

# THE FREETHINKER

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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

## Views and Opinions.

### Body Snatching.

We admire sincerity wherever it appears, and it is not so common in public life in this country that one can afford to pass it by without comment, especially when it shows itself in connection with the relations of Christians to Freethought. We have therefore the greater pleasure in drawing attention to an article on Anatole France in the *Church Times* for November 7, and should like every Christian to read it and to mark its concluding paragraph:—

There is one feature about this brilliant writer's funeral which all should commend. It is that no religious ceremony whatever took place at his grave. That was perfectly consistent with his whole career. No prayer to a Deity in whom he had no faith discredited the funeral of Anatole France. The only immortality mentioned there was literary fame. An eye-witness remarks in the *Times*, "It was curious to note how greatly the absence of any religious character detracted from the impressiveness of the proceedings! It may well be so. But what it lost in impressiveness it gained in sincerity. For what is the sense or worth of the language of religion among those to whom Deity is a fiction and immortality a dream? If men are unable to be religious at least let them not shrink from the logical results of their inability to believe.

Now that is quite straightforward, and it does credit to the man who wrote it. We need not bother about the *Times'* man finding nothing impressive—not even in honesty and sincerity—about the ceremony; that is obviously due to lack of imagination in one who cannot lift himself above the glamour of his own particular mummery. But we should like the comments of the *Church Times* to be studied by those who see nothing wrong in performing over the body of a man ceremonies which he would have strongly repudiated while living. It is an insult to the dead as well as an outrage on the living.

### Other Times.

This habit of body-snatching on the part of the religious world is not an ancient phenomenon. There was a time when the Christian Church quite properly declined to perform its rites over the body of one who while living had not been faithful to its teaching. But that policy depended upon two things.

First, upon the independence of the Church, and second upon the existence of genuine belief among the majority of the population. Both are ultimately phases of the same thing, but it is convenient to take them separately. So long as the Church felt itself strong enough to be independent of the heretic it could cut him off publicly as a warning to others. By refusing him Christian burial it damned him in the next world as it punished him—when it could—in this one. But this was only effective so long as the people had a genuine belief in the Christian mummery and felt themselves injured by the Church refusing its services. To-day the Church is weak and genuine belief in the doctrines of Christianity is rare. The consequence is that the Church is not merely ready to place the Christian brand upon anyone; it struggles for the privilege of doing so. So long as it can advertise itself, even over a corpse, it is content. It is keeping itself in front of the public, and it is as ready to lie about the beliefs of a dead heretic as it was to slander him while living. A Church can only afford to be passably honest so long as its teachings are generally accepted, and people are only terrified by its threats and its excommunications so long as they genuinely believe in them. The Church that once busied itself in seeking out the heresies of men and women in order to exhibit its power of punishment is now driven to snatching a corpse and lying to the world about a dead man's beliefs.

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### Reaping the Harvest.

A Church with a proper sense of dignity and decency would decline to lend itself to the game of playing such a hideous lie at the side of an open grave. On the contrary, it would encourage the relatives of the dead man to be honest in the face of death, to speak the truth of the dead as they would speak it of the living. But a Church that has never insisted upon its people acting with intellectual honesty in the affairs of life, and which throughout the whole of its history has made it more profitable for men to tell a lie than to speak the truth, can hardly be expected to enforce that lesson in the matter of death. And in this country, more than any other in Europe, the game of the Church is helped by the moral cowardice exhibited by many of our public men. Everyone is quite well aware that there are large numbers of these—politicians, scientists, men of letters, and others—who are as destitute of genuine religious beliefs as was Anatole France. But they do not make the fact as public as men in France in a similar position would do. On the contrary, when questioned they hedge, they prevaricate, they use phrases which mislead, and which are intended to mislead. The Atheist in France becomes the Agnostic in England, the publicist in France who, in the name of a better social state, attacks the established religious beliefs, in this country goes out of his way to do lip-service to the spirit of "true religion," or to the lovable character of Jesus, or sings the praises of "true Christianity." He knows full well the use the Christian Churches will make



of these utterances; it is for that reason they are used. They form the cloak of respectable conformity with which moral cowardice covers itself, and guards itself from attack. By their own actions they pave the way for the crowning lie of all, when a parson will intone over their dead bodies a service for which in their own minds they felt nothing but contempt. They have sown the seed and they have reaped the harvest for the benefit of a Church that does not hesitate to scramble for a corpse so long as it will serve to perpetuate its reign.

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#### Death and the Law.

I frequently receive letters from people in connection with their wills, and with regard to their desire that no religious service shall be performed over their remains. Unfortunately there is no way known to me by which that can be secured absolutely. The law gives the next of kin absolute right over the dead body, and all provisions that one may make can only be in the nature of a request. It is sometimes thought that by making a legacy contingent upon the carrying out of a Secular service observance can be secured. I am afraid that is a mistake. The next-of-kin in disposing of the body as he or she wishes is exercising a right conferred by law, and you cannot contract a third party out of his legal rights, at least without the consent of that third party. The only exception to the rule, and the only way in which a person can exercise a right over the disposal of his body is if he wills it for purposes of dissection. One could make a legacy contingent upon a Secular funeral, or, in its absence, give the body for dissection, but that is as far as one can go with certainty. The remedy must come either by an alteration of the law, or by the growth of a greater feeling of moral obligation and intellectual decency among Christians. When Christians are brought to the point of realizing the meanness of this form of body-snatching, and the insult to the memory of their dead in performing a religious service over the grave of a Freethinker the scandal will end. But that perhaps is only another way of saying that when men and women cease to believe in Christianity they will cease to behave as Christians. In this, as in so many other directions, the real remedy is to go on making Freethinkers. Experience is always driving home the lesson that Christians will only act fairly to Freethinkers when faith in their religion has undergone a weakening.

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#### Religious Origins.

There is one other comment of the *Church Times* on Anatole France that deserves a word in passing. Speaking of his antagonism to religious beliefs, it says:—

He had no knowledge of religion as an experience. It was all to him on a level with the Breton legends. And the Breton, he said, was incapable of criticism. So in Anatole's France's opinion, it is with all religious beliefs. He thought that theologies originated in the unintelligent fear of our savage ancestors when confronted with the phenomena of the universe. In fact religions are being created before our eyes. Witness Spiritualism with its dogmas and its morals.

That is the kind of comment which helps one to realize how little the religious leaders know, or appreciate the standing of modern thought with regard to religion. What is the belief of our leading students on religious origins? Men of the rank of Frazer, Durkheim, Wundt, Hartland, to mention only a few living authorities, are in absolute agreement that all the religions of the world began in the ignorance of primitive savagery. There is a quite un-

broken chain from the early imaginings of the savage down to the latest performance in a modern cathedral. The belief in God or in a soul have no other and no better origin than this. Anatole France was simply following the teaching of all who are in a position to teach authoritatively the truth about religion. It is not perhaps agreeable to Christians to be reminded of this, but it is the truth nevertheless.

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#### "Religious Experience" and Science.

The remark that religions such as Spiritualism are being created before our eyes, and therefore Anatole France was wrong in deriving all religions from what Tylor called a psychological blunder, is very ingenuous. Of course, new forms of religion are coming into existence, but it is significant that they fall naturally into the old moulds. Superstition and the superstitious temper are not destroyed because scientific advance has weakened the authority of the older creeds. This type of mind dies slowly, and when it is no longer able to gratify itself in the orthodox way, it seeks other forms of gratification, much as the toper unable to get gin flies to methylated spirit. The elimination of irrationalism is always a very slow task, even when there are inducements to get rid of it. But when Society is so organised as to encourage it the difficulties in the way of its removal are infinitely greater. It is enough if on contrasting one period with another one is able to mark some advancement, however small. And the remark about "religion as experience" is just jargon. There is no experience which the religious devotee undergoes that is not well understood by the scientific enquirer. The emotional states evoked by religion are on all fours with emotional states that are evoked in a dozen other different ways. Scientifically they are of no greater value—even though as illuminating—than the visions seen by the opium eater. One day perhaps these religious journalists will awaken to the perception of the fact that the phenomena associated with religious belief present no difficulties to the scientific student. He is not puzzled by them; he understands them. Whether the phenomena be called Christian or other, whether they occur in the forest clearing or the cathedral, whether the object of worship be the god of the savage or of the modern civilised person, there is no radical difference between them. We do not set religious beliefs on one side as insoluble mysteries, or as something with which we cannot deal. As Lord Morley said long ago, we explain them out of existence. And the one irreparable disaster that can befall religion is for it to be understood.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The National Secular Society.

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

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.



## The Wickedness of the Missionary Enterprise.

THE Rev. Bertram Lee Woolf, M.A., B.Sc., B.D., recently preached an exceedingly remarkable sermon at Toxteth Congregational Church, Liverpool, entitling it, "The Urgency of the Missionary Enterprise." We admit that no honest man could possibly help delivering a remarkable discourse based on the following text: "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved but that of Jesus Christ"—Acts iv., 12. Mr. Woolf is perfectly justified in saying that "our text claims that in Christ and in Christ alone, is to be found the final answer to man's cry for the life which is unbroken by death." Believing in the truth of that text Christian ministers have no other Gospel to preach. Our contention, on the contrary, is that the Christian Gospel is fundamentally false, and that the belief in and advocacy of it have seriously retarded the real progress of the world. Mr. Woolf, while regarding the text as absolutely true, fully realises that belief in it gives rise to grave difficulties. He asks:—

Are all those lives wasted which are not in accordance with this pattern? Are all those souls lost which have not here founded their faith? There are millions in India living the life of Brahma, believing his teaching, following in his ways. Are they lost souls? Millions upon millions in that same vast empire worship one god, Allah, and revere Mohammed his prophet. Are they born for hell? Untold millions in China, Japan, Burma, and Ceylon obey what they conceive to be the dictates of Buddha. Is their case hopeless? These countless souls are sitting in the real light of their ancient teachers, and most of them have never heard of Jesus Christ or of Christianity. Are they of no account, therefore, before God? And their numbers are increased by the multitudes of Africa who sit not in the light, but in gross darkness of savage totemism and animal cults. Are all these souls lost because they know not our religion or cannot appreciate its truth, or are unable to obey its appeal?

All these are awkward questions for those who believe Mr. Woolf's text, and which they are bound, if they have the courage of their faith, to answer in the affirmative. If the text is verily true, nothing awaits unbelievers in Christ but the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and for ever. And, after all, Mr. Woolf does not really believe his own text, for he says of the lowest and most degraded heathens that "God blesses them in spite of their sins, in spite of their superstitions, in spite of their awful vices, even apart from Christ." He is even courageous enough to assert "that it is not beyond the reach of God's Grace and Loving Will to receive even the vile and vitiated unevangelized Hottentot, or the fierce and degraded Papuan, or the beast-like and brutal Australian, with all their foulness and spiritual disease."

If this again is true what need can there be for foreign missions? This question occurs to our preacher, but his answer to it is a subterfuge, an evasion, quite unworthy of him. He says:—

If that be so, if there be final salvation assured to all these peoples, why disturb them from their ancient faiths and customs? Why seek to convert them to our creed and life? They are happy enough now and it all comes the same in the end. Surely the missionary enterprise is a costly superfluity if faith in Christ is ultimately unnecessary for the salvation of the souls of these people? And so it would be if that were the whole of the truth. The missionary enterprise would be a costly superfluity

if salvation meant only the saving of souls of men from hell; but salvation means very much more than that, and I venture to say, something equally important.

Mr. Woolf does not seem to have acquired much first-hand knowledge of Heathendom. Clearly he has never lived among and come into daily contact with raw Heathen men and women, as the present writer did thirty and forty years ago. We can assure him that they are not nearly so "vile and vitiated," so "fierce and degraded," or so "beast-like and brutal" as he depicts them. Some Heathen nations known to us, as described by British writers, are morally and socially fully equal, and in some instances superior, to ourselves. Now, in the assumption that God can and does save their souls apart from Christ, we declare that the presence of Christian missionaries among them is an inexcusable insult to them, an unpardonable interference with their independence and liberty. Swayed by the ugly selfishness which is of peculiarly Christian origin, Mr. Woolf says: "We preach Christ because we believe that Christ is the only guarantee of goodness that is really worth having, and of a life that is really worth living." At this point the preacher begins to tell open lies about the Heathen. Purity and holiness are unknown to them. "Orgies of lust and sustained appeals to the sensual passions are almost the core of the practice of even the better faiths." If Mr. Woolf had read Professor H. A. Giles' *Chinese Sketches*, written after eight years' residence in the country, he could not have talked such contemptible rubbish. Professor Giles says (p. 122):—

We believe that theft is not one whit more common in China than it is in England; and we are fully convinced that the imputation of being a nation of thieves has been cast, with many others, upon the Chinese by unscrupulous persons whose business it is to show that China will never advance without the renovating influence of Christianity—an opinion from which we here express our most unqualified dissent.

On his return to England Mr. Giles was appointed Professor of Chinese at the University of Cambridge; and in 1911 he published *The Civilization of China* for the Home University Library. In this work we learn that the Chinese "find their chief pleasures in family life and in the society of friends, of books, of mountains, of flowers, of pictures, and of objects dear to the collector and the connoisseur," and that "the principles of general morality, and especially of duty towards one's neighbour, the restrictions of law, and even the conventionalities of social life, upon all of which the Chinaman is more or less nourished from his youth upwards, remain, when accidental differences have been brushed away, upon a bedrock of ground common to both East and West."

What is true about China and the Chinese is equally true of Japan and its people. Both nations wish to have nothing to do with Christianity, and Christian missions have been established in both without the approval of the authorities. India cherishes the same antipathy to all attempts to convert the country to the Christian faith. Passionately do the native tribes love their own religions, and resent the activities of Christian missionaries; and it is a dark crime to characterize those people as "vile and vitiated," "fierce and degraded." We have had the pleasure of meeting and conversing with many of them in this country, and have found them men and women of noble impulses and high character. It is well-known how tremendously hostile to Christian missions Turkey has always been and is, and what a gigantic failure they have proved in that land. And yet with all these facts known to him, Mr. Woolf



has the audacity to exclaim: "We wish to convert all the Heathens into Christians.....Our first aim is not to make converts to our creed, not to mould men into our way of thinking, not merely to secure them for eternal bliss beyond the grave. The emphasis here is totally mistaken. The first and immediate point in carrying the Gospel to the Heathen is to make good men out of bad ones." In such words the preacher takes it for granted that Christians are inexpressibly superior to all Heathens, and he does so in the almost entire absence of any practical knowledge of the latter. In his dense ignorance and prejudice he declares that "there is the point of view that Heathenism is spiritual disease, whether abroad or at home," and that it is "an infectious spiritual miasma and we must cleanse it away."

Is the reverend gentleman not aware that Great Britain has never been converted to Christianity? Does he not know that no country in Christendom has ever been wholly Christian, and that the present trend is to de-Christianize all Christendom? Before Heathendom becomes Christian, Christianity will have been superseded, and then even the desire to Christianize Heathendom shall have died out.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Christian Circus.

No sound theologian would claim that we clergy are given in our ordination a special measure of common-sense.—*The Bishop of Birmingham.*

Hain't we got all the fools in town on our side?  
And ain't that a big enough majority in any town?  
—*Mark Twain, "Huckleberry Finn."*

At the last General Election a priest of the Church of England, the Rev. T. P. Stevens, of Southwark Cathedral, stood on a political platform in East London, and told a crowded audience that his heart bled for the working classes of his country. Although his own suffering was great, it was nothing to the agony of the Bishops of the Anglican Church, who were bursting with pity for the men and women of the Labour Movement. The audience applauded him rapturously, and seemed delighted at the mere appearance of a parson on a political platform. The preacher's bland assumption that the Church of England was on the side of the Labour Movement excited no adverse comment among the audience. An assembly of Sunday-school children could not have been more docile, nor could they have been more innocent and guileless in matters political.

The attitude of the Rev. Mr. Stevens is in very striking contrast to the glowing utterances of the Bishop of London, who, naturally, occupies a far more important position in Christ's Church than Brother Stevens. Speaking recently with that sobriety which so endears him to his friends and reflects lustre on his dignified calling, he said:—

There is a religious question mixed up in the midst of all these political questions. I cannot forget, as a Christian Bishop, that the Russian Government has its hands red with the blood of hundreds of bishops and thousands of priests, and has made the extermination of Christianity a definite part of its political creed; and that, therefore, any action which strengthens their hands is, in my opinion, definitely opposed to the interests of the Christian Church.

At another meeting, a political hireling, possessing a throat of leather and lungs of brass, bluntly referred to the Russian people as being a nation of Atheists. Judging by the frantic applause of his audience, the fame of the historic Greek Church has

not yet penetrated to the cultured inhabitants of East London, despite twenty centuries of political and religious activity in the East of Europe. "We must educate our masters," cried a famous Tory statesman, but his successors have seen to it that the education has been of the most rudimentary description. How, otherwise, could such nonsense be shouted from public platforms without challenge in any form or any shape? In all three instances the speakers had gauged their audiences to a nicety.

They each assumed that a Christian audience in a Christian country would know very little of the religion they professed to believe, and that they would be in a state of complete and perfect ignorance regarding religious beliefs in other nations.

So far as the Church of England is concerned, this ignorance is astonishing on the part of English people. The Anglican Church has not hidden her face under a bushel. She has no less than forty lawn-sleeved representatives in the House of Lords, and every intelligent voter ought to know what these reverend Fathers in God have done for the people of this country. In an assembly notoriously against popular liberties, and opposed to the House of Commons when the latter threatens vested interests and proposes changes in the social order, the record of these bishops has been the despair, not only of politicians, but of the plain average citizen. In the long struggle of Roman Catholics, Jews, Nonconformists, and Freethinkers, for civil and religious liberty; in the humanitarian crusade for amending cruel criminal laws and reducing the scope of the death penalty; in the efforts of the people to obtain a voice in the Government; and in the effort to obtain a system of national education, the House of Lords was ever in direct conflict with the House of Commons. In that battle, which lasted throughout the nineteenth century, and is still going on, the Spiritual Lords stood shoulder to shoulder with the peers against the people. These Fathers-in-God could not be got to see that it was wrong to hang starving people for stealing articles over the value of five shillings, and unwise to exclude from all political power millions of citizens. They also held the quaint idea that citizens who did not belong to their Anglican Church did not deserve to sit in Parliament, to vote, or to enjoy the educational advantages of the Universities.

Only one narrow conception of their duties filled the minds of these bishops. They were in the House of Lords to maintain the rights and privileges of the Throne and their Church. Many years ago, Lord Shaftesbury, who sought to ameliorate the condition of women and children in factories, asked bitterly, "Of what use are the Bishops in the House of Lords?" and the records of *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* supplies the answer. Scores of measures for the bettering of the condition of the working classes have been opposed by these Spiritual Lords, and the record carries its own condemnation. When the hearts of men were stirred at the savage cruelty of the law, the bishops joined with the majority of the Lords Temporal and resisted the movement, deaf to the cry of pity and humanity.

The day will come when the people of England will pass judgment on these Spiritual Lords of the Established Church, and in that day strip them of power and place. Every bishop of the Church of England at the solemn moment of his consecration makes promises which are in their nature undemocratic. Every one of the twenty-five thousand clergy of the Church of England has to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, which may be seen in detail in the Book of Common Prayer. These articles are sufficient in themselves to show that the clergy are completely out of touch with modern ideas. They include the belief that a spirit can be at the same time



a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost; that Adam was the father of the human race; that the first woman was manufactured from a man's rib; that Adam and Eve ate fruit in consequence of which the human race is damned; that Roman Catholic doctrine is a vain invention; that the Hebrew Bible is God's Word; and that King George the Fifth is the head of the Church of Christ. To these Articles of Faith, among others, every Church of England minister must subscribe. And, if they do not believe them, they are guilty of wilful and corrupt perjury. And we know further that numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them, and that their main reason for remaining in the Church of Christ is "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former cheerful dean of St. Paul's Cathedral wittily expressed it.

Throughout Europe Democrats recognise that Priestcraft and Kingcraft support one another. In this country men and women are still content that a priestly caste should be entwined in the social order like poisonous ivy. This priestly caste, 25,000 of whom belong to the Government Religion, and 25,000 of whom belong to the Roman Catholic and Nonconformist Churches, simply exists to feather its own nest and to hinder the wheels of progress. The mere word "reverend," applied to such survivals from the past, is pure humbug. To apply it to the ordinary priest, or to a purse-proud prelate, is as absurd as to apply the term "All Highest" or "Imperial Majesty" to the exiled decadent who once battered upon the credulity of the German people.

MIMNERMUS.

## Spiritualism and Conjuring.

EVER since I was a small boy I have taken a great interest in conjuring and illusions of all kinds. It is a good many years now (more than I like to think about) since I sat in bewildering amazement watching an itinerant magician restore watches broken into a hopeless conglomeration of springs, cards which I saw with my own eyes torn into bits, handkerchiefs with holes burnt into them and all sorts of mystifying wonders of the same kind, all with the aid (as he told us) of the wonderful magic wand which he never ceased to wave. It was an experience I never forgot and it made such a deep impression on me, that, when some years later, an odd volume of *Every Boy's Annual* came my way with Professor Hoffman's fascinating work, *Modern Magic*, running through it, I thought I had found a new heaven—at least, a new heaven of delight. From that day, I have read all the books on conjuring I could lay my hands upon, and I have done my best to see all the famous conjurers and illusionists possible—both professional and amateur. Needless to say, I learnt a good many tricks myself and found to my great surprise as well as amusement, that it was possible to deceive quite clever people with the simplest feats of legerdmain. And I want to add that, in spite of the fact that I have read hundreds of books and articles on conjuring, it is quite possible for a small boy to mystify me now with the easiest of card tricks if I don't know it and have never come across anything like it. This has happened on more than one occasion.

Now, anyone at all acquainted with the literature of conjuring must have come across discussions on Spiritualism. Nearly all the great conjurers have had to deal with the subject at some time or other, and they have had to give an opinion about it. Take, for instance, the rope-tying phenomena of the Davenport Brothers (and I might add some of the

modern illusionists). There is no doubt that even conjurers were thoroughly mystified, and had it not been for a happy chance, the late Mr. Maskelyne might never have discovered the secret—or rather, I should say, he found out one method of duplicating the wonderful feats of these clever Americans. Yet in spite of this, you will find that spiritualists assert that not only were the Davenports genuine mediums (which they never claimed) but that Mr. Maskelyne himself was also one. And if they were told that it is possible for nearly anyone to give a rope-tying entertainment, *practically without rehearsal*, which would include a good many of the Davenport feats, they would still hold to their theory of spirit intervention. The entertainer can have his hands bound behind him and the knots *sealed*, his feet also tied together and to the chair he is sitting on. A screen is then placed before him and in less than half a minute the screen can be taken away and the "medium" seen in exactly the same position with all the knots and seals intact, but with *his coat off*. The screen can be put back and immediately a tambourine, cornet or other instrument which was on a table a few feet away, will commence to play, a hand-bell will be violently rung, an umbrella will bob up and down from behind the screen and various other feats take place. Take away the screen, and once again the knots and seals will be found intact, the performer will be wearing his coat and everything will look as at the commencement of the entertainment. Now, I repeat, this can be done by almost anybody of average intelligence without previous practice.

But if one were to perform this perfectly simple trick before, let us say, Sir A Conan Doyle or Sir Oliver Lodge (but particularly the former) and were to commence with a prayer and a silly hymn sung with all the reverence due to such a distinguished spiritualist, I am sure Sir Arthur would fill our newspapers with his new discovery of another heaven-sent medium and every editor would respectfully publish his articles.

The fact is spiritualists, who are quite aware of what conjurers know about them, hate the very name of conjuring, and will never if they can, have anything to do with any prestidigitateur. Mr. Maskelyne in this country was their particular *bête noir*, and the one who so thoroughly hoaxed Sir A. Conan Doyle and his friends with the *Masked Medium* would never, of course, be allowed to investigate the preposterous claims made by most mediums. On the other hand, spiritualists welcome any investigation made by the average scientist, and even writer, for, of course, there are no people so easily gulled. Touch them on some recent bereavement, tell them it's their beloved mother or wife who is speaking and you have converted them practically at once. Never forget there is a strong reason for this. So clever are some of the feats performed by spiritualists that it is nearly impossible *not* to believe. We have all seen illusions on the stage that absolutely defied discovery. Couple some similar illusion with sentimental appeals, and the heart overcomes the head and another spiritualist is made. (I am not discussing for the moment those very few cases where abnormal psychology or double personality in the medium is the solution of the mystery). There have been many books published by conjurers which have thoroughly explained the *modus operandi* of the vast majority of mediums, but I want to call the attention of the reader to the latest and perhaps the best of them all.

Everybody has heard of Harry Houdini, I believe, and anything coming from a man who has mystified the greatest experts in the world is worth reading. His book is called *A Magician among the Spirits*, and it is packed with about the most damning ex-



posure of the claims of Spiritualism that has ever been made.

Houdini is particularly the right man to make these exposures. He has an open mind and actually *wants to believe*. He adores the memory of his mother (what a splendid trait this is in any man!) and has evidently wished for years to speak to her from across the border. He says:—

During the past thirty years I have read every single piece of literature on the subject of Spiritualism that I could. I have accumulated one of the largest libraries in the world on psychic phenomena, spiritualism, magic, witchcraft, demonology, evil spirits, etc., some of the material going back as far as 1849, and I doubt if anyone in the world has so complete a library on modern Spiritualism, but nothing I ever read concerning the so-called Spiritualistic phenomena has impressed me as being genuine.....Mine has not been an investigation of a few days or weeks or months, but one that has extended over thirty years, and in that thirty years I have not found one incident that savoured of the genuine. If there had been any real unalloyed demonstration to work on, one that did not reek of fraud, one that could not be reproduced by earthly powers, then there would be something for a foundation, but up to the present everything that I have investigated has been the result of deluded brains or those which were too actively and intensely willing to believe.

This is what one of the cleverest illusionists who has ever lived has to say, and what is the reply? Sir A. Conan Doyle is a personal friend of Houdini's and the latter tries his best to be fair to the great apostle of Spiritualism, but he must have found it difficult. The book is full of their encounters, and one can see why Sir A. C. Doyle says as little about Houdini as he can in England. Let me give an example. I have pointed out how Houdini adored the memory of his mother and how he wished to speak to her if possible. This, with various other details, was told by Mrs. Houdini, in the way women have of talking about anything dearest to them, to Lady Doyle. It can surprise no one, therefore, that anxious to convert such a distinguished magician as Houdini, Sir Arthur suggested a seance, as "Lady Doyle has a feeling that she might have a message come through." "Sir Arthur," says Houdini,

started with a devout prayer. I had made up my mind that I would be as religious as it was within my power to be, and not at any time did I scoff at the ceremony. I excluded all earthly thoughts and gave my whole soul to the seance. I was *willing* to believe and even *wanted* to believe.....If ever there was a son who idolized and worshipped his mother whose every thought was for her happiness and comfort, that son was myself.

Houdini was thus in a perfect frame of mind to be convinced and could not have been surprised when he saw Lady Doyle "seized by a spirit." She started, after various contortions, writing and Sir Arthur handed page after page to his guest. We are given this letter to judge for ourselves, and it must be difficult for anyone to read it without laughing. It reminds me of the nonsense (only it was worse) put into the mouth of Paine, Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, Shakespeare, and other eminent men through the planchette. Houdini tries hard to be just and he puts his conclusions as nicely as he can:—

In the case of my seance, Sir Arthur believed that due to the great excitement, it was a direct connection. The more so do I hesitate to believe and accept the above letter, because, although my sainted mother had been in America for almost fifty years, she could not speak, read nor write English, but spiritualists claim that when a medium is possessed by a spirit who does not speak the language, she automatically writes, speaks or sings in the

language of the deceased; however, Sir Arthur told me that a spirit becomes more educated the longer it is departed, and that my blessed mother had been able to master the English language in Heaven.

Could anything be more amusing? Think of a master of fiction like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of *Rodney Stone* and *The White Company* talking such drivel! Houdini's chapter on Sir Arthur is intensely interesting and should be read by all. A good deal of it would never be known otherwise and Sir Arthur makes an interesting study in psychology.

H. CUTNER.

(To be Concluded.)

## Acid Drops.

Cardinal Vaughan is quite a nice sort of man. At the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of a Church he said that during the last war there were over seven million killed. But he went on to say, before action there were many young men who went to confession, and even though there were but one case of a soul being saved it would have been cheaply purchased by the war. There speaks the true churchman, with all his unrestrained bigotry and cruelty masked by an appearance of philanthropy. The death of seven millions is nothing provided a single soul can be brought to conform with the rules of his church. When one reads such horrible sentiments as these one can understand how it was that Christianity worked the horrors it did work through the ages, and the carelessness with which it wrecked civilizations if they threatened its supremacy.

A special invitation was received from the vicar of St. Paul's Church, Weston-super-Mare, for all ranks of the Royal Engineers and the 4th Batt. Somerset L.I. to attend a church parade service in that church last Sunday. Nothing seems to us more completely to expose the lack of sincerity in Christian ethics among those professing them than the constant association of war and religion in this manner. Whatever else the Bible Christ may have been, he was certainly a pacifist. And to-day his humble followers cheerfully bless all the instruments of war!

A figure of the Virgin and Child in the Church of St. Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge, was the subject of a judgment in the Arches Court (an ancient ecclesiastical court), which sat at Church House, Westminster, recently. Sir Lewis Dibdin, Dean of the Arches, delivered judgment on a parishioner's appeal against a decision of the Chancellor of the Diocese granting the Rector and churchwarden permission to place a figure of the Virgin and Child on a ledge at the back of the second holy table. The Dean allowed the appeal; although he dismissed the appeal against the placing of a crucifix over the pulpit. Is it to be wondered that, with the grave social and international problems that face the world to-day, decent men and women are turning in larger and larger numbers from the Church that wastes time over such ridiculous details? With unemployment and other social ills overshadowing this country, and with the perpetual lurking threat of another great war that will destroy civilization, representatives of one of the most powerful and wealthy of organizations in the white world can find time to consider, with all the gravity of statesmen settling great international disputes, whether an image may or may not be placed in a building. Surely the future historian of our age will write with mingled disgust and amazement of these queer people.

We see from the *Times* that two reverend gentlemen recently deceased leave estates valued respectively at £14,520 and £6,341. They seem to have succeeded remarkably well in reconciling business acumen and faith



in the doctrines of poverty preached by the founder of their profession.

The Rev. G. Shillito, of Oldham, in a paper on "The Christian Ethic and the Novel," deplors the modern writers' absorption in sex. He further supposes that the unhealthy tone of so much modern fiction is due to the fact that many of our novelists are in touch with deplorable types of character and conduct. We can assure the reverend gentleman that the average author is a quite innocuous person, and most of them are not, as the parson seems to imply, in the habit of attending church regularly.

Mr. H. Dennis Bradley is a recent convert to Spiritualism, and we are informed that at a sitting on October 11 he brought cymbals, sirens, and slave-bells into the room and spirits played these in perfect tune. Mr. Bradley was one of the few public men during the war who spoke common-sense; besides demanding courage, this in itself was an achievement, but he must beware of the implications of this announcement respecting the performance of spirits. If spirits can play tunes they can tailor a suit. This, if done, will bring down the cost and incidentally throw out of work many knights of the needle. We refuse to pursue the alarming conclusions of such a practical harnessing of spirits, but we might be interested if suits came down fifty per cent. in price.

A book reviewer in the *Saturday Review* takes for granted that it is of no importance that the celebrated divine John Douse was a hypocritical sensualist and a parasite, who by continuous flunkeyisms became Dean of St. Paul's. On the contrary, it is a public service that information regarding the pillars of the Churches should be known—although it was nearly three hundred years ago. It is understood that sheer merit is the necessary qualification these days.

Mr. H. Wildon Carr, in noticing a book on *Space, Time, Motion*, tells us that intolerance is not confined to theologians. This is a little jewel of relativity, but we shall be progressing when the learned scientist will publicly name the intolerant theologians—and then we will proceed with intolerance in other circles. Einstein, as far as we know, does not want publicly to ostracise or burn us because we do not agree with his theories—neither would a gardener if we did not agree with him about the beauty of a rose; but science has no elbow room due to theologians, who live by throwing dust in people's eyes.

The *Daily Herald* is to be congratulated for stating the case against the Blasphemy Laws. "B. C. B.," in a short sketch, relates a conversation on free speech as follows:—

Breakin' up meetings is silly, of course it is—worse'n silly; violence never done no good to no one—that's about all the Great Old War taught us—; let 'em speak—that's what I says, and speak as damn silly as they please. Give 'em rope enough, I says. Only, mark my words, this 'ere Press is a public danger.

We venture to hope that public opinion can dispense with the blinkers supplied by our free Press and that our own countrymen have never yet been subjected to a "writing up to" by journalists—assuming that the scribes are capable of it.

I regard an effective religious education in elementary schools as an education calculated to bring home to the hearts and minds of children the importance of true Christian ethics, and the duty of regulating life on the model of the example of Christ."

Lord Parmoor expressed this view in a speech at Manchester recently. It would have been helpful if Lord Parmoor had given a definite statement of what he understood by Christian ethics. The phrase has meant many varying codes in the past history of the world, and still sums up many kinds of moral standards to-day.

The Jesuit was able to reconcile deliberate, calculated lying with the Christian code of ethics. The Crusader was able to reconcile war on a grand scale with the teaching of the pacifist carpenter of Nazareth. Catholics and Protestants when they fought one another during the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were able to reconcile treachery, massacre, and torture with the injunction "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Bishop Wilberforce could worship the man who said "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," and strenuously insist that boys of six or seven were fitted to climb chimneys to sweep down the soot, even though at times they were stifled there, and could use the weight of his reputation to oppose legislation intended to regulate child labour in factories and mines. That intimate acquaintance of God, the late Kaiser William II., could cling to the faith which bids its devotees turn the other cheek to the aggressor, and help loose upon the world the most disastrous war of modern times. Many of our prominent politicians can reconcile sharp political practices with vehement affirmation of faith in Christianity. Most of the particularly ruthless "captains of industry" of America are deeply pious Puritans—out of business hours—and over our own Stock Exchange is the grimly humorous biblical quotation, "The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fullness Thereof." Seemingly those who do business there can embrace the creed which bids adherents scorn gold and earthly wealth, and pile up treasure in heaven, and yet spend their better energies in adding to their bank balances. If we are to judge Christian ethics by the actions and lives of its professed adherents, it scarcely appears to be a system fit for children.

But we presume Lord Parmoor would declare that all these examples of Christian ethics in action are not really what they purport to be. That they are really contrary to the Christian ethical system; that professing Christians do not usually live up to their moral code. That does not say much for their religion, it seems to us. Suppose, however, we assume that the Christian ethical system is epitomised in the Sermon on the Mount. Will any sensible person, who carefully studies the principles embodied in the sermon, honestly affirm that they are either desirable or reasonable? "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Would this world be a happier place if there were more poor in spirit? Would it not be a direct incentive to the tyrannous and the bullying to force their views and wishes upon the rest of us. Has not lack of spirit in the past led to the establishment of royal, and aristocratic and theocratic despotisms. And are the poor-spirited of to-day of any particular value when it becomes necessary to fight against some social injustice, or to assert some great ideal? The same criticism applies to the injunction, "Blessed are the meek."

"Blessed are they that do mourn." Here, again, is a principle which seems to indicate a melancholy, unhealthy attitude of regarding things. Sorrow comes to everyone in turn, and, perhaps, as the poet has said, the world is a tragedy to those who feel. But surely it is better to preach a gospel of cheerfulness and insistence upon making the best of things, than one of placid acceptance of unhappiness, in the belief that sorrow here is a guarantee of bliss hereafter. There are enough Jeremiahs already without seeking to make them by the teaching of such feeble stuff. And so, if we had time, we could go through the whole of the Christian ethical system, pointing out how lamentably it fails to offer a virile code to men and women who see that the world is far from ideal, and are possessed of a sane desire to leave it a little better than they found it. An excellent criticism of the futility and immorality of Christian ethics is to be found in Herbert Spencer's *Study of Sociology*, in the chapter on "Religious Bias."

The truth is, of course, that Christians have adopted the common-sense habit of ignoring the real moral



teachings of their code, and now claim that all those principles which the conscience of mankind knows to be good and wise are Christian in origin and spirit. They are all far older than Christianity, and, without exception, are the product of the Secular attitude towards affairs. Religion may have given us a bewildering mass of instructions as to how we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is doubtful whether it has ever given us any very useful guides for social conduct in this life. These have been the product of social experience throughout vast ages of times. In other words, morals are secular in origin, and not religious. They can scarcely be otherwise, since morals have to do with the life of human beings in a given social environment, and ideas of right and wrong are thus necessarily social in origin.

Preaching at Frizinghall Parish Church recently, the Bishop of Bradford admitted that "the attitude of science appeared to be that every cure effected at the Mission (the notorious Hickson mission), was possible on the plane of suggestion, and that it had yet to hear of a case of organic and not merely functional disease which had been healed by the immediate action of God. It had no room in its philosophy or in its exact scientific accuracy for the immediate working of God." Such a confession helps one immensely to realize the vast progress which Secularism has made in the last half century. The wisest Christian apologists seem to be beginning to realize the futility of repeating the parrot-like cry that there is no conflict between science and religion. Instead there is the frank admission that Christianity and science are eternally opposed, and a tendency to seek refuge in a vague, semi-mystical, semi-scientific description of nature, with the old paraphernalia of the creeds dragged out on ceremonial occasions.

How many people have asked What is God? And one of the many answers is given by Mr. C. W. J. Tennant, in the *Evening News*, on behalf of Christian Science. It is as follows, "Christian Science teaches that God is not anthropomorphic; he is incorporeal infinite Spirit, and therefore personal in an infinite sense only." Now we know all about it. And the beauty of the definition is that one can begin it from either end and read up or down, or can begin in the middle and read both ways at once. It is as enlightening one way as the other. We do not wonder that Christian Science attracts many people. It has all the qualities of a first-rate religion—plenty of sound and very little sense.

The Rev. Dr. Orchard repudiates the insinuation that Christians, although they say their home is in heaven, wish to live as long as possible on earth. He says that what a Christian mourns is the fact that there is a stop put to the mellowing of character and a shortening of the opportunities for self-development. Death would put an end to our attainment of virtue, and also to the possibility of sin. In that case heaven must be a delightful place where you do not change, but are exactly the same year after year for ever and ever—and a little longer. Perhaps someone will tell us the difference between being transported to a state of this kind and being converted into an everlasting mummy? Life would be about as interesting as it is to the mummy of King Tutankhamen. Really, Christians show some taste in wanting to remain here as long as possible.

And yet Dr. Orchard appears to us to come nearer the inner spirit of Christianity than many, and much nearer than he is aware of. For the strength of Christianity has always been that it made a strong appeal to the narrower side of man's nature under the disguise of appealing to his better side. And so long as one can gratify the more selfish and the lower feelings under cover of an appeal to the unselfish and the higher one may be quite sure of a ready response. And it has always been one of the standing claims of Christian teachers that without a future life where man would

reap the reward of any good he may happen to have done on earth, there was no sense in exercising what they called moral restraints. So the sincere Christian mortified his passions here in order that he would be able, with the greater certainty, to gratify them hereafter. His goodness was just an investment for which he expected a rattling good dividend; and he asked, if there is no dividend hereafter, what is the use of making the investment here? And his complaint against secular morality was not that it was poor, but that it was too good to expect a Christian to practise. And we quite agree that to one who has not outgrown a Christian training Secular morality will not appeal very strongly. Still we are hopeful—even of Christians. And we are sanguine enough to believe that Christians could become as genuinely moral as other people if they would only try hard enough.

Prebendary Gough, at Brompton Parish Church, during the recent election, gave a good example of Christian charity. "This alien Socialism," he said, "is a thing which seems to me like some carrion bird which preys upon the slain after a great conflict. It comes down upon the sorely wounded and impoverished state with a flapping of wings and gluts its beak." Without discussing the merits and demerits of Socialism, we should like to point out to this brother in Christ that this non-religious creed has been able to stir more enthusiasm in its supporters than the Christian religion has done for centuries past; that it has attracted to itself many of our finest men and women whose sincerity cannot be questioned; and that some five and a half millions of the prebendary's fellow citizens voted for it at the last poll. In the circumstances, it seems hardly good taste for him to talk in the hysterical way that he does of it. Also we would like to remind him that many of the early Christian communities were based upon Communistic principles, and that the various religious houses which flourished during the Middle Ages were also based on somewhat similar ideas. We suspect that if Socialists inscribed "Blood and Fire" on their red flag, after the fashion of the Salvationists with their red flag, the Prebendary might suddenly discover what an affinity there is between Christianity and Socialism.

"A Vicar," in a daily newspaper, assures us that it is most difficult to get a curate. After reading half a column of his lament, we are driven to the conclusion that the engagement of a curate does not differ from the engagement of any other person, and that the Lord's work now is nakedly and unashamedly measured in terms of money—as it always has been, but not with the publicity of a penny newspaper.

## How to Help.

There are thousands of men and women who have left the Churches and who do not know of the existence of this journal. Most of them would become subscribers if only its existence were brought to their notice.

We are unable to reach them through the ordinary channels of commercial advertising, and so must rely upon the willingness of our friends to help. This may be given in many ways:

By taking an extra copy and sending it to a likely acquaintance.

By getting your newsagent to take an extra copy and display it.

By lending your own copy to a friend after you have read it.

By leaving a copy in a train, tram or 'bus.

It is monstrous that after forty years of existence, and in spite of the labour of love given it by those responsible for its existence, the *Freethinker* should not yet be in a sound financial position. It can be done if all will help. The Paper and the Cause are worthy of all that each can do for them.



## Our Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £316 7s. 9d. Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Side, £1 1s.; R. G. McDonald, 2s. 6d.; W. Wright, 2s. 6d.; W. McKelvie, 5s.; E. H. Barker, 5s.; H. Hughes, 5s.; Mrs. E. Shepherd, 5s.; J. R. Lickfold, 10s.; J. W. Robertson, 5s.; D. McDiarmid, 5s.; D. Robertson, £2; Sansfor, £1; Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Rosetti, 10s. 6d.; A. Brooks (Plaistow), 5s.; J. Schofield, £1; Mrs. R. Ralston, 5s.; A. Mitchell (Ontario), 12s.; Anonymous, £2; J. M. Bishop, £1 10s.; J. Flinthoff, 5s. 6d.; W. A. Holroyd, 5s.; J. Meerloo, 5s.

Per F. Lovie—Mr. Hutchings, 1s.; Mr. Jones, 10s. 6d.; Mr. Lowie, 3s.; Mr. Scott, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Sims, 1s.; Mr. Wigg, 3s.

Total, £330 12s. 9d.

Correction—"E. L. Wace," in last week's list, should have read E. L. Ward, 5s.

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.**

E. L. WARD.—Sorry you have had to trouble to make the correction. We have set it right in this week's list.

SINE CERE.—We have had the same silly religious circular delivered in this district. Presumably it has gone all over the country. There appears to be always money enough to pay for this kind of folly, and enough religious knaves to take advantage of other people's stupidity. Thanks for papers.

H. W. SIDE.—Thanks for good wishes. As soon as the time is opportune we shall make the matter public and leave the rest to the friends of the paper.

D. ROBERTSON (Glasgow).—Posters have been sent. Thanks for getting new subscribers.

H. ORGAN.—We cannot trace the receipt of your letter. Have you preserved particulars? If so, enquiries could be made of the Post Office.

W. WRIGHT.—Pleased to hear from you and to receive your continued appreciation of the *Freethinker*. Regards to Mrs. Wright.

J. SCHOFIELD.—Thanks for promise to subscribe again to Fund if the required amount is not forthcoming. But we do not think there will be any difficulty in getting all that is needed. We are obliged for your interest all the same.

F. LOVIE.—We do not measure the value of anyone in terms of what they give, but only in terms of the spirit in which it is given. We agree with you that there are many who could help a little, and if each one did a little the task would be easy for all.

H. C. LONG.—We note your comments on Mr. Kensett's letter, which has, as you will see, awakened the interest of others of our readers. Your resolve to spend what would have gone on other papers on Freethought literature and distribute it is a very practical way of developing an atmosphere that is favourable to genuine freedom of thought.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 16) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice in the Palace Theatre, The Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare. The meetings have been well advertised and good audiences are expected. There are hopes of starting a Branch of the N.S.S. at Weston, and Mr. Cohen will be pleased to meet any friends who are ready to lend a helping hand in this direction. Freethought has made a big advance in the town, and it is time that the results were consolidated.

Next Sunday (November 23) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Town Hall, Stratford. There is small fear as to there not being a good meeting, but all the same we trust that all our East London friends will do what they can to make the meeting as widely known as possible. Trams and buses pass the door from all parts of London, and Stratford railway station (G.E.R.) is only a few minutes' walk away. This will be Mr. Cohen's last lecture in London this year.

We have received several letters—among them one from our old friend, Mr. A. J. Marriott—commenting on the letter of Mr. Kensett describing his experience with the *Daily Herald*. We regret we have not space for their publication, nor would it be quite fair to single out the *Daily Herald* for special condemnation. The *Herald* is a newspaper, and, like other newspapers in this country, lives in fear of offending its religious readers. Hence, while they are always ready, even anxious to find space for all sorts of "gush" and nonsense about religion, it is not very easy to get them to find space for letters which seek to correct the bias. While public opinion is as it is, and newspapers, particularly those connected with a political party, are catering for the votes of either church or chapel, the *Freethinker* must expect the treatment he gets. In this respect the *Daily Herald* is no better and no worse than are the other papers. It wants Christian support, and to get that one must play to Christian prejudices. That is all there is in it.

The striking thing about it is the testimony it bears to the power that organised religion has in this country. However much so-called reformers may attack other things, the one thing they are generally afraid to touch is religion. It is not that they believe in it themselves; we know very often they do not, but they are well aware that to attack religion will involve them in the hardest fight it is possible for them to undertake, and there are no well-paid offices of any kind at the end of or during the fight. And yet, if their fight for reform were both honest and intelligent, they could not but realize that the fight against the influence of established religion is the most important of all. What is the use of the most elaborate political machinery unless there is a critical and informed public that is prepared to use it? The vested interests of every country read the situation far more intelligently. They know that so long as the people can be kept under the influence of established religion they can always get their way. That is why they see to it that whatever else the people may be short of they shall not be short of religion.



It is verily the opium of the people. And we fancy that a great many of the Labour leaders see this as well as we do, but it does not pay them to say so. So we must keep on trying to purify the social atmosphere. Freethinkers have made it possible for parsons to be a little more reasonable in the pulpit than they would otherwise have dared to be. And we are making it possible for men in public life to be more honest in their utterances than a Christian community would permit could it have things as they would wish.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti is lecturing to-day (November 16) in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester. The meetings will commence at 3 and 6.30, and we hope that Manchester friends will see to it that the hall is well filled. Mr. Rosetti usually has something thoughtful to say, and delivers an address that will well repay those who attend.

We observe a letter in the *High Peak News*, from Mr. David Macconnell, protesting against the censorship set up by certain newsagents over the newspapers supplied by them. The protest is raised in connection with the action of Conservative newsagents, but it applies to others as well, particularly to those who are asked to supply Freethought publications. The only methods to meet this kind of intolerance is for all to go on making Freethinkers, and for Freethinkers when there are difficulties placed in the way of getting what they want to transfer their custom elsewhere. These pious bigots will soon wince when their bigotry affects their pockets.

Mr. J. Meerloo, who is not a newsagent, makes it a practice of hanging a *Freethinker* poster in his shop for the enlightenment of the public, and commends this practice to others. We hope many will follow this good example.

## Karl Marx.

### I.—MAN'S MARCH TO INDUSTRY.

THE world is very young. It is old enough in one sense, for the old Biblical chronology which occupied the later days of Newton—greatly to the comfort of Bishop Barnes—and which incidentally brought that great brain (Newton's) to deliquescence, that chronology, then, has been from time to time so extended that a few million years cease to count, and the Neanderthal man or the Piltdown representative seems to have had as roomy a brain-pan as most of our high intellectuals, say our legislators.

And yet withal the problems that engross us to-day, that passionate our lives, and which we treat as if they had belonged to the eternal order of things—such as the industrial régime and our economic theories—are growths of yesterday. Our modern world of science is wonderfully new, and it is continually reconsidering its findings; and therefore before definitely touching the doctrines of Karl Marx I wish to take a rapid review to see its place in the general setting of man's activities.

Man's struggle is with nature. That is to say he must find his living amid the natural conditions presented to him, and he makes use of his physical powers, aided by mental faculties, in order to win from his environment the products that serve for his nourishment, and for his comfort and embellishment.

The savage is the real sportsman, not, as we find in our cultured societies, a dilettante of artificial games, and as I have known him in his native haunts he has good qualities. One point here I may refer to, for it has always puzzled me. We speak of a cultured society which produces fine pictures and great statues, but we regard as a state of degradation the life which enjoys these at first hand. In our vaunted

school system an overweening part is given to the cultivation, not so much of sound physique likely to be serviceable in the conditions of practical life, but to toys of games, in which our molly-coddled youths at Public Schools and Universities acquire only a relative efficiency. But I have seen savages who could beat them out of the field in the great fundamental sports, as distinct from tricks, and I doubt whether Phidias or Praxiteles ever carved an image more instinct with grace than the Queensland aboriginal Samuel about the period when he ran Harry Hutchins.

Art, it seems to me, should not be appreciated merely when cooped up in museums; there should be an art expressible in the physique of the people, in their cleanliness, their health, their beauty of free development.....But let me get on.

After hunting, but without rendering it obsolete—and this suggests deep problems for the evolutionists—comes agriculture; and, here again suggestively, it is rather the tame and peaceful agriculturists who produce the relatively strong military nations.

Coming forward in our civilization we find history, especially as written for schoolboys, a tangled skein of wars which, bloody and brutal as they were, seemed to leave mankind weltering in the same old distressing conditions with little general gain. Then amidst certain signs of a higher civilization here and there, in India, in Egypt, in China we find the establishment of the Latin Republic, afterwards the Roman Empire, which in its form of organization and in its laws has given the guiding lines of our own structure of civilization; and then we light upon, contemporaneous in part with this and offering all it knew of the higher graces of the mind, the Athenian civilization, the effervescence of Greek genius comprised within few years but radiating still upon our modern world.

There is hardly an idea now animating the circles of thought of which the origin may not be found in one or other of the philosophies of Greece, from Thales to Archimedes. Pythagoras had the heliocentric conception of our planetary system; Hippocrates might, so I heard a famous French physician say, be read with profit to-day; Empedocles had grasped the essentials of the Darwinian theory; Democritus and Heralitus had between them the foundations of chemistry including the atomic theory; Plato was great in his stimulation of science; his pupil Aristotle appears as one of the supreme intellects of all time; Eratosthenes not only knew that the earth was a sphere but measured it; Anaxagoras, Apollonius and Archimedes all displayed genius in the handling of mathematics. We shall hear of them later.

Picking up wars again, it is instructive to read of Alexander's conquests not as a mere story of battles but in the light of the indications contained, for example, in Humboldt's *Cosmos*, of the manner in which they opened up the paths between the East and the West.

Coming later to the Crusades, which represent one of the most extraordinary aberrations of the human mind, we find that the chief permanent results were the lessons the Crusaders learnt of the art of war and of peace, and the introduction into Europe of various products known to the Moslems.

Then at length we come to an important date, that of the capture of Constantinople by Mahomet II. in 1453. There again the indirect results were much greater than those that appealed to the sensual eye of the conqueror. The Greek learning had been kept alive in Byzantium, but when the city fell and became the capital of the Mahometan power, the Greek scholars were dispersed all over Europe. The event happened at a time when the brains of men were waking from the long lethargy into which they had



been cast by centuries of dominance of the Church, and so a desire for Greek learning became the fashion.

Those who have written of the Renaissance have dwelt too much on the revival of learning in its literary form, but the most valuable result of the discovery of the long hidden treasures was that relating to science. The voyage of Columbus is in fact due to this, for Toscanelli, the celebrated Genoese savant, had gone back to the records of Eratosthenes, and not only had he convinced himself that the earth was a globe but he was able to give figures to Columbus which, being somewhat understated, induced the navigator to think that the islands he had run against were outlying parts of the Indies, hence the name they bear to this day of the West Indies.

Copernicus established the heliocentric system, and it is to him that M. Painlevé, the famous French mathematician and statesman, ascribes the foundation of our modern era. Galileo in turn went back to the writings of Archimedes, and from the great Greek we derived the suggestions that led to the foundation of the science of mechanics, as we know it, and also to the discovery of the Differential Calculus.

The Greeks, with their fine speculative minds, looked askance on the mechanical arts, and, with a few brilliant exceptions such as Archimedes himself, disparaged invention. The strain in their character which led to such an attitude was one of the causes of their downfall. Galileo, breathing the modern spirit, was an inventor as well as speculator. His work followed in various directions by Descartes, Kepler and Newton, and in others by Toricelli, by Janssen, Leeuwenhock, and eventually by Watts and the long series of modern inventors. From these have sprung those great works which have given to our actual civilization its particular cast—steam engines, locomotives, railways, steamships, telegraph systems, mechanical apparatus of all kinds, and finally the organization of the producing industries.

All these may be regarded as the material consequences, the graphic corollaries, of the products of science; and in this view I find nothing more fascinating than to trace backwards from some striking example of mechanical power to the scientific principles from which it took origin, and finally to the subtle thought and delicate analysis carried on in the mind of a remote philosophic thinker.

One discovers in this way the whole world of civilization bound together by invisible organic filaments, and the supremacy of mind becomes established. This contemplation, rather than the coldly-thrilling but shallow hysteria of false religions, gives the true note of spirituality. We see "Science as the woof of civilization."

One result of laying down structural lines within the environment has been that the social organization has adapted itself to these conditions. The feudal system, founded on war, service and protection, began to give way before a new social order in which quite other kinds of faculties, less showily noble but more intellectual, more highly developed, became of importance. Hence a process of peaceful, or comparatively peaceful revolution began to transform society, especially in regard to wealth and influence.

At the other end of the scale a process of transition was also in active operation. The invention of machinery had displaced men from occupations in which they had found a livelihood, while another effect of the use of machinery was to hold the factory hands to routine tasks in which there was no scope for general development. Pay became reduced accordingly, and the only limit to the downward movement was formed by the impossibility of the worker subsisting at a lower level. At the same time the profits of the em-

ployer increased enormously. We were face to face with the conditions that Henry George described as Progress and Poverty. Moreover, the old relations between feudal lord and protected tenant became altered into a less humanised association in which the employer became inclined to regard the workpeople as part of the machinery, or at best, like cattle.

Hence we find "exploitation."

With the process of transition we had at the same time a movement for education, and with a "proletariat" both intelligent and instructed but also abominably mishandled, we arrived at the period of "revolt."

Here it is that we find the conditions which attracted so keenly the attention of Karl Marx, and out of his criticisms has come a new religion, that of Communism. As will be seen even from the preceding hasty glance the conditions for a great system of philosophy, applicable in wide ranges of time and place, do not seem to be here present; but on the other hand, this religion as compared with most of its predecessors is more deeply based, more intelligent in conception, more intelligible in application, and better calculated to appeal to the sympathies, to stimulate the energies of its followers, and to open up in this world wide vistas and alluring prospects.

We will proceed to examine it.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

## Correspondence.

"BLESSED" WORDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Living in such out-of-the-way regions as Lower California, Mexico, where the mighty play of the forces of civilization dwindles down into something less formidable than the murmurings and flickerings of a far, far away tempest, and where the history-making doings of dictators, Church dignitaries and industrial Tzars are *sometimes* mentioned among topics such as the recent increase of mosquitos, or the cool North winds now a few days overdue, and kindred not unduly nerve-racking subjects, one looks forward to the irregular and infrequent arrival of the mail that is to bring one the few letters and periodicals that serve to satisfy one's rapidly diminishing interest in the occurrences of the civilization-stricken parts of the world. And the *Freethinker* is perhaps the most interesting among the few things that come to us from the Darkest Far East. (To us, who dwell on this side of the world, Europe is the Far East, and Europeans are Orientals, whereas Chinese culture becomes Western culture. The magnetic compass is exorcisingly logical!)

Sometimes much overdue, sometimes unexpectedly early, the *Freethinker* always arrives here a few weeks after date of publication. Among the interesting features contained in it, the Correspondence column is the one for which I have the greatest weakness. Often enough my fingers have itched to wield the weapon that is mightier than the sword. But when I remember that I must necessarily arrive upon the field of battle at least six weeks late I realize the folly of throwing oneself into the fray—only to find that the grass is sprouting again. And so I have to reconcile myself to playing the part of the distant spectator who cannot even sway the issue of the battle by means of an occasional shout of advice.

However, the *Freethinker* for September 14, has proved irresistible to me. In his article, *The Tyranny of Words*, Mr. Hands has sounded the rallying-call of a Cause that is as vital as anything can be at the present time, and it would be a pity if it died away unheard, and failed to provoke a most vigorous discussion. It is from fear that this may prove to be the case that I am prompted to write this letter.

While it may be assumed that most of the readers of the *Freethinker* are settled in their opinion as to the value of words and phrases such as Immortal Soul, Resurrection of the Flesh, Miracles, Holy Trinity, Immaculate Conception, Faith, Sin, and a host of others equally abstract, it may not have occurred to many scap-



tically to examine other current words and phrases that are apparently very little, if at all, related to the taboo-jargon of the medicine men who work their joss-house magic in the big kraals of London, Paris, Rome, and New York. Magic words are not proper to religious thought and practice only; they are in daily use in many other directions, and there is reason to fear that even the canny freethinker is far more under the spell of magic words than he would care to realize.

The phraseology of science should be one of the last things to be suspected of containing a formidable list of magic words, *hocus-pocuses*—words with which the most astonishing conjuring tricks may be performed.

Mr. Hands has in his quotations already indicated some of the more self-evident specimens, such as Absolute, the Infinite, the Unknowable. To these I beg leave to add Space, Time, Mind, Force, Matter, and Progress, Liberty, Equality. The first group of five words is extensively used on the field of science; the last three are used chiefly by politicians, social reformers, and "extremists." The list could be added to at length, but the examples chosen may suffice for present purposes.

Has anyone, credited with being *compos mentis*, ever claimed to have perceived, or to have in any way experienced, Space? Yet Space is spoken of as freely as bread, meat, and water. Its existence has still to be proved by common experience, or by that which determines what is knowledge and what is hallucination. We know only about the existence of a *space* or of some *spaces*. Space is an arbitrary assumption; there exists no known phenomenon—and a phenomenon is always known—that is analogous with a mental image of Space. Therefore Space would appear to be nothing but an hallucination. But since it is exceedingly doubtful whether anyone can describe a mental image of Space, it becomes even less than an illusion: it is merely a mannerism or habit of speech and has about the same significance as the curate's "ahem!" or the festive gent's "Hic-hic."

What do we know about Time? There may be people who know all about it; but I am one of those who have been compelled to resort to dictionary and encyclopædia for enlightenment. My experience has been much the same as that of the press reporter who wished to collect all the facts bearing upon the unfortunate nurse, both of whose breasts were said to have been amputated by the brutal Hun in Belgium during the recent war.

Arrived at the village where this dastardly outrage was reported to have been perpetrated, the pressman was told that it had not happened in that particular place, but in a village twenty kilometres to the East. He repaired thither, but found upon enquiry that it had happened, not there, but at a place fifteen kilometres due North. Arrived there, he was informed by the inhabitants that the outrage in question was well known to them, but that it had occurred at a place twenty-five kilometres to the Westward. At this latter place he was referred to a village situated twenty kilometres due South—the very spot at which he had commenced upon his journey of enquiry. Arrived back at the starting point, he persisted in his search after information, but when the simple and honest burghers wanted to send him off again over the same vicious circle, he wisely gave up the search, sat down to think the matter over, and came to the conclusion that, like the human credulity that fostered it, the object of his search was without beginning and end, and that the classic saying, "There ain't so sich thing" summed it up neatly.

I will not go to the unnecessary trouble of writing down a list of the pathetically futile "definitions" of Time given in dictionaries and other books of reference. Anyone caring to do so may see for himself. And what have our thinkers and philosophers done by way of explaining the meaning of Time? Their ponderous works are nothing but dictionary definitions padded with an enormous amount of verbiage. Thomas Carlyle tells us, with the awe-hushed voice of the little girl who is telling her baby brother fairy tales, that "The illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called 'time,' rolling, rushing on—this is forever very literally, a miracle, a thing to strike us dumb." Well, well! To hear talk like this in this "era of enlightenment" does rather

tend to strike one dumb. Then comes Herbert Spencer who, after having a great deal to say about it, tries to pull himself out of the quagmire, as did Baron Munchausen—by his own boot-straps. Only he called his boot-straps "the Unknowable."

When all is said and done, we find that Time, like Space, is only a bad habit, and that we are only sure of knowing anything about *this or that time*, or about a number of *times*.

Only the out-and-out anthropomorphist can see any earthly use in the word Mind. What applies to Space and Time applies in every respect to Mind. We may know this or that about a *mind*, or *some minds*; but Mind, with the good old capital M, is only another way of saying Jehova.

We require proof to the effect that matter and force (or motion) can exist apart from each other before we are at liberty to speak of Matter, as such, and Force, as such. We might with just as much (or little) reason separate the dog from his bark, in our imagination—for we cannot do it in any other way—and say "That is Dog, and this is Bark."

So it is with Progress. Something may progress, viz., move forward, but there is no such thing as Progress. Yet we hear almost at every turn that we "must not oppose Progress." If somebody was to tell me that I must not impede the *progress* of a policeman, or a steam-roller, I should understand him; but when I am told I must not oppose Progress I wonder what it all means, and finish by visualising a sort of car of the Juggernaut or a Tank in action.

And what is Liberty? I know that at different times I am or am not *at liberty* to do what I would like to do. I must admit, however, that to me Liberty represents nothing more than an image of a fair-haired she-angel wearing a red nightcap.

So much for the specimen magic words chosen for brief examination. They represent but a few among a multitude. The space of the *Freethinker*, unlike that of our great thinkers and ecclesiastics and their satellites and dupes, is not of the "boundless" variety, but is of the common or garden variety, and is limited usually to about seventy-two corners. Therefore I will conclude. Before doing so I would like to say that I might at some future date, not yet decided upon, submit to the *Freethinker* a contribution entitled: "How the God-hallucination blighted the Tree of Knowledge, or How the Tower of Babel was set into our midst." But as the climatic conditions of Mexico will not allow me to make any promises excepting such as I have no intention of keeping, I recommend this task to the more regular contributors to the *Freethinker*. Possibly there may be someone who can do it better than even myself.

Let the Absolute-Eternal-God cancer be cut out of our system down to its last fibre, and then let the place it occupied be carefully cauterized.

My compliments and avowal to Mr. Hands, and to C. B. Warwick, whose "Unwelcome Fairies" is a by no means unimportant contribution to the War upon Magic Words; my regards as an old comrade, if I may take advantage of the present opportunity to that extent.

I am not alone in the hope that you have not discontinued your most interesting Scientific Column.

HENRY BERNARD.

La Paz, Baja, California, Mexico.

Sept. 28, 1924.

#### ARTHUR LYNCH'S "ETHICS."

SIR,—Permit me to acknowledge the admirable tone of Mr. Lynch's reply to my criticism. He frankly, albeit somewhat naively, confesses that that portion of the book is the weakest according to his own standard of reasoning; thus justifying the main ground of my criticism. There are whole chapters of Mr. Lynch's book that are an intellectual treat, but it is always more profitable to concentrate on the points of disagreement, and, fortunately, Mr. Lynch does not evince any signs of resentment at my adoption of this course.

Mr. Lynch offers to delete the word "mere," but this would hardly meet the case. It is not the adjective I object to so much as the noun. The order and the regularity in the universe are the *inevitable* result of all the factors at work; to speak, therefore, of chance



in connection with it is wholly unwarranted. Mr. Lynch, in his book, quotes with approval the dictum of Kirchoff: "There is only one science—mechanics." That is the essence of the Atheistic position. What I want Mr. Lynch to do it to justify, logically and scientifically, the introduction of his Deity. "Chance" being ruled out, on what compulsion are we bound to infer God?

Let us take a simple analogy. How is it that twice two always make four? Obviously because four is the resultant of twice two, and not because a designing intelligence decreed it. No one, not even so devout a soul as Mr. Lynch, ever thinks of praising God because it does not sometimes make four and a half. If that is so in this case, then why is it otherwise in the case of the universe? Only because the one is more complex than the other. "God" is once more appearing in his historic rôle—"the asylum of ignorance."

Bell's argument for Design is no different, essentially, to Paley's. They both aim at proving design from the fact of adaptation—and both are equally irrelevant. If the Design Argument had any relevancy it would only be valid in the case of a special creation, and the Hand is the result of innumerable modifications extending over thousands of generations. The Design Argument logically conducted leads to that philosophic *impasse*—a First Cause. Purpose is psychic; it implies mind, and mind is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Granted that mind adjusts means to ends, the fact of adaptation does not necessarily prove the presence of mind. Inorganic Nature's ends are the resultant of the opposing forces and energies blindly neutralising and wasting one another in reaching equilibrium. Organic Nature's ends are the result of a bloody struggle in which only a few tolerably well-adjusted specimens survive—the very antithesis of human selection where mind comes into play. *Mind adjusts means to ends by means of an economic expenditure of force and energy*, and this is true whether we are dealing with a mechanical invention or the League of Nations. Logically to prove Design you must know what was the original intention of the Designer and then compare it with the finished product. If Mr. Lynch saw a woman fall from a cliff he would only be witnessing a process (and that is all we witness in nature)—he would still, like the music-hall comedian, have to ask himself: Did she fall or was she pushed? and that the process does not reveal.

I asked Mr. Lynch if he regards the universe as eternal, and he says that I anticipated his answer, and in doing so revealed a bias. Well, this question admits of a negative or an affirmative answer, and as I anticipated *both answers* I am left wondering what my bias is! He further mistakes—as I thought he would—my attempt to make him face the logical results of his own arguments, for a repressed anthropomorphism. It is always difficult to get these gentlemen who dress up primitive animism in philosophic tailor-mades to recognize the identity of their offspring. I did not suggest that Mr. Lynch had any affinity with Unitarianism or Modernism, but I did suggest that his Belief in God and the immortality of the soul would entitle him to a place in their ranks; indeed they would hardly dub him an "advanced thinker," for some of them do not accept as much as he does. For instance, the Rev. S. A. McDowall says, "There is no necessary evidence of purpose in the systems themselves: Paley's Divine Watchmaker is no more than an unsupported hypothesis." Canon Streeter says, "A belief in *Mumbo Jumbo* we will scornfully repudiate; but call it *das Muminose*.....and make it respectable with a few ethical and rational reservations, and the most 'high-browed' of us will acknowledge its allurements."

I am not, therefore, forcing Mr. Lynch's meanings beyond what he expresses, but am merely endeavouring to show him whence his arguments lead. On p. 67 of his book Mr. Lynch describes how a certain type of scientist will argue very learnedly and lucidly, and then suddenly—"in a solemn tone, and without indicating even the nexus between his science and his conclusions, he gives forth the ideas which he has imbibed at the knees of his nurse." Mr. Lynch is himself a classic example of this all too-fashionable vice.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

## The Way of the World.

Art is not morality, and an artist is none the less interesting—indeed, he is often all the more interesting—for being a lump of "distorted egoism." We have no illusions about the rottenness of Rousseau's soul; but which of us would not rather spend a day with Rousseau than with Dr. Watts?—*Ernest Newman, "The Sunday Times."*

### "TESS" ON THE FILM.

He (the producer) had no right whatever to distort and defile a masterpiece. This he has most dreadfully done: he marcelled Tess's hair, put her to starve in a Dorset village in 1923 in a costume which would grace the Ritz, seduced her in an expensive bedroom instead of a simple wood, took her to "a London supper club," placed a limousine at her disposal in which to escape after the murder and cheered her last hours with a prayer-book stamped with a luminous cross.—*Iris Barry, "The Spectator."*

The tragedy of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," as unfolded by Mr. Hardy, was much too old-fashioned for those who filmed it.....So the story went into the factory at Hollywood to be made a thoroughly convincing article. As a tragedy in the life of a woman like Tess is inconceivable unless she frequents a night club, Hardy's character is shown in one as a typically modern woman on the road to ruin. The story has been conceived and presented as a kind of modern variation of an old melodrama called "The Girl Who Took the Wrong Turning"....."The President of the Immortals," says Hardy at the end of his story, "had finished his sport with 'Tess.'" The "sport" seems to have continued with crude gusto at Hollywood.—*Daily News.*

### GENERAL SAINT ANTHONY.

The *Universe* prints the following story:—

About 400 years ago the Portuguese Viceroy of Brazil, following the example of his King after a brilliant victory, placed a Brazilian regiment under the patronage of Saint Anthony, awarding the gentle and illustrious Franciscan Saint the honorary title of colonel. The salary attached to the rank was duly paid to the Little Sisters of the Poor. Brazil, however, has now a frugal Minister of War who, partly from prejudice and partly from motives of economy, thinks that the honorary colonelship should be abolished, with the salary. He therefore laid the matter recently before the Prime Minister, who, after much anxious thought, solved the problem by issuing this *communiqué*:—

Colonel Saint Anthony of Padua, of the — Regiment, having now completed three centuries of service, is now gazetted General and placed on the retired list.

—*Observer.*

### BRITISH CONSERVATISM.

Sir Archibald Geikie, in his recently published biography, tells us that when he visited Vienna in 1869, ten years after the publication of *The Origin of Species*,

it was a surprise to find what a hold Darwin's views, as expressed in his *Origin of Species* had gained in Austria. Again and again it was affirmed that the men of science in that country had gone much further in their acceptance of these views than was yet the case in the British Isles. One acquaintance, a physician of note in Vienna, remarked to me, "You are still discussing in England whether or not the theory of Darwin can be true. We have got a long way beyond that stage here. His theory is now our common starting-point." This was the case not only in the domain of science, but even in politics. It was remarked that three years ago, after the disastrous termination of the war with Prussia, when the Austrian Parliament assembled to deliberate on the reconsolidation of the empire, Professor Rokitansky, a distinguished member of the Upper Chamber, began a great speech with this sentence: "The question we have first to consider is whether Charles Darwin is right or no." A great empire lay in dire distress, and the form and method of its reconstruction were proposed to be decided after a consideration of the truth or error of the doctrine propounded by the English naturalist.

—*Sir A. Geikie, "A Long Life."*



## Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Under the title, "A few of my Opinions for what they are Worth," Mr. J. H. Van Biene delivered a most inspiring address to the North London Debating Society last Sunday. One only regretted that the audience had not been larger for the address ought to have been broadcast, and what a flutter it would have created amongst the orthodox dove cots! Next Sunday, Mr. Rex Roberts will address us, affirming that "In poetic achievement our Generation need fear comparison with None." North London Freethinkers met Mr. Roberts as a debater for the first time during our last session and have been looking forward since then to another taste of his quality. Will members and friends advertise the meetings as widely as possible?—SECRETARY.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—The American Tea last Saturday week was a complete success. Many useful articles were on sale, and the proceeds will almost pay our debts. A short sketch was given, entitled "Poor Pillicody," which was very well presented and equally well received. About fifteen members of the Secular School attended and gave us songs and Lancashire dialect recitations. There was also dancing. Everyone seemed to be pleased and the arrangements, in Mr. A. C. Rosetti's capable hands, went off without a hitch.

To-day (November 16) Mr. R. H. Rosetti visits Manchester and will speak in The Engineers' Hall at 3 and 6.30. In the afternoon he will deal with "If Jesus came to-day," and will speak with reference to Strikes, Unemployment, Housing, etc. The evening lecture is on "The Church and Medical Science." I hope I shall be able to report "House full."—HAROLD I. BAYFORD.

## The Salt of the Earth.

Women are the salt of the earth.

—The Lord Bishop of Oxford.

Ho, women!—Would you like to know the teaching Of "Christian Fathers" in their Gospel preaching? First stands old Paul, whom humour never saves From making bulls—and he proclaimed you slaves; For ever must you do your master's will, Make no objection, shut your mouth, be still. Paul was the champion bully of his breed, To hell condemned who with him disagreed. Of love he spake, but most unlovely showed 'Gainst who'd dare curb the great high horse he rode. And following him, each "early Father" tries To emphasize and illustrate his lies; Go thus against your sex, patristic teaching cries:— Saint Gregory the Great, with raucous rasp, Proclaims that "Woman has the poison of an asp"; Saint Bonaventure too, did cheerly sing: "She is a scorpion ever prompt to sting"; And Saint John Damascene did calmly tell That "Woman is the sentinel of hell"; While Chrysostom (sweet John the Saint) outburst: "Of all wild beasts 'tis woman is the worst!" These are but samples of the "Fathers'" thought Of womanhood, and what the Church has taught. But now, right reverend fathers in our God Would lay such words (like th' authors) 'neath the sod; With tact the women lead to kiss the rod. That "women are the salt of all the earth," Says Oxford's lordly bishop: What's that worth? Since when have ye, oh women, changed your nature? When did ye cease to be that baleful creature Soul-saving saints abhorred and cursed and hated, Because your gentle ways upon them grated? This truth I tell your priests would never note: Your nature's changed just since you've got the vote! You've something now that makes it worth your while For priests to flatter you, cajole and smile. But ah!—Beware these modern tempters' guile.

J. G. FINLAY.

## 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, Mr. Joseph H. Van Biene, "A Few of my Opinions—For what they are Worth." The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Debate—"That in Poetic Achievement our Generation need fear comparison with None." Opener, Mr. Rex Roberts.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "The Future of the Freethought Movement."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Mrs. How Martyn, B.Sc., "Everybody's Children."

## OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Constable, Hart, and Shaller.

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

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Robert Parker, "Nights with Ambrose."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Concert by "Arcadian" Orchestra and Local Artistes. (Silver Collection.)

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, All Saints', Manchester): Mr. R. H. Rosetti, 3, "If Jesus Came To-day"; 6.30, "The Church and Medical Science."

WESTON-SUPER-MARE (Palace Theatre, The Boulevard): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Making of Man"; 7, "Things Christians Ought to Know."

A REMINDER that there is a remnant of *THE EVERLASTING GEMS* to be had at 2s. a copy, post paid, from THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

DANIEL DWELLING in the lion's den is probably an early instance of housing shortage. One day a Government may ask us to inhabit the Zoo, but the present subject is tailoring. If you really knew you could get good clothes from good Freethinkers, supporting the good cause by advertising in this journal you would employ no other tailors. You can get this sure knowledge by asking us to send you the following:—*Gents' AA to H Book, Suits from 54s.; Gents' I to N Book, Suits from 99s.; Gents' Superb Overcoat Book, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Winsome Winter Book, Costumes from 60s., coats from 46s.* Tailors to thinkers—MACCONNELL & MADE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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