, statesmen, heroes, martyrs? Do not the stars shine like night-lamps over the slumbers of the mighty dead? And why confine ourselves to one little country, one petty nation, and one type of character? Not in Palestine, not in Jewry, not in Christ shall we find all the elements of human greatness and nobility.....The wise, brave man will be curious and eclectic. He will store the honey of truth, beauty and goodness from every flower that blooms in the garden of the world.

There you have the Freethought of a great Freethinker, and the same sentiment might well inspire to greatness the least among us here. In justice to man we must mete out justice to the gods. Man can sin and suffer and die. The gods cannot (perhaps because they never lived). Man has striven nobly against overwhelming odds, man is emerging from the cosmic struggle, man is triumphant. "Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things!" Some things man will never know, some things he will never achieve, but let him not worry about Spencer's Unknown and Unknowable. Freethinkers young and old will at times be troubled about the "great perhaps." In silent watches of the night, in strange, awed moments they will ponder the dizzy distance of the stars, and thought lose itself in the inane uttermost beyond, returning, like the soul of Omar, to say: "Myself am heaven and hell!"

Still, the best of us will now and then wonder how out of senseless nothing, or inanimate something, this intellectual being, by whatever process, has emerged, or how anything ever came to be. There will be no answer; and that way madness, or the Christian superstition, lies (*lies*, in a double sense).

What do these things matter after all! Count what is left. Be a *free* thinker, not always dragged at the heels of the horrible—which is always more imaginary than real. Rightly, if inevitably only partially informed, every honest and intelligent man will agree, the so-called Christian revelation is no solution to the riddle of the Sphinx. Perhaps man, if he knew all, would be still more unhappy. There would be no new worlds to conquer, no hopes and fears, no "pleasing anxious being." If Freethought cannot make us omniscient, it can give us the next best thing—a practical philosophy of life. ANDREW MILLAR.

The latter part of a wise man's life is taken up in curing the follies, prejudices and false opinions he had contracted in the former.—*Swift*.

Acid Drops.

Thomas Farrow, of Farrow's Bank notoriety, is writing for one of the Sunday papers his reminiscences of Parkhurst Prison. It seems the rule now for men who leave prison to write for newspapers; and it might well be a pleasing thing if some of those who write for the papers spent a term in prison. Anyway, Mr. Farrow found that Nonconformists have a genuine grievance so far as Parkhurst is concerned. He found there—officially—600 churchmen, 100 Roman Catholics, 40 Nonconformists, and 20 Jews. There does not appear to have been any Freethinkers. He explains that of those stamped as Church of England, 240 are Nonconformists, so that the actual numbers of these two religious and moral bodies are about equal. The prison authorities provide for the spiritual sustenance of these people two clergymen, a Church Army evangelist, two priests, and a Rabbi, but only one service per month is permitted to be held by a Nonconformist minister. This, says Mr. Farrow, "is a real grievance; and in accordance with promises made to my co-religionists I have called the attention of the Free Church Council to the matter."

We agree with Mr. Farrow that this is a real grievance. How can anyone expect these prisoners to get along without a religious service of the kind they have always loved, and probably attended with unflinching regularity? Besides, Mr. Farrow points out that 95 per cent. of all who are not first offenders return to prison; what must be their feelings when they hear the judge pronounce sentence to know that they will only have one genuine religious service a month? Men with such strong religious feelings should receive proper consideration. We suggest that Nonconformists should hold some public demonstrations in Trafalgar Square demanding that as they provide half the prison population of England they have a right to an equal number of parsons in prison and an equal number of services. It is altogether mean of the Church of England to claim more than their share of the prison population. That Church should be sharply reminded that other Christian sects beside theirs do something to keep the prisons populated.

But this question opens up another that affects us as Freethinkers. Mr. Farrow did not find any Freethinkers there. But we as well as Christians have to pay for the upkeep of these places. What are we getting for the rates we pay? Next door to nothing. If we reckon up the amount paid by Freethinkers for the maintenance of prisons, and the very small return they get for their outlay, it is quite clear that we are overtaxed. We are not getting what we pay for. We pay for the upkeep of prisons, and Christians fill them. That is not fair. Christians should either pay the whole cost of the prisons, or Freethinkers should send more of their number there. These Christians behave with the prisons as they behave with the schools: they make everybody pay and select the religion that shall be taught in both places. It is unjust. Then they will probably have the impudence to tell us that as these prison inmates have all been brought up in the Christian religion as children, it would not be right to deprive them of it while they are in prison. All the same, we don't see why Freethinkers should be made to pay for the prisons that Christians fill—particularly as they are so ungrateful about it afterwards.

During the ceremony of consecrating a new church-bell in the village of Lajozmise, near Budapest, a ringer called down from the look-out tower that he was throwing down a rope. Misunderstanding the warning, a woman exclaimed, "The bell is falling!" Other cries immediately arose from the congregation: "The tower is tumbling!" "Fire!" "Earthquake!" "The Day of Judgment is come!" A panic ensued, and during the mad rush for the doors three people were trampled to death and thirty others injured. A caustic commentary upon the claims made by Christian apologists that belief in a divine ruler

of the universe is a source of moral strength and courage to those who hold it.

Christ Church, Birkenhead, was struck by lightning and set on fire during a thunderstorm. Occurrences such as this may explain why Christianity takes refuge in metaphysics. And the answer to the plain question of "What's he want to burn his own house for?" is either a lemon, or that there is not one incomprehensible, but three incomprehensibles. The use of this kind of language may also explain the contents of the twopenny box at the booksellers.

The question of Wembley suggests the text: Doth God care for exen? It does not matter much anyway. The R.S.P.C.A. and public opinion justifies the idea that humanitarian feelings are a fact, although only a hundred years ago in our own Parliament the members greeted with laughter the proposal of a Bill for asses, dogs, and cats to be protected from cruelty. In those good old days, also, when religion was entrenched in its coward's castle, little boys were stuffed up chimneys—and in some cases straw lighted under them to encourage their progress. A Bill to regulate the trade was rejected by the House of Lords, and among those who opposed it were one Archbishop, five Bishops, three Dukes, five Earls, one Viscount, and ten Barons. It must not be forgotten either that the most vocal people in the bloody mess called the Great War were the same as God's executive whose heads were granite where boy chimney-sweeps were concerned.

The League of Nations Union have not allowed the Earl of Ypres speech to school-children to go unnoticed. It is about time that children who have hardly begun to live should be protected from the war-like speeches of those who have reached the years of three score and seven.

It is natural that in a Christian country the glittering prizes and sharp swords sentiments should raise their ugly heads. Lord Birkenhead, who has nothing to lose by saying what he thinks, tosses this to a world that has nothing to gain by listening to it. A writer in the *Westminster Gazette*, seeing the obvious with both eyes, states that the fruits of victory are now seen to be Dead Sea fruit. Fifty thousand priests who were exempted prove their indispensability at the unveiling of war memorials.

The Bishop of Southwell, at a Diocesan Conference at Nottingham, did not call the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham a liar. High heels said that low heels was not speaking the truth when he claimed that the Roman Catholic Church was the only Church making progress. We leave the directors of the two business establishments in the sure and certain truth that dividends in heaven are carrots before the ass's nose.

The Rev. Canon W. H. M. Hay Aitken is reduced to make a concession to the advance of Freethought as follows:—

It is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that the doctrine of Eternal Torment has lost its hold on the common sense and moral sensibilities of mankind. People don't and won't believe that an infinitely good and merciful God can assign His own offspring (Acts xvii, 28-29) to measureless æons of torture in retribution for the sins and weaknesses of a few swiftly passing years here on earth.

We are much obliged to the Rev. Canon for this bouquet; hell fire was kicked out of doors years ago—with as much assistance from the clergy as they rendered in bringing about Sunday games in the parks.

We have not heard any clerical protest against the work involved in Sunday flying. With the exception of burning good petrol, and reminding us of its opposite on the day of peace, we fail to see the object of Sabbath flying.

Forward! ye right reverends, canons, and all others of a lower degree in the army of equality—here's work for you to do.

In the case of a boy summoned at a police court in the Rhondda Valley for playing cards on Sunday the magistrate fined the boy's father 4s. and placed him on probation for twelve months, with orders to attend a Sunday school during that time. The Probation Act gives magistrates wide latitude, but they have no power to force attendance at Sunday school, if the parent objects. In any case it is monstrous that a magistrate should force attendance at a religious school without regard to the opinions of those responsible for the child. In any such case the parent should simply decline the condition, and at the same time offer himself as surety for the boy's behaviour. We do not think that magistrates would then seek to force their religious opinions upon others. And the value of Sunday school attendance is always open to question.

We see that Reuben Wilson, a lay reader of the Church of England was charged with offences against boys, and was at the Essex Assizes sentenced to twenty-one months imprisonment. That seems a very good comment on the case just noted.

The Vicar of Leeds says it is not an act of worship listening to broadcast sermons. There is no money in it, either. One cannot make a collection by wireless. And the intellectual poverty of the clergy is far more evident over the wireless, divorced from the stage setting of the church, than it is when they are listened to in the ordinary way. We do not think that any body of educated men in the country would talk the unadulterated rubbish that is broadcasted by the clergy. We do not base this on a difference of opinion, but judging the speeches from even the standpoint of religious talks. For sheer inanity, or drivelling absurdity, they beat anything we have ever heard.

A parson was among the amateur riders at Wembley who tried to ride a "bronk." He kept his seat for six seconds, when the horse left him sitting on the ground. We congratulate the horse on getting the Church off its back so quickly. Humanity does not find it so easy a job.

Mr. Sydney Webb says he likes an apple every day. That does not seem an item of news that should rouse the world, although the calibre of many newspaper readers may be gauged by the fact that editors think it worth while printing such items about well-known men and women. But we might remind Mr. Webb that this practice brought serious trouble into the world in the case of our first parents. So he had better be careful.

Canon Peter Green says that before the war people did not realize that they needed God. They realize it now. "Even our great statesmen" realize it! We fancy that our "great statesmen" are realizing that, with the extension of the franchise, they can get blocks of votes from the Churches if they pretend to believe. The Churches do not care whether they believe or not so long as they make a public pretence of doing so. It helps to keep the public in "blinkers," and that is what the Churches as well as some of our "great statesmen" desire.

Bishop Hensley Henson has been letting himself go on the question of certain Socialist Sunday schools, and his remarks reflect small credit on the intelligence of the people to whom he appeals. His bugbear is the asserted "deliberate defilement and perversion of children" by the Russian revolutionists, and which he asserts is also being carried on in Socialist Sunday schools here. That is what we have in view when we refer to the small mentality of his followers and his own disregard of truth.

For one need not go into a close study of the actual facts, or into the question of the desirability of impressing upon young children certain definite political theories. On that question we have already expressed an opinion, and we disagree entirely with the practice. But a man must be a born fool, or an unscrupulous liar to say, and to lead his hearers to believe, that any body of men and women would deliberately set themselves to debauch the minds of young children. One only needs to understand ordinary human nature to realize that while such a thing may be possible in individual cases with warped characters, it is simply impossible with bodies of men and women who at least aim—however mistaken they may be in their views—at reforming the world.

Bishop Henson's own mentality is disclosed in such stupid and untruthful comments as the following: "The modern State was becoming aware that it could not provide the sanctions of duty or the ideals by which the greater achievements of human nature were inspired. Religion was indispensable to the State, and religion could only mean Christ's religion. Apart from religion manhood was a sterile and mutilated thing." When one of the princes of the Church descends to such puerilities as these, there is needed no additional proof of the poor type of men who to-day figure as the leaders of Christianity.

Bishop Henson considers that the secularization of the schools is almost certain to come. He calls it "one of the surest postulates of the situation." But he thinks also that the "evil" might be combatted by having these secularized schools "in the hands of Christian teachers," who would make the schools "Christian in tone, atmosphere, and tendency." So much for this upholder of morality and denouncer of the immorality of the Socialist schools. He can see nothing wrong in Christian teachers seeking employment in schools that are maintained with the avowed purpose of practising a strict neutrality so far as religious beliefs are concerned, and while taking salaries, deliberately turning the schools to other ends! Anyone but a Christian bishop would call this obtaining money under false pretences, acting dishonestly towards those who had placed them in a position of trust and responsibility, and even harsher names still. But one does not expect a Christian bishop, where his religion is concerned, to act with customary decency or honesty. Bishop Henson is true to his kind.

Canon Haldane thinks that the sermons sent out by wireless are useful to sick people. We are inclined to agree with this. If a man or a woman is thoroughly sick—the sicker the better—he or she is likely to find the sermons that are broadcasted on a Sunday evening to their liking. Heine said that Christianity was a capital religion—for cripples—and we may take sick men as coming under the head of cripples. But what we wonder at is the kind of human being who is well finding the inanities sent out in the wireless sermons of interest. Perhaps Canon Haldane will explain that.

In the course of a notice of *Needlework in Religion*, the reviewer very sympathetically states that the conveyance of liturgical knowledge is rather a slippery subject. The chaste ears of ladies who occupy themselves in Church needlework are informed that:—

The cross, having in its hidden form a special significance, by the early Christians was further emphasized when, in A.D. 110 they adopted the custom of making this secret sign on the body, as a mark of recognition among themselves.

And we have no doubt that this information is as reliable as the claims made for the discoveries of the cup used during the last supper. This is the evidence that gently jostles the unanswerable logic of the rainbow being put in the sky after the deluge. The spirit comedy lurks in these tales that assume all heads to be empty of everything except credulity.

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To Correspondents.

A. FARIS.—Pleased to know that you read the *Freethinker* with interest, after having a copy given you by a friend. Sorry we cannot deal with your criticism at the moment, but we will do so at the first opportunity, and the matter will not hurt for the delay.

R. H. L.—Delighted to learn that you so much enjoyed your visit to the Preston Conference. We are up against great odds, but have the satisfaction that every movement in the direction of genuine progress makes for our assistance.

H. LANCASTER.—Excerpt quite useful for the purpose named. Sorry to miss you when last in Glasgow, but hope to see you in the autumn.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—D. Kerr (New Hebrides), £8 10s.

GRETA (Belfast).—Subscription for N.S.S. received and handed to proper quarter. There is no need to apologize for the smallness of the amount. If everyone did what they could, the work would go with a swing.

H. BARNES.—Mr. Cohen's *Religion and Sex* is still in print and can be got from this office, price 6s., postage extra.

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. A. Reade, in writing to thank us for "the series of inspiring articles on personal identity," recommends the report of a lecture by Professor R. J. Berry in the *British Medical Journal* for April 19. We have not seen the article in question, but have pleasure in passing on

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the information to all who are interested in the matter. We have been asked to follow up these articles with some on the meaning of materialism, and we may do so if nothing gets in the way. We have been very gratified to note from letters received that the articles have been of use to many of our readers.

The West Ham Branch has arranged an excursion to Theydon Bois for July 13. The train will leave Stratford at 9.40, fare 1s. 5d., and tea will be provided for those who require it. Members and their friends are welcome.

We have had excellent reports of Mr. Whitehead's "mission" to Bolton. The meetings were well attended and aroused interest and discussion. In order to counteract their effect some opposition meetings were arranged by the "enemy," but without very much effect. We have heard from more than one source of the great good done for Freethought by Mr. Whitehead's lectures, and altogether he seems to have given the town a much-needed move in the right direction. Hopes are expressed that Mr. Whitehead will visit the town again before the summer closes. There is no reason why he should not do so, provided our friends will remember what we have already said, namely, that this kind of propaganda is expensive, and funds are badly needed.

Mr. A. Heath, secretary of the South London Branch, sends us a good report of the lectures delivered in Brockwell Park on Sunday last by Mr. Ralph Brown. The name is new to us; but from what Mr. Heath writes we hope to hear more of the activities of that gentleman. Both meetings were good, and there was a brisk demand for the *Freethinker* and other literature. South London appears to have a very energetic secretary in Mr. Heath, and we trust the members will give him the support he deserves.

Apropos of our note on selling the *Freethinker*, Mr. H. Du Rose writes that he would be willing to join with some friends in either Nottingham or Newark. Perhaps some friends who are willing to help in this way will write us. This experiment is being tried in London, and is attracting attention. It is a splendid form of advertising. With regard to our suggestion that each interested reader should make up his or her mind to get at least one new subscriber, Mr. Du Rose managed to rope in four. Every one another one, should be our motto.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.

The Finsbury Park Branch held its first half-yearly meeting on June 26, Miss M. Mostaert in the chair. During its brief existence the Branch had distributed many hundreds of specimen copies of the *Freethinker* and a large number of propagandist leaflets. There had also been carried out a systematic canvas of newsgagents with a view to getting them to display and stock the *Freethinker*. Members of Parliament had been written to with regard to the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and the establishment of Secular education in State schools. Some very successful meetings had been held in Finsbury Park and at Highbury Corner. The balance sheet showed a balance in hand, which was very gratifying considering the Branch started its existence with an empty exchequer.

Miss Mostaert was elected President; Mr. Lovie, vice-President; Mr. M. Brown, Treasurer; and Mr. L. Mason, Secretary. It was also resolved, as a means of training new speakers, that meetings should be arranged—other than the regular ones—at which candidates for the platform should speak. It is hoped that by this method new speakers may be introduced to the movement. Altogether a feeling of satisfaction was felt and expressed at the work done, and the Branch looks forward with confidence and hope to the future.

L. MASON, Secretary.

Concerning Education Crises.

IN days gone by we used to have periodical education crises—that in 1870, when elementary school education was made compulsory, was, of course, important. I had the fate to enter public life as a candidate for the London School Board in another great crisis (great, that is to say, in noise and often very vulgar sectarian strife). This was the education crisis of 1893-4, which had as its starting point the terrible discovery made by a high Tory clerical member of the London School Board that infants in a certain Board School were *very* unsound on some point of religious doctrine. If I remember rightly it was the Incarnation. Great controversies followed on the School Board itself, and also outside—indeed, the keenest interest was taken all over the country. Contents sheets of newspapers were hardly large enough for the words "Education Crisis"; so big was the type necessary that even the magic words "all the winners" had, alas, to be relegated to small type and the bottom of the sheet.

However, a very sensational School Board election in November, 1894, brought relief, and the excited minds of the workers, in some cases at least, began to settle down to consider *the things that matter*.

It was a pity that the minds of thinking men and women in the London Labour movement had at that time been, even for the space of twelve months, so much occupied with sectarian strife, for it was a very interesting period in the Labour movement. The Second International had recently been formed in Paris; the Dock Strike had resulted in the formation of the Dockers' and Gas Workers' and General Labourers' Union. On May Day, 1890, there had been a wonderfully imposing demonstration in Hyde Park, even respectable skilled workers walking behind their banner in the procession; and in those days that meant a great deal. Altogether, it looked as if even reactionary London was beginning to wake up; when out came the theological red-herring, and events proved that it had not lost its tempting, savoury smell. As one of the candidates who stood neither for "chapel" or for "church," but for the children, I said "hands off to both," and was fought by both, and lost; but had my revenge three years later, still on the ticket "Hands off to both," and "Secular education"; and won again at the last School Board election in 1900.

Rather less than ten years later we had another education crisis, a much more serious one in the history of British education, when Mr. Arthur (now Lord) Balfour, without any mandate from the electorate, used the khaki Conservative majority of 1900 to carry legislation having for its object the destruction of direct popular or bureaucratic control of publicly-supported education, and also the very important object, from the Tory clerical point of view, of saving from threatened extinction the denominational schools. Liberals, the Free Churches, and the Labour Party vigorously opposed, but Mr. Balfour and his friends persisted and *won*, and no doubt felt—as well they may—that the carrying of their education legislation fully compensated for the overwhelming defeat at the general election of 1906 sustained by the Conservative Party. More especially as the opposition to the education legislation, shown by various sections, soon gave place to meek acquiescence.

The voluntary—denominational—schools which up to the Balfour legislation had received public money only in the form of Government grants, were now put on the same financial footing as the old Board Schools, but the control remained with the denominational managers, who were charged with the obligation to keep the school building in proper repair. How far

that obligation has been honoured, I have shown in previous articles in the *Freethinker*. There were to be no more School Board elections, the old Board Schools being transferred to the County Council, and education became relegated to the position of a side issue at local elections. Further, the co-optative, non-elective principle was introduced; for, as Mr. Balfour said in defending this, there were many highly educated people of leisure who, while being in every way competent to deal with education, were nevertheless not suited for the rough and tumble of elections. In other words, there were people who were willing to take part in the control of the education of the workers' children, but preferred not to come into the open and discuss educational questions with the parents of those children.

My reply to that argument, in my propaganda in opposition to that legislation, I repeat with added emphasis to-day: In matters pertaining to the control of the education of the workers' children, I would rather trust to the stupidity of the workers, as expressed through their votes, than to the cupidity of caucuses of wire-pulling politicians—ecclesiastical and other.

Mr. Balfour and his Tory friends were wise in their generation in removing education from direct control by the people who paid for it.

The Labour movement was growing; the I.L.P. had been in existence for some years. Many educated people with leisure and sympathies with the Labour movement saw in education one great means of furthering Labour's ideals, and were coming forward as candidates for School Boards in increasing numbers. They were not afraid of meeting working-class electors face to face at election times, and were glad of the opportunity of making the working-class child the "peg" on which to hang the teaching so useful in arousing in the workers that divine discontent which is a necessary preliminary to the determination that their condition shall be changed. Triennial elections for the School Board led to much concentration on matters educational, and those wishing to win seats were compelled to become more or less acquainted with educational problems.

Yes; Mr. Balfour and his friends gave us in that legislation an admirable example of the foresight, the power of seeing "rocks ahead," for which the British ruling classes have been famed throughout the world. Heaven knows what would have happened if the old School Boards had remained with representatives all directly responsible to the people. Certainly, in the great majority of cases, the Boards would have been controlled by *Labour*; and conferences of an Association of School Boards would have been to all intents and purposes Labour education conferences discussing the education demands of Labour organizations.

There were at that time ominous indications that the power of the forces of reaction over the minds of the rising generation was fast falling from their grasp. Did not the Parliamentary Committee Trade Union Congress issue in 1903 a manifesto on education opposing the Balfour education legislation, containing the following passage:—

Among trade unionists there is a steadily growing feeling that the great reason for the workers' slowness in learning (in the words of William Morris) "*to know their own, to take their own, and to use their own*" is the lack of education; and there is every reason to believe that with the increasing strength of the Labour movement it will be no longer possible to disregard the demand of the trade unionist organizations for better educational opportunities for the nation's children. (See Trade Union Congress Report, 1904.)

In 1920 we were on the threshold of another education crisis, when Mr. Fisher, the Education Minister

of Mr. Lloyd George's Coalition Government, sent out a "kite" in the form of a proposal to add one more to the sectionalizing influences among the workers by dividing the workers children in the elementary schools into theological camps, according to the creed (to be duly stated in a credal register) of the parents. Thanks to the efforts of the National Union of Teachers, and of many educationists, mostly Liberals of the old school, which had traditions in matters educational, this proposal was scotched. The Parliamentary Labour Party and the *Daily Herald* were silent. I did my "bit"; and one of several articles I wrote appeared in the *Freethinker*. Had a Bill embodying the proposal been introduced, it would have been interesting to note what Mr. Lloyd George would have had to say to the denunciations of that sturdy, old fighter, the late Dr. Clifford.

In the education crisis of 1902 and 1903 the issue was forced by Mr. Balfour, a leading member of the Cecil family (assisted by Toynbee Hall), the great protagonists of denominationalism in publicly-supported education, with its concomitant Traditional Tenderness to insanitary and otherwise inferior denominational schools, with which I dealt in my article on May 11. But now, as that article showed, we are faced with another education crisis, resulting in the breakdown of one at least of the objects of the Balfour legislation; and surely the issue should in this case be forced by *Labour*, the protagonist of the well-being of the workers' children, including the 1,350,000 children who, as Mr. Leslie has told us, are being "educated in 6,000 schools which, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, are unfit for the purpose for which they are being used."

I would repeat what I said in my last article: There is need among working-class students for a careful study of British education politics. The best book I know on the subjects, as a starting point, is John Morley's *Struggle for National Education*, written in 1873. This is a book which whets the appetite for more knowledge of the great power of clericalism in the field of education, and it gives references to movements of which Labour propagandists should at this juncture have some knowledge; one, for example, being the National Society—still active—founded (I believe over 100 years ago) for the purpose of instructing the children of the poor in the principles of the Established Church.

I rather fear the book is out of print. If so, we must endeavour to get a reprint. It would certainly be of great use to those wishing to get a thorough grip of the full meaning and implications of the Traditional Tenderness shown by successive Ministers of Education to insanitary and otherwise inferior denominational schools, the very existence of which, as the facts of the hideous scandal become widely known among the workers, must inevitably increase the class antagonism which the politically powerful ecclesiastical forces behind those schools profess to deplore.

MRS. BRIDGES ADAMS.

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen: for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, for ever play
A losing game into such other hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and, of the human frame,
A mechanized automaton.

—Shelley.

Why the Birth Rate Falls.

II.

(Continued from page 413.)

It has been pointed out that the one invariable feature which characterizes the variations of the birth rate is that they follow the variations of the death rate, apparent exceptions being always due to variations in the age and sex composition of the population or to statistical fallacies of one sort or another. The only possible inference from this is that the decline in the birth rate is due to the same combination of causes as that which produces the falling death rate. If this inference be just, then the same principle should be traceable throughout the whole organic scheme. We should find that throughout the animal kingdom conditions which, broadly speaking, tend to reduce the death rate will also reduce fertility; and this we actually do find. Not only so, but the action of the principle can be traced with equal clearness throughout the vegetable kingdom, and among unicellular organisms.

Owing to the complexity of the evidence and the infinitely varied aspects of this question it is only possible in a series of short articles to deal with the subject in its simplest terms. Those who wish to see the law which governs this matter worked out in detail and reduced to logical precision, and to see how complete and overwhelming is the evidence in support, I must recommend to my book, *The Law of Births and Deaths* (Fisher Unwin). Here it must suffice to say that the law is one which governs the union of sperm cell and ovum, and has nothing to do with asexual reproduction. It is based upon the principle of the vital optimum, which means that there is always a *best* set of external conditions for any vital function, including fertility. Every species or individual has a certain ideal combination of conditions—never, perhaps, ever quite realized in actual life—which is most favourable to its fertility—the optimum point, or best point. Under actual famine conditions all species become practically sterile, and fertility increases with increasing favourability of conditions until the optimum point for fertility is reached; and then a further improvement in conditions will produce a decline. This optimum point varies with different individuals and with different species. Thus the best conditions for fertility will differ in a race adapted to the tropics from the optimum conditions for a race adapted to a temperate climate. It is a failure to realize and apply this principle of the optimum point which leads to many criticisms and objections which have no validity. Thus it is pointed out that increased fertility often follows improved conditions. Certainly! Both this and the opposite case are the necessary consequences of the principle of optimum conditions. The human race has its optimum point so adjusted as to produce its maximum degree of fertility under conditions which produce a very high death rate, in order that the former may compensate the latter; but when conditions become so hard that an increased birth rate would simply aggravate the mischief, as under famine conditions, then sterility will be produced.

The experiments of Maupas, L. L. Woodruff, and others have shown that so long as unicellular organisms are kept under highly favourable conditions and in perfectly pure solutions conjugation is unnecessary, and can be dispensed with; but as soon as the conditions are allowed to become unfavourable the organisms must conjugate, or perish. Conjugation, be it borne in mind, is the beginning of the sexual process. It is found that plants tend to become sexually sterile when highly cultivated, if propagated asexually.

Sexually propagated plants, such as wheat, have had their optimum point adapted by selection to conditions of high cultivation; but even these become sexually sterile in the tropics, where all the factors necessary to fertility are present in excess. Practically all plants adapted to a temperate climate run to wood and leaf in the tropics, this being really a manifestation of asexual reproduction, and conditions which are most favourable asexual reproduction are inimical to the sexual process.

Wild animals in captivity, where they are well fed at the cost of little exertion, become very infertile; but they are always more fertile when kept under harder conditions, as in travelling menageries; and it has been repeatedly noticed in zoological gardens that when circumstances have led to the animals being more exposed to the weather they have become more fertile. Men should be governed by the same biological laws as the animals, if evolution be no illusion, and it is significant that various observers agree that when the women of wild races, such as the aboriginal Australians, are taken into the houses of settlers as concubines or wives they invariably become very infertile, although, or rather because, comfortably housed and well fed.

Highly bred animals always become very infertile, many stocks of highly bred horses and cattle showing from 20 to 40 per cent. of complete sterility. All highly bred animals are "bundles of nerves," this being their most outstanding and invariable characteristic, the racehorse, perhaps, being the most conspicuous example. The human race, under the conditions of our modern civilization, are developing into just such "bundles of nerves" as the racehorse. If, then, the doctrine of evolution be sound and man be governed by the same biological laws as the lower animals, similar results should be produced among human beings, and, as a matter of fact, we find as many as 25 per cent. of childless marriages among the intellectual and wealthy classes, these being just the people who can best afford to rear children and who have the strongest reasons for doing so.

This proportion of completely sterile marriages offers one of the best tests of the question, owing to the fact that the overwhelming majority of people desire one or two children, and that only a small minority would desire to remain childless. If the decline in fertility be due to a natural law, then there should be an increase in childless marriages proportional to the decrease in fertility; whereas if the decline be due to contraceptive measures there should be no such proportional increase in childlessness. It has been asserted that the proportion of childless marriages has remained practically constant, but the statement is quite incorrect. The census fertility of 1911 shows that in this country the increase in sterile marriages has been strictly proportional to the decline in fertility. The same thing is proved by the census figures of New South Wales, which, as being more simple, I will give here. In New South Wales between the periods 1871-80 and 1891-97 the increase of sterile marriages per 1,000 total marriages was:—

Age at marriage...	15	20	25	30	35	40	45
Increase per 1,000	11	24	29	45	95	166	183

The peculiar arrangement of these figures, constituting as it does a sort of geometrical progression, is exactly what would follow from the action of a natural law, as can be demonstrated diagrammatically; and it can be demonstrated in the same way that every detail of the English fertility census of 1911 is exactly what the natural law demands, and the exact reverse of what would have been produced had the decline in the birth rate been due to the use of contraceptives.

CHARLES EDWARD PELL.

(To be Concluded.)

The World of Science.

The American Bison.

It was thought at one time that apart from specimens in captivity the great American bison, which formerly ranged over the greater part of North America, was extinct, and that individual ones seen from time to time in the wooded area in the Mackenzie Drainage Basin were not really bison of the plains, but a species inferior in size to these. They were called, from their habitat, the wood buffalo. The Canadian Government, however, forbade their being killed, and appointed a couple of rangers to ensure their preservation. In 1920 the Superintendent of National Parks instructed Mr. F. Kitto, Engineer to the National Resources Intelligence Department of the Interior, Ottawa, to report upon the condition of the animals when he was engaged in exploring the district. An account of his work is given in the *Geographical Journal*, LXIII, 431.

He was satisfied that the wood buffalo is the true *Bison Americanus*, and that so far from becoming extinct its numbers are increasing, and its individuals are as alert and vigorous as ever, and increasing in size. The Dominion Government has set aside a large tract of land as a bison reserve, where these animals can live unmolested in the wild state.

An Island Civilization.

"From the latest finds in the area of the Palace at Knossos we learn, among other things," says the *Scotsman*, "that in the important departments of road-making and bridge-building, and in provision for the needs and amenities of travel, as well as in the construction and decoration of palaces and temples, the Cretans of 2000 B.C. were in many respects abreast, if not ahead, of the Europe of last century."

Barely a quarter of a century has passed since Sir Arthur Evans and other investigators began to reveal the glories of Minoan civilization. Since then every year has added to our knowledge of the sea power which reached its zenith centuries before the days of Tutankhamen.

Thanks to the labours of Sir Arthur Evans and his fellow-workers, we are enabled to enter chambers that until now, besides being buried under and blocked by the ruins of later periods, have been sealed, as in a cyst, by the petrification of alluvial deposits impregnated by gypsum springs. It was only after weeks of quarrying through what had been taken for a rock surface that access was obtained to "the cyclopean piers of a Minoan viaduct and bridgehead, the most imposing structure that has yet come to light in Crete," over which had passed the great road that crossed the island from north to south, and adjacent to what has now been revealed as the southern entrance of the Palace—a portico with ascending staircase, and supporting columns on a scale and in a style worthy of the vast extent and dimensions of the building to which it was the main access.

Close by the bridge, and a revelation of the ordinary life and habits of the citizens of Knossos, the excavators met with "what seems to have been a caravanserai, with convenience for travellers, and stabling in the basements," and having as its central feature "an elegant little pavilion," set round with pillars, "supporting a frieze very delicately executed with decorative plants and birds, chiefly partridges," forming, as is pointed out, an "appropriate subject for the walls of a dining-room" in this inn of four millenia ago. In a separate room were "arrangements for washing the feet"; while an underground chamber, furnished with a fountain, stone benches, and ledges for stone lamps, gives the impression, with its "masses of vessels of offering and censers," of being a place for the celebration of religious rites.

The breaking of the shell of gypsum has brought to the light of day a buried civilization, more than twice as old as that of Herculaneum. Already we know a good deal concerning Minoan arts and religion, and the habits, costumes, and occupations of the inhabitants both of palace and city; the new discoveries open a further chapter, illustrating their modes of travel by land and water, their engineering achievements, their domestic and urban arrangements. They possess a literature, or at least a written language, although the secret of its decipherment has still to be unlocked. Doubtless the discovery of the key would enable much to be added to our information concerning this Island Power that

flourished before the days of Abraham. But it would probably tell us little regarding the causes and circumstances of its downfall, which, in the case of the Knossos of the chief Minoan Era, seems to have been sudden, and ultimately so complete that hardly an echo of its greatness came down to later ages.

Death Ray.

The current number of *Conquest* contains an interesting article by Mr. M. A. Iaqui on this subject. Having given a brief account of its history, he proceeds:—

In estimating the possibilities of future developments along the general lines of wireless transmission of powerit is desirable to keep certain things clearly in mind in order to avoid the risk of being unduly carried away by some optimistic assertions unfounded on actual fact. In the first place, the wide gamut of the ether vibrations, ranging from the 25,000 metres wireless waves used in high-powered transmission down to the infinitesimally small disturbances which we call Röntgen or X-ray, has been thoroughly explored, and its properties investigated. It is true that there is a small gap between the short wireless waves proper and the infra-red light rays that has not yet been ascertained, but it is practically certain that this region possesses no extraordinary properties to differentiate it from the rest of the spectrum. Obviously, if any considerable power is to be radiated across space, it must be in the form of a direct ray or beam, and not in the diffuse manner in which ordinary wireless radiation takes place. The mechanism of their radiation, however, is such that at present only the smaller vibrations can be concentrated or caused to travel in a more or less clearly defined beam. The matter is comparatively simple as long as one is dealing with the vibrations not exceeding a few metres in wave length. The possibilities, for example, of focussing light and heat rays are illustrated in the simple spy-glass and in the elaborate reflector systems which have been erected in America for generating steam-power from the sun's rays; whilst short-wave "wireless beam" telephony is even now being perfected. When we come to the longer wave lengths—and these are the only vibrations capable of transmitting a *destructive* current—it is found quite impossible to control or guide them along a defined path or to concentrate their energy upon any given object. They proceed outwards from the radiating source in all directions, so that their strength rapidly dies away and becomes ineffective. Given, of course, an extremely powerful generating system, it is quite possible to radiate sufficient power to create harmful effects for a comparatively small range. As long ago as the year 1898 Nikola Tesla, in the course of some experiments with high-frequency currents of enormous voltage and amperage, is stated to have damaged the fine armature windings of dynamos working at a power station some few miles away. But this was simply due to electro-magnetic induction, or ordinary transformer action.....Several inventors have suggested the use of ultra-violet rays as a means of first breaking down the insulation of the air, and then utilizing the conducting path so formed as a channel for carrying more powerful currents of electro-magnetic energy. The ultra-violet light consists of extremely short vibrations which liberate electrons from the molecules of air and thereby render it more or less conductive. This certainly offers a possible method of overcoming the difficulty of concentrating a comparatively powerful stream of electro-magnetic radiation, but results are at present limited by the fact that the ionizing power of the strongest beam of ultra-violet rays available is limited to a few feet.

Palmyra.

At University College recently M. Franz Cumont gave some interesting facts about Palmyra, once the capital of a considerable empire. Palmyra opened a shorter trade route across the desert, and thus profited by the commerce between the West and India and China. Trajan annexed it to the Roman Empire, and thereafter the Romans undertook the protection of its extensive trade. In the third century Syria was abandoned by the Empire, and menaced by the Sassanid kings of Persia. Palmyra undertook the defence of the country. Under Odenathus and Zenobias, Palmyra's influence was extended far and wide; but in the year 273 the Emperor Aurelian attacked and destroyed Palmyra, "leaving only the mighty ruins of this city of merchants to bear witness to its former greatness and prosperity."

W. H. M.

Correspondence.

WHERE ARE YOUR HOSPITALS?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Leonard Mason's letter in your issue of June 29 is both welcome and timely, for had the Canon's laughter proceeded unchecked our brother might have suffered some permanent facial, as well as mental, distortion.

Questions such as that raised by Canon Dorrity lack something in graciousness, coming from religionists with a record behind them such as Christianity is fettered with.

The treatment of medical science throughout the Dark Ages is a pretty damnable business; and it is not very long ago that Sir James Simpson's very moderate proposal to use anaesthetics in certain cases of childbirth drew down upon his head all the Presbyterian and other thunder of that day.

The whole attitude of Christianity to philanthropy might be summarized as a series of attempts to cure measles by pointing out the spots. Christians seem to have a genius for dealing with symptoms as symptoms; rarely do they attempt to eradicate the disease, or to get down to root causes.

Practically all the ills which call for charity to-day are due to two causes—ignorance and poverty. The first can be cured by education; and the handling of education—education in really vital matters—by the Churches is a grim and ghastly chapter of history. As regards the second, poverty, the capacity of industrial nations to-day to produce both the necessities and the luxuries of life is so enormous that, given a sane system of finance, it is easily possible to stamp it out utterly and for ever in ten years. Freethinkers in economics are quietly and persistently educating public men in the principles to be applied for this purpose; what time the Churches continue to preach the giving of alms to the poor that we have always with us!

A. W. COLEMAN.

SIR,—I have been looking for some answer to Canon Dorrity, and friend Mason in this week's issue does well; but this kind of slander, "Where's your hospitals?" is a very old chestnut, I first heard it over forty years ago on Kingsland Green. The first editor of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Foote, lectured there one Sunday morning, and a certain loud-mouthed Christian Evidence lecturer tried to oppose him, and his very first remark was: "Where's Your Orspitals?"; and I can hear the laughter now. Freethinkers are used to this kind of argument, but it is really a very stupid one, and coming from a man of Canon Dorrity's cloth sounds bad, for he must know that hospitals require money, and Freethought as an organization has only recently won the right to hold any. Yesterday was Alexandra Rose Day, and the writer knows Freethinkers who bought more than one rose, and Christians who bought none. A lot of stupid nonsense is talked about hospitals, but they were never better described than by the late Mr. Foote in the *Freethinker* some years ago, as "places where the poor are treated for nothing, that the rich may be treated for something." If Canon Dorrity thinks so much of hospitals, I invite him to go any day to the out-patients department of any large hospital disguised as a poor man, he will find himself treated with insolence and contempt, both from the last girl who has joined the nursing staff to the new boy who has joined the medical school.

THOMAS DUNBAR.

THE UPRIGHT RESOLUTION.

SIR,—From an evening paper we cull the following announcement:—

The Primitive Methodist Conference at Newcastle to-day adopted a resolution on the motion of the Rev. W. Upright, of Birkenhead, "deprecating the cruelty to animals inevitably involved in Rodeo exhibitions," opposing "a form of entertainment only possible through the suffering of dumb creatures," and urging the Government to take steps to prevent such exhibitions.

After this who will ever say again that the Church has no conscience? Does it not champion the cause of the dumb and helpless foreign animals and urge the Government to put a stop to a form of entertainment only possible through the suffering of dumb creatures? These sentiments strike me as truly admirable. But does the reverend feel that he is living up to his name in voicing noble sentiments in the full security of public approval being on his side. Is he quite sure that he couldn't discover anything equally cruel to protest about outside the walls of the exhibition?

If cruelty to animals is wrong, and it surely is, what about the sport of kings? Is hunting a humane pastime? Is there less cruelty associated with the hunting of the fox, than with the roping of a steer? Perhaps the reverend hasn't had a "call" to express an opinion upon this particular activity which is indulged in exclusively by those of blue blood. There seems also to be some little danger associated with steeplechasing, and it is not a rare thing for horse and rider to be so severely wounded that the former has to be shot.

If it isn't going away from the subject, I wonder what the views of the reverend gentleman are about boxing? Even the most experienced boxers get hurt. You can't draw blood, nor knock a man's face into a shapeless mass without causing acute physical pain. Therefore I take it that the pious and humane gentleman has at some time, some place, brought a motion before a conference of his Primitive Methodist brethren "deprecating the cruelty to human beings inevitably involved in boxing exhibitions.

If so, it should be recorded in his favour. Or is the worthy reverend waiting for an accommodating little wave of public indignation before venturing to launch an opinion that might lead to disaster?

"Tis easy in this world to live after the world's opinions," says the great Ralph Waldo Emerson. (Probably in the next the Christian divines will live after their own.)

It takes a sceptic, in the midst of the crowd, to formulate with perfect sweetness an unpopular opinion.

Talking of cruelty, I have heard that those who subscribe to the creed of Primitive Methodism—the Reverend Upright will correct me if I am wrong—are not prohibited by their religion from eating the flesh of animals slaughtered in cold blood for their enjoyment.

ROSE WITCOP.

"A LIVERPOOL LARRIKIN."

SIR,—With reference to the letter by Jas. W. K. Leiper respecting the above, I would like to point out that my impression on reading his letter was that, through his bumptiousness, he has missed a splendid opportunity from a propaganda point of view. Why do some Freethinkers (you find the same thing applies in most advanced movements) consider themselves so superior that they cannot even be courteous to an opponent?

For what reason did Mr. Leiper introduce his remarks *re* Mr. Armitage's bills? If he had simply written a business-like letter treating the challenge as serious and received a refusal or no reply, his efforts would have served a useful purpose; as it is, to attempt to utilize the incident as proof of the emptiness of these challenges is impossible; and I submit that if any Freethinker issued a challenge to Christians and was written to in a like strain, he would consider it beneath his dignity to accept the writer as a worthy foe; and I, for one, would say he was perfectly justified.

Furthermore, Mr. Leiper does not give the substance of the challenge made; and I should also like to know what exactly he did say when writing to accept it. As the matter now stands it is worthless.

HAROLD HUGHES.

They considered that physical maladies made the soul more healthy, and that the flesh could receive no more glorious adornments than ulcers and sores. Thus were fulfilled the words of the prophets, who said: "The deserts shall be covered with flowers."—*Anatole France, "Thaïs."*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday, at 8, at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Passing of Empire."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

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NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. J. J. Darby, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. P. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, Mr. A. Hogan, "The Failure of Christianity." Members please attend.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION, 1924.—July 5, Bury; July 12, Rochdale; July 19, Aston-under-Lyne; July 26, Stockport. August 2, Manchester; August 9, Hull; August 16 and 23, Newcastle; August 30, Leeds. September 6, Wolverhampton; September 13 and 20, Swansea.

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