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Views and Opinions.

(Continued from page 418.)

The Nature of "Self."

It will be remembered that the thesis we set out to examine in these notes was that personal identity implied the existence of a "self" that was independent of bodily states or changes, and which might be, therefore, presumed to exist beyond death. An examination of this showed that the ground of the belief was nothing more and nothing better than the primitive misconception of certain mental states, which led to the belief in a "soul" or a double that could get out of the body during the life of the individual, and merely stayed out for good at death. Thence it passed into philosophy, and continued there, because, on the one hand, philosophers for the most part followed the customary ruts, and, on the other hand, because the idea of a soul had become the kernel of a strongly established system of religious belief which few cared to challenge in a thoroughgoing fashion. It was then shown that an analysis of the fact of personal identity proved it to consist of nothing more than a memory synthesis—a bringing together in consciousness of a memory of past events and experiences so as to form a coherent whole. So far as this memory synthesis exists it forms part of my sense of personal identity. Where it is lacking, as it is concerning my infancy, or events that are forgotten beyond possibility of revival, or in pathologic conditions where complete loss of memory takes place, there is no continuance of a sense of personal identity. Personal identity is thus resolved into the cohesion of a number of distinct states of consciousness. Where the co-ordination of conscious states is absent, the sense of personal identity is absent. Where it exists, the sense of personal identity exists. There is not the slightest need here for mystery or confusion. The mystery is due to those who assume the existence of an inconceivable entity, and then complain that they cannot picture things clearly.

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Mind and the Nervous System.

The "self" is, it must be pointed out, as real to the materialist as it is to the spiritualist. A consciousness of personal identity is a fact. The only question

at issue is what is the nature of the fact. The Spiritualist offers us an explanation with no evidence whatever in support; the Materialist explanation is in accord with all we know and in line with the whole run of scientific development. The cardinal fault of the Spiritualist here is that he completely ignores the existence and the function of the nervous system. Mental states are treated as separate and independent things, affected by the nervous system much as coloured glass will affect the rays of light that pass through it. When we do consider the operations of the nervous system we have a quite reasonable explanation of the basis of the sense of personal identity, which meets us as a psychological fact. We may take as an illustration of this the case of muscular action. We are all familiar with the fact that, within limits, a muscle becomes more efficient as it is exercised. It conserves the consequences of past actions and tends to reproduce them on receiving appropriate stimuli. After a time, athletes will perform easily and unthinkingly actions that once were performed slowly and consciously. But this quality is not peculiar to muscular fibre. It is characteristic of all nervous tissue. The characteristic quality of all nervous tissue is its educability. A child learning to play the piano has at first to pick out certain notes carefully and deliberately. After a time the notes are struck automatically, while the conscious attention may be directed elsewhere. Expressed in psychological terms, the nervous elements are contracting a memory. Nerve tissue not only learns, it also forgets. For just as frequent repetition makes an action easier and automatic, so desistance makes repetition more difficult. In the one case, to use figurative speech, the cells remember, in another they forget.

* * *

The Nature of Memory.

It may well be that to speak of the cells forgetting and remembering is not quite such a figurative expression as it might seem at first glance. From the standpoint of physiology memory must mean that a nervous discharge effects some molecular change, and that with every repetition of this discharge the molecular rearrangements, or their possibility, becomes more settled. Each discharge, to use an expression of Romanes', treads in the footsteps of its predecessor. On the psychological side there is a memory of previous events, because on the physiological side there is nervous tissue which undergoes alteration with every stimulation, and which always to some extent conserves the effects of past stimulations, and repeats them under similar conditions. Indeed, to say that memory records past events is to give no information whatever. It is merely saying that memory is the act of remembering. But to say that the nervous structure registers impressions and revives them does tell us something, since we have here the obvious machinery for registering and recalling such impressions. It does not require very elaborate study to observe how drugs and our general state of health will affect our capacity for registering and recalling events.

"Self" and Human Environment.

Now, as Captain Cuttle would have said, the bearing of all this lies in the application thereof, and in our present case it is the conception of the "self" and the question of survival after death. Life, whether considered under its physical or its mental aspects, is a question of correspondence between an organism and its environment. In the case of one of the lower animals the environment is relatively very simple, and its constituents and reactions determined with comparative ease. But when we arrive at such a complex organism as man, with his structural complexity, and his powerful reaction against an enormously complex environment, the question of determination is not so easy. Still, in a general way, it is possible to see the outlines of the answer. In the first place we can see if we watch the development of a child the manner in which it first awakens to the perception of an external world. For details, I must commend readers to that very interesting work by James Mark Baldwin, *Mental Development in the child and the Race*. But if we follow the child through its home and school life we can trace the formation of "habit patterns" which are to provide the ground for its reactions to the world at large. Arrived at maturity there goes on the same process, and throughout all we are watching, not the expression of an independent entity, but the reactions of a personality that is a product of the racial evolution of which it is an expression and a cause—an expression in relation to all that has gone before, a cause in relation to that which is to come after. The human "self" is only to be understood in relation to the human environment. Divorce it from that and not only does it cease to be intelligible, but it ceases to exist. If one tries to imagine parental love apart from the procreation of children, or comradeship apart from conditions that make comradeship of value, the absurdity of thinking of human beings existing in an environment different from the present becomes apparent.

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The Myth of Survival.

This being granted, one would like to have a clear answer from those who take the fact of personality as a basis on which to build their belief in a future life, as to what use they imagine personality—our personality—can be in a state of existence which is assumed to be so far different from our own that the vital and fundamental phenomena of birth and death no longer exist? To assume that we go to some other world identical with this is so scientifically absurd, and so religiously unsatisfactory, that such a thing has never been believed. On the other hand, to assume that the next world is radically different from this one is to say in so many words that we shall be utterly out of place in it. Family affection cannot exist, the love of parent for child or child for parent, the affection of man for woman and woman for man will have no meaning. The feelings that cluster round the country will have no means of expression. Man will be as much out of place as if he were condemned to spend eternity in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Our personality, whatever be its real nature, is fashioned for existence in this world and has meaning and significance in this world alone. Even though we were to assume that the "self" is an articulate something, independent of the body, which enters the body in order to find expression, the fact remains that it is the body that gives it shape and expression, and that apart from the body and the existing environment it would remain, like the earth in the geneaic legend, without shape or form; and, we may add, without meaning. It is perhaps fortunate for our religious teachers that their theories of things, born of grossly inaccurate thinking, are swallowed by those

to whom thinking is more or less a trouble, and who in relation to religion seldom think at all. The pity is that so many men who occupy high positions in the world of thought, for fear of "upsetting" people, tacitly connive at the perpetuation of ideas which have neither reason nor utility to commend them.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Significant Sign of the Times.

(Concluded from page 419.)

ACCORDING to the *Church Times*, Dean Inge "rather likes to pose as a voice crying in the wilderness in a world that does not understand." If that is true of him he is woefully mistaken. The world is not nearly so dense as he seems to imagine it to be. The *Church Times* claims to "understand him very well," and so do we; but whilst we understand him well enough, we cannot help testifying that he is often guilty of contradicting himself. He makes statements in his published *Outspoken Essays* which he dare not repeat in his sermons. For example, in the first volume of *Outspoken Essays* (p. 33) he writes about miracles thus:—

Miracles must, I am convinced, be relegated to the sphere of pious opinion. It is not likely, perhaps, that the progress of science will increase the difficulty of believing them; but it can never again be possible to make the truths of religion depend on physical portents having taken place as recorded. The Christian revelation can stand without them; and the rulers of the Church will soon have to recognize that in very many minds it does stand without them.

Last Easter Sunday morning the Dean preached in St. Paul's Cathedral a remarkable sermon, entitled "The Easter Sunrise," in which, while not expressing his belief in the physical resurrection of Christ, he speaks of the alleged event as if it had actually occurred. Yet throughout the sermon one is semi-conscious of a sky covered with black clouds of doubt which almost completely hide the "Easter Sunrise." As proof of the truth of this statement take the following passage:—

Has Christ after all risen, or did Good Friday mark the triumph of the chief priests, of Judas, and of Pontius Pilate, and the defeat which goodness must always expect in a world given over to the powers of darkness?

Such is the question which, the Dean contends, thrusts itself in the faces of those who suffer injustice and persecution in this world. With such facts of violence towards, and wicked treatment of, innocent but weak people before our eyes—in a word, with the history of the Christian religion fully made known to us—is it possible honestly to believe that a Divine and all-conquering Redeemer of mankind really rose from the dead on the third day? The Dean sees nothing surprising in such a question, and he quotes Matthew Arnold's famous lines, in which the poet describes the glowing hopes cherished by those who believed that Jesus "was born to save," but who were stunned into utter despair when they realized that he was dead, saying, with scalding tears in their eyes:—

Now he is dead, far hence he lies
In the lone Syrian town,
And on his grave with shining eyes,
The Syrian star looks down.

Addressing a Christian congregation in a great Cathedral, one would naturally infer that the preacher's object would be to cheer his hearers by firmly assuring them that Christ was still alive, and that by dying and arising he had abolished death for

all believers. But Dean Inge is infinitely above ranting of all sorts, and so he dwells calmly upon the difficulties of believing in Christ's resurrection. Such a resurrection would have been the most stupendous of miracles; and "miracles," the preacher had already declared, "must be relegated to the sphere of pious opinion." This is by no means an enviable position for a high dignitary of the Church to occupy.

The *Church Times* ridicules "the slipshod sentimentalism of the American who looks forward to a Church of the future which shall embrace and welcome those who cling to the ancient creeds, and those who abjure all creeds whatever—an attitude of mind based on a scepticism so deep that it has ceased to love or hate, and despairs even of the validity of its own mental processes." We had no idea that Dr. Eliot held such an unreasonable and impossible conception of the Church of the future, but if he does hold it, we can confidently assure him that Rationalists or Freethinkers will never join it. We are quite certain, however, that Dean Inge does not entertain so foolish a notion; and yet it seems impossible even for him to do justice to opponents. Frankly admitting, in his first volume of *Outspoken Essays*, that "the chief rival to Christianity is Secularism," he goes out of his way to misrepresent and bring false charges against the latter. He asserts that "this creed has some bitter disappointments in store for its worshippers." What are the disappointments, and from what source do they come? The very reverend gentleman does not condescend to inform us, but he insinuates that Secularism endeavours to destroy the moral sense and to bring about "in matters of sex a period of unbridled license." But he is fundamentally and absolutely mistaken. Secularists have never been the advocates of "lawlessness." On the contrary, their reverence for law has ever been the chief trait in both their character and teaching, and we confidently challenge the Dean to produce a single quotation from the writings of any accredited Secularist in which secular or any other form of immorality is represented as a virtue. The motto of the Party is, "We seek for Truth" for both the intellect and the heart. As the *Church Times* points out, the Dean's "strong prejudices often distort his vision and make him play to the cheapest gallery." Then our contemporary adds:—

He gains by pungent and sarcastic outbursts the ear of that same vulgar multitude which he affects to despise. In fact, in their rôle as publicists, the popular ignorance and prejudice that live on the lurid tradition of the Smithfield fires, the relics of the No Popery frenzy that in days of yore made possible the infamies of Titus Oates and the horrors of the Gordon Riots, are the greatest controversial assets that the Dean and Bishop Henson possess. Superstition and credulity are more likely to lead the ignorant to New Thought, Theosophy, Christian Science, or Spiritism than to the Catholic Faith. Nor is it true that Catholicism is the enemy of science properly so called.

It is doubtless true that Dean Inge does deliver himself occasionally of "pungent and sarcastic outbursts"; but it is not true that by so doing "he gains the ear of that vulgar multitude which he affects to despise." The truth is that the Dean's readers are fully as intelligent as those for whom the *Church Times* caters, and generally speaking much less superstitious and credulous. Besides, ignorance does lead to the Catholic Faith much more readily than to any other theological creed; and we can truthfully testify that among Theosophists and Christian Scientists the highest order of intelligence is often found. Furthermore, the *Church Times* cannot be ignorant of the fact that Catholicism has been through all the ages the bitterest enemy of science. Did not

the Dominican Order prohibit all its members from studying natural philosophy, medicine, and chemistry? Did not the Popes issue numerous bulls in the attempt to silence all scientific students of Nature? Was not Charles the Wise of France a good Catholic, and was it not in the interests of his religion that he forbade chemists even to possess any chemical apparatus, such as furnaces? What we need to bear in mind is that Catholicism never alters in its attitude of hostility towards secular knowledge and scientific discoveries. It still condemns every form of teaching that is out of harmony with its own dogmas, and puts on the *Index* all books disapproved of by the Roman Church. We have by no means forgotten the case of Mr. St. George Mivart, a devout Catholic, who was condemned for his articles in English periodicals, and finally excommunicated six weeks before he died in 1900. And yet the *Church Times* has the hardihood to declare that Catholicism is the friend and not the enemy of science "properly so-called." Dean Inge, on the contrary, represents a party in the same Church which wholeheartedly accepts as true the wonderful discoveries of modern science, and tries to bring its theology into harmony therewith.

To us the significant sign of the times is not that the Duke of Northumberland and the Dean of St. Paul's "walk together" in the columns of the *Morning Post*, but that the *Church Times* honours the Dean "so far as his lucid intellect and zeal for truth are concerned." Surely all must honour him in that respect; and it is a most significant sign that a man of such broad-mindedness should be the Dean of so eminent a Cathedral. From our point of view, his theology is a bundle of superstitious beliefs which Reason utterly rejects; while in the sight of Bishop Gore he is a heresiarch of the worst type. Dr. Gore is the most prominent leader of the Catholic Party in the Anglican Church, of whom the Dean writes as follows: "He makes a fetish of the Creeds, documents which only represent the opinions of a majority at a meeting; and what manner of meetings Church Councils sometimes were, is known to history." Though he has subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles, the Dean regards all creeds as matters of very small importance, and even the Thirty-nine Articles lie lightly on his conscience. He belongs to a large and growing party in the Established Church, a party whose destination, in all probability, is the Secular platform, while the Catholic Party is slowly but certainly drifting towards Rome. At any rate, the Anglican Church, as such, is ultimately doomed to disappear, or to cease to be what it is at present. In other words, Freethought has been working like a potent leaven in Protestant communions everywhere, until they are being gradually converted into Secularist centres. The time is coming when Catholicism will be the only extant enemy of freedom of thought, and when at last even this powerful foe shall be put under freedom's feet.

J. T. LLOYD.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

This week's report from Blackburn is that large and sympathetic crowds have attended each of the seven addresses delivered by Mr. Whitehead, and their success is to be found in the fact that sufficient members have been made to justify the formation of a Blackburn Branch. Our thanks are due to Mr. J. Glassbrook and J. Glassbrook, junr., for their noble support. The general enthusiasm displayed demands a return visit if possible. This week our missionary, who is in excellent fighting form, is visiting Bury. We hasten to correct a statement in the report of the Bolton meetings last week. The Labour Agent referred to did not associate himself with the demand for Mr. Whitehead's arrest, etc. This honour belongs entirely to the Catholic element.

The Richest Talker in England.

That which will stand of Coleridge is this: the stimulus of his continual instinctive effort to get at and to lay bare the real truth of the matter in hand, whether that matter were literary or philosophical, or political or religious; and this in a country when at the moment such an effort was almost unknown.—*Matthew Arnold.*

“NOT one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist.” This is a quotation from Samuel Taylor in Coleridge’s *Table Talk*, a singularly suggestive and inspiring volume. It was a man with a big heart and a big head who said that. It loses none of its force from the fact that Coleridge was a Christian, although heterodox, for he was a man of real and unmistakable genius. Always he wore his “rue with a difference.”

Some of the best men he knew, such as Charles Lamb, were Freethinkers. His close friend, Wordsworth, was a Pantheist, and the world was then ringing with the Freethought message of the great French Revolution. Coleridge knew that it was not half-educated, or illiterate persons who doubted the existence of “god,” but the very flower of the “intellectuals,” who could not be lulled by priestly incense, or frightened by priestly threats.

Coleridge was as great a talker as Dr. Johnson, but he had no Boswell to record all he said. His friend, Robert Southey, said that Coleridge’s mouth “seems incapable of being at rest.” Southey was hard to please, for he had the richest talker in England with him, and it only made him peevish. The truth is that Southey had a commonplace mind, and was the opposite of Coleridge. In all Southey’s shelf-full of books there is not any work of genius. Lamb, who was himself a genius, had a very different impression of Coleridge’s talk. Writing of one of the poet’s visits, he said: “I am living in a continual feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh on three weeks.” The picture which Thomas Carlyle gives of Coleridge at Highgate Hill is very graphic, and endorses Lamb’s view:—

Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke tumult, like a sage escaped from life’s battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. He had, especially among young enquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. No talk in his century, or in any other, could be more inspiring.

Coleridge did other and finer work than talk across the dinner-table. Endowed with an intellect of the first order, and a delicate and splendid imagination, Coleridge left enough poetry and criticism to place him in the front rank of authors. This is not to belittle his conversational ability. Except Selden’s *Table Talk*, there is hardly so rich a treasure-house of wisdom in the language as Coleridge’s *Table Talk*. It represents the mature thought of a princely intellect equally at home in the book of the world and in the world of books. His friends had better entertainment than food or wine, for there have been few such brilliant talkers as Coleridge. The pages of his book show us how an accomplished man, famous for his conversation, entertained his company near a hundred years ago. For, like old Samuel Johnson, who drank wine with the wits, Coleridge enjoyed the best of good company from first to last. What must it have been to have been present at those festal nights? It must have been a rich memory and an abiding delight, like those ever-memorable nights at Frederick’s palace, where the nimble wit of Voltaire

challenged the choicest brains of Europe; or those immortal meetings at the “Mermaid,” when rare Ben Jonson exchanged quips and cranks with the smiling Shakespeare.

The contributions which Coleridge made to modern thought—rich, ample, and suggestive as they are—have all the characteristics of his varied and eventful life. In whatever he attempted, he drove the shaft deep, and gave us samples of the golden wealth lying in its confines. Although he worked these mines only at irregular intervals, and passed from one to the other, yet, by stimulating others, he caused the ground to be explored as it never was before in England. If it cannot be said that he left a complete system, yet it can be said, and it is a noble tribute, that he made it possible for others to grasp the principles underlying all systems. His contribution to the literature of power is almost unsurpassed by any modern author.

Yet, great as Coleridge’s genius was, he suffered from laxity of fibre. He wrote a lot, and the very notes he made would have been a task for most men. But he was incapable of continued and concentrated labour. Intellect he had; the frenzy of the poet was in his eyes; but he was indolent. The result was he illuminated the world, not with a steady radiance like Shakespeare, but in meteoric flashes, which, in Milton’s expressive phrase, “made darkness visible.”

The living Coleridge was ever his own apology. Men and women who neither shared nor ignored his shortcomings not only loved him, but honoured him. He must have had a rich and royal nature to have gathered about him such choice friends as Wordsworth, Scott, Lamb, De Quincey, Byron, Hazlitt, and Sterling. In fancy we cannot fail to conjure up his placid figure during his later years—the silver hair, pale face, luminous blue eyes, the portly form clothed in black, slow walk, benignant manner, and the inexhaustible well of eloquence and wisdom. A great man and a great poet; the wings of his imagination wave easily in the rare ether of high Olympus. Unconsciously he worked at the looms of the future, weaving patterns which other men have since woven into something that will some day change the face of the earth. In that day superstitions will be transformed into the religion of Humanity, and Christianity will be as remote as when the star of Ormuzd burned out in the unquiet skies.

MIMNERMUS.

Drama and Dramatists.

In three hours Mr. George Bernard Shaw tells us that which we are able to read in three minutes. All the stops of the dramatic organ are pulled out and pushed in during the performance of this mediæval fugue, and, if the gifted author has written for amusement, for instruction, or as an escape from tedium vitæ, he has something to say in *Saint Joan*. The Catholic Church burned her, and the Catholic Church has now canonized her—and this rumbling in the stomach of mankind called Catholicism can do with and will not object to this theatrical advertisement, for the attenuated irony in the play will fall on many deaf ears. The flowers of the Holy Roman Church are all wax, and the garden bed is made of the dense mud of ignorance. The problem for mankind is not what it believes, or how it is believed; it is the explanation of how it came to be believed, and in this connection it will be safer to trust Freud, Adler, and Jung rather than saints in hair shirts. We feel sure that their scratching must have interfered with their continuity of thought.

If Shaw could not blow down the walls of Jericho with *Blanco Posnet*, he has floated gracefully over the bulwarks of the candle burners with whimsical

mysticism to project the central thought of private judgment versus authority. And it has been done splendidly, at the same time showing up the beautiful dovetail workmanship of the ecclesiastical and secular machine. Joan's body was a nuisance to the secular arm of authority; her soul was a menace to the claws of what is called a Church, and, as usual, authority was tossing with a two-headed penny. If, according to Bergson, common sense is fatiguing, our dramatist has succeeded in making didacticism interesting—but with disastrous effect to action in the play. Quiddities and oddities were trotted out by an effectively disgusting collection of monks who wished to force Joan into a mould of their own making, but it was the very human appeal of the sunlight and fields that, if they were denied, made her choose the faggot. The voices of private judgment were not consonant with the voices as reproduced on the gramophone record of Rome; Shaw has at least established a celestial problem, if he cannot settle an earthly one. The language of the saints must be standardized—and here is a field for Esperanto.

Our master of paradox sober is strangely different from Chesterton, who looks straight in front of himself over his left shoulder. There is a supple beauty in the clean-cut speech of Joan; it is the *don terrible de la familiarité* of Mirabeau, and when Shaw begins to use this language for no others' sake but the sake of mankind, instead of Joan's God, and the world instead of France, we may witness a renaissance in the evolution of man that will make the disease of religion appear as simply as an attack of the colic or a bad dream. In *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a convent sister was reprov'd for taking a plum out of a tart—it was a sin; two thousand years of that old theological air, "original sin," has a lot to answer for, and it has perverted a simple idea into a complex one. Fire is useful for boiling a kettle; but the clod-hopping and cruel hands of religious tyrants with an itch for something different tried to make it useful for burning ideas. With Athanasius, Augustine and Aquinas to produce a ferment under their shaven heads, we understand their lunacy and supreme crime against our species.

Dunois, Bastard of Orleans, is the closest friend of Joan; he is the soldier, with faith—in big battalions and a friendly west wind. The maid's ecstatic fervour does not blind his eyes, and he has about as much faith in God as our own troops had in that abstraction during the last war. The camel companions, praying hard at home—and exempted—knew more about the soldier's faith at the front than he did himself. Dunois could understand Joan better than the Bishop of Beauvais; he had not, like this monster, an interest in her immortal soul. As a working hypothesis the soul has been to the Catholic Church a mine richer than any in Eldorado; and those who wish to lift men to heaven give them a hell of a time on earth.

The play, with splendid promise in the first scene, does not redeem the hope of hearing an emphatic yea or nay in the odyssey of man. The dramatist has led us to expect this from him. We know he is clever, has knowledge, and also has the riper fruit of wisdom. He has pounded the fatty ribs of respectability, he has withered the sickly blossoms of the glory of war, he has hit the ugly face of stupidity between the eyes, but he has allowed the simplicity of Joan and her speech to be muddled by the wearisome twaddle of the religious professional interests, and we will not forgive him for this. The stage is not the place for dialectic; he has the spectators' imagination focussed for three hours to tell us that a crime was committed, the act bungled, and the Catholic Church donned the white robe of repentance in 1920. He has only made the obvious interesting.

In July, last year, Miss Sybil Thorndike in an interview claimed Mr. George Bernard Shaw as one of the most religious of human beings—he even approached to saintliness; and she stated that the sacrament of the Anglo-Catholic Church was a perfect expression of idealism. That she was burnt "off" in *Saint Joan* may or may not alter the views of this gifted actress; but it was a coward's way of settling a difference. Occasionally a Wat Tyler tries to balance the account by sticking two archbishops' heads on the gates of London Bridge, but paid historians will put him in his place. The face of religion might be cleaner if it had no history; as for its hands, let it remember Lady Macbeth; and Harvey will tell us better things about the blood than those who drink it.

A note in the programme of *Saint Joan* is as provocative as any of the author's prefaces. The music from the orchestra was mere noise; the acting was good; but, to conclude, let our author beware of a woman. She is neither the *Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, nor *Saint Joan*. She is Lot's wife, and a symbolization of losing one's self in the past. WILLIAM REPTON.

The Making of Freethought Myth.

It sometimes appears to me that there is a tendency on the part of some Freethinkers to cast about them unnecessarily for the purpose of including as many names as possible under the head of Freethought. As if strength can only be derived from numbers. Consequently, conditions are created which make possible the formation of what one might describe as Freethought Myths; inasmuch as great historic personages are claimed as Freethinkers if it has been discovered that, at some time or other, they said something that was not exactly religious, or, at any rate, was not in harmony with the teaching of the predominant Church or sect of the time. It is forgotten that many people can occasionally jest at their religion and yet remain within the fold. Only when the outsider jests does the jesting become wicked.

It is true that in relation to the age in which they lived many religionists, such as the deists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and men like W. E. Channing and Theodore Parker, may be described as Freethinkers. But this should not lead us to include in the Freethought category everyone who has not been strictly orthodox and pious. There are many non-pious people who are to be classed with the greatest humbugs in the world where matters of religion are concerned; while there are broad-minded people whose boasted freedom of thought vanishes into thin air when circumstances begin to turn the idealisms of Freethought into reality on the plane of every-day, matter-of-fact life. This is especially so when a reconstruction of society is involved.

In the *Freethinker* for February 3, 1924, the following statement was made by "Mimmermus": "How many innocent critics of Freethought realize that the evangel of Reason is of the widest appeal; ranging from kings to students. Catherine was a Freethinker in word and deed. When Denis Diderot was forced by poverty to sell his library, she bought it back for him and installed him as librarian." Also, in his article for May 11, 1924, "Mimmermus" speaks of Catherine of Russia as having befriended Diderot and other French Freethinkers; and, if my memory does not fail me, we have had something to the same tune before.

Why Catherine of Russia should be claimed as a Freethinker, I am unable to understand, except that certain Freethinkers, having lost the god of heaven,

have a strong desire to look up to some tin-pot god almighty on earth.

These Freethinkers belong to the law-and-order type whose Freedom of thought begins and ends in matters of religion and speculative philosophy. They have no room for freedom of thought in economic and social matters, and must needs have a king or queen to see that the order of this world is not disturbed by the more unfortunate of mankind struggling for a better "place in the sun." For my part I delight in law and order, but not on Catherine the Great of Russia's terms. Then it must be remembered that law and order are not always good for everybody. Sometimes they are too much on the side of the fortunate minority. They were on the side of Catherine of Russia, and she had no intention that things should be otherwise, with all her profession of advanced ideas.

If anything, Catherine of Russia was an intellectual libertine, rather than a Freethinker in any worthy sense of the term, just as she was a practical libertine in matters of sex. She could toy with literature and philosophy, and approve some of the most advanced views of her time, while it was possible to keep them within a given circle. They must not be made broadcast—the common people must be kept in the dark as to any advance in science or philosophy; and, then, Catherine could buy the library of a French Freethinker.

In this there is nothing to justify the conclusion that, in relation to her times, Catherine was a decided Freethinker even in matters of religion. What was there to prevent an autocrat buying a Freethinker's library, and even discussing the new ideas of her day, if she kept the new knowledge from the people, and herself kept well in with the Church?

A certain type of mind is capable of keeping in touch with the most advanced knowledge of its day while accepting religion in one or other of its prevailing forms. The religion is accepted as a matter of course, while the science and philosophy are indulged in by way of intellectual luxury.

Even if it could be supposed that Catherine actually rejected the religious teachings of her day, that she had broken with the Churches, and was on the side of the most advanced philosophers and scientists, the sincerity and depth of her convictions proved to be of little value when the day of reckoning came.

Like many another, when she saw in the French Revolution the possibility of the lower classes taking things into their own hands and leaving god in the lurch, she became afraid of the new ideas in literature and philosophy. She began to realize that there was something at the back of those ideas and that they were not merely part of a movement which she had at first mistaken for a performance in drawing-room idealism.

Sometimes ideas do run to little or nothing more than drawing-room idealism; but sometimes they are such close symbols of reality that they hurt those who are only used to playing with ideas in drawing-room fashion. At any rate, the idea of an actually free populace hurt Catherine the Great of Russia. It was more than her so-called Freethought could stand. In fact, so important was the would-be Freethought of Catherine that J. M. Robertson, apart from mentioning the Diderot incident, can but say: "In the day of the great Catherine the ideas of the philosophers were the ruling ones at her Court, till the outbreak of the Revolution put the whole school in disgrace with her." (*A Short History of Freethought*, p. 309, Vol. 2, 1906 edition.)

Along with French literature and philosophy, French fashions in dress and general deportment, even to the use of the French language, were accepted

in the higher circles of Russian society. But the French Revolution was something very different. It shocked Catherine and her high-minded Court circle into rejecting the French ideas which they had thought so harmless when transferred to Russian palaces. This was only what could be expected with an intellectual libertine at the head of Russian high society. Catherine was doubtless playing for safety at all times in practical matters, while she flirted with new ideas until they became obviously too dangerous. After speaking of serfdom having been greatly increased during Catherine's reign, Maxime Kovalevsky says:—

Although Catherine II was willing to be advised by the Encyclopædists as to the way in which serfdom might be abolished, she took effectual means to prevent the expression of Russian public opinion on the same subject. (*Modern Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia*, p. 220.)

Economic freedom did not appeal to her, any more than it does to a modern capitalist, but while even the Encyclopædists would only have substituted wage slavery for serfdom, Catherine, the great intellectualist, was too steeped in feudalism to make such progress even from serfdom to capitalism with its factory-dom. She wished to play with new ideas, but did not wish to see the reality, of which they were but the symbols, on the social and economic plane.

Catherine is to be credited with having abolished the religious disabilities to which the Raskolniks had been subjected, and her act of toleration made it possible for many to return from their places of exile. But the Raskolniks were a religious people of a conservative turn of mind, and not likely to do anything to undermine the power of Catherine when they were granted the right to worship in their own fashion. They were more likely, in Catherine's eyes, to be safe members of the community than if they had been followers of the French sceptics. Scepticism was no doubt safe enough inside the Russian Court, but had Catherine found the Raskolniks to have been a large and closely organized body of poor sceptics, striving for their own social betterment, she would not have been so ready to free them from the disability of paying the double poll-tax, imposed upon them by her predecessor, Peter.

No doubt Catherine's Freedom of Thought is revealed to many modern Freethinkers by her treatment of the writer who wished to keep in touch with what was going on in the west, even though the French Revolution was the greatest event. This was Radichtchev, whom the great empress had condemned to death for daring to welcome the new ideas after she had turned her back upon them. But Catherine's freedom and breadth of thought reached heights of magnanimity undreamed of when she had the death sentence of Radichtchev commuted into a sojourn for a few years in Siberia. E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

(To be Concluded.)

Was the Earth made for to preserve a few covetous, proud men to live at ease, and for them to bag and burn up the treasures of the Earth from others, and these may beg or starve in a fruitful land; or was it made to preserve all her children? Let Reason and the Prophets' and Apostles' writings be judge, the Earth is the Lord's, it is not to be confined to particular interests.....Did the Light of Reason make the Earth for some men to engross up into bags and barns, that others might be oppressed with poverty.....Therefore if the rich still hold fast to this propriety of Mine and Thine, let them labour their own lands with their own hands. And let the common people, that say the Earth is *ours*, not *mine*, let them labour together, and eat bread together upon the commons, mountains and hills.—*Winstanley*.

Acid Drops.

A Bishop tells us that what thoughtful people are demanding from the Church of England is not greater activity, but greater intelligence. There is plenty of room for it, but intelligence will not save a discredited creed that will not fit the facts of modern life. In his particular attempt to make a noise, Dean Inge has put one leg in the pulpit and the other in Fleet Street, and the result is that he is neither a good Christian nor even a second-rate Pagan. He is simply a journalist in gaiters.

The Bishop of London, at the Diocesan Conference, said: "There was a growing sense and practice of loyalty in the diocese. They had their cranks, and so had Parliament. In a large diocese like theirs they need not be surprised at their having a few cranks." The Bishop seems to possess a remarkable capacity for uttering banalities. But still, it is a refreshing confession. Some people might hint that the majority of earnest Christians are cranks.

The Bishop of London also said that while he was accustomed to consecrate never less than four or five new churches in the diocese a year before the war, he had only been able to consecrate one since the Armistice, and that was not paid for. Perhaps the late war shook people out of a comfortable lethargy, in which religion played the part of a pleasant fiction. Perhaps, too, the war exposed the hollowness of Christianity's claims to be international and pacific. Or perhaps most people in these post-war days are too much concerned with practical problems, such as the unemployment and housing problems, to bother their heads about religion.

Mr. Alexander MacLaren, general secretary of the National Federation of Retail Newsagents, speaking on the influence of the Press, said that each Sunday nearly 30 million newspapers were distributed in Great Britain and Ireland. Curious that the people who loudly condemn the proposal to open the British Empire Exhibition on Sundays, never launch their denunciations against the Sunday Press. Perhaps they think that if the general public will no longer come to church for religious dope on Sunday, it is as well that they should be plentifully supplied with another kind of dope. Or is it that the Press of this country represents powerful interests which pious Christians are loathe to offend? The religious leaders seem generally much more ready to denounce the Anti-Christ when he takes on the guise of an insignificant individual enjoying some mild recreation on the Sabbath than when he assumes the guise of a press millionaire. Which is somewhat strange when one remembers the contempt in which the founder of their religion held the wealthy men of his own age.

As Swift pointed out, there is a great danger in abolishing Christianity. The programme of the Church Advertising Department is as follows: "The Personal Touch in Church Advertising"; "Publicity as an Evangelistic Medium"; "What Should the Church Advertise?"; "Wireless and the Christian Message." We are afraid, however, that the boosters of patent foods, purgatives and pills will not find the members of the Church such innocent lambs in advertising as they suppose. The Church had all the publicity it wanted during the war—even to compulsory church parades for camouflaged civilians. It is well to the front on all public occasions and is never behind when there is something to be given away. The Salvation Army already advertises on tram tickets. Illuminated signs proclaim, declaim and exclaim all sorts of cryptic messages to inoffensive people. Bells on Sunday also rend the air and tell tired people that the day of rest is about to commence. Boy scouts smite the vellum on the way to churches, and also lift the bugle to their lips. Advertisement would be another bell to the cap of folly of an institution chock-full of slogans and knowing every trick of the trade.

Lord Danesfort, who was Mr. Butcher at one time in his career is jealous because, in his own language, the Young Communist Movement "openly and avowedly trade on the helplessness of children." A Daniel come to judgment, my Lord! For what other purpose does the priest have his foot in the doorway of any ordinary school? The result is that not one in ten white men dare call a black man his brother. This mushroom Lord might take a few lessons from Lord Cavendish-Bentinck on the latitude and longitude of the mind.

Recent revelations go to prove that knighthoods and the other gee-gaws of society have not yet reached the level of the price of a dog-license. We thought there was a catch in the business somewhere. The Bishops, however, need not quake in their shoes at present, as they can always explain that we are all equal—in the sight of the Lord.

A Catholic correspondent of the *Daily Herald* pointed out that Catholicism had produced Mr. Wheatley, Minister of Health. Frida Laska (Workers' Birth Control Group) now informs the public that this minister refused to grant facilities for knowledge relevant to Birth Control to be given at maternity welfare centres, and referred a deputation to hospitals. The Workers' Birth Control Group found on investigation that hospitals are neither equipped to give such information nor are generally willing to do so. It may be taken for granted that when the glamour of Rome has been seen through, and when the drum-beating of Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton has died down, quantity instead of quality is the pole that holds up the Popish tent of fakirs.

Dean Inge has been forced to admit that "Science, so far from being discredited, goes on from strength to strength. Its conclusions are subject to modification, but its methods are constantly vindicated, and have passed into the habits of thought which determine the convictions and practice of the modern world. It holds the same position of authority that logic held in the Middle Ages." He adds: "What has been shaken is not the scientific method, but the shallow materialistic philosophy which was based upon it." This afterthought may merely be deference paid to the orthodox Christians. At least, it is hard to believe that the Dean is entirely sincere when he suggests that materialism is discredited. Materialism is a habit of thought, a way of regarding the universe; just as science is a method of investigating natural phenomena. And, like the scientific method, its validity does not rest upon any one fact or theory. True, the New Physics has given us a conception of matter which is very different from that which we had half a century ago; but that merely strengthens materialism. Matter, we have learnt, is in its way no less wonderful than mind, and in the light of modern physical science it is far easier to form an idea of how the non-living gave birth to the living; and how mental energy is but a particular form of the cosmic energy. The deeper we probe into the problem of matter, the more wonderful we find it is, and the less complete seems the gap between it and vital and mental phenomena. Moreover, as we have already said, materialism is a way of regarding the universe, a philosophy, which is based upon the whole of science, and not upon one branch. Since it is such, since it is really a co-ordination of all our scientific knowledge and experience, and not a system of thought based upon a number of dogmas, every advance that science makes only serves to strengthen it. When Dean Inge admits that scientific methods "are constantly vindicated, and have passed into the habits of thought which determine the convictions" of the modern world, he is simply admitting that *materialism* is vindicated. Materialism is the habits of thought engendered by a scientific study of Nature.

The Dean further declares that "The future of civilization is quite uncertain. Those who have strong convictions must work for them without any assurance that they will see them triumph." That, we suggest, is a

queer attitude for a Christian to adopt. If a man believes in a divine ruler of the universe, an omniscient, omnipotent being, he can surely be neither optimistic nor pessimistic. He would surely, if he were a logical man, leave the future to the Lord, satisfied that he knows what is best for the world, and is ordering things according to his design. The attitude of the old divines whose theology can be summed up in the tag "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world," was at least logical, once the reality of their religious beliefs was admitted. If the Dean had not such a reputation for scholarship, we should be tempted to suggest that he is muddle headed.

Many years ago Mark Twain threatened to "blow the gaff" on the whole human race. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald appears to be perilously approaching that point himself. He recently stated that:—

The Government, in their incapacity to do the miraculous, the people in their incapacity to have the miraculous performed upon them, were the two most inconvenient impediments in the way of all God-fearing Governments.

Spencer expresses the same idea better in his *Study of Sociology*; but we congratulate the Premier on his first steps in freethought.

The Palestine Government is asking for a loan of £3,000,000. A much bigger business than the Government of Palestine is reputed to have been started on thirty shillings, but this is not mentioned in the best circles.

The Bishop of Bangor is 79 years of age, the Bishop of Llandaff is 77, the Archbishops of Wales and Canterbury are each 76, and the Bishop of Southwell is 73. Jolly old shepherds all. But following Jesus in a motor-car and having an army of servants may explain a good innings.

What reckless devils there are in the world—and they even write books. One of these Dick Turpins of Theology, according to a reviewer, apparently commits himself to the view that the virgin birth is incompatible with biological fact. Dr. Crichton Miller had better be careful; such implications will fling him on the rocks of common sense.

The Rev. D. Railton, Vicar of Margate, had better be careful. His heart will be his ruin. He wanted to know at the Canterbury Diocesan Conference at Birmingham why the question of the waitresses' wages at Wembley was not first brought forward by the Church. Saint Simplicity! and tut-tut. This sort of thing is not done in the best circles. The Rev. D. Railton had better rattle the old questions; they are much safer. Here is a short list: Paganism of London, Vice in the West-End, Labour involved in opening Parks for Sunday Games, Flannelette Petticoats for the Aborigines. If he goes on in this manner he will be accused of taking "Red" gold—and get the sack.

When we have time we may try to trace the link between religion and big words. Father Whitacre, in his lecture on St. Thomas Aquinas, confesses that his disquisition is "rather metaphysical than, properly speaking, theological." He deals with the distinction of potentiality and actuality and the identity of essence and existence in God. We can only ask with Erasmus, "What is the meaning of this trash?"

On the lighter side of Catholic literature we note that a reviewer writes of the ecstatic hilarity that breaks out in the Canticles of Janet Erskine Stuart. What about the lyric music in Our Lady of Sorrows?

The Bishop of Lichfield assures us that nothing took place at the Birmingham "Copec" meeting that could

not be described as sane Christian common sense. We agree with Voltaire, that the adjectives here are enemies of the substantive.

There was considerable alarm among the inhabitants of a suburb of Boulogne recently when a lion escaped from a circus and took refuge in a church. The pastor did not, it appears, command the impious beast to come forth, in the name of the Lord. Instead, the very mundane, if practical, method adopted was to send for assistance to the circus. Some of the staff came to the church and captured the animal.

It is possible that something like £2,000,000 will be the total cost of Liverpool Cathedral, which is to be opened by the King this month. A fitting place for the worship of him who had nowhere to lay his head, and is reported to have preached in the open air, like any modern agitator.

It would appear that the vices of the late Government have been quickly appropriated by the present members. Mr. Wheatley, Minister of Health, admitted in a speech that his training had enabled him to address a conference without saying anything. This polite foolery may sound very clever, but there are plenty of ecclesiastical establishments in England to provide this kind of talk that leads nowhere.

General Nollett, who is only a French soldier, is willing to include Germany in a pact under articles arranged by the League of Nations. That child's rattle, the *Daily Mail*, wants to search their pockets, and our war-mongering Bishops' voices are silent. Nationalism and religion are things that the historian might record in the story of the Churches' efforts to keep man pot-bound.

Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck stated in the House of Commons that the only way to fight Communism was to pay fair wages and remove hardships, injustices, and social inequalities. Dean Inge, having information from the celestial stable, and being a follower of the Prince of Peace, prefers more warlike measures.

The dead hand has been busy again. In a recent will disposing of an estate of £50,000, a testator makes the following bequests: £2 a year to the British Legion; £2 a year to the Salvation Army; £1 a year to the Church Army; £2 a year for the preaching of two yearly sermons on the duty of patriotism and work. The *Daily News*, with one eye on filling a space in the paper and the other on those interests that support it, asks if these bequests are sarcastic expressions of grudges, or gifts conceived as kindly and adequate. This is a perplexing problem, but our concern centres round that assessment of twenty shillings worth of superiority possessed by the Salvation Army. Is it that the testator thought that a trombone at the street corner was worth two in the pulpit?

Students of physiognomy may have noticed the difference in the appearance between the face of the man who preaches and the faces of those preached at. General Booth has a nice, round, fat face usually found among bishops and vicars, and other perspiring workers in the Lord's vineyard. They illustrate the text that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; and they also illustrate how comfortably Jesus can be followed at a distance.

Edward Carpenter has his dreams. In *Towards Industrial Freedom* he states that: "People will wake up with surprise and rub their eyes to find that they are under no necessity of being other than human." We trust that his dreams will come true, but there is no hope for this happy consummation whilst we have 50,000 skirted priests amongst us who appear to be neither men nor women.

EVERY ONE ANOTHER ONE—To Gain a New Reader for the

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

C. A. PRIESTLY.—We do not think the essay you name would be such as we should care to publish. It seems rather out of our line.

E. SMEDLEY.—When we say that science knows nothing of the soul we mean that organized knowledge knows nothing of it. It is useless as an explanation, because we know nothing about it, and you do not remove a difficulty already existing by introducing another and a quite gratuitous one.

J. CARRUTHERS.—We are pleased to hear of Mr. Whitehead's success at Blackburn, and should welcome the formation of a Blackburn Branch of the N.S.S. There are plenty of Freethinkers in the neighbourhood of Blackburn to keep the Branch active and healthy.

H. AMEX.—The Atheist does not say there is no God, since by itself the word stands for nothing at all. But if he did say so it would certainly not be so foolish as the man who not only says there is a God, but is prepared to tell you all about him. That kind of stupidity is tolerated only because it has been so long in evidence.

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

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

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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.

The Secretary of the South London Branch, Mr. A. Heath, writes that since fixing a small rack on the open-air platform displaying the Freethinker and pamphlets, a much better sale has resulted. He hopes, and so do we, that other branches will try the same plan. On Sunday last the speaker was Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and we are glad to know that the audiences were large and appreciative, with quite a volley of questions at the conclusion of each lecture.

Mr. A. B. Moss, who as been enjoying a brief holiday, resumes his lecturing to-day, July 15, in Victoria Park. East End Freethinkers will make a note of the fact, and will doubtless make a point of being present.

The Annual Meeting of the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. will be held at Derricourt's Restaurant on July 14 at 8 o'clock. The Branch has also arranged for an excursion to-day (July 13) to The Lickeys. Those joining will meet at the Navigation Street tram terminus at 2.30. Tea will be provided.

Optimistic Pessimism.

ART is often more real than life. The picture art paints is more definite and clear, because life rarely pursues an aim to its logical conclusion; it does not possess the single-minded purity of art. Emotions in life are feeble compared with their intensity in the realm of art. Nothing in life can provide the ultimate satisfaction supplied by the ideal circumstances of art.

The Stage Society's production of Ernst Toller's *Man and the Masses*¹ is a piece of melodramatic propaganda, and its presentation recalls the gruesome intensity of the Grand Guignol shows for which the same actors were responsible. *Man and the Masses* is definitely a period play. The intensity of its emotion is of a kind that will be incomprehensible to the happier days of the future—if they are happier.

The play portrays the ancient conflict between divergent human emotions, which in man takes the form of a struggle between sexual love and love of work, and in woman takes that of a contest between pity for suffering humanity and love of an individual. The acting of Sybil Thorndike emphasizes this personal human side which must absorb each individual, and the play itself is in the key of the Capek dramas, although its laughter is much more grim. The very rectitude of each man's actions, according to his own reading, is what condemns him, says Toller in effect, because it forbids the acknowledgment of a similar rectitude in every other man's actions. Action in this play is dictated by principle, and the very altitude of his principles is what leads man to destruction. The more emotional nature of the woman perceives that principle is too broad, because it takes no heed of the individual, whom it would sacrifice to the Moloch of the masses in order to save humanity. She wants something finer than the easy generalizations of the conflicting men; she desires the conservation of every man, not that of the future for men. Why, she asks pregnantly, should any man suffer, or be sacrificed. Master or slave, each is still a man, suffering the same passions, the same hurts, and each should feel for all, rather than confine his pity to the narrow boundaries of a class. It is a statement of the unending struggle between emotions that are irreconcilable, and the blame for their existence is placed upon the creator, where it should have been placed upon the incomplete development of humanity.

The play is ostensibly a piece of anti-Bolshevik propaganda, but it is very much more than that. It does not spare any class. It punishes with a quite unsubtle weapon the futilities of the much admired class consciousness, which is so respected now that man has, to a limited extent, won his battle with the irrational forces of the objective world. Since he must emerge from his cocoon of barbarism, he now struggles with himself to achieve a unity of effort, but he cannot perceive his unity of aim. The class war is an anachronism in a self-conscious age, but its futilities are indulged in by all, who desire a selfish proportion of the wealth resulting from the victory over Nature. Having tamed the powers of the elements, man has yet failed to achieve self-control, and remains a sorry amateur in social organization, gibbering in his self-created misery.

The actual characters, who participate in the action of the play, are overdrawn; they are caricatures similar to those of Dickens, and the thing was unavoidably overplayed. It had to be, partly because it was a work of art, partly because no issue is so clear in the world of every day as it is in the sublimated life of the realm of art.

¹ *Man and the Masses*, by Ernest Toller.

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It is a pessimistic production. Man cannot escape the limitations of himself, or so Toller would appear to believe, but perhaps he only tries to show that the prison is self-created, and the walls are no more substantial than the chains borne in a dream.

Each figure is terrible and terrifying. The man in his calm correctness, torn between his desire for the woman and his oath to the phantasm of the State, a conception covering the interests of a section; the woman, torn between her love for him and her pity for the suffering of another class; the financier, who is prepared to provide public brothels for the destruction of others, provided he can obtain his desire; the workman, fanatically craving destruction as the means of liberation; the comrades, wounded by their enemies, and slain by their friends, the soldier, for whom the highest good is the fulfilment of the exact terms of an order—all these symbolical, terrifying figures pass in the bright concentrated light of art before an astounded vision, and leave humanity to discover its own answer to the question it has always been able to ask—"Whither?"

It is impossible to see this play without bringing away new conceptions. It is impossible to answer the questions it asks; and, while the theatre cannot be admitted to be the proper setting for propaganda, it is eminently the proper place to show the soul of man in conflict with circumstance. Formerly the tragedy of the world was concerned with the more obvious of human conflicts; desire was limited to the personal passions and ambitions, and passions were limited to the emotions aroused by other single persons; the modern playwright, exemplified by Toller, and his play, takes a wider view. Emotion is broader and is growing. The influence of the development of altruism, non-religious and unselfish altruism, has brought in its train new problems and new sufferings, and it is these new problems and their emotions and desires that have provided the more humane of the modern dramatists with a motif that definitely belongs to the time, although it is as universal as tragedy has ever been. *Man and the Masses* is pathological, but it is concerned with a pathology of the utmost relevance to human life, and it is a diagnosis of a disease, for which it offers a sudorific of a kind that humanity cannot afford to ignore.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Methods of Propaganda.

THE National Secular Society is primarily a propagandist body. Its object is to abolish superstition root and branch, and to establish a society based upon reason and knowledge. At the risk of being termed a "bourgeois ideologist," I venture to suggest that this object will be attained through the clash of ideas rather than through improved social conditions. Fundamentally it is a problem in education. Hence the question of propaganda.

It is for us to consider how best to improve the movement and so spread the gospel of freethought. I know there are Freethinkers who have no desire to disturb the mental and religious outlook of the people, and who would prefer freethought ideas to percolate through in an haphazard fashion. But not so the ardent propagandist. He takes the view that having obtained a truth it is for him to pass it on, so that others may share his good fortune.

We often hear complaints of the smallness of our meetings, and those responsible for branch activities often console themselves by saying that what they lack in quantity they make up for in quality. Whether this is a rationalization of an ugly truth or not is a matter for speculation. But whatever view is taken

there can be no question that the ideas for which the freethought movement stands have made very considerable progress, as a comparison of *The Freethinker's Text Book* with present-day freethought literature will show. Such a comparison also indicates that the freethought attack is being made from a different angle. And although this is true with regard to much of the literature, it is not true with regard to many of our meetings and lectures. The view-point on those occasions is rather restricted, and the constant lectures on God killing without any reference to active life, become just a little tiresome. In fact, this may account for the paucity of numbers at our meetings. The novice is apt to question the utility of it all, and too seldom is it pointed out that the influence of these superstitions have a disastrous effect on many of our current problems. The lecture platform could be broadened, and I think strengthened, by applying the freethought point of view to topics other than religion. After all, there are superstitions in other realms of thought, such as politics, economics, and sociology.

The enthusiastic propagandist is ever ready for further and increased activities, and these perhaps can best be considered from the point of view of the Branch in relation to its domestic affairs, and then from the point of view of the Branch in relation to the public generally.

There is no sufficient outlet in the movement for the energies of our young people. Attendance at occasional lectures will not suffice. There are a few secular schools in existence, but even they are not as virile as they might be, because in many cases their adherents have not thought themselves into the position, but have come into the movement ready made like orthodox Church members. We want more schools where the principles of freethought could be explained to our young people. The difficulty is largely one of finance. But why should not each Branch look to the future and establish a Building Fund with the object of purchasing premises of their own, and meanwhile utilize such accommodation as they can obtain? Schools of this kind would be utilized for the training on a broad and scientific basis of the children of Freethinkers. Marching and calisthenics would cater for the physical side of their natures, and the mental or intellectual side would receive attention in group classes. The preparation of a freethought Manual might be undertaken with examples and excerpts culled from the lives and writings of the pioneers past and present, and this could be used as a text book. Why cannot we make the experiment? Surely we have men and women in the movement who would be prepared to undertake the work. The time certainly has not arrived for us to rest on our laurels and consider the battle won.

We want our lecturers ready made without the trouble involved in fitting them for the platform. Could not these schools have graduated classes to follow the plan laid down by Mr. F. J. Gould in his Moral Instruction Series? In the more advanced groups a series of study courses could be pursued, followed by discussion, and these could be used as seminaries for our future lecturers and leaders. The adult class would furnish an excellent springing-off ground.

So much for the domestic side of Branch activity. To carry our movement into the highways and byways is propaganda pure and simple, and to do this effectively is a question of organization.

At the interim Conference at Birmingham in 1918 an amended and extended Constitution and Rules was approved. We have not yet taken advantage of all the machinery there provided for. We had power to appoint a full time organizer, but that has not been done. We have had one lecturer undertaking a week's

propaganda here and there, but his activities have been too sporadic. The organizer should be the confidant of the Branches, and by constant visitation should keep them up to concert pitch. Branches are organized by enthusiasts, and their enthusiasm is apt to wane unless the movement remains a living force to them. Apart from the annual conference, there is nothing to co-ordinate these activities, with the result that they are apt to flag. Again, Branch representation at the monthly meetings of the Executive is in fact a matter of proxy. Could not this position be largely remedied by having District Councils for convenient groups of Branches. The District Councils could co-ordinate Branch activities in the area, and the District Councils in turn would keep in touch with the Central Body in London through their representative on the Executive for whom they would undertake financial responsibility.

Open-air work is essential, and often is more effective than set indoor meetings, and consequently should be exploited to the full during the summer months. There are greater facilities for the distribution of literature, and the appeal generally is to the unconverted. There would be the difficulty of obtaining speakers, but the District Council would be able to arrange an interchange of speakers at little cost. Again, the District Council might arrange an outing for all the Branches in the area, to be coupled with a mass demonstration at some popular and central meeting place. A sort of gathering of the clans.

In the winter months we have our indoor meetings. These surely could be made more attractive. The enquirer is often nonplussed at the apparent coldness of our meetings, and this could be remedied by music and song. Each Branch should have a Literature Secretary, someone who will make himself responsible for obtaining and distributing the "printed word" of the freethought gospel.

Debates whenever these can be arranged make excellent propaganda, but as our opponents realize this, they are very chary in engaging in this kind of controversy.

Again, the local press can often be utilized to express our point of view. This is a form of Branch activity that could be cultivated with considerable success.

I recognize that many of these suggestions involve expense, but to a band of enthusiasts the actual outlay need not be heavy. Many of our members are not in a position to pay their annual subscription in one sum, and if each Branch had one or two collectors who would undertake to collect the subscriptions periodically this would be a method of keeping the members in touch with Branch activities.

But on every occasion from the cradle to the grave our point of view should be expressed, the object being to show that the ceremonials at birth, marriage, and death are not at all necessary to a full and adequate social existence. Not that this is necessarily propaganda, but it goes to show that our philosophy touches life at every point and in every phase. It is regrettable, but none the less true, that many Freethinkers do not insist on their right to affirm, with the result that the opposition appears to be stronger than is in fact the case.

Propaganda to be effective will require hard work; much of it apparently without any result. It will mean the attendance at numberless "footling little meetings" and endless discussions which seem to lead nowhere. But the path will have to be traversed, and the only satisfaction we shall obtain is that we shall have added our quota to a great movement which seeks the mental emancipation of the race, and that surely is a sufficient *quid pro quo*—if one were necessary—for all the time and labour spent in and for the Cause.

F. EDWIN MONKS.

Why the Birth Rate Falls.

III.

(Concluded from page 428.)

THE advocates of the contraceptive hypothesis are relying upon evidence which is no evidence at all, since there is no means of knowing whether or not those people who claim to be restricting the size of their family would ever have had any more children; and the coincidence between the taking to contraceptives and the cessation of childbearing is inevitable in the case of hundreds out of every thousand of those who take to contraceptives, owing to the fact that those people who use no contraceptives have only two or three children on the average. The only true scientific method is to apply a variety of tests designed to ascertain whether or not the decline in the birth rate is really due to contraceptive methods. For example, if it be true that the decline is due to contraceptives, then those who do not use them should have families as large as ever. Fortunately, we now have abundant evidence upon this point. The report of the National Birth Rate Commission contains the results of three distinct enquiries. Of these, one showed that the average family among those using contraceptives was 2.4, as against 1.6 for those not using; another showed an average of $3\frac{1}{8}$ against $2\frac{1}{2}$ respectively; while the third enquiry gave 2.7 and 2.88, but in this case the average duration of the marriage was eighteen years for those not using contraceptives, against fourteen years for those using them. An enquiry carried out in the United States by questionnaire among 995 married couples of some social eminence, mostly college graduates, showed among those using contraceptives an average of 2.5 pregnancies per marriage, as against an average of 1.65 amongst those not using them; while an enquiry carried out by personal interviews among fifty married women produced similar results. It is an interesting commentary upon the reliability of those "contraceptives," by the way, that of 730 women in this enquiry who were stated to have used contraceptives, no less than 187 had families ranging from 4 to 13, while 93 women had procured 149 abortions between them.

It is attempted to meet these facts by arguing that the people who do not use contraceptives are mostly those who have never felt the need for them, owing to their natural infertility. This may have some application to childless marriages, but otherwise it is a fallacy. The average fecund family in the American enquiry among those using contraceptives was 2.8, and among those not using 2.3. It would be interesting to know why the average family in the one case should "feel the need" for contraceptive measures and not in the other. Those whose families averaged 2.3 would have no more means of knowing whether or not they would have any more children than those whose families numbered 2.8. They would simply have to take the risk, if they elected not use contraceptives, and the result shows that those who take the risk have families no larger on the average than those who take to contraceptives.

The worthlessness of the argument is shown by the results of an enquiry carried out in Paris among the families of those people who were most conspicuous in their advocacy of larger families and their opposition to birth control. It was found that the average family worked out at $1\frac{1}{3}$. Of 445 married couples, no less than 176 were childless, and only 75 couples had more than two children. Yet all these were wealthy people, well situated to rear large families. As even the most ardent special pleaders in favour of the contraceptive hypothesis hesitate to infer that practically all these people were deliberate hypocrites

or suffering from venereal disease, an attempt is made to evade the point by calling them "highbrows," and admitting that highbrows have always been very infertile, assuming that by labelling them so all necessity for explanation is avoided.

Yet they were not highbrows, but simply average members of the middle and wealthy classes. From the days of Aristotle it has been observed that the more prosperous classes have been less fertile than the poor. In this country even before 1851, and while the birth rate was still rising, the coal miners, the most fertile class, were 25 per cent. more fertile than the middle and wealthy classes, after all allowances for difference in age at marriage had been made. From the miners, through unskilled labour and skilled labour, to the middle class there was the same graduating down of fertility as we have to-day; while the peers were less fertile still. Agricultural labourers were less fertile than the miners, and textile workers were less fertile than either. Such facts demand explanation, not evasion.

The alleged facts which have been adduced as rebutting evidence against me are many and various, but there is one feature common to them all. Upon examination they invariably turn out to be absolutely wrong, or else exactly what my views demand; and it is literally true; as I have pointed out again and again, that the advocates of the contraceptive hypothesis cannot produce a single fact in support of their case which will bear examination. Thus, the fertility of the peerage has been adduced, and it has been argued by Mr. R. B. Kerr that the fertility of the peers, taken from Debrett, 1878, was greater than that of the population as a whole. The average completed family among the peers at that period was 4.7; but Mr. Kerr has fallen into the error of comparing the completed families of the peers with families of incompleting fertility among the rest of the population. He has compared the 4.7 of the peers with the average size of all families among the rest of the population as shown by the census figure, and that includes those who were married only the day before the census was taken. The true figures for families of completed fertility for marriages among the various classes during the period 1851-61 are as under:—

Coal miners	...	...	...	8.23
Unskilled labourers	...	...	...	7.81
Skilled labourers	...	...	...	7.58
Middle and wealthy class	...	...	...	6.42
Peers	...	...	...	4.70

The peerage of the present day shows an average fertility of 2.89 for those peers married up to and during 1900, while the average completed family for the middle and wealthy classes for marriages occurring during the period 1871-1900 was 3.74. Yet the fertility of the peers has been quoted against me! It will be seen that it is as exactly as possible what my views demand. It may be added that the Roman Catholic peers show an average family of 2.69, while about 17 per cent. are childless. This is for all families, though most of them may be regarded as complete. The leading Roman Catholics of this country show an average family of just about three, while about 23 per cent. are childless. Thus the difference between the average fertility of the Roman Catholics and that of the rest of the population is almost negligible, and the notion that the former are much more fertile is due to the fact that there are large numbers of Irish Catholics in the various cities of this country, mostly unskilled labourers, who are fertile because they are poor.

Another triumphant argument of Mr. Kerr is that five ex-premiers of this country have twenty-four children between them. This is supposed to be a

crushing blow to me. But even had these men been exceptionally fertile, it would have signified nothing, for there are fertile members even among the most infertile classes; and every statistician knows that small numbers, even when taken at random, are not necessarily fair samples, and may be grossly misleading owing to the patchy way in which Nature distributes things. The law of averages only works out fairly through large numbers. But, one of these men having been married twice, the average number of children per marriage is only four, as against 3.74 for those members of the wealthy and middle classes who were married during the same period. Thus, the difference is quite trivial, and we have another instance of the habit of recklessly quoting facts the bearing of which has never really been examined.

There is another fallacy of the same kind available which is so much more plausible and imposing that I am astonished that no one has yet made use of it. By judiciously selecting the more fertile among the reigning monarchs of Europe, it would be possible to show that the average fertility among royalties works out at about six per family of completed fertility! But, unfortunately for this deduction, I have gone through the families of the relatives of King George, numbering 107 marriages, nearly all of completed fertility, and I find that the average works out at 2.88, a figure agreeing as closely as possible with that of the peers. It simply means that a few of the more fertile royalties happen to occupy the thrones at present; but if we went back, say, half a century, we might find the average fertility of kings very low, although royalty as a whole was more fertile than now. It happens that sometimes the more fertile and sometimes the less fertile individuals among royalty occupy the thrones.

Another very good example of the alleged facts adduced against me is provided by the statement of Professor Ahluwalia before the International Conference of the Malthusian League of 1922, when he claimed that the number of births per 1,000 married women of child-bearing age was only 160 for India in 1911, as against 196 for England and Wales. It is asserted that this proves that hard conditions of life are not favourable to high fertility. But the statement is based upon a statistical blunder of the most elementary kind. The census of India covered a population of over 312,000,000, whereas the population from which birth rate and death rate returns are received numbers only 238,000,000, no returns being received from the Native States. Professor Ahluwalia has fallen into the error of assuming that the number of births given for India in 1911 covers the whole country, as a little simple arithmetic will show anyone who cares to test the matter. The true figure per 1,000 married women from 15 to 40 (the period adopted by the registration authorities of India as the child-bearing age, owing to the early marriages and early cessation of child-bearing in that country) upon the actual returns in 1911 is 231, and this is admitted by the statistical authorities to be very imperfect. Good reason can be shown for believing that the fertility rate of India in 1911 was over 300 per 1,000 married women of child-bearing age, a rate higher than that of this country when it was at its highest. Moreover, investigation has shown that in Indian villages the more prosperous inhabitants have fewer children than the less prosperous; while the census returns show that the lower classes have a larger proportion of children than the upper classes. In short, India exhibits in every detail exactly the same demographic phenomena as this and every other country. I know of no argument in favour of the contraceptive hypothesis which will stand examination better than that of Professor Ahluwalia.

One of the odd features of the birth control propaganda is the assumption of its protagonists that it is either a matter of life and death to society or else a quite superfluous and unnecessary thing according to the exigencies of the argument and the evidence. Thus, when the high fertility of the slum populations is pointed out, or the immense fertility of all nations until the death rate began to decline, it is argued that these people are or have been lamentably ignorant of birth control methods, and that it is imperative that we should run an intensive campaign to educate them. But I point out that there is no birth control propaganda in New Zealand. During an eleven years' residence in that country I never saw a pamphlet or newspaper article or heard of a single public meeting in support of birth control, and it is hardly possible to get a letter in the newspapers on the subject. Yet fertility declines just as swiftly in New Zealand as in this country. And when the death rate began to decline in France as the result of the overthrow of the *ancien régime*, with its oppressive tyranny, the birth rate began to decline immediately, although there was no birth control propaganda and although effective contraceptive methods were practically unknown. To-day, all birth control propaganda, all giving of birth control information, and all sales of contraceptives have been suppressed in France under the most drastic penalties. Yet the birth rate falls as rapidly as ever. The people are not rendered in the least degree more fertile.

And so, in answer to these undoubted facts, the birth controllers begin to answer that birth control propaganda is not really necessary. The people find these things out for themselves. They "tell each other." But, if so, why does not this apply to the English and to the thrifty and well-educated Scots before 1875? Were they really so much more ignorant or stupid than the French or the New Zealanders? Is it not curious that this power of absorbing contraceptive knowledge from the atmosphere always springs into existence instantaneously when the death rate begins to fall, and never under any circumstance manifests itself except in company with a falling death rate? Why have the thrifty Scots to-day a higher birth rate than the relatively unthrifty English, having also a higher death rate? Of course, it has been argued that the high fertility of the people of India is due to their ignorance of birth control; but now that it has been shown that India exhibits exactly the same demographic phenomena as every other country, we may expect to hear it argued that the fertility of India is regulated by contraceptives. The controversial effectiveness of birth controllers is certainly not hampered by any embarrassing attachment to consistency; but to the impartial observer all these mutual contradictions will probably appear as the desperate special pleading of those who are attempting to defend a case which is absolutely indefensible.

CHARLES EDWARD PELL.

No creed for me! I am a man apart:
A mouthpiece for the creeds of all the world;

A martyr for all mundane moods to tear;
The slave of every passion, and the slave
Of heat and cold, of darkness and of light;
A trembling lyre for every wind to sound.
I am a man set to overhear
The inner harmony, the very tune
Of Nature's heart; to be a thoroughfare
For all the pageantry of Time: to catch
The mutterings of the Spirit of the Hour
— And make them known.

—John Davidson.

Correspondence.

WANTED—NIGHT SCHOOLS FOR CATHOLICS!

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is claimed, I believe, for the Roman Catholic Church that, relying upon authority and not reason, her apologists can be trusted to avoid some of the grosser errors into which Protestant speakers and writers are entrapped.

In regard to the Catholic Defence League propaganda, now proceeding in Hyde Park, this hardly applies.

While the speaker to whom I listened the other evening put his case ably and lucidly, his supporters in the crowd were I found profoundly ignorant.

This is what they told me in conversation during and after the speech: (1) That Joan of Arc was burnt by a Protestant, to wit, the Earl of Warwick; (2) that Cobbett was not a Freethinker; (3) that Thomas Paine was not a Freethinker; (4) that Voltaire was not a Deist.

The lady and the gentlemen responsible for these statements were all, they assured me, devout Romans.

Surely the Catholic Defence League can do better than this? Let them start students' classes in which elementary facts—historical and theological—are taught to the youth of their faith. These are, I fear, a shade more ignorant and intolerant than the Protestants; though I did not think that possible. AGNOSTIC.

TOPSY-TURVY THEOLOGY.

SIR,—The article in your issue of June 29, entitled "Topsy-Turvy Theology," exhibits a lack of understanding of the subject of Christian Science on the part of the writer. When he declares Mrs. Eddy "attempted to build a golden bridge between religion and science," he has in his mind, no doubt, the so-called orthodox religions of to-day and natural science. The reconciliation of these Mrs. Eddy has in no way attempted.

Christian Science, as its name implies, is Christian knowledge. The record of Christ Jesus reveals the fact that he had a knowledge of spiritual law which superseded all so-called natural law. This knowledge is scientific and is capable of being demonstrated by those who gain it. Mrs. Eddy, through her close study of the Bible, discovered the divine Principle, and its spiritual laws, which underlay the works of the prophets, Christ Jesus, his disciples, and the early Christians. Having thoroughly tested and proved that this spiritual understanding healed the sick and reformed the sinner, she was then enabled to teach others how to do this work; and so the Christian Science movement began, and it is now encircling the globe. There are hundreds of thousands to-day engaged in this work of reformation and goodwill towards men. Christian Science is the fulfilment of the declaration of Isaiah (chapter 9, verse 2): "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."

The Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, is not "the newest of new Bibles," as our critic avers. It is, as its name implies, a Key to the original Scriptures. Christian Scientists acknowledge the King James version of the Bible, which they study daily, and they are very grateful to Mrs. Eddy, who revealed to the world the spiritual meaning of its pages.

Our critic has referred to Mark Twain's ridicule of Christian Science, let me quote what Mark Twain also said in favour of it: "Christian Science is humanity's boon.....She [Mrs. Eddy] has organized and made available a healing principle that for two thousand years has never been employed, except as the merest kind of guesswork. She is the benefactor of the age." (Excerpt from page 1271 of *Mark Twain, a Biography*, by Paine, Volume 111.)

CHARLES W. J. TENNANT.

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY.

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a review in the *Freethinker*, of June 29, of my book, *A Critical Examination of Psycho-analysis* (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.). Your reviewer, "W. H.," evidently belongs to that large class of people who think they study psychology when they

amuse themselves with psycho-analytic literature. They remind me, as I mentioned in my book, of William Sefton Moorhouse (in New Zealand), of whom Samuel Butler reports in his *Note Books*, that he imagined he was being converted to Christianity by reading Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which he had got by mistake for Butler's *Analogy*, on the recommendation of a friend. But it puzzled him a good deal.

"W. H." says: "As this book has been hailed with delight by a number of the enemies of the doctrine of Professor Freud, it perhaps deserves a little critical examination itself." Unhappily his criticism is confined to my "elaborate and learned patter." He is angry with me that I have pulled his idol Freud from the pedestal upon which he places him and that I speak irreverently of his psycho-analytic *faith*. I say *Faith* designedly, for the psycho-analytic "Unconscious" is the outcome of anthropomorphic tendencies with respect to the inner life, as the creation of ghosts, spirits, and deities is the outcome of such tendencies with respect to the outer life. "W. H.'s" criticism really merits no reply, but lest your readers might infer from it that my arguments are mere logomachy (I hope the word won't hurt "W. H."), I may tell them that "W. H." carefully avoids coming to close quarters. I will give him an opportunity and single out a couple of arguments. Freud's theory is based upon the interpretation of dreams. It is contended that the dream as we know it is but a symbolic representation of repressed thoughts in the "Unconscious," that from this "manifest dream-content" we can by "free associations" come to those hidden thoughts, the "latent dream-thoughts." The proof that the result is the opening up of the "Unconscious" consists in that it, the result, fits so completely into the dreamer's life; this, says Freud, cannot possibly be due to chance. Now I took a dream I had never dreamt, in the formation of which my "Unconscious" could therefore not have played any part. It was Pharaoh's dream recorded in Genesis. I treated it in exactly the same way as Freud treats his dreams, and look at the result given in my book! Again, Freud says that if a person writes down any number that comes into his head it can be proved that this number is not due to mere chance, but that his "Unconscious" prompted him. He then analyses the number in a similar manner as he does dreams, and "proves" his assertions by the fact that he gets something that completely fits into the person's life. Now I took *Freud's own numbers*, not mine, analysed them for myself in the same way as did Freud for himself, and obtained quite as good, if not better results. I therefore showed, as completely as it is possible to do, that Freud's reasoning is fallacious. Many more examples are to be found in my book.

If your reviewer can divest himself of his prejudice and examine his psycho-analytic faith as dispassionately as he has doubtless probed his religious faith—for I take him to be a Rationalist—I would recommend him to read my book again, more carefully, and he will cease to be an admirer of any of the psycho-analytic doctrines.

A. WOHLGEMUTH.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

The South London Branch again had a very successful day on Sunday, July 6, when Mr. R. H. Rosetti addressed two meetings in Brockwell Park. As is usually the case in Brockwell Park, the evening address attracted the larger audience, and was listened to with very keen attention, the only interruption coming from an octogenarian Christian who confessed to having been saved from a life of debauchery through listening to Moody and Sankey; and who hoped similarly to convert the lecturer and his supporters. At the conclusion of the lecture Mr. Rosetti, at his express invitation, was bombarded with questions—perhaps boomerangs would be a more appropriate word, inasmuch as they materially assisted in driving home his case against Christianity, and recoiled on the heads of his interlocutors. Mr. Hyatt followed, and kept a large crowd well interested until closing time. Once more the supply of *Freethinkers* was sold out, and there was a steady demand for other literature.

A. HEATH, Hon. Secretary.

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, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Atheism."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner, Islington): Every Friday at 8 p.m., Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Freethought lectures and debates every evening in Hyde Park. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Beale, Hyatt, Harris, Hart, Keeling, Knubley, Saphin, Shaller, Dr. Stuart, M.A., Mr. Vincent, B.A., B.Sc., and Mr. Howell Smith.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. E. Burke will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Outing to Theydon Bois. Train 9.40 from Stratford. Return fare 1s. 5d.; ask for cheap ticket. Each member to carry lunch, and tea will be arranged. Mr. H. C. White will act as guide. All Freethinkers and friends invited.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BOLTON SECULAR SOCIETY (Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street): 2.15, "Demos" (T. Hibbert), "Humanity's Great Illusion—'God.'"

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, Mr. Carlton, a Lecture.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION, 1924.—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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