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## Views and Opinions.

### Are We Civilized?

Are we civilized? That is a question very often asked, and one not at all easy to answer off hand. We have certainly a greater knowledge of natural forces than the world has ever before possessed; and our manners are much better than they were. We are more alive to injustice than we were—the revolts going on are evidences of that, for dissatisfaction is at bottom a striving after something better, and inconvenient as unrest may be a society is in a state of stagnation where it does not exist. But inventions are not unknown among those whom the world calls savages, manners are not always harsh—many "savages" have suffered because they were more gentle than their "civilized" conquerors, and care for others is certainly not a mint's quantity in uncivilized societies. Our standard of what is civilized is vague and elastic, but if instead of taking its measure by the things already named we take it as consisting in a mental outlook or attitude, then the degree of civilization we have attained is certainly not nearly so great as we are apt to think. For while all of us avail ourselves of the existence of a better knowledge of natural forces (including those of human nature), and that is something that any savage could accomplish, there are large masses of the people that are still in their mental attitude towards life, essentially uncivilized. And this has no necessary connection with what is called education. It is found with the "higher" as with the "lower" classes. Park Lane and Mayfair is as great a devotee at the shrine of superstition as is Whitechapel. The resort to fortune tellers, the fondness for charms, the hardly veiled belief in miracles are all as common with the educated classes as with the uneducated. These people, whatever their station in life, are to all intents substantially in the position of savages. The man who cannot realize this shows himself incapable of seriously thinking out the problems that lie before him.

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### The Medicine Man.

In Bradford recently there has been at work a travelling faith healer named Hickson. Some curious stories about this gentleman have appeared in South African and Australian papers, but with these we are not now concerned. We do not care whether he is

an honest and ignorant man who really believes in what he says, or whether he is a mere adventurer trading and living upon the credulity of his "patients" and the dishonesty of the clergy who patronise him. We are not concerned with either of these aspects of the matter, because dishonesty, trickery, and roguery are not strange things in the history of religion, and the longer religion is permitted to exist among a civilized people the more prominent will these things become. Hickson, who was in Bradford, but is now in London, has received the blessings of the officials of the Church of England, and that Church is, we may assume, fairly to be credited with all that follows from this adventure. From one point of view it is only right that the Church should patronise this kind of thing. Every minister of the Church of England is given the power to cast out devils, and if the devils are not there to be cast out that cannot be helped. And every minister of the Church finds it laid down in the Prayer-book that no matter what the illness is from which the patient is suffering it "certainly" comes from God. And if it comes from God it would seem only reasonable to ask God to take it away. One cannot expect a clergyman to pray to the devil to undo God's handiwork. We praise God for sending disease and then we thank him for taking it away. And never a religious man has the courage or the sense to remind God that he would have done better never to have sent the disease at all. Unless God is as stupid as the most devout of his followers would appear to be, he must find continuous amusement in their antics.

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### Exploiting Ignorance.

The Bradford and the London Missions of Healing have followed the usual lines. Crowds of sufferers from all sorts of diseases have come to this man Hickson. He has laid hands upon them and some of them have gone away cured. There has been no medical testimony produced as to the nature of the disease from which they were suffering (not that that in itself would be absolutely conclusive, for we have heard of even doctors making mistakes) and no attempt at an estimate of the nature of the cure is published. And, above all, no attempt is made at comparing the isolated cures with the tremendous number of "as you were" cases. It is enough for someone to say that he or she is cured for the clergy to pronounce a miracle, and for the newspapers—ready to exploit popular ignorance in any direction, to advertise the "miracle." Not one of the journalists who have written about these things has either the knowledge or the honesty to point out that medical works supply plenty of cases substantially similar where patients suffering from functional disorders are cured by a shock, by some sudden excitement, or by faith in some nostrum in itself of no curative value whatever. The notorious Sequah used to cure complaints with the aid of a big drum, a brass band, and the excitement of a public crowd. The brass band was as effective as the heavenly choir, the market-place



crowd as the filled Church, and Sequah the quack as powerful as Hickson the mountebank. Sequah never thought of getting the Church to help, or he might have done better, but in this profession as in others one lives and learns.

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#### Simplicity or Artfulness.

The clergy are taking the number of sick people who are flocking to the Church—carrying with them their God-sent complaints—as a splendid testimony of the power of faith. I am the more struck with the heartless exploitation of credulous and suffering humanity. All of these sufferers have gone there expecting to get cured. It cannot be said that faith was lacking; that is evidenced by their attendance. Neither Hickson nor the clergy will say that God cannot cure these people; that would give the game away altogether. And yet they can see that crowd of suffering and disappointed humanity turn back, suffering, in addition to the diseases it has, all the pangs of frustrated hope, and praise God for his power and goodness because a solitary case here and there professes itself cured. Worst of all is the report of the number of blind cases on which Hickson tried his hands. He cured none of these. And of all the brutal things that can be done exploiting the pitiful helplessness of blind men and women appears to be the worst. He can only cure a disease from which the patient never suffered. Or it may be that Mr. Sequah-Hickson went the wrong way to work. In the New Testament when Jesus cured the man of blindness he took some earth, spat on it, smacked it on the man's eyes, and immediately he saw. We commend this method of Jesus to the "Mission of Healing." But perhaps its promoters may realize that even modern religious credulity would not stand the spectacle of a missionary spitting in a blind man's face in order to restore his sight. Mr. Hickson guards himself by saying that he comes "as a spiritual healer. Bodily cures I consider of secondary importance." Artful Mr. Hickson! I should have thought more of his straightforwardness had he not introduced that reservation. If a man professes himself cured of some bodily infirmity—which he never had—Mr. Hickson is quite ready to take credit for it. Otherwise he is content to rest his case on spiritual cures, which means only that people will feel better for his being there. And yet all the time he asks for prayers to cure bodily disorders, lays on hands to cure them, and knows that if it were thought he could not effect the cure of bodily disease not half a dozen would cross the road to see him. Artful Mr. Hickson! There is no mistake he knows his business—and his customers.

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#### Physic and Prayer.

The *Daily News*, which has been publishing accounts of the mission, says in a leading article, "Can it be claimed that healing can come from faith alone, or must it not have the aids of medicine and science?" Artful Mr.—no, *Daily News*. The *D.N.* must think of both classes of its readers. It must not offend the religious section by saying what it doubtless knows this faith-healing fake to be. On the other hand, it must not offend the more sensible section by leaving out medical science. So it plumps for faith plus science. Which is exactly what Voltaire said. Prayer will cure disease, if it is mixed with the right kind of physic. I have known myself of a case in which a man was cured of constipation by repeating the name of Christ with daily doses of purified paraffin. The *Church Times* is also very careful, at least it does not wish to risk over-much for fear the ungodly will scoff. In its comments on the mission it says that

"no person seeking healing should be allowed to attend one of these missions unless some clear and definite course of preparation has been made." What is meant here by a course of preparation is that the patient should be taken in hand by a parson, and only when the latter is convinced that he is in a frame of mind fit to persuade himself that he will be cured, and probably when his spiritual adviser is convinced that there is nothing organically wrong with him, will he be allowed to attend the mission. Oh man of little faith! As though the Lord cannot cure a man unless a parson has certified him as fit to be cured! But, in any case, it is the wrong people that are cured. As a matter of evidence, and as an advertisement of the power of the Lord the better plan would be to cure someone of a complaint without the sufferer knowing anything about it. Why not start with the Editor of the *Freethinker*? I have one or two minor ailments at present. Nothing very serious, but as I am not used to ailments I do not take to them kindly, and they cause me to blaspheme. Now if someone would pray to the Lord to cure me at a given time and date, consider what an advertisement that would be. It would be far better than the doubtful cure of doubtful complaints, by one whose very truthfulness may be called into question.

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#### Are We Civilized?

I commenced by asking whether we were civilized, and I conclude with the same question. And so far as this mission is concerned we are not. This game of the medicine man curing diseases by invoking the name of some tribal God, is older than any of our historical records. In the era of the cave-man the skin-clad Hickson of that day would crawl out of his cave, and with his attendant clergy would solemnly cast out the demon, which was the complaint from which some man was suffering. In the days of the New Testament Jesus, that personage is represented as pursuing exactly the same policy. Right through the Christian ages the fakirs of the Church proceed with their demon-expelling methods, and their appeals to God to cure the sick. In this matter there is no change. The medicine man in his cave, the witch-doctor in his forest, the Shaman in his hut, Jesus on the wayside, the priest in his church, Hickson in London, are all moving on the same mental level. The name of their mumbo-jumbo is different, but the essence of the position remains unaltered. That is so far as religious circles are concerned. But if a man opened a shop in Oxford Street and offered to cure diseases at five shillings each by making passes over the heads of people, the police would soon be on him, he would be convicted as a rogue and vagabond, while a Christian magistrate would lecture him upon the wickedness of deceiving an ignorant and credulous public. Yet he could also produce testimony from people who had been cured by his methods, but it would not save him. It is only when these practitioners have taken the precaution to ally themselves with the Church, or to do it in the name of Jesus that they fare differently. Without Jesus a fraud, with Jesus an instrument of God. All the other conditions are the same. Why this distinction? Is it a question of monopoly? Must the Christian Church be permitted to hold a monopoly in knavery? Must it be the only institution in the country that is permitted to exploit the ignorance and credulity of suffering humanity with the approval of our enlightened Press and our religion-soaked public? It would seem so, and I congratulate Mr. Sequah-Hickson in taking the precaution of doing it in the name of Jesus. That covers a deal; and it keeps one out of the hands of the police.

CHAPMAN COHEN.



## Modernism.

SUCH was the subject discussed by the Rev. Arthur Pringle in his address as Chairman of the Congregational Union at its recent meeting in Liverpool. As is well known in Congregational circles, Mr. Pringle is a remarkably able man, and is by no means of the narrow-minded order. If our memory is correct he was closely associated with Dr. R. J. Campbell in his New Theology controversy nearly twenty years ago; and it is not on record that, following Dr. Campbell's example, he has returned to the old Orthodoxy. If that is true, it is no wonder that his address was entitled "New Testament Modernism and the Church of To-day," and it is this address, as reported by Mr. Hugh Edwards, M.P., in the *British Weekly* of October 16, that we wish to criticize in this article.

Mr. Pringle begins by asking: "Ought it (Modernism) any longer to be, amongst educated people, a term of suspicion or reproach, or even a distinctive label marking a man as exceptional or advanced? Ought not the most timid and conservative to be impressed and reassured if we find, as I think we shall, that the New Testament, in relation to its own time, is essentially and boldly modernistic?" Of course, the answer to those questions depends entirely upon the meaning attached to the term "modernism." We infer from Mr. Edward's report that the Chairman did clearly define modernism, but the reporter deliberately left the definition out. We are aware that as popularly used it signifies a rejection of the great dogmas of the Church, or the adoption of such interpretations of them as rob them completely of their original meaning. In other words, modernism is "a system or complexus of theological and philosophical tenets condemned by Pope Pius X. in the encyclical *Pascendi Gregis*, September 8, 1907, as 'an alliance between faith and false philosophy,' arising from curiosity and pride which rouses the spirit and demands a compromise between authority and liberty." From the Catholic point of view that is a true definition of Modernism. The Anglican Church is composed of several antagonistic parties, and Modernism is distinctly under the ban of both the Catholic and Evangelical schools. From our point of view Modernism is a half-way house between faith and no-faith, or between Christianity and Secularism. Now, naturally, from these points of view, it is a term of suspicion and reproach, and we fail to see the reason why Mr. Pringle wishes it not to be so regarded. To him Modernism is evidently a thoroughly good thing worthy of all encouragement.

Proceeding, the Chairman says, "it is no less incumbent on us to come to a clear understanding with ourselves concerning the Church." The following are the words Mr. Edwards attributes to him:—

It is significant that New Testament Modernism issued in a church full of hopeful vitality. With us outside the Church, the trend at the moment is all against organized religion. What is more ominous, there is a good deal of half-heartedness and misgiving inside the Church. We are accustomed to hear of men outside denouncing the Church and extolling Christ; which may be set down to misunderstanding or exasperation where the Church has manifestly failed. But what for our present purpose is more to the point is the frequency with which people who belong to the Church allow themselves to depreciate it. It is not uncommon to hear ministers emphasize with zest and confidence the distinction between religion and organized religion. I have even heard, he added, a Congregational minister publicly declare, amid applause from some of his brethren, that organized religion is a contradiction in terms.

The whole of that long passage is undoubtedly true and surely Mr. Pringle is not blind to the fact that its truth proves the secular claim that the Church is exclusively human in its origin, nature, and work. There is absolutely no trace of what is popularly understood by divinity about it at all. The saddest thing about the Church's claim to be a Divine institution is that the belief in it has made it possible for the Church, on numberless occasions to commit the darkest crimes on record. It was the belief in the Church's divinity that gave rise to the bloody Crusades during which upwards of five million lives were wickedly sacrificed. Indeed, the deeds of the Church in all periods, particularly during the Dark Ages, are such as to make the belief in its divinity logically and ethically absurd. Mr. Pringle practically admits this; for in Mr. Edward's report we read thus:—

After emphasizing the existence of the essential, thorough-going Modernism of the New Testament, with its reinterpretation of Christianity in Paulinism and in the Fourth Gospel, he enquired what became of Modernism as a label of reproach or even of distinctiveness. Extremists, he declared, there will always be; the crude, hurried change for change's sake, left-wingers by whom progress is hampered in every sphere. But it is unnecessary and unworthy to confuse these with the true and scrupulous friends of progress.

Beyond dispute the Church thus described is a distinctively human organization, incapable of any superhuman performances, and the reference to Christ's promise of the Spirit who will lead believers into all the truth is in the circumstances devoid of all meaning. The Church is nineteen hundred years old, and the promised Spirit has never supplied the slightest evidence of his presence. Mr. Pringle himself admits that organized religion is at a discount all round. Modernism has achieved no success anywhere. Its converts are Church members, chiefly priests in Holy Orders, while the outside world scarcely takes any notice of either it or them.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Salaried Sons of God.

Gold will knit and break religion.—*Shakespeare*

The services of the priests are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description.—*G. W. Foote.*

THE announcement in the newspapers that the curates have failed to form a trade union, or a guild of employment, will provoke smiles rather than tears. For curates, in spite of their alleged sacred calling, are usually regarded with amused tolerance. Dramatists and music-hall song-writers have made them the butt of their satire for generations, and the public never seem to tire of the jest. It is all very ironic, for these long-faced young men take themselves very seriously as heaven-sent individuals commissioned by a benevolent Omnipotence to reclaim a saucy world from naughty ways. Styling themselves "reverend," these priests have always endeavoured to keep their caste separate from the world of ordinary men and women. And now, fallen on evil days, the sacred "sons of God" are "playing the sedulous ape" to the Cats' Meat Men's Union, and the Organ Grinders' Protection Association.

The curates are beginning to look with longing eyes on the loaves and fishes. Perhaps it is only natural that they should wake up and find that in a time of industrial depression they are as much "on the shelf" as the most elderly spinsters of their congregations. For, sad to relate, in the race for the flesh-pots of Egypt the curates have been passed by the



dustmen and the road-sweepers. Prayers may move mountains, but it takes so much more to move the very hard hearts of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Lord's Spiritual. Truly, it must be galling for the curates to see men of not superior ability living in palaces, attending Court functions, legislating in the House of Lords, and drawing incomes varying from £2,000 to £15,000 yearly. It has even been said that the poorer clergy are "starving." At least, that is how the Bishop of London, and some of his colleagues, put it, and "Londoniensis" has quoted the awful instance of a priest who fed his whole family of five persons on sixpence a meal; and the still more horrid instance of the unfortunate "man of God" who lost whatever brains he had for the want of a respectable bank-balance. It is very sad, but there is always balm in Gilead. The Bishop of London, who is so generous with other people's money, has collected about £100,000 to protect the sacred persons of the clergy from the blessings of poverty.

The inimitable Bishop of London should be an authority on poverty. He is obsessed by the woes of the unhappy rich, and is always painfully anxious to rebut the charge of wealth. Some time ago he explained, in full-throated tones, to an astonished congregation that, after drawing his episcopal stipend of £10,000 for fifteen years, he was £2,000 on the wrong side of the ledger, and actually poorer than when he started the self-sacrificing experience of following in the footsteps of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth. On such bookkeeping it is abundantly clear that, had his lordship's salary been that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he must have finished his unhappy career in a Church Army shelter, or "sleeping rough" on the Thames Embankment.

Whether the clergy are really starving is an open question. That some of them are "hard-up" has been vouched for by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons, and he is just as truthful as the Bishop of London. Mr. George said that the men of God were worse off than mere miners. But why should they be in such dire distress? The ancient endowments of the Church of England are as golden as the streets of the New Jerusalem, and far more solid. Moreover, they were not invested in Farrow's Bank. Lord Addington's return of 1891 showed that the annual value of these ancient ecclesiastical endowments was £5,469,171, exclusive of modern benefactions, which totalled millions more.

Anyone who cares to consult Crockford's *Clerical Directory* can see at a glance that the average reverend is not eating grass like the Biblical King Nebuchadnezzar. The stipends are far above the poverty line. The higher ecclesiastics evade the blessings of poverty in a more skilful manner. The Bench of Bishops, forty in number, share £182,000 yearly. Other bishops, and suffragan bishops, are almost as fortunate. The bachelor Bishop of London, who is so concerned about the poverty of priests, starves on a salary of £300 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep fifty working-class families in comparative comfort. The blunt truth is that the Anglican Church is the richest Church in all Christendom. At the top there are prelates with seats in the House of Lords, where they never do any good service for democracy; at the bottom are a multitude of holders of benefices better off than the ordinary man. Within the narrow confines of the City of London £50,000 is spent yearly in ministering to a small resident population of policemen, caretakers, and Jewish people. The Anglican Church has also property in the City of London worth over £2,000,000.

Curates should be interested to learn that the most hideous of all known costumes—the episcopal war-

paint—costs £200, and I fancy that a curate's wife could have stitched together something as good at less cost. Hospitality to the tune of thousands a year should stagger them. "The stair-carpet at Farnham Castle are measured by miles," wrote old Bishop Thorold. "My episcopal income goes in geraniums," complained Bishop Stubbs. It is, indeed, a far cry from the legendary fishing-nets of the original disciples to Lambeth Palace, with its guard-room; Fulham Palace, with its deer park; and Wells, with its moated garden.

We fear that the Bishop of London's arithmetic will not entitle him to an honorary membership of the Society of Accountants, but what can one expect from a man who believes in the Tangle of the Trinity. His lordship's engaging candour is sure to cause much heart-burning in the breasts of devoted Churchmen. He should have imitated the quiet and cautious reserve of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, two canny North countrymen, who pocket large salaries and say nothing of finance.

The Anglican Bench of Bishops could easily mitigate the condition of the curates. One cannot think for a moment that these descendents of the Apostles would act like the selfish boy with an apple, who, when his brother asked him for the core, replied, "Go away. There ain't going to be no core." But curates must expect unfair treatment so long as the bishops' conception of a national church is that of a glorified Selfridge's Store with themselves as managing directors.

MIMNERMUS.

## George Bernard Shaw.

THERE are not two Shaws. Perhaps this is lucky for us, for the coruscations of a double luminary of the kind would certainly shed intolerable day. But what I mean here is that Shaw is one of the most original of those who have lighted on this sphere to beguile us; and yet one traces in strands and glints the touches of others from Grimaldi to Mark Twain, from John the Baptist to Bunyan. That reminds us—I am looking for an image, but I will throw in one that shows how wide is the range of our Puck-like friend, for the phrase has the hall-mark of the Fabian Society—that proves, then, the solidarity of the human race.

Now it would be easy to set off Shaw as a compendium of paradoxes—his wit and his seriousness, his levity and his great purposes, his sarcasm and his good cheer, his happy blend of Isaiah and Voltaire with a touch of Habbakuk to bind them together—but I am not greatly enamoured of that style, which is more fitted to show off the writer's cleverness than to illuminate his subject.

Seriously, therefore, I will try to offer an account of Shaw which corresponds to the conclusions I have formed after having for years asked how to account for him.

In the first place it was not for nothing that Shaw was Irish. I do not here refer simply to the critical eye and the contentious spirit that flourish in the Emerald Isle; I mean that when he invaded London he came here with a mind less trammelled than usual with a score of things of belief, of conformity, and of tradition which are supposed not only to be the breath of life of the British Constitution—as they were and are—but, what is very different, necessary to the progress of man.

Shaw came here at a time when the dreadful ideals of mid-Victorian furniture, with its horse-hair sofas, its antimaccassars, its frock coats, its crinolines, and the chlorosis of Tennysonian femininity were all in vogue, indissolubly allied; and when the tall hats



of the blameless life were the essential headgear also of the souls of men.

The fact that Shaw was a Protestant was also helpful, for whereas for centuries the intellectual energy of Ireland had been absorbed in an insane and murderous squabble between two aspects of a religion of love, Shaw having disengaged himself from one side was able to look at both with unprejudiced eyes, and also to direct his attention to the roots from which these twin blossoms had eventually sprung.

Moreover, like most Irishmen he was ambitious and vain, quick in his apprehensions, lively in expression, and endowed with a spirit both impatient and persistent. All this, however, might have made him a Cabinet Minister. There was something more. Shaw laughed at his uncle. He tells us so much, after many years, in his preface of *Back to Methusaleh*, and his uncle, it appears, did not mention him in his will. Even now at times I seem to find in the story traces of Shaw's Irish ancestry—that sandy-haired, freckled, uneasy, over-clever boy, with the undying worm of curiosity and the disconcerting demand, that uneasy, cantankerous little devil of a fellow that would not be still and respectful, but would ask questions, would grin at absurd replies—oh, how often—and would in the high-pitched, scannel-throated, side-ways wrestling, semi-querulous, reasonably protesting voice, that still comes to him in argument, return to his point and demand explanations. Yes, there was something vital, though uncomfortable, in this gingery, thin, long-legged scapegrace to whom his uncle left no money.

London was an extensive and impersonal uncle to Shaw. He lived on porridge, thought high, wrote, when he got a chance, criticisms, screamingly good of music, of anything; while that undying worm of his fretted him on. The Shaw of *Back to Methusaleh* was already there, but the cap and bells were most in evidence; while Don Quixote was burnishing his lance Sancho Panza was getting the breakfast, and not easily, pardy!

Most humorists seek out the unusual and the incongruous as contrasted with normal life, their brains are freakish, but they beguile us to go and sport with them for awhile; Shaw's humour consisted in the discovery of the absurdity of the normal, or what had been accepted as such; he brought to the world of sham, of make-believe, of self-deception and external humbug, a sane reasoning mind, and when he found a point he stuck to it tenaciously. That accounts both for the brilliancy of his early comedies and for the fact that so many of these offsprings of his brain were stifled at their birth.

O, what a pother of serious business, what evangelical earnestness was required to get Shaw's funniments to the light, as if John the Baptist were pushing the village Zany to the front to expound his views. Something of this I gather from Shaw's prefaces. I collect strange things—rivers, for instance—at least in the cabinets of memory, and amongst the other goodies, prefaces, that is to say, prefaces of genius. I have got two so far, the first being Le Sage's introduction to *Gil Blas*, and the second Halsted's to *Synthetic Projective Geometry*, and I am still hesitating about adding one of Shaw's as a third; they are illuminating prefaces, but Lord bless us, a preface as long as the whole of *Gulliver's Travels*, while all the time the adage keeps chiming in as to the charm of brevity. But then that's like Shaw; it is the John the Baptist peeping out through the oddments of the clown. He lures us by his piping to follow him, he makes us laugh till we can't stand upright, then, and especially in *Methusaleh*, he planks us on a seat in the corner, locks the door, and then drenches us with that philo-

sophy of his. And all this of malice prepense; he meant it all along, from way back, from the days when he was astonishing the public and leaving T.P. delighted, terrified, at the genial audacities of Corno di Bassetto.

Shaw's prefaces are as good as plays, for after all, some of the plays are a series of chap-book pictures in illustration of his prefaces; some are the coloured representations of the articles, or short stories, that Shaw has written or has wanted to write. Not indeed that the plays lose anything by this style of conception; they sparkle with the wine of Shaw's peculiar vintage. Even that terrible *Methusaleh* that kept me bored stiff night after night at last caught hold of me, in the discourse of the Elderly Gentleman, till it not only tickled my ribs, dilated my spleen, shook my vertebræ, but at length turning me to sheer idiocy, left me laughing, panting, gaping, trying both to laugh again and to stop laughing, till the meaning of all things dissolved in sheer folly.

In his prefaces he gives us the stars of his firmament—and a queer crew they are—Bunyan, Blake, Hogarth and Turner; Goethe, Shelley, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Ibsen, Morris, Tolstoy and Nietzsche. Now of these I understand at once Bunyan and Hogarth in this connection, then Turner and Ibsen; I always suspect a pose in the man who sticks Blake forward—it reminds me somehow of Willie Yeats—all of which may but show a sort of tone deafness of mine in these high realms; Nietzsche, likewise, tires the mind—the man of strength whom your decadent poet hurls at the endeavouring bourgeois of Clapham, but what has that to do with Shaw?—; Morris, yes, for there must have been something very fundamental in the Socialism of Shaw when he followed in the leading strings of such a bureaucrat-type as Sydney Webb—imagine Shaw setting out to battle, and crying now we must make as little progress as possible; we must put up the banner of the slowest warrior in history, and with the Cunctator inscribed in pale type on our standards—and this, remember, in a campaign not of defence but of attack—cry, *In hoc signo*. Oh, Bernard Shaw, where was then your humour?—; then Tolstoy, who lived the simple life in a more delightful villa than Chequers, and who wore silk under his peasant's blouse, and gave us a philosophy that was attractive in due proportion to its impracticality; Shelley, whom Shaw represents in curious guise in his *Candida* as a sort of cross between a moonlight spirit and a wet poodle; not a word hereof Byron, Keats, or Burns; not a reference to Molière, Beaumarchais, Voltaire, but then the Olympian but irresponsible Goethe—what was he to Shaw or Shaw to him?—I suspect some affectation there, a spice of snobbery, and that accounts also for dabbling-in Tolstoy.

And yet after all how great these prefaces are. Shaw says, "There is among people who are really free to think for themselves, on the subject, a great deal of hearty dislike of Jesus and of contempt for his failure to save himself and overcome his enemies by personal bravery and cunning as Mahomet did."

He talks of Shakespeare with freedom. "He (Shakespeare) must be judged by those characters into which he fits what he knows of himself, his Hamlets and Macbeths and Lear and Prosperos. If these characters are agonising in a void about factitious melodramas, murders and revenges and the like, whilst the comic characters walk with their feet on solid ground, vivid and amusing, you know that the author has much to show and nothing to teach."

Or of Dickens: "At the end of the book you know Micawber, whereas you only know what has happened to David, and are not interested enough in him to wonder what his politics and religion might be."



Now, when I reflect, these sayings seem to me commonplace, but then my own ideas border on lunacy; that is to say, if our "great teachers" be sane; but Shaw is here, and all through his life and adventures, replying to the *Things That one is Expected to Say*, and from that point of view his courage is stupendous.

Is he a philosopher? Well, there I remember that just as Edison after a lifetime of invention tried to learn something of the principles of electrical science, so Shaw found that he needed a philosophic basis; but he, following the leading strings—and of what guides?—thought Bergson the last word of enlightenment. And, oh, how shall I ever forget our modern Voltaire, our Puck-like, irresistible, inimitable Shaw sitting grave, attentive, brain-straining while Bosanquet turned out his abracadbric nonsense on government as conceived in the womb of the Transcendental philosophy.

No. Philosophy means, or rather should mean, something both more basic and comprehensive, more organically formed and developmental, more sure and cogent in form than Shaw has given signs of. He is rather, in this regard, what was said of Daniel Bernoulli, not a profound mathematician but a brilliant solutionist; the mathematicians whose ideas have developed the science are of the type of Archimedes, Descartes, Gauss.

And yet withal what wonderful plays—"The Doctor's Dilemma," "John Bull's Other Island," "Androcles"—I stop simply because the list is the tally of all, except that I would like a He-Man to spank Shaw's little Flapper—and if I have said anything critical it is merely in an attempt to define the limits here and there, for, this side idolatry, I rejoice in Bernard Shaw and bless the stars that they have afforded us in our time such a lively stream of sparkling wit, sapient wisdom, so energetic a spring-cleaning of the musty-fusty corners of our civilization; so brave and brilliant a total achievement.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

#### THE PRIEST'S PRAYER.

Have pity, Lord! Let me not die alone!  
 Though once I dared my fellow-souls to shrive,  
 I am unclean; with pangs of death I strive.  
 Alas, what healing balm to me was known  
 For every heart that made its fevered moan!  
 But now that I am sick, who shall revive  
 My hopeless faith, or save my soul alive,  
 Since that elixir fails, which was mine own?  
 Spirit of God, Who dwellest e'en in me,  
 Who speakest even by this doubtful breath,  
 Whether for good or ill Thou set me free,  
 Withhold not Truth, although its price be Death;  
 I faint, I die, in scorching plains accurst,  
 Let me drink hemlock, if it slake my thirst!

—Constance Naden.

#### FROM "SONNETS ON THE THOUGHT OF DEATH."

These questions all men ask; but none can make  
 Fit answer for their anguish here below.  
 The howling whirlwinds of existence blow  
 Onward for ever o'er an endless lake:  
 We watch the struggling barks around us take  
 Their fated course; and that is all we know;  
 They sail, they sink; no sign the waters show;  
 While straining myriads follow in our wake.  
 The force that speeds our flight we cannot see;  
 No voice of man or god survives the storm;  
 Nor 'mid the weltering waves hath any form  
 Risen to fill the vast vacuum;  
 Nay, if at times there stream athwart the night  
 Some forkèd flame, it dazzles but to blight.

—John Addington Symonds.

## Acid Drops.

The Rev. C. Owen French is a clergyman who resides in the town of Pudsey. He is also a very pure-minded man—that is as many Christians understand the term. His purity is such that although his Church is in need of money he refused to sanction a theatrical performance by amateurs, the profits of which were to be given to the Lord. The stage, he explained, is a sink of iniquity, and his pure soul shrinks from money coming from so tainted a source. But we wonder whether Mr. Owen is equally scrupulous and critical concerning the sources of the money which does come to his Church. We are not concerned with defending the stage against Mr. Owen; these parsons are so ridiculous when they assume a lofty moral attitude, more so than the average layman, but we venture to say that the money which might reach his Church from the worst kind of actors, even though they were as black as the vicar's imagination paints them, would be snow white beside the money which has come to the Church through its endowments.

And we do really think it time that intelligent men and women gave up the pose of pretending that the clergy are fit to be moral guides to the nation. We call this a pose, and we believe it to be nothing else. For, on the whole, there is not a class in the country that is less fitted to play the part of moral guides than are the clergy. They are not more truthful than other men, they are not more honest than other men, and the meanness and trickery of many clergymen when they are striving to get their way against those to whom they are opposed, would make even the average politician on an election campaign blush. It is pure habit which makes men and women defer, against their better knowledge and judgment, to the clergy in matters of conduct. It is time the pretence was ended.

We wonder what Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who gratified a church meeting by professing an attachment to the Scottish Sabbath, thinks of the Rev. John White, of Glasgow. This gentleman said it might be wise if before being adopted, a candidate for Parliament were to pass an examination in the Bible. We daresay it would please Mr. White if no one were allowed to stand for Parliament without a certificate from his minister as to his spiritual fitness and soundness in matters religious. Once upon a time a man had to be a believer in order to get into Parliament, but that was a long time ago. Mr. White must long for a return of the good old days.

In writing of Spain, the country where the ethics of the slaughterhouse are considered good enough for the public, Galton sets down the decay of that country to the annual removal by the Inquisition of those with the greatest tendency to independence of thought. Our apologists for Roman Catholicism in England, writing with a pot of beer in their hand, are too busy making verse to the plaster saints to remember this chapter in the history of a creed, that, with Mussolini's assistance, is hoped to gather the world to its bosom.

We are informed by the newspaper, that whilst coughing out of a railway carriage window, one of the pilgrims returning from Lourdes jerked his wallet containing over £100 in notes and gold out of his pocket on to the line. This little incident may explain the solicitude of various priests interested in the miracles of Lourdes.

The British and Foreign Bible Society, whose aim appears to be tonnage, tell a fine story in their 120th Report. The reception of the colporteur in Germany does not appear to be of the pleasantest in the country that



was once a training school of theology. The report states:—

The colporteur is in many cases regarded as a cheat and a swindler. A grocer said, "There is no God; if there were, he would never have allowed such a terrible war."

The German grocer must keep calm; if all the world decided to kiss, be friends, and make it up, the trade of Christianity would find this behaviour advocated in the Bible—as it may have to find something suitable for the next great war. It is just possible that the peasant of Galilee included even the British and Foreign Bible Society in his last words.

The worst bitterness, we are told, in the above report seems to arise with rival Christian sects, and complaints are made of opposition from Catholics. From this, we conclude, that geographical insanity aptly describes the efforts of the Bible Society that wants to "do people good" and send up the tonnage of bibles—mass production, mass salvation.

Some arrow shot from a bow has apparently found its mark with the Earl of Ypres. The Mayor of Hastings in handing the soldier a silver salver and a scroll containing the freedom of Hastings, made some very pointed and tactful remarks. He said that his lordship was never obsessed with the glory of war.....and he would join in the fervent hope for the time when there would be no more need for war." His lordship, replying, said that he was absolutely in sympathy with all efforts for world peace.....but it was useless to dub a man a militarist simply because he warned his countrymen of approaching danger." There are signs of grace here; very obscure it is true, but his lordship's mind does not move with the times. When we know, without waiting for proof, that war will be simply civilian massacre from the air, we would ask him to think in terms of aeroplanes, bombs and poison gas, and if he is still in the mood, let him be downright, and tell us *how* to be prepared. As far as we can see, the only thing to do is to extend the underground railways and learn to live like rabbits, for the demon of war is now laughing at the *basso-profundo* song of "Let me like a soldier fall."

Miss Rosamund Boulbee, the Canadian authoress, tells a good story in her *Pilgrimages and Personalities*, just published by Hutchinson. It is about an old Admiral Field, who was once a character in the House of Commons. He was travelling with her from his home in Hampshire to London. He put her into a third-class carriage, and got into a first himself. Later he rejoined her. "As I don't have time before I catch this train in the morning," he explained, "to say my prayers and sing my hymns, I like a carriage to myself until I have finished."

It seems rather curious at first sight that so many military and naval men should profess themselves followers of the pacifist carpenter of Nazareth. The Jesus of the Gospels—and it is he whom these professional fighters claim to adore—had plenty of faults, but at least he does not appear to have been tainted with militarism. Indeed, he seems to have been altogether too insipid for any such positive code. And yet we remember that many of the primers of history and biography which we encountered in childhood days were full of beautiful moral stories, of exceedingly devout soldiers who regularly prayed God to help them in slaughtering their enemies, and who—whether in virtue of this piety or because of superior armament and tactics, was never quite clear—*did* usually overwhelm their opponents, and smite them in a manner that would have delighted the bloodthirsty heart of David King of Israel. In particular we remember a rather blotchy woodcut, depicting Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North on his knees praying in full view of his army, before leading it into battle against the Catholic Christians. This woodcut bore the caption, "A good beginning, and was a source of some

speculation to us. Were we intended to emulate the great man's piety by praying publicly, or by slaughtering Catholics? Did the common soldiers join in the pious exercises, or was that the king's prerogative? What would happen if the opposing Christians prayed with the same heartiness, so that each side got the same measure of divine aid in slaughtering the other? It was a problem as difficult, in its way, as the ancient conundrum, What would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable body?

But amusing though some such aspects of the Christian faith and ethics may be, there is a serious side. Ever since Christianity was born into this world it has been a source of war and disputation; and the fruitful cause of dissension, even within the family circle. It helped to complete the dissolution of the Roman Empire—true, probably, such a religion would not have thrived save in a decadent civilization—helped produce the Crusades, was the direct cause of innumerable religious wars of persecution, such as that aimed at the extinction of the Albigenses, and of religious wars, that dragged out for many years, and were probably unparalleled in history for the horrors attendant upon them. And even in most modern times, no war is complete until a priest of some sort has blessed it, and declared it to be a divine service. Why should a faith, which in some respects, at least, is pacifist, be so prolific a cause of war and massacre?

The answer, we think, is that superstition, and beliefs and ethics unfounded upon the facts of life, must ever produce evil results. Only by the brave facing of the imperfections of this world and humanity, can we hope to improve things. The man who takes refuge from reality in a dogmatic creed, can never again see clearly what things require reforming, or wherein human nature is vicious, or what human institutions make for evil and what for good. He has a false standard of worth; all things are distorted by the belief that he has the truth, and divine guidance in going through life. This belief that he has a special revelation which makes him superior in knowledge and ability to other folk, passes easily into an intolerant desire to compel others to think as he thinks, and then to act as he acts. And so, in due time, he is prepared to "compel them to come in" by use of armed force, by lies and slanders, by all manner of subterfuges, from which his better nature would turn in disgust, were his mind not clouded by religion.

In the parish magazine the Rev. A. Wellesley Orr, who has a vicarate at Kingston Hill, in Surrey, has been unburdening his mind on divers subjects of importance. "Modern society," he says, "with its conventions, aims in every class at turning out puppets and dolls who, by dress and speech, action, and even thought, are mere copies and imitations of one another." We commend his reverence for this frank condemnation of Christian civilization, although we think, as in the case of most things on which the Christian clergy utter their dicta, the statement is rather extravagant. But still there is truth enough in it to make every Christian reconsider the value of his faith. Our civilization, including the educational system, which turns boys and girls out into the business and industrial world, just at the age when their minds are developed to the point at which they are beginning to take an interest in social and scientific problems, is based upon, and permeated with Christian ideas and prejudices. Moreover, not a little time in schools is wasted in so-called religious instruction; precious time that might be used in so many other really valuable directions. The Rev. A. Wellesley Orr further laments that "From the great machine of education we turn out thousands upon thousands of human articles, moulded to the same strict pattern by the rigid routine and the red tape restrictions of the Boards and Councils." We would suggest in all un-Christian humility, that the reverend gentleman should consider his own profession before he makes this rather stupid criticism of the teaching profession, which, after all, is doing a great work,



under difficulties of which the priest seems to have no realization. If he really wants a more efficient educational system, and the chance for the development of individualities, let him give up his outworn creed, with its insistence upon tradition, and its proud unconcern with this world and with the development of the mind, and seek to effect such social reforms as shall make it possible for every child to have as near equality of educational opportunity as is possible. Then let him criticize the teachers of this country, if scholars are still turned out according to standard patterns, in somewhat the same fashion as parts of machinery are turned out by standardized processes.

Over a hundred Hindu priests, who lived in huts along the bank of the Ganges, near Hardwar, have been drowned in the recent floods. The place in which the unfortunate men dwelt was a holy one. It would be interesting to hear some Christian priests expatiating upon the pitiful folly of these men, who depended upon superstition to save them from the forces of nature, which they defied.

The Countess of Chesterfield, in opening a Congregational bazaar at York recently, said, "She could not help feeling that the excitement and stress of life tended to make them all, and more especially the young, a little careless of religion, when all was going well." A euphemistic way of saying what we all know, that religion, like all superstition, makes no appeal to healthy, normal people, except perhaps when trouble comes, and saps one's strength of will, and weakens the more virile qualities. For that reason, even if there were no others, religion is to be dispised and denounced. In times of stress and suffering it may be easy and pleasant to take narcotics, but in the end whatever they be, the last state is worse than the first. And religion, as the Countess implies, is an intellectual narcotic, which can never help an individual or a community to conquer adverse circumstances.

The Emir of Katsina (West Africa), who recently visited London, when asked his opinion of the greatness of Great Britain, said the most wonderful thing was certainly Wembley; next came Maskelyne's illusions; next the film, "The Thief of Bagdad," and lastly the animals in the Zoo. An unintentionally ironic commentary upon our Christian civilization. One is reminded of the other black ruler, who, visiting Victorian London, was most impressed by the blue-coated kings who, with a hand-wave, could halt a stream of traffic.

An article, "The Lure of Rome," by Dr. T. R. Glover, has created a great deal of interest, so we are informed by the *Daily News*, and Father Ronald Knox is going to state the case for the other side. It is delicious fun to note the jangling of specialists on the road to heaven; we imagine that this difference will be over a bit of bread, and nothing to do with the fundamental side of religion with its belief in miracles—which is the nigger in the wood pile.

At a conference of the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, Miss Alison Neilans, in supporting a resolution stated that "They had in the past created an ugly and morbid atmosphere about sex, and they must teach that sex was one of the beauties of life." We wish the lady every success in what is a noble ideal, and she will be well advised to leave Church or Church history alone in her efforts to place women on a little higher level than the tenth commandment.

Bishop J. E. Hine has written his autobiography, in which he tells us of the difficulties of missionaries preaching in the Swahili in the native language. He writes:—

A priest who wished to describe the saints as "clothed in white garments, with palms in their hands," spoke

of them, in his ignorance as being "clothed in white sweet potatoes."

The book is 16s.; considering the marvellous unanimity among the batches of religionists at home, we think the laugh is on the Swahili's side, and the humour in *Comic Cuts* approximates nearer to the human heart and leaves the above specimen nowhere.

It is not Freethinkers who now say it; in the *Times Literary Supplement* the writer on the late Anatole France, in a gasp of despair, wants to have it, that "life is a dance of atoms in the void." He had better begin reading the *Freethinker* to brace up his ideas; or perhaps he has only missed his morning dose of the popular purgative.

Mr. C. M. Grieve in the *New Age* tells us that "the intellectual status of Christianity is steadily falling." Yes, it was in the *New Age*, October 16, 1924.

The wheel of fortune keeps turning; in "King Lear" Kent in the stocks is a fine example of Shakespeare's grasp of the fact that life is fluid. We now see that Mr. Lloyd George is being called a blind Samson, and a Bolshevik. Strange to say, it is the Rev. H. Dunning who says so. It is not even a century ago that the Welsh politician was regarded as a second Messiah. Perhaps it would be safe to say that public men of this type are what the newspapers choose to call them, and if one does not run to newspapers for information, they are all rather ordinary men, just a little past the biped stage.

The daily papers have saved us the trouble of saying anything about the success of the Wembley Exhibition; perhaps the Nonconformists are now glad that the Bishop of London was the star turn at the opening.

As it is only possible to judge journalists after reading them, by what they don't say, we wonder what was at the back of "Newsman's" mind in his note about the opening of the Law Courts. Writing of the ceremony he states: "It is truly a dignified little show with nothing of the tinsel finery of a carnival or a circus, to move on-lookers to cavil or make scoffing remarks." From this we gather that some remarks have been made somewhere at some public function or other, and "Newsman" may take it that when the truth at the back of ceremony departs, mankind will not be content to live on the husks of outward show. The padlock on free speech could not forever remain, and many anachronisms blessed by Popes and Archbishops will, in popular language, go west.

In the current monthly issue of *Humanity* there are many informative articles, and, as a compact and readable magazine throughout, it is worth its weight in gold. Mr. Malcolm Quin brings Christianity back to its fundamental teachings of supernatural beliefs in his article on "The Death of Christianity." This modern hotch-potch that Christianity is mixed up in at the present has nothing to do with it. Bazaars, garden-parties, whist-drives, socials, readings by tame poets, the drama in the Church, the cinema, all these and their associations with Christianity are so many red-herrings to disguise the primitive humbug. Perhaps the bishop's sleeves are wide to enable him to laugh in them.

An essay in the *Times Literary Supplement* on "Galton and Eugenics" would be as appropriate in the columns of the *Freethinker* as figuring on the front page of a journal with a stated average net sale of 25,401 copies weekly. In this article we are reminded of Galton's attempt to measure the efficacy of prayer by the statistical method. If our summer performance is the result of praying for fine weather, we shall have to follow the late Lord Fisher's advice with our professional medicine men and "sack the lot."

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



## Our Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £210 10s. 6d.—Mathematicus, £1 1s.; G. Smith, 31s. 6d.; C. M., £2 2s.; R. Wood, 5s.; W. P. Kernat, 5s.; W. C. Bishop, 10s.; J. Thompson, 5s.; H. W. S. Butler, 10s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 5s.; H. Marshall, £1; G. Smith, £1; H. R. Troughton, 3s.; H. Bayliss, 5s.; V. Wilson, 5s.; J. Burrell, 2s. 6d.; D. Macconnell, £1; Sydney Gimson, 21s.; E. Whitehorn, £5; W. Allen, £1; G. G., 10s.; "Jersey," £2; F. Kuctgens, £1 1s.; W. H. Hicks, £2 2s.; T. C. Riglin, 2s. 6d.; F. Reed, 20s.; J. Newman, £2 2s.; J. Broadfoot, 5s.; M. Sowden, 5s.; H. Good, £1; J. W. English, 2s. 6d.; G. Saunders, £1; J. Robertson, £1; H. Bell, 10s.; G. Bell, 5s.; R. V., 5s.; R. M., 5s.; F. A. Hornibrook, £3 3s.; T. W. Latimer, 4s.; Mr. and Mrs. Russell, 5s.; A. Harvey, £1; A. B. M., 5s.; W. K. Hutty, 10s.; H. A. Lupton, 5s.; Josie Hinley, 5s.; T. Goulding, 10s.; Mrs. A. Robertson, £1.

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Total £250 18s.

We shall be obliged if subscribers will point out any errors that appear in the above list of acknowledgments.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## 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.

H. BAYLISS.—Thanks for contribution to Fund. There is no need for apology. Many this year find it impossible to do as they would like, and we think all the more of what they do in existing circumstances. And there are plenty to meet the deficit without a strain on anyone if each does what can be done.

J. THOMPSON.—Your remark that it is a privilege to help keep the *Freethinker* going is echoed by many of our correspondents.

H. W. S. BUTLER.—We note what you say, but we take no part here in political questions. All the same, in encouraging clear thinking and open speech we are making no small contribution to the better handling of all questions.

S. CLOWES.—We know we can always rely upon your doing what you can for the benefit of the Cause.

F. KUERGENS.—The Council at which it was debated whether woman was a human being or not was held at Macon in the sixth century. The thesis debated, which was revised at a later date, was that nature always aims at perfection and would produce men, but woman is produced by a kind of error as when one is born deformed. The incident is dealt with by Bayle in his *Philosophical Dictionary*, under "Geddiens." Mr. Cohen gives this and similar instances in his *Woman and Christianity*.

G. G.—Thanks for good wishes. We are keeping well enough, although we are not getting younger.

W. HICKS.—Thanks for subscription to Sustentation Fund. It is very good of you to say what you do, but our readers will make repayment for what we do if they will push the paper wherever possible. We do all we can for it at this end; the other end should be the concern of all its friends.

W. K. ANDREWS.—In the nature of the case a statement of the unbelief of a Pope would not appear in official Catholic documents. But the statement of the unbelief of several of the Popes is made by more than one writer. But the only one we can place our hands on at the moment is the one you name.

A. V. H.—We are not over-impressed by the journal you send. There is a fashion in "Psychology" at present, and all sorts of people appear to be taking advantage of it, not necessarily from bad motives, but the aim when good, is not always backed up by sufficient knowledge and understanding.

J. ROBERTSON.—Sorry you were unable to get through to the Glasgow meetings. Shall hope to see you when next we are North.

J. W. WOOD.—Shall appear soon. Thanks. We have not forgotten, but our opportunities for holidays are not very frequent, and you are a long way off. However, the near future will, we hope, be more favourable. Regards to Mrs. Wood.

R. ANDERTON.—We cannot say whether Col. Lynch intends to deal with Marx, but he will note your wish that he should do so. Your pleasure in reading his articles is shared by very many of our readers, all the more because he often suggests differences. And that is always the kind of writer it does one good to read.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.—You will see we have written on the subject. Thanks for article, that will come in useful for next issue. It is a pity that leading men in this country who see through the imposture have not the courage to speak plainly concerning these evangelical adventurers and their abettors.

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## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (October 26) in the Parkhurst Theatre, Holloway Road. The theatre is opposite the "Nag's Head," one of the great centres of North London, and can be easily reached by bus, tram, or train. In spite of the election fever there should be a good meeting, and Freethinkers should make it a point of seeing that as many Christians as possible come along. It is a long time since Mr. Cohen lectured in North London, mainly because of the difficulty of getting suitable halls. However, the opportunity has now come, and all should make the most of it. The meeting commences at 7, the doors will be open at 6.30. Mr. McLaren will take the chair.

In spite of there being no less than thirteen large political meetings in Glasgow on Sunday last, with three Cabinet Ministers describing their own and their party's political virtues, there were excellent audiences to listen to Mr. Cohen's lectures, although not so large, naturally, as when the public conditions were more nearly normal. But in the circumstances the meetings were a testimony to the vitality of the movement on the Clyde. Mr. Hale occupied the chair on both occasions, and before each lecture pressed the claims of the *Freethinker* on the audience. There were very good sales, and these should lead to more regular subscribers.

We have received several new books from Messrs. Watts & Co., some of which will be noticed later. We have space this week only to call attention to a thoughtful essay by Mr. C. T. Gorham on *Why Do Right, A*

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*Rational View of Conscience* (3s. 6d.) Mr. Gorham subjects the different ideas of conscience to a very careful examination, and comes to the very sound conclusion that conscience is the product of social life, modified from time to time and from occasion to occasion by the developed and developing judgment of the individual. Mr. F. J. Gould, in his *Three Hundred Stories to Tell* (2s. 6d.), supplies another of his collections of skeleton stories which will be found useful, not merely by teachers, but by anyone who has to interest and instruct by interesting youngsters. The stories are conveniently grouped under subject headings, so that one can place one's hand on the kind of story that is required.

We are pleased to hear there was a good audience and a brisk discussion at the St. Pancras Reform Club last Sunday, when Alderman Combes gave an address on the reformation of criminals. To-night the Debating Society will not meet. Mr. Cohen will be in North London, and as it is a long time since he paid a visit to this part of London, we feel sure that the North London Freethinkers will all want to swell his audience at the Parkhurst Theatre.

We mentioned some weeks ago the desire of many Freethinkers in various localities to get into friendly touch with other Freethinkers. A lady, well educated, who describes herself as lonely and worried, would like to get into communication with other Freethinkers living in or near Worthing. Letters should be addressed to "Sussex," c/o Post Office, Worthing.

We are glad to be able to report that the debate between Mr. Hick, of the Plymouth Branch of the N.S.S., and the Rev. A. Mambly Lloyd, on "Can Civilization Survive the Collapse of Christianity?" was well attended and altogether successful. Mr. Hick pressed all his points home forcibly, and when a vote was taken at the end of the debate he had the substantial credit of 65 as to his opponent's 32. Many of the Rev. A. M. Lloyd's own supporters refrained from voting, we hear. We congratulate Mr. Hick in performing a useful piece of propaganda work for the Cause.

Mr. Corrigan was unable to carry out his engagement at Manchester on Sunday last, and at the last moment Mr. Whitehead stepped into the breach and gave two lectures. He had what he deserved—good audiences, and the audiences had what they deserved—two good lectures.

## The Religion of a Prime Minister.

It has often been remarked how widely our conception of some prominent person differs from the real person when revealed by personal acquaintance; or by the publication of his life. Great men are seldom, in private life, how we picture them. We see them triumphant and adored, but we are apt to forget that they are human like ourselves and subject to those cares and sorrows, against which no amount of foresight and ingenuity has yet been able to construct an impregnable barrier; and, we may add, never will while human nature remains what it is.

These reflections arose from reading the life of Lord Salisbury, by his daughter, Lady Gwendoline Cecil. We well remember the return of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury from the Berlin Congress—known to Radicals as the "Thieves kitchen"—with all their honours thick upon them, bringing with them, as they claimed, "Peace with honour."

What changes we have seen since then! There were no motor-cars then. The safety bicycle was yet unknown; the bicycle had a front wheel nearly five feet across and a hind wheel of about one foot. Lords were lords in those days, with their great historic

town houses and country estates. They wielded immense political power; one Salisbury Cabinet was known as the "Hotel Cecil" from the number of relatives of that house it contained. Cecil, of course, being the family name of Lord Salisbury.

We were brought up in the Gladstonian faith; Gladstone's speeches being regarded as almost, if not quite, equal with "holy writ." Lord Beaconsfield, known to us as "Dizzy," was regarded as a political Mephistopheles, who, for some obscure purpose of his own, God had permitted to become Prime Minister of England.

However, the great lords have fallen upon evil days, their wealth has been drained by taxation, and the financiers, captains of industry, and the war profiteers now occupy the seats in the historic mansions from which the lords formerly wielded their power. Even in America a title is no longer a lure to the daughter of a millionaire. Much as we hated these lords, all those long years ago, we can almost pity them in their present state, even as Heine compassionated the pagan gods overthrown by Christianity. It never entered our heads that these great ones also experienced doubts and fears. That they also questioned the coldly indifferent stars as to man's origin and destiny. That they also strove to read that riddle of the Sphinx—to all true believers—the old eternal question as to the existence of evil in the creation of a benevolent deity.

We little suspected that the haughty exterior and stately trappings concealed the troubled and unhappy consciousness that the startling discoveries of science, then being revealed, would not square with the religious beliefs in which they had been trained; and the further agonising dread as to how these new and revolutionary ideas would affect their privileged position, when, as sooner or later they were certain to do, they permeated the masses already beginning to stir uneasily under the age-long injustice of the distribution of wealth, and the existence of a privileged peerage. What was the use of telling a man that he must be satisfied with the position to which God had ordained him, if there was no God to ordain anything? Or what was the use of explaining, to the scandalously low-paid worker, that the inequalities and sufferings of this life would be rectified in a future life, and he must dwell upon the treasures of heaven, rather than strive for those of the earth; if, as the scientists asserted, we were descended from animals and shared the same fate?

The fact is that the upper, intelligent and educated classes suffered more from the impact of the new and startling theories of evolution than did the Nonconformists. For they read Darwin and Spencer, and knew what they were up against, while we Nonconformists only knew the caricatures of evolution, and second-hand at that, which percolated through the pulpits of the Nonconformist tabernacles. But to return to our subject, the religion of a Prime Minister.

Lady Cecil devotes a chapter in her life of Lord Salisbury to a consideration of his religious views; we may say at once that Lord Salisbury believed in a Creator, or Providence, but with the popular arguments and apologies used in support of this antique hypothesis he decidedly and emphatically disagreed. Here is a passage that apologists to-day should take to heart. Lady Cecil quotes him as saying:—

I repeat that considering this method of arguing, of discerning Divine facts from human analogues—of guessing God's ways by what we know of man's ways—is utterly deceptive. But if it is used at all, it must be used completely and all its results must be fearlessly faced. It is juggling with logic to argue that God would act as men would act as far as the conclusions suit us, and then, when they become inconvenient, to take refuge in the illimitable dis-



tance between the aims and methods of the finite creature and the infinite Creator.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Salisbury declined to deceive himself, and others, with such sleight of hand tricks. With Professor Clifford's trenchant denunciation of the destructive effects of Christianity upon civilization—which Matthew Arnold tried to smile away by comparing it with boyish fireworks—he fully agreed. His daughter tells us:—

He quoted Professor Clifford's accusation against that religion that it had destroyed two civilizations and had only just failed in destroying a third—and he quoted it with agreement. What had been would be. The result was contained in the inherent nature of things, not to be affected by man's conscious action. We had been warned that Christianity could know no neutrality and history had verified the warning. It was incapable of co-existing permanently with a civilization which it did not inspire and any such as it came in contact with it withered. How much more must this be so with one that had been formed under its auspices and had subsequently rejected it. Such a society must inevitably perish. His voice and manner, as these reflections developed, grew heavily oppressed, and his eyes—looking out upon the sunlit sea beneath him—seemed to be filled with a vision of gloom as he dwelt with unforgettable emphasis upon the tragedy which would be involved in such a catastrophe (p. 108).

He further declared that although he had never doubted the truth of Christianity, "he had all his life found a difficulty in accepting the moral teaching of the Gospels." And added, that "his acceptance of Christ's moral teaching was an act of faith due to the divine authority upon which it rested" (p. 102).

In the presence of the mystery of the universe, says his daughter, the mere stumblings over miracles were almost pitiful in his eyes, and when it was urged against some point of Christian teaching that it was morally unsatisfactory, or rationally incomprehensible, his only comment used to be, "As if that had anything to do with it!" Because the same might be said of the universe.

A Christian Evidence lecturer will solve all the theological problems of pain and evil in about five minutes—to his own satisfaction—but here was one of the keenest intellects of his time earnestly seeking for such a solution and could not find it for himself, let alone for other people, for we are told:—

The acute sensitiveness to the pain of creation never became deadened—the resolve to face it unsupported by any soothing self-delusions never became weakened. Once in the course of a discussion upon some such ineffectual attempt at a solution, he broke off suddenly with the exclamation, uttered with almost defiant energy, "God is all-powerful and God is all-loving—and the world is what it is! How are you going to explain that?" (p. 113).

Sometimes we are told that he was inclined to believe in "the independent existence of a principle of evil still at war with the Divine Being." But the suggestion was not dwelt upon:—

Far more permanently characteristic of his thought was the uncompromising acceptance of an unsolved mystery which appears in our quotation—the refusal to tolerate any half-hearted attempt to subject God's action to the analysis of human reason. This acquiescence in incomprehension might be compared to the attitude of the pure agnostic. But he was incapable of the agnostic's negative conclusion.

However that may be, it is certain that there was very little in common between Lord Salisbury's beliefs and those of an earnest Christian. In the Non-conformist circles of those days he would have been denounced as an out-and-out infidel. W. MANN.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*. By his daughter, Lady Gwendolen Cecil. 1921. Vol. i., p. 112.

## At a Catholic Concert.

A FEW weeks ago a friend of mine who enjoys considerable local popularity as a pianist asked me if I would accompany him some Sunday night and "do a turn" at a concert, held—after church hours—in an institute attached to a Roman Catholic place of worship. My first impulse was to give a decided "No." On reflection, however, it occurred to me that the experience might be interesting; it might afford an opportunity for "copy." I am, I trust, too broad a humanist to allow a mere difference of religious opinion to interfere with the social amenities. One cannot consistently assume a narrow-minded view of life that one would condemn in others. I accordingly assented. I replied, in effect, that whilst I had often appeared under distinguished patronage I had never before attempted to entertain an audience under the auspices of the Holy Family (this was the title of the establishment in question), but that I didn't mind giving a couple of impersonations of George Robey to the greater glory of the Blessed Virgin, and in the interests of a brighter Sabbath. So we went.

The concert was an unqualified success, and the institute was packed. I observed that the gentleman at the bar (the place carried a full license) appeared to be doing a roaring trade—indeed, the blending of the *spiritual* with the *spirituous* would have shocked considerably some of the branches of the reformed church. The presence of a priest—fresh from the labours of his holy office—impressed me with a fact that I have realized for a long time, to wit: that one of the main reasons for the hold the Roman Catholic Church has upon its followers is because it not only fails to demand a high standard of character in its devotees, but that it actually encourages some of the weaker traits of human nature, under the guise of solicitation for the welfare of their immortal souls. This view of human nature, whilst it is both false and pernicious, is at least free from the pleasure-destroying bigotry of the puritanical sects. Unfortunately—and herein lies the damnableness of religion in general, and Catholicism in particular—it does not extend the same tolerance towards difference of opinion. It smiles upon the petty vices of mankind, but frowns, with a maliciousness that it would fain translate into a bloody repression, on unbelief.

In my button-hole I wore the badge of the National Secular Society, and the priest eyed it with a look of half recognition. I hoped he fully recognized it, and had some inkling of its true significance. For my part I observed him interestedly and thought how funny he would look in wings! Everyone (except myself) called him "father" and showed him the utmost deference, which did not abate even when he had imbibed—at other peoples' expense—as much as he could carry with dignity.

If it were not for the mind-blighting surrender to dogma, and the celibacy clause, I would rather like to be a Catholic priest. It must be awfully nice and interesting to be a repository of other peoples' troubles; to be looked up to with affection and regard; to smile tolerantly and indulgently upon the petty weaknesses of one's fellows, and encourage their virtues, and—er, to be pestered generally by credulous fools who haven't the courage or capacity to face their own troubles, and fight their own battles. I think I should kick when it came to administering "extreme unction" though; and feel a little crest-fallen at being called father when my only prospect of becoming one in reality was to abandon my holy office or disgrace my cloth. No! on second thoughts I shan't enter for Holy Orders.



At the conclusion of the concert a lady sang, "I dreamt of a new world." I was half hoping that it might be something revolutionary, something like a Utopian dream of a millennium when man has banished "Gods from skies and Capitalists from earth." It turned out to be a mushy sentimental song on the lines of "If I were the only girl in the world and you were the only boy."

Oh, how I longed to get upon my feet and address them in the manner of a Bradlaugh! I was just itching to tell them all what I really thought about them, to face both priest and dupes, to point to my pansy badge and say:—

Here is the emblem of a society which—founded by a man whom you have never ceased to execrate, and whose nobility of mind you are too small and mean ever to be able to appreciate—has declared an unremitting war upon you and your insolent pretensions. You think you are God's elect, and that your Church with its infallible Pope and priests is a Divine institution founded by Omnipotence and destined to endure for ever. And yet, let me tell you, that already your sun has set, you have passed the heyday of your power, your teeth have been drawn. Already you are a hundred years behind the enlightened thought of the day. If antiquity be a virtue, if ignorance and servility be something on which to pride yourselves, you may extract what comfort you can from the knowledge that an advancing civilization has no use for you, and that science—which you affected to despise, and which you persecuted so long as you had the power—together with all the forces that make for progress and enlightenment is destroying you even while you plume yourselves upon your superiority to it. Your doom is sealed. Across your fast emptying temples has been inscribed the word:—Ichabod—the glory of the Lord is departed, and Man after centuries of superstition, is escaping from your dominance, and is slowly but surely coming into his own.

Instead of which, I had a small port with the Reverend Father and departed with his blessing!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

## Freethought in Lithuania.

LITHUANIA is a new state which arose after the World war, and calls itself a Republic, though it merits the name of theocracy. A "democratic" constitution was adopted on May 15, 1922, whereby the titles of nobility were set aside, but the state was not secularized: the Catholic clergy was left in the saddle. The majority of the Seimas (house of representatives) belongs to the Clerical party, the Christian democrats, who now are the preposterous rulers of the country. The Roman Catholic clergy has already arrogated many privileges to itself, and even a monthly salary is being paid out of the state treasury (1,300,000 lits a year). Before and during the war the intelligent classes were not permitted to establish their organization, and therefore the country has to submit now to the rule of a hierarchy which has been and is pretty well organized, though numbering only about 900 members in all. Besides, the clergy has received much financial aid from the Lithuanians in the United States of America, where the Chicagoan *Tautos Fondas* is collecting contributions under various pretexts, and those who possess money and organization are generally at the top of political affairs.

The revival of the Lithuanian nation is due to the work of Liberals. Basanavicius in Bulgaria, Kudirka in Lithuania, Szlupas in America—all of them physicians by profession—were the moving spirits of the nation before the war. Yet when it came to the

drafting of the constitution, the Liberals found themselves in the minority in Seimas, and the interest of the Freethinkers were worse than forgotten. Dr. Szlupas, who had returned from America, at once applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs proposing to enroll the Freethinkers' Ethical Culture Society, which among other things should conduct the registration of civil acts in Lithuania, until the state should provide a secular bureau for registration of births, marriages, deaths, and separations of marriage. The Christian democrats were indignant, and their ministers were loth to accept the proposition. Dr. Szlupas was persistent, and the juriconsults of the state as well as the minister's cabinet deliberated many times on the question, transmitted it to the bishop's *curia*, where the prelates' anger was roused to the pitch: such a thing—they said—was unheard of in Russia; why should it be permissible now in Lithuania? In the meantime Fortuna brought about that Canon Prapolenis, a broadminded priest, was appointed Referendar of the Department for Religious matters, and Mr. Zalkauskas, a populist, Minister of Internal Affairs. Thus after two years of delay and vacillation, at last it was decreed to announce by the administration (since the ministry did not dare to introduce a Bill in Seimas) that the Freethinkers shall be placed under the provisions of the Russian law, promulgated in Czaristic Russia for people who do not acknowledge clergy ("bezpopovcy"), and therefore the township and city executives were instructed to perform the civil acts for the Freethinkers. It was agreed that the Freethinkers' Ethical Culture Society might be incorporated and registered at the offices of the Regional Administrators wherever it might find adherents and members. This happened in May, 1924.

Soon after, June 28, a central Committee for the Lithuanian Freethinkers' Ethical Culture Society was incorporated in Sauliai, and sections began to arise, so that beside Sauliai sections are already incorporated at Birzai, Joniskis, Zagarc, Uzarai, Pasvalys, Mazeikiiai, Siautenai, and in many other places sections are being organized. Of course obstacles are being placed in the way; ex. gr. in Kaunas, the Regional Administrator has twice refused to register the Society, and probably it will be necessary for the court to decide whether Kaunas is within the limits of the Lithuanian Republic.

The aim of the Lithuanian Freethinkers' Ethical Culture Society, as stated in its by-laws, is: (1) organization of Freethinkers and people who are not members of the organized churches or who in general put little value on organized religion; (2) protection of the rights of the Freethinkers in Lithuania; (3) realization in life of natural ethics, of what is good, beautiful, moral, and healthy, and (4) education of adults and youth in the principles of ethical culture.

For the realization of its aims the Freethinkers' Society uses various means: meetings, lectures, publication of books and newspapers, schools, libraries, etc. Members are entitled to moral, medical, or juridical assistance. The society has the right to possess real estate, etc. Men and women are acceptable to membership, all enjoying equal rights. The society can lawfully own cemeteries and crematories.

The Lithuanian Freethinkers' Ethical Culture Society's further aim is to secularize the state and the schools, although this paragraph had to be dropped officially. We entertain the hope that in time we shall be able to realize it, when sufficiently large numbers of citizens have joined the Society. People at present are in a receptive mood, being dissatisfied with the rule of the clergy.

The unexpectedly quick growth of the Freethinkers' Society angers the Christians, and the clergy



make much noise about it; the priests proclaim crusades from the pulpit; in many places Freethinkers are deprived of their positions; difficulties are being placed for Freethinkers' children when entering school; officials and teachers of Liberal views are being persecuted and threatened. Since the Pope's delegate, Archbishop Zecchini, is directing the affairs of Lithuania, who can tell if the Inquisition shall not be renewed in the country and the stake fire rekindled for the heretics!

In the meantime the Freethinkers are on the alert. Dr. Szulpas has published a sketch of Natural Ethics; he has translated Professor Carpenter's "Comparative Religion": these he offers to the teachers in school for instruction of the Freethinkers' children. Another text-book is in preparation for the pupils. By these means we propose to deliver our children from the obligatory religious instruction of the clergy. For November 1 a reunion of Freethinkers is being arranged in Siauliai. One of our meetings resolved to communicate with Freethought organizations in the United States, England and France, in the hope that Lithuanian Freethought might get moral, literary, and, if possible, financial support in the unequal struggle with clericalism in Lithuania, when the clergy re-establishes monasteries for men and women (banished by Russia in pre-war times) and stretches out its unholy hands to grab the education of the young generation.

We hope that the Freethinkers of other countries will rejoice to hear that in the newly created state of Lithuania a vigorous struggle is being waged for the rights of democracy and Freethought. We already are experiencing persecution, and anticipate many difficulties and more suffering ahead until we reach tolerance and equality of rights with the Roman Catholics. Our struggle is the more difficult since the censorship is very harsh, even worse than it used to be in the benighted times of the Russian Czarism. It is quite possible that Freethought books we shall be obliged to smuggle across the frontier from foreign countries, as was customary in 1864-1904, when Russia had prohibited the Lithuanian press. The Roman Catholic hierarchy, now in power, eagerly follows in the footsteps of the Czar's policy.

Such is our unenviable position in theocratic Lithuania.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE,

Lith. Freethinkers' Ethical Culture Society.

Dr. J. Szulpas, *Chairman*.

Siauliai, Lithuania, Sept. 1, 1924.

## Correspondence.

### BIRTH CONTROL CLINICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—When I wrote you a few weeks ago, I was unable to give any actual statistics of the success of birth control clinics. Now I can. On January 2, 1923, Dr. Dorothy Bocker, a highly-skilled physician, opened a clinic in New York, and she has issued a report of the first year's cases. There were 1,208 patients. All details regarding them were carefully taken down.

One method "was used on 200 patients over a period ranging from two months to twelve months. Failures reported amounted to 2 per cent." Another method "was used without any other device on 200 patients over a period of two months to twelve months with a 3 per cent. failure." Another method was used "in 200 cases over a period of from two to five months. A failure of 2 per cent. was reported." Other methods were less efficient, some having a failure as high as 10 per cent. All methods which had more than a 3 per cent. failure were discarded as bad. Fourteen methods in all were tried.

Nurse E. S. Daniels has been conducting a private clinic in London for the last seventeen months, and has dealt with over 500 cases. Her results are given in the *New Generation* for October. She uses the Dutch method, of which she says: "I was assured in Holland that the failures are 1 per cent., and up to the present I am happy to say I have not had even that small percentage."

In your issue of October 12 Mr. C. E. Pell makes the following most extraordinary statements:—

Mr. Kerr wishes to know if I have heard of *coitus interruptus*. If he will read his birth control literature he will find it admitted by Dr. Norman Haire, in his address to the Medical Section of the International Conference of the Malthusian League in 1922, that in 95 per cent. of cases *coitus interruptus* is followed by conception.

Dr. Haire never said, nor did he remotely suggest, anything of the kind. He has too much sense. Here are Dr. Haire's exact words:—

In every case that comes to me for contraceptive advice, both in my private practice and at the free maternity centres at which I work, I enquire whether withdrawal has been practised and with what success, and in more than 95 per cent. of cases I have found it fail.

That is as different as possible from what Mr. Pell says. Of course, the persons who, after trying some method of contraception, go to Dr. Haire for advice, are those who have made a failure of the methods they have tried. Anybody who had already found a satisfactory method would not go to Dr. Haire for contraceptive advice. Dr. Haire never for a moment thought of suggesting that 95 per cent. of all the people in the community who have tried *coitus interruptus* have found it fail. Dr. Haire distinctly says: "It requires an amount of self-control which many men do not possess." That explains everything. It is not those who can practise it that fail, but those who are unable to practise it.

Why does Mr. Pell not visit the clinics and find out for himself? Is he like the astronomer who denied the existence of Jupiter's moons, but refused to look through Galileo's telescope for fear he might see them.

Mr. Pell accuses me of not having read his book. I did read it eighteen months ago, and made twelve pages of extracts from it.

B. R. KERR.

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me a little of your space to make a few comments on the above subject?

Mr. Pell's main contention, brought down to rock bottom, appears to be—That if contraceptives had never been known and used there would be no more people in the world than is the case to-day.

Now, this seems to imply an over-ruling "providence," who acts in this affair in his usual muddle-headed fashion by allotting Jones, say, ten children, Brown two and Smith none.

To tell a married couple endowed with ordinary common sense, who have, say, two or three children spaced out, that they would not have had more had they never used a safe contraceptive is, to use Mr. Pell's own words, a story "which would not deceive a child who did not wish to be deceived."

So much discussion over birth- and death-rates detracts from the main issue which is, birth control by contraceptives, and to say that this is an illusion is like arguing that the earth is flat.

One might just as well say that cholera, smallpox, and other loathsome diseases would not be any more prevalent than they are to-day if antiseptics and sanitary measures had not been adopted.

JOHN BRESSE.

SIR,—I see that Mr. Pell refers to Dr. Halford Ross's statement to the Birth-rate Commission that when sanitary measures reduced the death-rate in the Suez Canal zone the birth-rate then fell also. I examined the Egyptian statistics for the period mentioned and found that there had been no decline of either the death-rate or the birth-rate!

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

The world is my country; to do good is my religion.—  
Thomas Paine.



### Obituary.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Robert Perdue Dayton, age 73, which took place on October 11, at 7 Alsen Road, Holloway, N. Born on October 12, 1851, he became a Freethinker at an early age. He was a regular attendant at the old Hall of Science, and was one of the original debenture holders in the *National Reformer*. He faced death with calmness and unshaken Secularism, leaving a request (which was strictly carried out) that the final ceremony should be conducted by Secularists. A simple but touchingly effective service was conducted by Mr. George Whitehead at the graveside at Finchley Cemetery. We offer our sincere sympathy to the bereaved members of the family. His death is sincerely felt as a great loss, and he will be remembered with affection by those who knew him.—L. M.

We have to record the death, on October 16, of Mr. Frederick Rogers, of Kettering, in the sixty-first year of his age. Mr. Rogers had suffered for some considerable period from an excessively painful malady, which so increased during the last twelve months as to make death a welcome release, although his sufferings were borne with the fortitude becoming a Secularist, which he remained to the last in the teeth of much opposition from his family. His widow, although not sharing his opinions, loyally carried out his expressed wish for a Secular burial, and the service was performed in an impressive manner by Mr. George Whitehead, to the satisfaction of the attending mourners. We here tender our sympathy to Mrs. Rogers, who has, naturally, herself passed through much personal suffering. We understand that the Secular Society, Ltd., has been mentioned in Mr. Roger's will.—E. M. V.

The Glasgow Society regrets to report the death during the last few weeks of two of its oldest and most highly respected members. Mr. Andrew Little was not known to the younger generation because of his quiet and unassuming manner and his distaste for publicity. But the older generation will always cherish his memory, remembering his pawky humour, his fund of stories and witty sayings. Those who were privileged to even glimpse his home life and who saw the affection in which he was held there got a revelation of what family life might be, but, alas! too often is not. Mr. Little had not been in robust health, but his end came suddenly and unexpectedly. Mr. W. H. MacEwan conducted a Secular service at the express wish of our old colleague, a wish loyally respected by his family.

Mr. Chas. Howat was the same age as his friend and contemporary—62 years. For many years he acted as open-air speaker, debater, and free-lance. Where a word in season, a quip (with a sting), a jest, an address, or a question was any use he could be relied on. His admiration for the older Freethinkers, Chas. Bradlaugh and Col. Ingersoll especially, was unbounded, while his knowledge of the writings of the latter was frequently used with telling effect. He also suffered long, but with philosophic calm. By his own and his family's desire a Secular service was conducted by Mr. Thos. Robertson. And so our comrades have passed to their eternal sleep, leaving behind memories of work well done, of lives spent that the lot of the common people might be made better.—W. H.

#### MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

In spite of the counter attractions of the Election, Mr. Whitehead has managed to address seven meetings in North London. The literature sales have improved, which is a good sign, and opponents have not been lacking. The weather has been in our favour, also. Mr. Whitehead's mission closes on Saturday, October 25.

### 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 postcard.

#### LONDON. INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (174 Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Debate—"That the Bible is the Inspired Word of God." Messrs. F. Shaller and Pengelly (Protestant Alliance). The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No meeting.

PARKHURST THEATRE. (opposite Nag's Head, Holloway Road): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Things Christians Ought to Know."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, Open Debate—"Is Secularism Making Progress?" Opened by Mr. A. Heath.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Platt, "Poets of the People."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "The New Generation."

#### OUTDOOR.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner, Islington): 8, every Friday, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Freethought lectures and debates every evening in Hyde Park. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Beale, Brayton, Hyatt, Harris, Hart, Keeling, Knubley, Saphin, Shaller, Stephens, 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): 3.30, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Demonstration.—Speakers: Mrs. H. Rosetti, Mrs. Venton, Messrs. J. W. Marshall, R. H. Rosetti, F. C. Warner, F. G. Warner, A. C. High, and H. C. White.

#### COUNTRY, INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. William McEwan, "Playing with Words." (Silver Collection.)

HULL BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 5 Room, Co-operative Institute, Albion Street): 7, a Lecture.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Dr. Woodcock, "Medicine and Politics."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. F. W. Petrick Lawrence, "Can We get rid of our Prisons?"

WOLVERHAMPTON FREETHOUGHT DEBATING CLUB (Redhead House, 13 Pipers Row): Monday, November 3, a Meeting at 8.

**M**ATERNITY NURSE, formerly general clerk, middle-aged, young looking, wants change. Can do good plain cooking and light housework. Would like to help business woman or similar where no children. Could a Freethinker give her a job?—Miss Cope, 4 South Parade, Bath.

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**T**HE publishers of *THE EVERLASTING GEMS* announce that they have a remnant of the first edition of this vitriolic and amusing book, and that by special arrangement with the author (who is an old supporter of the Freethought cause) they have requested The Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., to supply these copies to readers of the *Freethinker* at the reduced price of 2s. net, post paid.



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