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Views and Opinions.

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Blasphemy and "Decency."

In the discussion on the second reading of the Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching to Children Bill Lord Haldane pointed out that "as long as one advocated his opinions in decent terms, no one had a right to interfere." If "decent" was applied to all subjects in the same way and manner there could be no special objection to the rule; but this is not the case. Decency is a very question-begging term, and in any case, what is considered "decent" in relation to one subject is not considered "decent" in regard to another. With regard to religion, where the judge and jury belong to the religion that is being attacked, the term is peculiarly objectionable, since it is left for them to say whether *their* opinions—and opinions which they have been brought up to believe should receive a special measure of consideration—have been treated in a way which they regard as proper. There has never been a trial for blasphemy where the language of which complaint was made, if used in connection with any other subject, would have been considered improper. It was the fact of the Christian religion being spoken of in certain terms that made it offensive. Had it been any other religion no complaint would have been made, or could have had any legal standing. To pretend that it is "decency" only that is aimed at is to add hypocrisy to intolerance.

Freedom and the State.

Commenting on Lord Haldane's utterance, the *Evening Standard* remarks:—

That in itself is a proposition more questionable to-day than it was in Lord Haldane's youth. During the war the expression of certain opinions, however decently expressed, was an offence against the community, and there must always be a limit to what may be said, as well as to what may be done, in regard to questions held to be of fundamental importance to society as it happens to be constituted.

The general truth contained in this only makes the fallacy it holds the more dangerous. During the war the *Freethinker* stood almost alone in keeping before its readers what is now generally admitted, namely, that our whole life was moving on a lower level and

the consequences would have to be faced later. Even though circumstances made this lowering of the tone of life inevitable, it is certain that had the truth been faced the results would not have been so bad as they have been. There never was any real necessity for the people being spoon-fed with prepared official stories; nor for the whole of the press to have joined in the suppression of the truth whenever authority decreed it should be done. It was one of the calamities of the situation that the expression of opinion was treated as a crime, and the word of a Government official was enough to decide whether an opinion should be suppressed or not. And the most disturbing feature of the situation was not that certain liberties were lost during the war, but that the majority of people seemed quite unaware they had lost anything worth having. It showed that the feeling for liberty—for intellectual liberty which really does matter, as compared with political liberty which matters much less—was not really so strong as some of us had thought it was. The war gave authority an impetus of which it was not slow to avail itself.

* * *

The Limits of Toleration.

It is quite true that there are limits to what may be said at any time; but these limits are well laid down in the law of libel, and should serve. I may not say what I think concerning the character of any person, because that may be defaming an individual; but it by no means follows that, therefore, I may not express my opinions about the justice or the wisdom of the laws, of the constitution as a whole, or of religious beliefs and doctrines. There should be no limit whatever, so far as the law is concerned, to expression of opinion concerning either the British constitution or religion. If I believe the Christian religion to be a mixture of lies, delusions, and fables, there should be perfect freedom to say so. If I believe the British Constitution to be bad, or royalty to be an evil, or our present economic system bad, there should be liberty to say these things also. It does not matter whether I am right or wrong in these opinions. Right or wrong they may be, but they are my opinions; and the right to express an opinion has nothing whatever to do with its rightness or wrongness. It certainly has nothing to do with the distinction drawn by Lord Balfour of whether certain opinions are taught to young people or adults. There are plenty of legal adults who are never more than intellectual children. The gospels tell us that the kingdom of heaven is made of such; but heaven has not a monopoly of them. It is often said that an opinion ought not to be suppressed because it might be true. My position is that if it is false there is less justification for its attempted suppression. I would allow every opinion a free platform; but if possible I would allow every false opinion two platforms. It should have additional opportunities of making itself heard, for it is only by bringing falsehood into the light of day that it can be completely exposed. The freer the expression the more certain the exposure.

The Growth of Authority.

I have no desire to pose as a pessimist regarding the future, and have no feeling in that direction, but all the same there seems to me considerable truth in the opinion of the *Standard* that Lord Haldane's proposition is not to-day so unquestionable as it would have seemed in his youth. The feeling for intellectual freedom and individual liberty is not so keen as it was fifty years ago. It is, I believe, a passing phase, but at present authority seems to be having an innings. The war emphasized very strongly the power of authority, but after all it only brought out what had been coming to the front for some years. In all directions there has been an enormous development of officials and official orders. This is not only true of the agencies directly under the Government, but it is true also of the people as a whole. We have been getting accustomed in all directions to being drilled and ordered by officials—a Government official here, a trade union official here, another official elsewhere—we have been so ticketed, numbered, scheduled, and regulated that a generation has grown up which appears to have largely forgotten that such a thing as individual freedom exists; and certainly acts as though it places small value upon it. This growth of the principle of authority in political and social matters has inevitably reacted in intellectual ones. If authority may regulate what we shall do in so many matters of everyday life, may it not also regulate what we shall say or publish? Where governments do, or are expected to do, so much, there must always be a tendency on the part of governments to attempt to regulate the expression of opinion by which they rise or fall. So that we have reached the position that while there is to-day greater difficulty in forcing people to accept specific religious or political doctrines, there is less devotion to principles of intellectual and individual freedom than there was during Lord Haldane's youth. But I do not regard this as more than a danger signal. There will be a reaction here as there has been so often before. What I desire to point out at present is the insidious growth of pure authority in our lives, and this has prepared the way for such ridiculous measures as that of Lord Danesfort. I am quite sure that fifty years ago such a proposal would never have reached a second reading. Perhaps it is one of the things that may cause thoughtful people to work back to something like first principles and so set on foot a needed and healthful reaction.

* * *

The Need for Freedom.

As though it were axiomatic, we are told there must always be a limit to what may be said concerning questions that are held to be of fundamental importance. But who is to decide what opinions are of fundamental importance? If it is the opinions that are established, we place a sharp limit to progress. If it is sincerity of conviction, who shall claim primacy? People who talk in this loose way would do well to remember that there is certainly as much, and often more, sincerity with unorthodox opinions than there is with orthodox ones. Whether religion is myth or a truth, whether a capitalistic or a socialistic system is the better, whether governments ought to do all, or whether they should be replaced by voluntary associations of free men and women, are all opinions that may be held with equal sincerity. What, one may ask Lord Danesfort and his "distinguished ecclesiastics," is a parent to do who takes the unorthodox side of a question? Is he to stand on one side while others are teaching his boys and girls things which he believes to be wrong? In that case he neglects his plain duty as a parent. Is he to remain quiet while others are loudly proclaiming their orthodox opinions to adults? In that case he fails

to do his duty as a citizen. If any of these questions are of fundamental importance they are not less fundamental to the heretic than they are to the true believer. There may be limits as to what a man may do in carrying his opinions into practice when they conflict with what the rest of the community believe, but there should be no limits as to the expression of opinion no matter how fundamental the things may be. The more important the matters are the more important it is that they should be fully and openly discussed. There is no other rule that can avoid the encouragement of intolerance and the obstruction of genuine progress. That, however, is a lesson that politicians learn but slowly, and which ecclesiastics—distinguished or otherwise—never master.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

What is Life?

(Concluded from page 451.)

ALL who knew Olive, whether personally or merely through her writings, are fully persuaded that she was a lover of philosophy, and was in the habit from earliest years of looking at the universe with the eye of logical criticism. In her, intellect and emotion were exceedingly well balanced. Of the truth of this estimate of her genius *The Story of an African Farm* is a magnificent illustration. Dismissing Bonaparte Blenkins as more or less an obvious caricature, and Em as an ordinary girl brought up on a Dutch farm fifty and sixty years ago, we find that most of the other characters, especially Waldo and Lyndall, are very largely but two different aspects or sides of Olive Schreiner herself. This is perfectly obvious, and on more than one occasion the present writer was assured of this from the author's own lips. Olive Schreiner was from early girlhood a passionate advocate of the essential equality of the sexes, and nothing caused her greater grief than the fact that woman, at the time this book was written, was cruelly crushed beneath the iron heel of selfish man. Lyndall had just returned to the farm after her four years at a boarding school. Soon she had a long conversation with Waldo. Suddenly she asked him: "Don't you wish you were a woman, Waldo?" Without a moment's hesitation the boy answered, "No"; at which answer she was not at all surprised. Lyndall waxed dreadfully sarcastic saying to her friend: "To you it [the world] says, *Work*; and to us it says, *Seem*." Proceeding, she spoke thus:—

Look at this little chin of mine, Waldo, with the dimple in it. It is but a small part of my person; but though I had a knowledge of all things under the sun, and the wisdom to use it, and the deep, loving heart of an angel, it would not stead me through life like this little chin. I can win money with it, I can win love; I can win power with it, I can win fame. What would knowledge help me? The less a woman has in her head the lighter she is for climbing. I once heard an old man say that he never saw intellect help a woman so much as a pretty ankle; and it was the truth. (p. 203.)

Here was sarcasm with a vengeance; but it was justifiable. The keen edge of that sarcasm has been considerably worn off by to-day, though even now it expresses much sad truth. Here is more scathing sarcasm:—

With good looks and youth marriage is easy to attain. There are men enough; but a woman who has sold herself, even for a ring and a new name, need hold her skirt aside for no creature in the street. They both earn their bread in one way. Marriage for love is the beautifullest external symbol of the union of souls; marriage without it is the uncleanliest traffic that defiles the world.....And they tell

us we have men's chivalrous attention! When we ask to be doctors, lawyers, lawmakers, anything but ill-paid drudges, they say, "No"; but you have men's chivalrous attention, now think of that and be satisfied. (p. 205.)

That was the heart-breaking wail of a young girl who fifty years ago saw nothing in front of her but a possibly loveless marriage or humiliating drudgery. Who knows but that the publication of that wail in the *African Farm* has been one of the principal means in bringing about the emancipation and exaltation of woman? We know that for many years after the appearance of her great work Olive Schreiner was the recipient of innumerable letters from women in all parts of the English-speaking world asking for her advice as to the best methods of hastening the realization of the greatly needed reform. Just think of it! Fifty years ago woman was still, to a most regrettable extent, a slave—man's slave; but to-day we have lady doctors, lady lawyers, and, at last, lady lawmakers. The emancipation is not yet complete, but it is in the process of accomplishment. The equality of the sexes was always an indispensable plank in Olive Schreiner's philosophical platform.

Another plank is the absolute unattainableness of Truth, in the technical meaning of the term. Christianity's claim is that it offers to the world the sole revelation of Truth ever made, and this religion has the temerity to call itself "the Truth as it is in Jesus." Curiously enough, Hinduism, Mohammedanism, and all other supernatural religions, make the same claim; and since they differ so fundamentally from one another, it inevitably follows that not one of them has the right to characterize itself as the exclusive custodian of God's Truth; and does it not follow with equal necessity from this fact that God's Truth is but a figment of the human imagination? Such is a part of the message which "Waldo's Stranger" brought to the outwardly dull but deeply fascinating boy. To Olive Schreiner's vivid imagination Truth was an entity, an unapproachable being, "a vast white bird, with silver wings outstretched, sailing in the everlasting blue." In plain prose, Truth is not in existence at all, and consequently, not a thing to be discovered as if by accident, it rather signifies the laws of the universe which we are to study with solicitous care, in order to learn, often through much sorrow and suffering; what their meaning and demands upon ourselves are, and by what means we can best meet their stern requirements and live in harmony with them. Truth in the abstract is non-existent, it is a purely relative term, signifying what we know or ought to find out about our place in Nature and our duty of heroic submission to her implacable conditions of a peaceful and happy life. As thus understood, Truth is of such a nature that "he who sets out to search for it must leave these valleys of superstition for ever, taking with him not one shred that has belonged to them. Alone he must wander down into the Land of Absolute Negation and Denial; he must abide there; he must resist temptation; when the light breaks he must arise and follow it into the country of dry sunshine. The mountains of stern reality will rise before him; he must climb them; beyond them lies Truth"—inspiring, energizing, nerve-building knowledge of the Truth as it is in Nature and her unalterable laws. Who "Waldo's Stranger" was in the flesh, whether a Cape civil servant who once visited Olive Schreiner in her early 'teens and lent her Spencer's *First Principles*, or another, is wholly immaterial, the fact being that the ideas he expressed were put into his mouth by a woman of the most brilliant genius.

Another plank in Olive Schreiner's philosophical platform is the complete absence of any convincing evidence of the reality of a hereafter. Into Lyndall's closing years of unfathomable grief and pain and her

tragic end, we will penetrate no further, profoundly illuminating and instructive though it would prove to do so, but will concentrate our attention upon Waldo's dying meditation upon the subject of immortality. To all but Lyndall, Waldo was an inscrutable mystery. His taciturnity was largely accounted for by his unceasing introspection; but he had a keen sense of beauty, and an inventive faculty which only needed training and opportunity to make him famous; but neither training nor opportunity ever came the unfortunate boy's way. After a short life of exceptional vicissitudes and trials he lay face to face with death. As he sat in the sunshine contemplating it, he passed in review the various dreams in which mankind had indulged at different times as to a life after death; but the only tolerable conclusion to which he could come was that they were all illusory and would never come true. Lyndall, whom he so passionately loved, was dead; and he yearned to see her again beyond the tomb. Listen to him:—

"There must be a hereafter, because man longs for it," he whispered. "Is not all life from the cradle to the grave one long yearning for that which we never touch? There must be a hereafter because we cannot think of any end to life. Can we think of a beginning? Is it easier to say, 'I was not,' than to say, 'I shall not be'?" And yet where were we ninety years ago? Dreams, dreams! Ah, all dreams and lies! No ground anywhere." (pp. 331-2.)

Em thought he was only asleep as he lay in the sunshine, and she said, "He will awake soon." But the chickens that crowded all over him without a single trace of fear "were wiser." Waldo's cruelly checkered life was at an end.

What, then, was Olive Schreiner's philosophy of life? This is really a needless question, for a perusal of the *Story of an African Farm* proves beyond a doubt that its author was a convinced Secularist, to whom the present life was all, and whose ideal was to fill this one life with such ideas and deeds as would be of permanent benefit to the race. That was the kind of life she lived herself. She loved and served all within the wide reach of her influence, without recognizing any distinctions of race, colour, or position, especially the downtrodden and oppressed; and her clarion voice goes still resounding through the world summoning all to undertake a life of love and service; and this is the Secularist philosophy in all its simplicity and grandeur.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Cult of Caine.

The art of the pen is to rouse the inward vision, instead of labouring with a drop-scene brush.—George Meredith.

Who is Mr. Hall Caine?—Bernard Shaw.

Middling men, favoured by circumstance, often appear of higher stature than belongs to them.—Landor.

THAT shy and retiring writer, Sir Hall Caine, is fortunate in having publishers who are so utterly unlike himself, for seldom are any books heralded with such a blare of trumpets as his novels. Some time since these enterprising and industrious tradesmen announced a cheap edition of Caine's novel, *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*, and they actually described the book as "a love story for all the world and for all time," and added that 500,000 copies had then been sold. They also informed the reading public that hundreds of thousands of his previous novels had been sold, and that his latest story had been translated into no less than sixteen languages, including Japanese and Yiddish.

The reasons for a popularity such as this are worth considering, for, if foreign sales come anywhere near the English purchases, it may be assumed that con-

temporary English fiction is represented the world over by Sir Hall Caine, as French literary art is by Anatole France, Belgian by Maurice Maeterlinck, Italian by Gabriele D'Annunzio, Russian by Maxim Gorky, and so forth.

Yet some people, not wholly illiterate nor graceless, have been known to admit that they could only regard Sir Hall Caine's tremendous popularity with wonder and amazement. The genius of Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, as of Shelley and Keats before them, dawned slowly upon the general reader. But here is a writer of novels whose books run into editions as fast as the printing presses and bookbinders can supply them. Like Miss Ethel Dell, and the late-lamented Mr. Charles Garvice, he has succeeded in winning the hearts of myraids of readers. What these stern moralists were to the worldly-minded, Sir Hall Caine is to the other-worldly minded. In each vulgar but virtuous puppets and grotesque villains win the appreciation of their readers. Sir Hall Caine represents this taste, with the addition of an affectation of culture, and the ethics of an invertebrate Christianity. The realism is too transparently thin, for, in the stage versions of *The Christian*, patrons were offered the choice of a happy or a sad ending; and in the cinema adaptation of *The Eternal City* Signor Mussolini is introduced, without any castor-oil, amid the ruins of ancient Rome.

In his latest works Sir Hall Caine has left far behind the simplicity of *The Deemster* and *The Manxman*. In *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*, for example, he bids fair to rival the writers of the two-penny novelettes. Breaking no fresh ground, he but tells a melodramatic love-story in strident tones and with overmuch elaboration of detail. Although occupying many pages of close print, the actual plot can be told in a few words. A woman is married by force to a profligate brute; gets disgruntled with her husband; loves an explorer; not wisely, but too well; gives birth to an illegitimate child; and dies of consumption. The characters in the novel are older than the everlasting hills. There is not a single portrait of an actual personality; but only personifications of courage, self-sacrifice, profligacy, greed, and other virtues and vices.

The story, it will be seen, is frankly popular, and, incidentally, presents a considerable opportunity for introducing theatrical effects, and the author's exceeding fondness for the picturesque side of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, Sir Hall Caine takes nothing for granted, and "wallows naked in the pathetic." Naturally, the explorer must be an Arctic one, and when his mistress is suffering, by some convenient telepathy, he hears her voice calling him over thousands of miles of space. The heroine is what our American cousins call "a Continental idiot." Forced into a loveless marriage with an almost unknown man, she has not sense enough to earn her own living after leaving her husband, and gets consumption through drying her baby's wet clothes on her own body. Although madly in love with an explorer, she never thinks of reading the newspapers to be informed of the expedition, and she starves herself in order that her child may be strong and healthy. Frankly, the book is altogether unreal and melodramatic, for, when the heroine is forced by poverty to solicit in Piccadilly, the only man she accosts is her long-lost explorer.

The plot is sufficient to turn a critic's hair white, and curl it afterwards, but worse is to come. Sir Hall Caine tickles the ears of the groundlings with phrases from the Bible and the Anglican Prayer Book. The very title strikes the keynote, and the heroine's narrative begins with the following words:—

Out of the depths, O Lord, out of the depths, begins the most beautiful of the services of our Church; and

it is out of the depths of my life that I must bring the incidents of this story.

The ending, hundreds of pages after the opening, has the same air of striking novelty:—

Very soon the mist will rise, and the day will break, and the sun will come again, and—there will be no more night. These were the last words penned by Mary before her gentle and tortured spirit took flight from earth.

It is enough to break a "gentle and tortured" critic's heart. However, Sir Hall Caine is, presumably, giving pleasure to hundreds of thousands of English, Yiddish, Japanese, and other readers, and no great harm is done if, in reading his works, they cherish the pleasing delusion that they are reading really great English literature, fresh from the brain of a master of his art. Since, however, Sir Hall Caine plainly labours under the beautiful belief that he is only slightly inferior to Shakespeare, it is a pity that he cannot be enlightened. He has won an enormous body of readers precisely because he is not a genius. Why should he not be content? Why should he dream that he is a big brother to Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, to Anatole France and Gabriele D'Annunzio? He is the universal provider of the circulating libraries, and is as little an artist as any other manufacturer, although he was knighted for his services to literature. MIMNERMUS.

Birmingham Economics.

And the Saint and Seer and Prophet
Can make no better of it
Than to sanctify and prophesy and pray.

—Kipling.

VOLUME IX of the C.O.P.E.C. Commission Reports is hardly calculated to inspire the Freethinking reader with hope or confidence, for a self-imposed handicap fetters the Committee in the opening sentence. They tell us that—

We approach this consideration of industry and property with the definite spiritual conviction that the sovereignty of God is supreme over all human life.

The introductory chapter is what one might expect from such a beginning, and there is not much that calls for remark.

The injunction to "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" is brought up to date. "Cæsar," in these days, is the community, and the command is therefore to render service to the State. Excellent Christian Socialism for 1924, but one wonders why this interpretation was not apparent in 1824.

"Christ," we are told, "has no criticism upon industry itself," but—

A severe criticism on the actual results of human industry. He points out that God has made man superior in powers to the birds, in that they can plough, sow, reap and store the resulting harvest, yet they are anxious as the birds are not. Yet the birds are fed, in spite of their weaker powers, in the providence of God.

The writer, however, must be perfectly well aware that the birds are not fed. These creatures are always competing for a food supply which—except in favourable seasons—is inadequate, and in the resulting struggle the weakest go to the wall.

Later, we are assured that "where the spiritual factor is duly recognized, satisfactory economic results must follow." If and when satisfactory economic results are obtained, there can be little doubt that passages from Holy Writ will be produced from which, so Christians will tell us, Major Douglas directly deduced his fractional price-factor.

When we come to the main body of the report there is a good deal of sound and solid stuff to be found, and some of the remarks, in the Finance Section, on the manufacture and control of credit are certainly not orthodox. We read that ".....the remedy is to be found in preventing unnecessary price fluctuations and in the scientific control and direction of credit." This is at least a recognition that any effectual remedy must deal with both credit-issue and price-making—the positive and negative poles of the problem.

Then the light deserts them, and we are treated to such platitudinous stuff as "the end of industrial strife is to be found in mutual confidence"; and ".....the winning of all classes of society, financiers included, to a Christian view of their duty to their fellow-men is of more lasting influence and importance than any mere changes in organization.....," etc.

In the chapter on "Character and System," under the section "Unemployment," we find the following:—

It is when we come to the explanations of the deeper underlying causes that agreement fails. Some lay stress upon financial considerations, involving the currency and credit and alleged failure of the monetary system to correspond with true values of goods or obligations between creditors and debtors. Others are more concerned with the misdirection of business energy resulting from competition and an ignorance on the part of the several directors of industry as to what is being done as a whole. Yet again, others find the root of the trouble in the absence of any regulated connection between investment for producing and expenditure for consuming goods. It is not our part to give judgment upon questions which divide technical experts.....the causes of this evil are obviously not to be charged upon the nature of things or the will of God; they are admittedly somewhere within the range of human methods, which means that these methods must bear the responsibility. If the practical solution depends upon determining which of the rival theories is true or whether they are complimentary to each other, the best brains and the ripest experience ought to be charged with the task and given full facilities for carrying it out.

So these worshippers of the "Almighty and Most Merciful Father" have to confess their incompetence to deal with technical matters of economics. Here, in the midst of potential plenty beyond the dreams of avarice, God's children in hundreds of thousands are going short of the bare necessities of food, clothing and shelter; and yet, when a representative group of educated Christians confer in prayerful investigation for many months, their Heavenly Father, in his mercy, still withholds from them the key to this riddle. One is tempted to exclaim, "Some Father!"

From the subsequent discussion by the committee of such questions as reserves of labour, individual versus co-operative enterprise, industrial motives, maldistribution of incomes, luxury, Wages Boards, ownership and inheritance of property, etc., it would appear that they have failed completely to envisage the magnitude of the main problem.

The main problem to-day is how to distribute to every man, woman and child of the community a generous supply of such necessities as food, clothing and shelter, together with a reasonable share of those other good things which human beings require for a really civilized life. The production of these things is a technical business, and presents no physical difficulties in these days. But it is fundamentally an energy problem. The total amount of energy required to provide, per head, for a given standard of living probably remains fairly constant over a long period, but the proportion of human energy in this total is vastly less since the application of solar dynamic energy to industrial process,

In Elizabethan times, for example, although Merrie England was perhaps somewhat less merry than novelists would lead us to imagine, yet the general standard of living would compare in many respects not unfavourably with that obtaining to-day amongst the wage-earning classes. Yet that standard of living was attained by the energy of human muscles, supplemented by those of horses, and by the harnessing of wind and water-power to a very small extent for very limited purposes.

To-day, the energy available, in numerous forms, is literally thousands of times greater than was available then, and any engineer would argue that there should be a rise in our general standard of living commensurate with this increase in available energy, or, alternatively, a reduction in our hours of employment in co-operative industry. What we are looking for is not a slight or even a substantial improvement in our share of goods and services, such as might possibly be obtained by a skilful combination of the many and varied remedies to which the C.O.P.E.C. Committee have drawn attention. We are looking for, and should expect to realize, wealth for all on the grand scale—a scale corresponding to our ability to exploit all ultra-human sources of energy.

The existing economic system utterly fails to give anything approaching this, and it might fairly be expected that the flaws in this system would be palpable and gross. But when a student, fresh from this aspect of the matter, first investigates the Douglas analysis and finds that the whole trouble is due to what is, virtually, a mere book-keeping error—our failure to allow for the credit-factor in prices—the conclusion savours so much of anti-climax that his first attitude towards it is not unlikely to be one of almost indignant repudiation.

To anyone in this stage of the investigation a most helpful little book, so far as its analytical portion is concerned, has recently been published, entitled *The Flaw in the Price System*, by P. W. Martin (P. S. King & Son, 4s. 6d.). The author contends that "the effect of the flaw in the price system is that under normal conditions of progress industry cannot sell all it produces at prices making production worth while." How this comes about he illustrates by taking a simple community engaged upon one industry. He selects the children of Israel in the wilderness, engaged in picking up and distributing manna by means of a simple wage and price system. He assumes that this is the only industry, that there is no external trade, and that the quantity of money in circulation is constant. He then shows, step by step, the operation of the flaw—some counters, some slips of paper and a pencil are all that is required. He then traces the effect of various complicating factors, such as would arise in more complex communities, until we arrive at present-day conditions.

At this stage we look for the remedy, only to find ourselves presented with another variant of the schemes proposed by Mr. McKenna and Professor Soddy, in which the aim is the stabilization of prices by means of expert and scientific credit manipulation.

The enormous difference between any stabilizing scheme and such a beneficently conceived scheme as that of Major Douglas will be apparent to any student of this subject by a perusal of a recently published popular presentation of it by Major A. E. Powell, entitled *The Deadlock in Finance* (Cecil Palmer, 5s.). Here the author makes it plain that, under normal industrial conditions, the rate of flow of incomes is always less than the rate of flow of prices. It will be apparent that no manipulation of credit issue and withdrawal can affect—except very temporarily—the ratio of income to prices, since every credit issue is a loan which becomes a cost and is charged into price.

That ratio can only be altered by an issue of credit to the consumer, which will "short-circuit" the price system. It can be done, and a start can be made at once. How it can be done is shown in this admirable little book of Major Powell's, which should be read by every man and woman who has the well-being of their country at heart.

It will not be done by prayer or fasting, or by selling all that thou hast and giving to the poor. The present system cannot be made to work satisfactorily, "even if every politician drank cocoa and read the Bible," as the editor of the *New Age* expressed it the other day. The *New Age* which he contemplates will not begin to arrive "until there are fewer sentimentalists with wet handkerchiefs and more students with wet towels." A. W. COLEMAN.

Sincerity.

Sincerity is, to speak as we think, to do as we pretend and profess, to perform and make good what we promise, and really to be what we would seem and appear to be.—*Tillotson*.

A FEW of the faithful—there is seldom more than a faithful few in any advanced movement—were holding an intensely interesting Sunday after-meeting discussion on aspects of the social question. Specialization, organization, scientific invention, speeding-up, etc., in factories like Ford's and Singers' were referred to in their amazing detail, economy and significance. Why, said the speaker quietly and confidently, "We have solved production, all that is now required is equitable distribution, a fair share for all, and not the lion's share for a few. I thanked him for the word—we had more than solved production, the rest must follow. I recalled a lecture by Mr. Cohen, in the course of which he said, in effect, that man was the only tool-using animal: tools of other animals were organic, and developed; man's were inorganic, and invented; which gave man an immediate and immense advantage in the struggle for existence. But the process being slower in the one case than in the other, the animal better kept pace in adaptability; man being left behind, and in a state of social chaos, from the very multiplicity and ingenuity of his inventions. He made war magnificently, with all the resources of science, and with the same resources maintained a most miserable peace. So much was clear, and we could take another step.

The *Freethinker* is not, of necessity, a political organ—the world has a plethora of these; most of them as clear as a London fog—but it cannot avoid political implications; many of us finding our surest lead in sociology, etc., in its pages; and, after all, it is the *Freethinker*—it must not belie its title. The speaker made another reflection that "gladdened my heart"—he was evidently a feeler, thinker, and observer, a rarity even among Socialists. He referred to David Kirkwood, M.P., "the hero of Clydebank," and his intense sincerity and indomitable courage—every chord vibrates to that iron string—and of how, with his rough-and-ready speech, he could sway his Glasgow audience as the wind sways the reeds, simply because of his sincerity and audacity, and because in all audiences there is a collective sincerity that vibrates to the speaker's own. The same feeling might pervade the parliamentary assembly, and undoubtedly did, even if there concern for personal security and vested interests was mistaken for a high sense of public duty. There, also, a Labour minister might grow emotional, almost hysterical, over the "Empire" and the glory and heroism of its fighting forces, as if these were the only qualities that could really ennoble a people! In such emotional moments the man might indeed be

sincere, but no less a fool; and worse, a dangerous fool, such as has kept the world rolling in blood since the dawn of history. In such crises, reason, common sense, and philosophy, are, in the estimation of college professors and swell-head imperialists, quite negligible things. Such men may reason, even rightly, after the event, but not wiser even then, for in the very next crisis the same savage emotions will prevail even, indeed especially, among the learned and cultured classes. The ruder, robuster Kirkwoods are as sincere and emotional as the best, or worst, of these, and rouse like these, but to refined not barbarian issues; more pugnacious, more audacious than the scholarly savages, he would fight also, but on the moral and intellectual plane, not in the bloody sawdust of the rat-pit of ten thousand years: his is the new spirit of the new age: fear not, faint not, is the motto for all such: their appeal is to a world ripe for change.

On one occasion, we are told, the streets adjacent to a Kirkwood meeting were packed with hero-worshippers of all ages and both sexes, and as people were being jammed and hurt, and women fainting, the crowds had to be dispersed with a fire hose. It is this mass sincerity of conviction, however mistaken it might be, that has made Glasgow "Red," and is likely to keep it so, even, in due course, in "Keelvinsyde."

Here, then, is revealed the hope and the power of propaganda when rightly, honestly, and even quite simply applied. The "people" are not so ignorant as they are supposed to be, nor yet as bad, only a little confused and hopeless and indifferent; but only so till the vital spark falls in the right place, at the right time, kindling to a blaze—"the nobleness that lies in other men, asleep but never dead." Speaking at an audience bores it to death; fills it with east wind; the hungry sheep look up—how patiently, hoping against hope, they look up to the platform or the pulpit fool—and are not fed! But speak to your audience, and the nobleness in other men will rise in majesty to meet thine own—not, perhaps, to give you place and power—the base self-seeker's reward—not even remembrance or gratitude; ignominy, perhaps; yet yours is the great reward—to have swayed like the wind of heaven the hearts and minds of men; to have planted in the rich and generous soil of humanity the seeds that will flower and scent and beautify the earth—yea, merely to have lived up to the highest dictates of your nature and appealed to the divinest throb in the breast of man in general. For, why, the choice spirit, so persuaded and endowed, is rich already—as Robert Burns would have put it—holding "the patent for his honours immediately from Almighty God!"

If the Editor will pardon a further reference: I have always been impressed by the attention given him by his Glasgow audiences, always highly intelligent ones: the speaker seemed to be expressing everyone's own thought, but clearly, consecutively, and scientifically stated. Here reason, exactitude, not emotion, sincerity, etc., were relied on, yet the appeal was intense, irresistible, the facts established by their own necessity, obvious, inevitable; no need of emotional declamation, assertion, words of sound and fury, signifying nothing. A milestone by the wayside does not orate, yet no one doubts its message. The speaker in question was not without emotion, sincerity, personal attraction, but his message was the thing, and impressed as noted.

Latterly our little meeting fell to discussing Lady Astor, who had just been visiting Glasgow and abusing the "Bolshies" like a fish-wife, holding them, as was her highborn right, in righteous and contemptuous scorn. It was recalled that this lady (in the House of Commons in 1920) had opposed alteration in the law of divorce on the ground that such might be made

too easy, and so do more harm than good, herself the while having, aforetime, made use of the more facile process of the U.S.A. Then outspoke brave Horatio Bottomley in *John Bull*, contrasting the lady's present protestations with her past practices—

The more 'tis a truth, Sir,
The more 'tis a libel.

But the lady never sued; she had her revenge, however. Next time Mr. Bottomley entered the House he was chivalrously hissed from all sides; and now, alas, poor man, he is in "another house." No doubt Lady Astor was "sincere" in her opposition to divorce—which, like religious heresy, was for her and her class a safe convenience, but a dangerous facility for the common herd.....

I gave our friend a copy of the *Freethinker*. His face lit up as he said: "My father used to read this paper." This does not suggest the *Freethinker* is a "back number," rather that, to adapt the poet, "A noble father must have bred so good a son!"

A. MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

Patrick Herbert Mahon was for a time a very distinguished person. He has brutally murdered a woman in circumstances that must give the murder a very high place in the records of criminal brutality. But being charged with a murder of this kind it appealed to large numbers of fashionable ladies and others, who besieged the court authorities for tickets of admission. All could not be given tickets, but large numbers of motor-cars poured into the town in which the trial was taking place, their owners hoping for at least a glimpse of so distinguished a person. That is a sample of our Christian civilization. There are those who will not mistake the symptoms. For our own part we do not think that if any outsider wished to draw an indictment against our Christian civilization he could build up a stronger case than one which rested on the anxiety of so many fashionable people to see a man charged with such a murder. Had Mahon killed the woman in a drunken fight, or in a fit of passion, and been satisfied with that, he would not have attracted so much attention. It was the style of the murder which tickled the jaded palates of these fashionable ladies.

Mahon has led a fairly busy criminal career—forgery, burglary and almost the murder of a servant, being among his exploits—and he was denounced by Justice Darling, who sentenced him to five years penal servitude, as a cowardly hypocrite. But where Christianity is concerned our good newspaper press, so praised by Mr. T. P. O'Connor for its uprightness, has nothing to learn from anyone in the way of hypocrisy. It said, after admitting that Mahon had been a Sunday school teacher, a constant and enthusiastic Church worker, and quite successful in both directions, that it was probable he regarded himself as "in some special sense a Christian." Why in some special sense? Had Mahon been a Freethinker would it have remarked that he was in some special sense a Freethinker? There is no more ground to question the genuineness of Mahon's Christianity than there is to question the rightness of the verdict of guilty. Only it would never have done for a British newspaper to have said openly and honestly that this man was a Christian, with a full belief in his religion. That would have drawn down letters of protest from religious readers, and these are too numerous for our independent press to ignore.

There is no reason whatever why the most devout Christian should not have criminal proclivities. A man is not a Christian because he is an admirable moral character, but because he believes. What other significance than this is there in the leading gospel story of the thieves on the cross? They were saved, not because of any good deeds they had, but because of a simple act

of belief in Jesus. What is the teaching of the official articles of the Church of England, and of other Churches but this? Is it not also the theme of countless hymns and sermons? Though your sins are as scarlet yet they shall be as snow. The one thing is to have faith in Jesus. Mahon was a Christian because he had this faith in Jesus, and we have no doubt but he will end his life as piously as other murderers have done. And if there is any truth in historic Christianity he will go straight from the scaffold to the arms of Jesus. There is nothing in Christian teaching to prevent him—and from looking over the battlements of heaven and watching, compassionately, or otherwise, the sufferings of Miss Kaye in hell. He may even think that but for the unfathomable goodness of God in permitting him to kill Miss Kaye instead of Miss Kaye killing him, their positions in eternity would have been reversed.

Mahon received a religious training in his childhood, he was connected with religious work all his life, his "enthusiasm" for religious work showed his sincerity. There was nothing unusual in this combination of piety and criminality. It is one of the oldest of associated states, and most criminologists have noted the fact. We do not mean to imply that religion must lead to criminality, only that there is nothing in religion to deter one who has strong criminal associations. On the other hand, the unstable emotional state, which so often goes with the criminal mind, lends itself admirably to religion. Christians themselves have so often boasted of the power their religion has in attracting the criminal mind; and scientific students will not fail to see in this a little more than the "power of Jesus." Moreover, in Mahon's case, we had the added force of strong eroticism, a factor which has a very, very close connection with all forms of deep religious belief.

"Why were the complaints respecting waitresses' wages at Wembley not first brought forward by churchmen?" asks the Rev. D. Railton, vicar of Margate, at the Canterbury Diocesan Conference. "It was an act that should have been done by the Church," he added, "although I am not now considering the question of rights and wrongs." Now that a good deal of public interest and indignation has been aroused in this matter, the Churches no doubt realize that they have lost a splendid opportunity for self-advertisement as social reformers and friends of the poor. It is not a "question of rights and wrongs"; we agree; but one of impressing the general "infidel" public with the fact that organized Christianity stands for social justice. However, the reverend gentleman and those who think like him, may find plenty of other movements for social amelioration in which they can do useful work. Such, for example, as an enquiry into the wage rates paid in the Salvation Army work centres.

A little boy who attended the parish church of Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire, ensconced himself in one of the ancient, high-backed pews and went to sleep during the sermon. At the close of the service he was locked in the church. At a late hour at night his mother, searching anxiously for the boy, found herself in the churchyard and heard her son calling. She broke the vestry window and liberated the prisoner. We trust that the youth was severely admonished for this behaviour. Everybody knows, of course, that one of the chief items in divine service is the nap during the sermon. But, even assuming that those of tender years have a right to this privilege, they must be made to understand that they must use moderation in the matter, and leave the church at the end of the service with a becoming expression of sanctification on their faces. If the church-goers frankly admit that sermons send them to sleep, the whole organized humbug may be endangered.

The Rye Parish Church bells, among the oldest in the country, are to be rehung. They have passed through many adventures. Six of them first called the people of Rye to church in 1360. Eight years later the French pillaged the town and, in the true Christian spirit, carried off the bells to Normandy, where they remained for ten

years. Thereafter the devout burghers of Rye and Winchelsea set off in a fleet of ships and pillaged the French coast in a manner that would have delighted the heart of Joshua or David or some of those other warriors who were under the immediate patronage of Yahweh. Finding the bells hidden away in a French town, they brought them back to Rye, where they were rehung and remained for four centuries. In 1774 John Lamb had the bells recast, and added two to their number. A splendid example of how Christianity fosters international brotherhood and goodwill among men.

This reminds us that Mr. David Kirkwood, M.P., has introduced a Bill to the House of Commons to provide that the "Stone of Destiny," generally called the "Coronation Stone," shall be removed from Westminster Abbey to Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh. According to tradition this stone was the pillow of Jacob, and was in the fifth century B.C. carried to Ireland and thence to Scotland. It was brought to England by Edward I. as a symbol of his conquest of Scotland, for upon the stone the Scottish kings had always been crowned. We trust that the Irish Free State will not also put in a claim for the holy relic. In that case the wisest course might be to refer the matter to the League of Nations. Until a press notice of Mr. Kirkwood's Bill caused us to re-read our history, we had a dim idea that the "Stone of Destiny" was symbolic of the Scottish occupation of England.

The *Times Literary Supplement* is like the curate's egg—good in parts. A reviewer, probably with split eardrums through standing too near a Salvation Army band, says of Carile that "he made a pulpit of the Press, and we doubt the efficacy of sermons the more they smack of Salvationism."

The Rev. G. C. Ommaney complains that the chairs provided at Church House are too small. The Bishops sit on larger chairs than those used by the rank and file. We feel sure that heaven must be a detestable place if it is going to be peopled by the servants of the Lord on earth.

What may be described as a back-handed slap for official religion was delivered by Mr. Lloyd George at a dinner given to Empire editors. He said: "Race would not keep the Empire together; creed could not hold it in union." This declaration ought to be followed by a closing down of the establishment that had its beginning in a manger.

Mr. Bernard Shaw when asked to join the International Advertising Convention made a characteristic remark that will not please those high-souled people who tell us what we want in the same manner that gospel-mongers emphasize our requirements:—

Advertising, instead of being privileged, as it is, to lie, cheat, obtain money under false pretences, and poison, should be dealt with as any other social activity is dealt with.

How many millions in the world's history have made a comfortable income by promises of "delivery of the goods" in heaven!

The pastor of the Berkeley Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Open van Loon, who has been missing for eleven days, was found in the street in a state of collapse. Taken to hospital, he was found to have the letters "K.K.K." branded on his back. The unhappy man's memory is completely gone, and he is only able to repeat wildly the phrase, "Don't let them get me." This vile outrage is presumably perpetrated by the Klu Klux Klan—a body professing Christian beliefs, together with a hearty hatred for Catholics, Jews, niggers, and any one who has the honesty of his own opinions. It proves, beyond doubt, that the old persecuting spirit of Christianity is as much alive to-day as it was in the Middle Ages, and that given opportunity we should have men and women and children

hanged, and burned, and tortured for their religious opinions.

"When the Communist asks, 'What is a patriot?' and supplies the answer, 'He is an international blackleg,' what are we to say?" asks B. C. Boulter in the *Crusader*. "For is he not? What is the current 'patriotism' of to-day but the denial of that solidarity of the human family which is so vital a part of the Christian Faith?" We cannot agree that the doctrine of the solidarity of the human family is a vital part of Christianity. That ideal has been left to Freethinkers, like Paine and others, to preach. And if to-day thoughtful men and women realize the wisdom of such an ideal, it is not thanks to organized superstition, which still blesses the means of destruction of human life, and approves that ignorance which makes war possible.

Two girl detectives employed at John Barkers recently attempted to arrest a couple of women whom they suspected of having stolen a robe from that store. They followed them into St. Mary Abbott's Churchyard, and Miss Frampton, one of the detectives, told the two suspects that they must go back to the shop with them. Thereupon one of the two suspected women struck the detective on the head and seized her by the throat. Hearing the struggle, a verger dashed out of the church and, full of good intentions, threw himself into the mêlée. Unhappily, he seized hold of the detective and pinned her to the wall, and her assailant, having delivered a final blow, escaped. The other woman was arrested. One might moralize over this incident, in the approved Christian style, and discover in it an apologue—Christians, *per se*, even when they honestly seek to do good, act in a muddle-headed fashion, and do more harm than anything else.

The Rev. Dimsdale Stocker says he describes himself as "a hell-deserving sinner." He may be quite correct in this, we do not know the gentleman with sufficient intimacy to contradict. Our objection is to his describing others as belonging to the same variety. We know that man is a gregarious animal, and that even hell would be made worse unless it were properly occupied. Still, there may be many objections to Mr. Dimsdale Stocker's wholesale classification.

The Rev. Luke Wiseman says that last year the Home Mission Committee pledged itself to reach the outsider. "But such was the hesitation of the outsider that the special services conducted in their buildings had not been successful in reaching him." That lets in a little light on the talk of the rousing meetings, etc. When these missions are fixed, the tales that are to be told about them are fixed also. The truth is that the attendance is made up of regular mission attendants who attend all meetings for the sake of the emotional debauch it promises—and the "outsider" remains outside, with an ever-increasing number of companions.

Roman Catholic or otherwise, there is not much to choose between Christian sects where their religious interests are concerned. The Rev. Dr. Strahan, an ex-Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, speaking at an Orange meeting in Belfast, said they demanded not merely the Bible in the schools, but teachers should be chosen on conditions that allowed their religion and character to be known. What Dr. Strahan means is that none but good, sound Christians should be permitted to teach in the Belfast schools. Others must be quite content to pay them, and be thankful for the privilege. We do not mind admitting that the claim is logical enough. If the Bible is to be kept in the schools and children are to be taught religion, it is only sense that teachers should be selected with an eye to the instruction they are expected to give. The real cure for it is to keep the schools to the work of secular instruction. But Dr. Strahan is, of course, opposed to secular education. "It would," he says, "turn our province into an arid wilderness." Those who know what a hive of brotherhood and love Belfast is, will appreciate the humour of the "arid wilderness" business.

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

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THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

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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.

I. J. KING.—Thanks for article. We note the divided opinions about the abolition of the death penalty. So far as we are concerned we are opposed to it, because of its effect on the community at large. It is quite clear that it does not prevent either murder or any other crime. The talk of the cost to the community of keeping murderers alive is ridiculous when one remembers how many murders are actually committed, and what the community's costs are in other directions. Altogether too much attention in criminal matters is paid to the offence committed and too little to the one who commits it. The former is not usually the best index to the character of the man who is being tried.

II. LACY.—Parton's *Life of Voltaire* is in two very bulky volumes and was published in 1881. It is a very full life, but we fancy it is now out of print. It should not be very difficult to secure a second-hand copy at a reasonable price. A good study of Euripedes will be found in *Euripedes the Rationalist*, by A. W. Verrall.

A. HEATH.—Pleased to hear of Mr. McLaren's excellent meetings in Brockwell Park, and that the outcome is likely to be a strengthening of your membership.

II. DAWSON.—We are not surprised at your enjoyment of Mr. Corrigan's lectures. Your appreciation of his efforts is shared by many. There should be a very strong Branch at Finsbury Park. There are hundreds of Freethinkers in the district.

II. R. WRIGHT.—We have too little time at our disposal to sit in public libraries reading new books, however much we should like to do so. It is one thing for public men to give utterance to Freethinking sentiments, and quite another for them to identify themselves with a fighting Freethought movement. The latter requires rather more moral courage than the vast majority of our public men appear to possess.

J. STRINGER.—Pleased to hear from and to know that you still retain your interest in the *Freethinker*. We fancy we put a girdle round the globe, even though it be but a slim one.

N. WOOD.—Mr. Cohen will be pleased to visit Bolton when he commences his autumn lecturing, and will write you as soon as he is able to offer you a suitable date.

W. H.—Sorry your reply to Dr. Wohlgenuth was not received in time for insertion in this week's issue. It will appear next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The *Two Worlds* devotes a leading article to Mr. Cohen's recent notes on "personal identity," but with the best will in the world we find nothing which calls for a reply, although it does invite the comment that its hopeless unscientific character gives it a certain degree of immunity. To talk of a plant as "the accumulated accretions of earth, air," etc., is to show an entire lack of appreciation of what scientific materialism is. Nor do we know exactly what is meant by "physical life." We never used such an expression, and do not know what is meant by it. Again, when Mr. Cohen pointed out that one can watch a baby gradually discovering itself, the editor of the *Two Worlds* meets it with a triumphant question: "Will he please tell us why a dead baby does not go on discovering itself?" Such criticisms defy rejoinder; but they help to illustrate the amount of scientific acumen that goes to the make-up of the average believer in Spiritualism. We are driven to the conclusion that the editor felt some reply was required—and so did his best. What we should like would be for someone who really did understand the subject to reply; then we might have an interesting discussion. Meanwhile we are glad to again note that, judging from our correspondence, the articles appear to have helped many of our readers to a clearer understanding of a somewhat difficult subject; and we are urged to follow them up with the promised articles on "Materialism." We intend doing so as early as possible.

The Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws has made arrangements for due opposition to be offered to the ridiculous Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching to Children Bill whenever it comes before the House of Commons. It is not likely that the Bill would pass, but it is well to take precautions, and there is much active work going on behind the scenes to secure support for the Bill. Onlookers are apt to overlook how much work, for and against, goes on in such cases which never come before the public eye.

An old *Freethinker* reader writes from Calgary: "As with every growing country, the parsons are rooted in it; and their hold in England is nothing to their stranglehold here. However, spurred by your 'How to Help,' I have persuaded my newsagent to display two copies of the *Freethinker*. This for a start. May the number soon increase." We hope so; there is nothing like the *Freethinker*—although we say it as shouldn't—for creating a stir in the religious dovecote.

The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise; but man
Passionless; no, yet free from guilt or pain.

—Shelley.

"Freethinker" is Equal to Doubling Your Own Subscription

The Boy Scout Movement.

II.

(Continued from page 461.)

(2) WHAT THREATENS IT.

WHENEVER any public movement becomes a success there is always a danger of it being "commandeered" by someone or other in the interests of religion, or morality, or some such "buncombe." The Boy Scout Movement has been a success, with the result that there is a danger threatening the movement from two directions, the *militarists* and the *parsons*, who seem bent on "commandeering" it for their own "ends." From the former there is less to fear, for this reason, that, unlike the Boys' Brigade and Church Lads' Brigade, the Boy Scout Movement is expressly "non-military." At the same time, there is so much material in the movement for "military" notions that it cannot be wondered at that the militarists are prompted to make this a happy hunting ground for their make-believe of "Defence, Not Defiance." Drills, scouting, commands, authority, can so easily be used by the militarists without the slightest suspicion being aroused. That so many army officers are to the fore when reviews and mass inspections of the Boy Scouts are on foot, is to be regretted. Surely, if we aim at producing *citizens*, we ought to select people of *civic* importance for these duties. The very presence of these army officers with their "war paint" tends to divert this movement from its true purpose.

I attempted some time ago to collect statistics of how far the military spirit prevails among the scouts themselves, but I was unable to carry this out to any extent, owing to pressure of other business; and the number obtained is too small for reliable deductions.¹ Yet even in this haphazard selection I found the "military spirit" lacking.

In my enquiry I proceeded thus. I arranged for the following questions to be answered on a form: Name, Age, School, Class, Address, Father's Occupation, Why did you join the Scouts? How long have you served? What do you like best in the Scouts? I use the age and class to assist in forming an idea of the mentality of the boy, whilst the school, address, and father's occupation helps one to make allowance for "influences." Out of sixteen answers, two from a so-called working-class district, joined for the sake of trips to the country, which is rather significant. Another, a shopkeeper's son, liked the uniform. A fourth had "read about the Boy Scouts and what they did in the Great War." Out of four boys who came from the working class, not one had the slightest tinge of "militarism." Others joined on account of chums or teacher. Not one (in the last question) gave any hint that there was any "liking" for playing at soldiers.

One factor at least protects the movement from the militarists, and that is that teachers as Commanders and Leaders are not, as a body, likely to allow a purely educational movement to be side-tracked by fanatics. At the same time, the motto which now appears on the circulars of the movement in Scotland, "Be Prepared," is perilously like that phylactery which the late Earl Roberts and other war-mongers were so fond of flourishing in front of our eyes. What has become of Baden-Powell's original motto, "Service and Brotherhood"?

Perhaps the more pressing danger comes from the parsons, and its significance may be gauged from the recent circular issued by the Scottish Headquarters of

the Boy Scouts' Association, entitled, "The Boy Scout Movement and Religion." The Scout Movement has become a success, and, as I have already pointed out, the time has arrived for it to be "commandeered." The circular says: "Organizations have arisen outside the walls of the Church: they stand as a monument to the Church's noble achievements for her Master. *Still they are her children, and need her guidance and sympathy. Such an organization is the Boy Scout Movement.*" (Italics mine.)

Unfortunately, the Churches got a slight hold on the movement from the very beginning, which was due to the compromising "undenominational" clause. Whilst the founder made a clear barrier when he said "non-military, non-political, and non-class," yet he did not have the courage or inclination to say "non-religious." The "undenominational" ticket gave the parsons the narrow end of the wedge, and the result is the latest circular. The principles with which the parsons wish to saddle the movement will be its undoing if persisted in. To insist that the movement is bound up with Christianity will alienate the support of Jews, Agnostics, Atheists, and Freethinkers of all kinds, of which no small proportion of the population of Great Britain is made up, unless, of course, these people insist on the parsons keeping outside the movement. The parsons see the great ethical and social value of this movement, and they assume that this is "Practical Christianity," and this is the reason, says the above circular, "why the movement is bound to appeal to all who are anxious to go beyond the sphere of mere nominal profession to that of definite Christian action." In other words, the movement has to become part and parcel of the Christian Church.

Admitted, there is already a "religious" tinge in the movement, but it is very slight. The scout promises "to do his duty to God and the King." To Freethinkers and Republicans this must sound very terrible, but it is very much like the boy's promise to wash his neck, it all depends on what is meant by the "neck." So long as the parsons and militarists are kept clear of the movement the scouts will be kept clear of "definitions." The parsons realize this, hence their solicitude. At bottom, however, the Scout principle and the Christian principle are antagonistic. What is the good of Chief Scouts, Commanders, and Leaders trying to inculcate "self-reliance" if the parsons are going to insist on reliance in deity and prayer. It is not "the last duty of the scout," as the parson says, "to stand bareheaded in prayer to Him who is to watch over him that night." As a backwoodsman it is the scout's last duty to see that his camp is safe and that his fire is out. And "that's that."

Just imagine such unmitigated nonsense as making Jesus Christ an ideal for boy scouts. "The humble Nazarene," says the circular, "gave to the world the supreme standard of life and action." Of course, he did nothing of the sort. Yet, even so, how on earth can a boy scout think of the "meek and lowly one" side by side with "the doings of backwoodsmen, knights, adventurers, and explorers," who are the "ideals" of Baden-Powell.

One might go through this circular line by line and make an *exposé* of the quaintest string of fallacies and vulgar prejudices that has been inflicted on an in-offensive public for some time, but what is the use. I am writing for Secularists primarily, in the hope that they may take some interest in keeping the hands of parsons and militarists off the citizens of to-morrow. That the Boy Scout Movement is worthy of their interest, I will endeavour to show in the next article.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

(To be Concluded.)

¹ If any reader cares to follow out the plan I have adopted and furnish me with the results of his enquiry, I will be obliged.

Spring and Autumn.

IN reading Chaucer we obtain the impression that it is always spring. Chaucer, an early child of the renaissance, sings sweetly of Nature in its early freshness, at the same time taking from her naïve lessons and morals. It does not seem possible that he lived as intensely as Shakespeare—he was satisfied with the muse and, as "a torso is as much a unity as the Laocoon," Chaucer has given us a picture of spring stamped with his genius.

Shakespeare's genius, however, transcends Chaucer in this respect; he gives us from the unexhaustible fountain of his imagination all seasons. From the simple colours of yellow and green, he advances to that period when flowers of vivid attraction open and display their fascination, to that time when they have departed leaving behind the gracious fruits touched with autumnal tints. His early romances remind us of primroses, daffodils, and the venturous crocus; his later, smell of apples, speak of sheaves of corn, of an harvest gathered from some fabled country in the *Golden Age*. We are not concerned here with the purple flowers of tragedy, and the deadly nightshade of passion leading to death. Shakespeare has sown with the sack; wherever we start to examine him, we find enough material to support any thesis, and with this in mind, we call his early romances "Spring," and his later works "Autumn."

In his early romantic comedies youthful vigour, optimism and high spirits are all in evidence. What sadness there is seems to be purely fanciful. Youth does not brood over death, fate, or the mystery of life. When looking on spring flowers we do not think of the winter to come, but rather on the winter that has gone. Moralizing in the narrow sense of the word, was no part of Shakespeare's intentions. He was not guilty of propaganda in any of his plays—he had no intention to teach or preach—and we may as well look for ethics in the Pastorals of Theocritus or the Bucolics of Virgil, as moral teaching in *Love's Labour Lost*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, or *As You Like It*. What then is the special significance that marks his early romantic comedies? Language, plot, humour, the sport and conflict of masculine and feminine wit? We think that the answer cannot be found in any of these. What is the charm of Theocritus? The answer is, in our opinion, the charm of imagination, and this we think also explains the irresistible attraction found in Shakespeare's youthful genius. If one were to dwell on the realities of life, madness would be a welcome relief; when one takes them for granted and commences to create, be it pictures, sonnets, architecture, or music, there is hope. Dr. Johnson had many ponderous sayings on many subjects, yet his expressed disgust of pastoral life has not killed the attraction of Theocritus, nor made the same quality in Shakespeare's romantic comedies less attractive. Crabbe, in his poetry of rusticity, though indicating the realism of country life, could not escape the charm of imaginative idealism. Not what things are, but what we would wish them to be, and here we come to the connection between wishes and dreams. Shakespeare's early romantic comedies are dream poetry.

There is laughter, song, gaiety and art in his early comedies. Even melancholy, as personified by Jacques, is a subject for light banter, for mirth. As well seek to find a meaning in our dreams as a purpose in these comedies. To draw our bow at a venture, we might say that his early comedies are feminine, and his later masculine. There is no thought of to-morrow in the former: we do not think of Arden in winter snows, nor Helena and Hermia

in a thunderstorm; they are all pictures in our mind, as static as the figures on a Greek vase. The "Duke" in *Twelfth Night* is as much a woman in thought as any woman. The world is nothing; his love is everything—this is no masculine sentiment—men have died (and worms have eaten them), but not for love. There is a greater dignity in the treatment of love in *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* than we find in the early comedies. We can conceive high words and storm in the after lives of Orlando and Rosalind, but not so in the case of Ferdinand and Miranda. Love in the later comedies is touched by the master who sees from without, and not by the man who sees from within.

We may quarrel with the creaky machinery of *Cymbeline*—the stupid old king—"Lear" in comedy, the character of Posthumous, Iachimo, a second-hand Iago; but the utter simplicity of Imogen arrests us. Imogen is Desdemona with providence in her favour; Shakespeare has left the "farmyard of sex" for a different atmosphere. Imogen is Rosalind with a difference, and the difference was that period in the life of the author between youth and mature age.

Suppose we take, for comparative purposes, the two figures of Benedict and Ferdinand. The former is a man of the world. His art is that of one who has travelled: his art is very like the face of one of Marlowe's characters—a face on which men have sharpened their swords. It is of the ready, sarcastic, ironical type—shall we say that of one who knows the price of everything? And we wish him joy of his Beatrice. Ferdinand's wit is that of a courteous gentleman—a son of the renaissance—it is that of a man who has ballast, it is that of Shakespeare speaking in the autumn of his life.

Full, sound, embracing, having undergone the human round of illusion, coming at last to that state in which there is little to be known, Shakespeare says in effect: "Oh yes, I know life is ugly, life is full of ingratitude, man sometimes approximates nearer the beast than the angel—all this I know—but I am not going to break my shins on regret. My tribute to it is *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*." As Turner's pictures are what we should like landscapes to be, so do we feel that the thought pulsating through these later comedies reaches the highest point of perfection. In the words of Meredith, from which we may infer that he had mastered the science of life, he writes: "To love comedy you must know the real world, and know man and woman well enough not to expect too much of them, though you may still hope for good."

In the same spirit we like to think of the genius that was Shakespeare—the spring breezes silent, the summer heat of tragedy and passion lived through—to reach at last the rarer and clearer air of autumn days which fade into the mellow twilight of wisdom.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The most accomplished way of using books at present is two-fold: either, first, to serve them as some men do words, learn their titles exactly, and then brag of their acquaintance; or, secondly, which is indeed the choicer, the profounder, and politer method, to get a thorough insight into the index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail. For to enter the palace of learning by the great gate requires an expense of time and forms; therefore men of much haste and little ceremony are content to get in by the back door. For the arts are all in a flying march, and therefore more easily subdued by attacking them in the rear. Thus physicians discover the state of the body, by consulting only what comes from behind. Thus men catch knowledge by throwing their wit in the posteriors of a book, as boys do sparrows, with flinging salt upon their tails. Thus human life is best understood by the wise man's rule of always regarding the end.—*Swift*.

The Way of the World.

LOSS OF RELIGION A RELIEF.

In truth, I did not feel that the solid ground was giving way beneath my feet, but rather that I was being relieved of a cumbrous burden. I was not discovering that my creed was false, but that I had never really believed it.—*Leslie Stephen, "Some Early Impressions."*

GLORIFIED BIOGRAPHY.

Not long before writing this [Life of Hudson] I was sent a letter which contained a message to me: "Please ask Mr. Roberts to say nothing of Mr. Hudson's faults if he knows of any." Such worshippers would desire to have St. Augustine's life edited by a specially sanctified St. Bowdler.

We cannot write biography in English, or it must be published out of England. If Montaigne lived now and were an Englishman he would have to operate on his book before it could be printed, save for private circulation. Though they had the ceaseless courage of Montaigne, his smiling gift of self-analysis, his acute and remorseless mind, and all men of any importance do not lack these qualities, none may speak the truth. The infection of the family biographer has overspread literature: he has become a romanticist, and his triumph is to fill two volumes with the idealism of those who purchase his pen.—*Morley Roberts, "W. H. Hudson—A Portrait."*

A PIOUS SWINDLER.

When he [the bogus Sir Richard Douglas] raised three hundred pounds in two days by means of worthless cheques, he celebrated the "triumph" by writing in his diary: "My labours ended for the week. Over three hundred to the good. Paid off local tradesmen—genuine cheques. Gave notice to the cook. Must get someone who understands serving fish. Looking forward to a quiet week-end. Must read Bible regularly." He was really fond of reading the Bible, and he spent his leisure at his home in studying it and keeping his diary up to date.—*Charles Kingston, "Remarkable Rogues."*

A MATERIALIST PHILOSOPHER

Now in natural philosophy I am a decided materialist—apparently the only one living—and I am well aware that idealists are fond of calling materialism, too, metaphysics, in rather an angry tone, so as to cast discredit upon it by assimilating it to their own systems. But my materialism, for all that, is not metaphysical. I do not profess to know what matter is in itself, and feel no confidence in the divination of those *esprit forts* who, leading a life of vice, thought the universe must be composed of nothing but dice and billiard-balls. I wait for the men of science to tell me what matter is, in so far as they can discover it, and am not at all surprised or troubled at the abstractness and vagueness of their ultimate conceptions—how should our notions of things so remote from the scale and scope of our senses be anything but schematic? But whatever matter may be, I call it matter boldly, as I call my acquaintances Smith and Jones without knowing their secrets; whatever it may be, it must present the aspects and undergo the motions of the gross objects that fill the world; and if belief in the existence of hidden parts and movements in Nature be metaphysics, then the kitchen-maid is a metaphysician whenever she peels a potato.—*George Santayana, "Scepticism and Animal Faith."*

THEOLOGICAL RAGS, BRICKBATS, AND TIGHT-ROPE.

James Anthony Froude, together with Arthur Clough, the poet, went through an experience which was more distressing in those days than it has since become: they lost their faith. With this difference, however, that while in Froude's case the loss of his faith turned out to be rather like the loss of a heavy portmanteau, which one afterwards discovers to have been full of old rags

and brickbats, Clough was made so uneasy by the loss of his that he went on looking for it everywhere as long as he lived; but somehow he never could find it. On the other hand, Keble and Pusey continued for the rest of their lives to dance in an exemplary manner upon the tight-rope of High Anglicanism; in such an exemplary manner, indeed, that the tight-rope has its dancers still.—*Lytton Strachey, "Eminent Victorians."*

GOD DISMISSED.

At the present moment, as we have already seen, there appears to be an irreconcilable conflict between orthodox Christianity and orthodox Natural Science. The one asserts the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, personal God—creator, ruler and refuge. The other, by reducing ever more and more of natural phenomena to what we please to call natural laws—in other words, to orderly processes proceeding inevitably from the known constitution and properties of matter—has robbed such a God of ever more and more of his realm and possible power; until finally, with the rise of evolutionary biology and psychology, there seems to be no place any more for a God in the universe.—*Julian Huxley, "Essays of a Biologist."*

RELIGION NOT NATURAL.

Of all the school subjects religion thus tends to be the least attractive. Lobsien, at Kiel, found a few years since, in the course of a psychological investigation, that when five hundred children (boys and girls in equal numbers), between the ages of nine and fourteen, were asked which was their favourite lesson hour, only twelve (ten girls and two boys) named the religious lesson. In other words, nearly 98 per cent. of the children (and nearly all boys) find that religion is either an indifferent or a repugnant subject.—*Havelock Ellis, "The Task of Social Hygiene."*

[A strange fact this, if, as the Clergy declare, God has implanted the germ of religion in ever soul.]

VERLAINE'S CONVERSION.

The sense of unreality is increased by the actual circumstances of Verlaine's conversion: by the sobbing impulsiveness of his self-humiliation; by the cheery acceptance of the ensuing absolution. As Mr. George Moore has said, Verlaine had "abandoned himself to the Church as a child to a fairy-tale....." For him religion was always to remain an anthropomorphic business. He had always liked being "even as a little child." To his relief he discovered that in the Christian Church this was a positive advantage.—*Harold Nicolson, "Paul Verlaine."*

Sham Reputations.

GIVE me a joyous moment or two of respite, for I have serious work in hand. I mean, if it is necessary, to find a "way over the corpses"; that is to say, I will overthrow the sham reputations by whatever great names they may bedizen in order to free the mind of man and open paths to new intellectual developments.

Then my thoughts revert to that evening when for the only time I saw George Bernard Shaw—a very clever fellow in his way—nonplussed, embarrassed, tongue-tied. It was at a meeting of the Aristotelian Society, of which "G.B.S." had recently become a member. Why?

I have long excogitated that little problem, and the result of my musing is something of this sort. Shaw is a very clever fellow—I have said this lately before, but you cannot escape it with Shaw—and having spent his time in showing off his opinions on all sorts of subjects, many of which he has studied, he has acquired the reputation of a thinker.

Now a thinker is, or should be, attracted to thought, and if he finds his way into certain hypnotized circles he spells thought with a big "T," and he talks nonsense on Kant and believes that he understands Bergson. In other words, he gets the entry to high Academic circles. I know this to be true of Shaw in some degree, for I observe in his famous *Back to Methuselah* all sorts of little quips of Bergsonian ideas, that have lured him like so many spiritual will-o'-the-wisps, of the *élan vital* order, or *évolution créatrice*. And here I cannot but digress again. Once when I was a young student I attended a small evening party, when a lady's chair was knocked over, and a pedantic gentleman asked her why it fell. She stammered and replied half doubtfully but yet triumphantly, "Centre of gravity." "Right," said the pedantic gentleman.

Now that party was the World; the pedantic gentleman was the Academic Circle; and the philosophic lady was Bergson. She had given a phrase just as one gives a pass word; and really Bergson with his "creative evolution" has done no more. I will return to Bergson later—he will be one of my corpses—but for the moment let us pick up Bosanquet.

Bosanquet had written on logic—a dead subject at best, but especially so after Bosanquet's treatment—and he had made himself almost as famous as Bradley, who had also written on logic. Strange how these dead subjects live in potted atmospheres.

But this night Bosanquet had a paper on the formation of States, or something of the sort, not states of mind, but government States. Now I had been mixed in a little of that business myself, and had I written the paper it would have been a commonplace production dealing with realities; had Shaw written it we would have learnt everything that States were not, but he would have flashed in his wit and turned somersaults of paradox; but Bosanquet was a thinker, or what Oxford calls a thinker, and he had addled his brains for so many years on Kant that even in this plain and practical subject he gave us fuliginous ideas that came from the very arcana of "Things-in-themselves." O what a paper! And then when he let himself go in comment, heaven how he talked. It reminded me though afar off, of Loie Fuller, as I once heard her on the Eastern Question, except that for the iridescent sheen of that marvellous discourse that painted hell and illuminated paradise, Bosanquet dazzled us with the whole repertory of transcendental pedantry.

He was a patriot withal—of the fourth form and Kiplingesque order—and from his inspired utterance I dimly gathered that the British Constitution had come, inevitable and perfect, from the subtle loins of Infinite Wisdom.

I studied principally Shaw. Had he known a little more, or a little less, how that faun-like mind of his would have gambolled; but he was new to this mystifying nonsense, and he was thick under the spell of Bergson, and he sat there subdued, silent, and, O ye gods, trying to understand, wrestling to make sense out of it all! It was after this that he wrote his *Methuselah*.

Another occasion that impressed itself upon my memory in the course of my adventures in philosophy was once when I was doing my medical course. My surgeon—I will not say where—was that happy cross between a butcher and a seamstress, a brilliant operator, and he was distinguished from most of his confrères by having a leaning to letters and to thought. That is to say, he would look up in the concordance some reference of Shakespeare's to the healing of a wound, and he would quote this on an appropriate occasion, and, clacking his lips, he would say, while looking round for applause, "Ah, what a mighty surgeon he would have made!"

Once while in the midst of an operation he turned to me, apropos of nothing in particular, and said: "Don't you think Arthur Balfour the greatest intellect in Europe?"

Well, I have been in some strange conjunctures, and I have tried to keep a stiff upper lip, but here I confess I was taken aback, and apparently I failed to conceal it, as I faltered, "Relatively to what standards?"

My surgeon paused with knife in air and gave me a severe and challenging look, and asked me peremptorily what I knew of the matter.

"Well," I stammered, "I've read his book. Have you?"

"Aouh!" said he, as he resumed his work, "if you put it that way—I haven't read a line he has written!"

Now my point is that this gentleman had talent enough to become the President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and to have presided at some great surgico-social function at which Royalty may have been present; and there he would have uttered words of praise of Mr. Balfour's philosophy which would have been telegraphed in italics to every quarter of the world. Science would have endorsed the statesman, and the shimmering disquisitions of our dilettante would have been the last word of human intellect.

The *Times* would have given two columns to my surgeon's speech. His opinion would have been worth just what it was when he addressed me—that is to say, nothing. But this little parable will show you the value of contemporary reputations and it may make easier my task of aligning the corpses.

It is a great thing to strut in gold lace and ruffles. It is highly laudable, no doubt, to spend the live-long days of all the weeks beating a leather ball; it is wonderful to win a hundred metres race; it is magnificent to punch an opponent over the ropes; what terms have we then left to speak of the man who climbs Everest, or of the conqueror who stalks through Europe amidst mountains of corpses and rivers of blood?

Yet there is something in man—strange being, man—which renders him not completely and definitely content even with these exploits. For one thing though they add facts to our store of history, they offer us no really new thing, no new principle; they are but the display in fresh combinations of what we really had known before. The physical has its limitations, rather severely marked; the man of action, unless he is also a man of thought—and that is rare—stirs the pot, but does not bring new ingredients nor produce new dishes.

But then science? Yes, science is marvellous. I have often thought that Oersted when he saw the needle turn under the influence of the current had reached a higher point than Napoleon when he entered Moscow. Caesar himself had passed through some such strain of thought when he declared that he would give all his conquests for the discovery of the secret of the Nile. Truly something thrilling is it to surprise in a gleam of genius a rare, bright secret of Nature, and to win a new, delicate, but great possession for the human race.

I stop less I become dithyrambic, though I am saved from that otherwise—I have known too many scientists, petty little fellows, some even of the most ingenious, who sold their faculty of thought to the service of social shams and frittered in delight when putting on a decoration that elevated them to the level of a music-hall impresario.

Yet marvellous is science! Elsewhere I have traced out the development of the main lines of our modern science, the germs of which are all to be found in the speculations of the Greeks, and I have shown that

the great and massy effects, the striking wonders of our civilization, are but the precipitates in material form of the thoughts that have lurked in solitary thinkers' brains. Science is the woof of civilization.

Yet with it all there is something greater than even this display of special results; there is the search for the correlation of it all as a great whole, the finding of a harmony in a greater scope than the study of details permits to envisage.

In this view Ethics is to me the science that shows us the structure of the world, psychical—if I dare use a word so profane—as well as physical, in which we live; the search not necessarily for mandates, but for extended knowledge of the conditions that govern our acts.

And then psychology underlies all that again, even as the architect's plans serve to interpret the edifice, and the subtle speculations of art and of science of the architect underlie the plans.

That is the point from which I conceive Psychology; and it is at this point already that I find the imbeciles arrayed against me.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

Correspondence.

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I reply to Dr. Wohlgemuth's answer, in your column under date of July 13, to his critic? Though, indeed, I hesitate thus further to advertise his book. For practising psycho-analysts it has its value as a warning to them that every piece of technically inferior work upon their part will be exaggerated by opponents into "proofs" that none of their results are due to what they claim. But for those having no thorough grounding in Freud will get a caricature of him by reading this book.

Those who are looking for the proofs of Freud's hypotheses, presented with an amazing depth of erudition and of fairness, should read the works of Ernest Jones. It is simply extraordinary that a man of Dr. Wohlgemuth's scientific standing should overlook this mine of facts, and ignore, as though it did not exist, the heavy artillery of his opponents.

Freud himself is essentially a creative genius, an exploring mind, who has had at the same time to hammer his way to scientific recognition and to elaborate and perfect the very theories for the recognition of which he was fighting. That Dr. Wohlgemuth should have been able, by wading through the long list of Freud's writings, to select here and here a careless piece of analysis, is not remarkable. But that he should list these in a book and say they prove that there is nothing whatever in psycho-analysis beyond suggestion, is preposterous.

I am even willing to go so far with Dr. Wohlgemuth as to admit that "unconscious" was not the most fortunate term Freud might have chosen to designate that portion of the psyche which is cut off by repression from the main stream. But this manner of arguing that because the facts are badly named therefore the facts don't exist, is a kind of logic which would have done credit to a mediæval theologian. It is he, and not "W. H." who here "avoids coming to close quarters."

As regards his statement in the *Freethinker* article that he treated a dream "in exactly the same way as Freud treats his dream, but obtained a different sort of result," the answer is that the treatment was *not* the same. It was a caricature. For the essence of Freud's association-method is that it must be spontaneous, unforced, "free."

The best part of Dr. Wohlgemuth's book is the experimental evidence which he cites against the theory that the pleasureableness of an experience is what determines whether it will be remembered. Perhaps modifications of Freud's conceptions will have to be made to meet this criticism. First, however, it must be shown that the experimental results have taken account of the

fact that an experience, pleasant in itself, may be affected by associations with other experiences of a different nature. For the rest, Dr. Wohlgemuth's book must be considered as the petty carping criticism of a controversialist, clever at scoring points on unessential technicalities, and seeming in all his long book never to have penetrated beyond words and phrases.

PRINCE HOPKINS.

Evian-les-Bain, July 10.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S TOUR.

We have to report seven very successful meetings at Blackburn. Every one was well attended, and the crowds listened with the closest attention, interruptions of any kind being practically absent. New members were made, and much help was given by Mr. Glassbrook and his son. This week Mr. Whitehead is in Stockport. The meetings will be held in Mersey Square. For further particulars see Guide Notice.

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.—No Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Startford, E.): 7, Mr. E. C. Saphin, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Square): Mr. Lew Davis, Tuesday, July 29, at 8, "What is it Worth?" Friday, August 1, at 8, "What Must I Do to be Damned?"

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

MR. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION, 1924.—July 26, Stockport (Mersey Square). 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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