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Views and Opinions.

The Bible Up To Date.

Some years ago there was an attempt to bring out an issue of the Bible written in the language of everyday life. There was a great outcry at the time; it was said that it was a desecration of the sacred word; it was vulgarising the Bible, etc., and eventually the project was abandoned. Now there is another step in the same direction. But on this occasion the book is actually to be issued, and will be issued by the time these notes are in the hands of my readers. The author is a well-known Glasgow clergyman, Dr. Moffat, and his aim is to get the people to take an interest in the Bible, which he imagines may be done if it is written in the vernacular. Whether that will result I have my doubts. Of course, it may induce many to read the Bible over again, and even lead those to read it who have never read it before. But whether it will lead them to believe in the Bible anew, or even more fervently, which is what Dr. Moffat is aiming at, may be doubted. At any rate, there is certain to be a protest against it, and from the point of view of those who wish to retain an active religious faith they will, in my opinion, be justified. Putting the Bible in everyday language may make it more interesting, if for no other reason than that those who read it will see more clearly what it implies. But that is not quite the way to get the modern man to believe in it. The interest in a conjuring trick is not to know how it is done. If a conjuror were to do his tricks so that all could see the way in which they were done they would interest no one. And the same is true of religion. There must be an air of the unusual, the mysterious, the non-understandable, if it is to retain its hold on the people. Every Church has appreciated this in practice if not in theory. To make a religion clear and comprehensible is to rob it of its principal recommendation—certainly of its chief safeguard.

* * *

Gush About the Book.

Naturally enough the issue of a new translation of the Bible has led to the usual talk in the newspaper Press about the Bible being a great English classic, etc. They who write in this way know their audience, and without any adequate knowledge of the subject

feel they are quite safe in repeating expressions that have become as much a fashion as the "Yours obediently," which a Prime Minister affixes at the end of a letter to one of his constituents. Mr. Robert Blatchford, for example, feels terribly hurt that anyone should disturb the language of the revised version, and writes, for the benefit of a Sunday paper, if not for the edification of Sunday readers, that a calamity has overtaken him in this retranslation of the Bible, and presents us with the ready-made opinion that, "Our old English Bible is a storehouse of the purest English. It is the deep source from which all our greatest writers have drawn inspiration and guidance." Now a man to write thus must either be ignorant of the history of Bible translations and of the great English writers, or must be careless of what he says, or is just repeating ready-made interested opinions because he knows they will either not be challenged or that obliging editors will protect him against criticism which attacks the position of the Christian's fetish book. The Revised version appeared in 1611, and one would really like Mr. Blatchford to explain how the great Elizabethan writers, Raleigh, Sidney, Shakespeare, Bacon, Lodge, Nash, etc., to say nothing of the great theological writers, could have owed inspiration and guidance to a book which did not appear until their own work was about done? It is only in relation to the Bible that one can write such absolute nonsense with impunity. Moreover, if Mr. Blatchford will settle himself down to a study of the history of the English Bible, comparing it stage by stage with contemporary English, he would soon make the discovery that if by the English language one means a language that was written by the great writers or spoken by the people, then the Bible is not English at all. It is almost a special language which gradually grew up in connection with the various translations of the Bible, with the introduction of many foreign expressions, and as a consequence of this evolution Bible English departed more and more from the English language either as written or spoken. At a later date, after the appearance of the revised version, the struggle between the Puritans and the Established Church led to the deliberate copying of biblical expressions by certain Puritan writers, but to say that even then the great writers drew their inspiration and guidance from the Bible is sheer nonsense. If anyone will compare the language of the revised version with the preface to it, they will at once see the difference between the language of current literature and the special "lingo" of the Bible. Such talk as that of Blatchford's is just one of those things that gain currency because they minister to a prevailing superstition, and few are inclined to contradict it.

* * *

Letting in the Light.

But there is a very solid reason why we should like to see the Bible translated into colloquial language. People would then be better able to realize the nature of what they were reading. Let us take one of

Mr. Moffat's pieces of translation. The existing Bible has it :—

And they heard the Voice of the Lord God walking in the cool of the day.

Mr. Moffat's version is :—

In the cool of the day when they heard the sound of God the eternal walking in the park.

Thanks to the glamour of an archaic form of expression, and to custom, the original strikes the religious readers as something extremely solemn, and the notion of God coming down from heaven and walking about the garden looking for Adam never strikes them as infantile or even ridiculous. But God walking in the park at eventime, does suggest an elderly gentleman taking his constitutional before turning in for the night, and one would almost expect to see—if Mr. Moffat's version were illustrated—pictures of "Keep off the Grass" decorating his path. In the one case we have criticism lulled, in the other we have exhibited quite plainly the childish imaginings with which the Bible is filled. What we should do by this method would be to act as Oliver Wendol Holmes said we ought to do with regard to our leading expressions—depolarise them. In the course of time certain words gather round them associations that serve to blind us to their real meaning and their actual value. It is only when we take them apart from these associations that we properly appreciate their meaning. And it is quite certain that if all the present-day implications of biblical statements were appreciated by those who profess a belief in the Bible there would be very little Christianity left.

* * *

Looking to the Past.

Ideas, like organisms, must have a suitable environment if they are to exist. In the case of religion there is not much doubt as to the kind of environment that is required. The fundamental ideas of religion belong to the past. The belief that there is some place called heaven—popularly placed "above," that there exists someone who sits up there listening to human petitions, watching human actions, judging them and inflicting punishments or giving rewards, that disease may be cured by supernatural intervention, or that a parson may by blessing a tree—as was done the other day by the Bishop of London—ensure growth, or that by prayer we may get some alteration in the weather or in the growth of corn, all these ideas belong to a world that is scientifically as dead as the Dodo. And, as a consequence, if people are to retain these ideas in even a formal manner, they must for the time being be lifted out of the influence of the present and placed—so far as possible—in an environment that belongs to the past. That is why in all religious services there is retained a form of speech which belongs to the past, and ceremonies which take us away from the current of present-day influences. Let anyone try the experiment of repeating a prayer first in the customary language of prayer, with a host of "thees" and "thous" and "thines," and then repeat the same prayer in the language that one would use if one were addressing a fellow human being, and he will soon realise that while it sounds quite solemn in the one instance it sounds utterly ridiculous in the other. In the first instance a man drowns his critical faculty in archaic words, in the other he realizes the meaning and implications of the words as he uses them. There is the same principle involved in the creation of what is called a religious atmosphere in order to encourage devotion. It is the creation for the time being of an artificial environment, a keeping at bay of the influence of current life and thought in order to give animation to a set of obsolete and often ridiculous beliefs. That is why in all religions, all over the world there is a clinging to old forms, old

ceremonies, old forms of speech. It is an unconscious realization of the truth that religion is born in the past, it belongs to the past, and that the only way it can live is by a perpetuation of the past. Ingersoll's figure that the religious man stands with his back to the sun worshipping the night is no more than the presentation of a literal truth put in the guise of a poetic metaphor.

* * *

How to Judge the Past.

By all means let us have a translation of the Bible, and, if possible, of the whole of religion, in modern terms. Let us get into plain English the equivalents of what those who created religious ideas really meant. No Freethinker could ask for more. It is what the Freethinker is always doing, and suffers for doing. When the Freethinker puts the ideas of the Bible into current English he is charged with irreverence, and even blasphemy. How, for example, would the casting out of devils by Jesus be put if it were narrated in language so that people could really see what occurred? It would naturally be stated in some such way as the following :—

And there was brought before Jesus a man suffering from epilepsy. Jesus, not knowing the nature of the disease, but believing, with those around him, that such complaints were caused by demons entering the body, exhorted the devils to leave the man. And the fit having passed, those standing round, took the recovery as proof that the devils were expelled, and as evidence of the divine power of Jesus.

Now that would give the modern reader a perfectly honest account of what took place. It would enable him to visualise the scene and to understand what actually occurred. That is what the Freethinker desires. But if the Christian is to understand his Bible he must read it, not merely in the language of to-day, but in the light of the knowledge of to-day. We must interpret the past in what we know of the present. This is the method we adopt in every other direction, and there is no reason why it should not be done with regard to religion. Of course, to the Christian preacher it has the drawback that it would lead people to give up believing in Christianity, but that is something which they who intelligently desire the world's welfare can face without serious misgiving.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Olive Schreiner Self-revealed.

The Letters of Olive Schreiner: 1876-1920. T. Fisher Unwin. 21s.

THIS volume of upwards of four hundred pages contains perhaps the most marvellous collection of letters ever offered to the world, letters in which we find, as Mr. J. M. Bullock observes, "a woman's soul revealed." In his valuable Preface to the work, Mr. Cronwright Schreiner remarks that "though the *Life* is complete without the *Letters*, yet they may be regarded as a necessary complement to the *Life*. Largely, if not wholly, autobiographical, and often constituting a kind of intimate diary from day to day, they are essential to the understanding of her inner life." While that is perfectly true, I cannot get rid of the impression that the letters were never intended for publication. Olive Schreiner wished her numerous friends to destroy all her letters to them. Very few, evidently, complied with her request, for Mr. Cronwright Schreiner, when compiling this volume, had more than six thousand letters at his disposal, sent in to him by her bereaved friends. Still, I personally rejoice to see these amazing epistles, or mostly scraps of epistles, in print.

Nothing in the world would be easier than to find fault with many of the letters included in this book; but no one who really knew and loved Olive Schreiner would ever dream of doing such a thing. She was a woman apart, controlled by moods and passions which often contradicted one another. On a memorable occasion I said to Mr. G. K. Chesterton: "For the last twenty years I have enjoyed many happy hours in your company, though I often totally disagreed with you." "Oh," he replied, "that's nothing; I disagree with myself every day." It is well known that Olive Schreiner was theoretically a Socialist, and that to her there was very little difference between the Gospel Jesus and Keir Hardie. She simply loved Keir Hardie, and, writing to Mr. Pethick Lawrence, she said: "Did I tell you that dear Keir Hardie came to see us at De Aar? It was the most red-letter day in my life since you and your wife were at Hanover." But surely there is nothing inconsistent with that in the following extract:—

What will it benefit us to seize away the money from the rich? At the same moment that the greedy hands are seizing it, there will pass over with it the disease of which the rich are dying, the selfishness, the hardness of heart, the greed for material good. Human nature will assert itself under Socialism.

Her very friendship itself suffered severely from her ever changing moods. Her first and greatest friend in England was Mr. Havelock Ellis, himself famous as critic and writer. In her normal mood he was everything to her, "Comrade," "My own," "My baby," "My sweet other self," "Darling," without whom she could not live. In many letters she asks for his love and sympathy and heartily thanks him for being so fully hers. "Put your arms round me," she humbly prays. "Yes, I know you do and it helps me so. I feel I want someone to stroke my hair." "Oh, my darling," she exclaims, "I am getting worse and worse. The thought of you is all that helps me in this agony of loneliness." But an abnormal mood would arise and entirely alter the situation. In this mood she would say to him, "I don't know if I care for you much"; "I am not going to feel loving to anybody; one feels so loving and so loving, so loving that one can't do anything. Don't you feel loving either. I try to do all I can to make you not love me. I don't want anybody to love me; it only makes them miserable." But this mood passed, and the friendship between her and Ellis continued as close as ever to the end, even for thirty years after both of them were happily married.

In the correspondence between Olive Schreiner and Havelock Ellis some sound literary criticism occurs. Ellis had evidently expressed the view that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* is not art, to which she replied thus:

Wilhelm Meister is one of the most immortal, deathless productions of the greatest of the world's artists, the result of twenty years' labour, worth any six of Balzac's novels, great and glorious as Balzac is.

In another letter she says:—

I love Shelley, and there is another man I love in that same personal way, Heinrich Heine. I personify myself with him. I know how and why he wrote every line that he did write. There is more depth and passion in one of his sneers, more quivering tenderness veiled under it, than in the outcries of half the world. I feel that I owe a debt of personal gratitude to the girl who comforted him in his "mattress grave."

Here is another sample:—

I think *Diana of the Crossways* the most fascinating novel that has been published in England since *The Mill on the Floss*.

Olive Schreiner had a wonderfully accurate insight into character. Of this one instance will suffice. On several occasions she met Eleanor, Carl Marx's daughter. Then July 4, 1884, we come across the following: "Dr. Aveling and Miss Marx have just come to see me. She is now to be called Mrs. Aveling. I was glad to see her face. I love her. But she looks so miserable.....I am beginning to have such a horror of Dr. Aveling. To say I dislike him doesn't express it at all; I have a fear and a horror of him when I am near. Every time I see him this shrinking grows stronger." This is extraordinary, as she felt this dread of the man the first time she saw him. By instinct she perceived his true character as others got to know it by bitter experience.

A great peculiarity of these letters is the total absence of religion from them. All readers of the *Life* are aware that at the age of fourteen Olive Schreiner was a thorough-going Freethinker, and that when, later, she answered advertisements for a governess, she never omitted to mention her inability to teach religion because she had none herself. In her first letter to myself, written in 1892, and published in full in the *Life*, she said: "From the time I was fourteen, when I ceased to read the Bible or go to Church, Christianity has been almost non-existent for me." Her repudiation of the Christian Faith proved a terrific shock to her family and friends; but she never lacked the courage of her convictions. Her brother Theophilus and sister Ettie, who were exceptionally pious in a superficial, ignorant way, began to persecute her with the utmost cruelty. I knew them both very well. In Theo's eyes in 1885-6, I was a dangerous heresiarch, and he frequently visited me in my study in order to denounce my views and pray for my conversion. But he was an exceedingly good-hearted fellow, and I never resented his attempts to win me back to orthodoxy. He was not so tender, however, in his treatment of his unbelieving sister, as Olive herself tells us. Writing to Havelock Ellis on July 10, 1884, she said:—

I send you a letter, part of which will perhaps interest you to read. It has made me so happy. It is the first tenderish letter I have had from my brother Theo for so many years. He is twelve years older than I am, and when I was a child I used to worship and love him so. When I was ten and began to be a Freethinker, he drifted away from me. He hasn't cared for me since because Christianity makes his whole life.

Three days later she wrote to Ellis again as follows:—

I must have a long talk with you some day (perhaps in a letter) on your use of the word "God" and the old symbols generally. The use of them by people like you and me is never quite true. (That is what makes Hinton's writings so false.) We cannot always stop to define what we mean by "God," etc., so the best way is not to use the terms at all. I have taken care that the word "God" does not occur in this last book of mine, hateful damned name that it is.

James Hinton was a distinguished aural surgeon, who served as such for many years at Guy's Hospital. He was also a deep thinker on ethical and philosophical questions. Like many others he was by no means an orthodox believer, as his *Mystery of Pain* and *Philosophy and Religion* abundantly testify. Olive Schreiner objected to him on several grounds, but not so much on account of his views as chiefly on account of his method of expressing them. Further on in the letter last quoted, she said:—

Hinton is a great man; the world will be better for hearing what he has to say; you are doing good work in helping the world to hear it.....If you heard me defending Hinton to other people you

would say, I "must like him a little." I love Hinton because he had a great free-loving soul. I hate his clinging to the old symbols when he didn't cling to the things meant, and his fear of saying the things he meant in naked black and white.

Most of the letters in this book were addressed to Mr. Havelock Ellis and her husband, and most of them are exquisitely beautiful. She loved her husband with all her heart, and her numerous letters to him are brimful of never-dying affection. Her friendship was a boon of the highest order which I had the privilege of enjoying to the full for many years. To all her friends she is immortal, and the millions of people who read her works can never forget her. As General Smuts said, after she had been his wife's guest: "She is a national possession to all South Africa, and the more one knows her the more one reverences her." J. T. LLOYD.

Death the Deliverer.

Pale beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves she stands,
Who gathers all things mortal
In cold, immortal hands. —Swinburne.

PRIESTS, in all ages and in all countries, have ever sought advantage from the fact that man is mortal. They have taught men that death is the most dreadful evil. All the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the horrors, and they invariably tried to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

The advent of the Christian Religion served to deepen this terror. Never has death been the cause of such craven timidity as in the Christian world. To visionaries like Catherine of Siena, or Emanuel Swedenborg, it may have been different, but to the uncultured masses death has been, and is, the King of Terror, from whose approach they cower in an agony which Marcus Aurelius, Plato, and Socrates, would have scorned. These great Pagans invested death with dignity, but Christians fear death as children fear the dark.

In Bacon's famous essay on death all the instances he gives of its being borne with equanimity are taken from Pagan literature. For the Christian Religion added a new terror to death in the thought of being cut off in sin "unhouselled, unalded." *The Book of Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church has a prayer against sudden death, which Pagans regarded as best. This idea is strikingly illustrated in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where the prince refrains from killing his step-father whilst at prayer, because:—

To take him in the purging of his soul
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage.

is to send his father's murderer to heaven.

Christian priests have found it advantageous to invest death with all that is hideous and horrible. "Prepare for death, flee from the wrath to come," have been among their cries. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," shout the evangelists. By such appeals to fear and imagination it has made a terror of that which should be accepted with serenity. The clergy know their sorry business. Old Doctor Samuel Johnson was not a fool, but he was tormented by the fear of death. The gentle William Cowper was driven mad by the horrors of the Christian Religion. Charles Spurgeon, the most popular preacher of the last generation, preached and wrote that the majority of the human race was destined to everlasting torture in full view of the Deity:—

In fire, exactly like that which we have on earth to-day, will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed,

every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament.

A very large number of Christians still believe these barbarous dogmas, inherited from the Ages of Truth and ignorance. To-day the Roman Catholic Church, the most extensive Church in Christendom, has not abated a single spark of its fiery damnation, and the Salvation Army actually works the same threat into its trade-mark—"Blood and Fire," and the tambourines of its devotees are full of money.

To the Freethinker, on the other hand, dissolution should have no terrors. Even Christians might ponder the wise words of Marcus Aurelius:—

What is it to die? If we view it by itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature, and it is a childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay! It is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe which subsists by change.

No less emphatic is Epictetus, who says proudly:—

Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not.

Modern science shows that the old-world Pagans were right. Despite clerical nonsense, most people die as unconsciously as they are born. Physicians notice that fear of death departs with the dying. The nearer the end, the less the apprehension. Dr. William Hunter, the famous anatomist, when dying, said: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and delightful it is to die." That gay, old man-of-the-world, Louis XIV. of France, said: "I thought that dying had been more difficult." That very gay cavalier, Charles the Second, on his death-bed, cheerfully apologised for being so long a-dying. Wise old Michel de Montaigne, having met with an accident which was thought to be fatal, said on restoration: "I had sincere pleasure in that thought that I was passing away." Walter Savage Landor, in extreme age, wrote:—

Death stands above me whispering low,
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

In the Highlands of Scotland people have an ancient proverb, "There is always peace before death." Christian priests pretend that the King of Terrors, as they term death, can only be encountered by aid of their faith. Yet Hindoos, Chinese, and Japanese, have as great a contempt of life as the old Greeks and Romans. Under Asiatic skies death is regarded as no less benign than birth, and the shadowy figure with the scythe is not to be feared as an enemy. The huge populations in our large towns necessarily acquire their knowledge of Nature from newspapers, or from superficial and fleeting observation. For five months in every year Nature is represented in the towns by fog, rain, and snow, and the necessity for fires and artificial lighting. Dwellers in crowded streets have no chance of meditating on the rigid processes of natural law, and in this respect they are more ignorant than the people they regard as savages.

The clergy know this full well, and exploit this ignorance. According to these pastors and masters, death is an awful enemy. They heighten the effect by appealing to the fears of their hearers, and use the Devil and his fearful fireworks as a useful lever. The terror of such stories is largely owing to the gross ignorance which surrounds the subject of death. Men and women fear it, because they were taught to fear it as children. The fear of the night can be dissipated by a little light. Death would be no bugbear

if it were known better. And nobody is there to tell people, except a small number of devoted Free-thinkers, who are cursed by all the Churches of Christendom. The sermons of the clergy, filled with barbarous nonsense, and inflated with sentiment, deal with all things except realities. "The wages of sin is death," is their idea of wisdom, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the youngest curate of Little Peddlington; from leading Free Church pastors to the evangelists who shout their noisy message at street corners. Hence the Christian Churches are emptying of men. The "cure of souls," as it is called, is passing into the physician's hands with the cure of the body. For it is now admitted that a healthy body and a healthy mind go together.

Why should men fear death? It is only our nightly sleep prolonged, without an awakening. Shakespeare, the supreme genius of the world's literature, has told us that:—

Our little life is rounded with a sleep.

"Rounded with a sleep!" "These words created whole volumes in me," said Jean Paul Richter, acknowledging the power of the master-mind of Shakespeare. Is it not a superb tribute, remembering that so many of the highest minds have ever been fortified by the same thought. Freethought, indeed, everywhere destroys the terror of death. The Atheistic poet, Shelley, in the opening lines of his *Queen Mab*, sings of death and sleep being brothers. Walt Whitman, the most democratic of all poets, chants a hymn of welcome to death. The dead are made one with Nature, and death is presented as a friend, is lovely and soothing, and the body, weary with life, turns like a tired child, and nestles close in the bosom of the eternal mother, Nature. Our own George Meredith challenges the assertions of the entire clergy of Christendom with two little lines:—

Into the breast that gives the rose
Shall I with shuddering fall?

For thousands of years priests have chanted the old, sad, disheartening refrain of death as an enemy, but the Freethinker listens to far other and more inspiring strains. The idea of the contemplation of death as a deliverer, dis severed from the terrors of the imagination, is gaining adherents, and Freethought is once more justified by its teaching:—

Not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward, look, the land is bright.

MIMNERMUS.

Karl Marx.

KARL MARX comes down to our time enveloped in the clothing, or disguise, of a great Hegelian philosopher, and the reader beginning the study of his works is faced with the prospect of having to traverse the purgatory of German metaphysics before he can enjoy the Paradise of the Communist régime. Now Hegel is reported to have said that only one of his disciples had understood him, and, he added, "he misunderstood me."

I think the story untrue for that lively sparkle of common sense with its epigrammatic turn smacks rather of French genius than of German solidity, but it would be true even if uttered of Hegel's self. He never understood his own philosophy so far as to have a clear vision which he could lucidly interpret to others, and so it happens that two opposed political camps both claim him. Recently I examined again his scientific apparatus, and I was astonished to find how faulty it was, not only in the details

such as subsequent developments have rendered more evident to us, but in the conception of the matter and the manner of valid science.

Moreover his habit of amplification of his arguments by appeal to science is mere furniture; it is not the foundation which he lays in order to proceed to a development of his psychology and ethics. In this respect, at least, he resembles Bergson who, decorative artist that he is, offers us a delectable discourse on scientific generalities in order to cover up the meagre establishment of his frail, and really meaningless, philosophy.

This little explanation has been necessary because we get the impression from Karl Marx himself, and still more from his commentators, that he was steeped in Hegel's philosophy, and that in some extraordinary way such products as *Das Capital*, or again—to make a jump—recently Zinovieff's sensational but apocryphal letter, are but graphic emanations from the awful but fascinating precincts of "The Absolute."

Sheer bunkum! Just as Hegel wraps round his brain-sick mysticism the enveloping garment of science, so Marx appeals to Hegel, cites him, refers to him significantly though vaguely, but except for one or two fantastic ideas to be noticed later, Marx really derives nothing from him. In the latter part of the famous Communist manifesto, delivered to the International Communist Congress, held in London, in 1847, Marx ridicules the German habit of investing vulgar or unintelligible speculations with high-sounding philosophic terms, but his own mind was German in construction, and he did not escape the evil example which he so vigorously belaboured.

In the reading of Karl Marx, therefore, we must not attach too much importance to his philosophic foundations, no matter how pompously expressed. He has another German attribute, that of thoroughness, often pressed to sheer boredom; and then again we must be on guard to separate what is really vital in his exposition from what consists of elaborations and amplifications and examples. These have a certain psychological effect in impressing the reader by their bulk and weight, and there is a tendency, as we have seen in discussing Spencer, to consider a work exhaustive when it may really be padded with inessentials while deficient in a great philosophic principle of classification which alone can secure a comprehensive exposition.

So I think it will be found with all the works of political economists from Adam Smith onward, and certainly the "Capital" of Marx is no exception. Suppose then in the midst of this great mass of philosophy, exposition, accumulation of particulars, and finally of directions towards realization, we search for the germinal idea; then—coming to the point so as to save time—I think we find it less surely in the *Capital* than in the remarkable Communist Manifesto. There it appears as a fierce, terrible, implacable hatred of the Capitalist system; the picture is ever before his eyes of a proletariat, disinherited, expropriated, exploited, flogged by the iron conditions of our society into slavery, destitution, death; while the exploiter, the sleek, comfortable but cold-blooded, unsympathetic wielder of Capital grows richer. The great impulse of this manifesto is not derived from the figments of Hegel, it is not found even in the economic theories of the "surplus value," but in the sentimental side, the temperament of Karl Marx.

All this would become more graphic if I could relate his history in detail, but space not permitting I must endeavour to throw upon the screen some picture of the man, and however feeble may be this presentation I beg that the reader's imagination may come to my aid.

I am reminded of a story that I heard from a celebrated French mathematician who had been delegated to meet Sylvester, the great English exponent of hyper-determinants, at the arrival of a train in Paris.

"But how shall I know him?" he enquired.

"Walk along the platform," said his friend, "until you see God the Father!"

Sylvester, who like Marx, was a Jew, had cultivated an appearance that suggested at once the familiar pictured representations of the Deity. Years afterwards, in Moscow, this story was again and again recalled to my mind by the images, pictures, and carvings that one met everywhere of Karl Marx. It is notable that the Jews who have given us more than one religion have had the gift of suitably incarnating them. These images, however, represent the older Marx. At the time of the Communist Manifesto he was a little under thirty, and at that age he looked less Paradisaical than Olympian—a good strong figure, a large head nobly formed, well carved regular features, coal-black beard and hair, locks of hyacinth (*hyacinthi sunt nigri*), and a bold and dominating expression, such was Karl Marx. Those who remember Max Nordau may associate him with this type, but he looked benevolent and domestic; Marx, with his royal air, was a lion in the path.

The original name was Mordechai, and he was descended from a long line of rabbis, but his father had been compelled, on political motives, to adopt the Christian religion. Born on May 5, 1818, in a comfortable condition of life, Karl Marx was duly sent to the Universities of Jena and Bonn, where he studied jurisprudence and philology, and subsequently to Berlin, where it was the etiquette to talk Hegelism. The advanced ideas of the young man made an academic career impossible, and at the age of twenty-five he was the brave editor of a vanguard paper in the Rhenish provinces. The paper was suppressed, and Marx was hunted from one country to another until at length he found a long period of personal repose in London. The industrial system had reached a high development in England, and he studied it with interest; the British Museum was his great University; and in his meagre lodgings in Dean Street, struggling with domestic difficulties on a pittance derived from journalism, Karl Marx began to forge the weapons which, for good or bad, have already produced to their credit the most amazing revolution in the whole course of history.

Think now of that life of the burning experiences of this deeply thoughtful but vehement man, of this bold leonine spirit cooped up, tied down by a thousand vexatious restrictions, simmering always with resentment against the manifest injustice of society, feeling his own great and superior spirit starved and hampered by the invidious distinctions which favoured the petty souls of the privileged, and enabled sleek humbugs, cold-blooded, selfish men to climb to honours and to power, their success being rendered still more odious by that smug self-righteousness with which in this country we calmly appropriate heaven as well as this world to ourselves; then give the opportunity to discharge the load of thought, to pay out the fund of deep resentments, to defend the social faith, to allow the hope to soar, to behold the rising tide of passion—passion for justice mingled with passion for revenge—that could sweep away once and for all the putrid system of the oppressors, the hated structures of society; then pour that forth in a glowing molten mass, and you get the spirit of the Communist Manifesto.

The dim echoes of all the revolutions are there. We have the thoughts of the Encyclopædists, the rigid doctrines of the Robespierre type, the roaring rage of the Dantons, the ravaging spirit of the Marats,

the gluttony of the people's retribution. The revolution is in march in this document; the exhortation, the inspiration, the defence of the barricades; and in the final passages he seems to hurl the words, like fierce irresistible troops, against the bastilles of tyranny.

The manifesto had its effect many years afterwards, much too late for Marx to enjoy the triumph, but it is evident that he had in mind an immediate success. "A spectre is stalking through Europe," he cries, "the spectre of Communism. All the powers of ancient Europe have combined against this spectre in a holy war of persecution—the Pope and the Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police."

Metternich and Guizot! They suggest Tutenkamen. The French Revolutionists of 1830 and the English Reformers are referred to—those heroes as the Liberals call them, of our great peaceful revolution; to Marx they are but "detestible parvenus and nobodies."

He slates all the economists, even those who are, in a sense, his own friends or disciples; he cannot thole Proudhon, who uttered the phrase, "Property is robbery"; at another time later he is angry with Lassalle, he cries, "I am not a Marxist!" Marx was in fact of a dictatorial and intolerant cast of mind.

"The theoretical doctrines of the Communists are not formed upon ideas or truths invented or discovered by this or that world reformer. They are simply the expression of the actual conditions of a struggle existing between certain classes—of the historical movement going on under our eyes."

This phrase, even in its obscurity, characterises the philosophy of Marx. In this manifesto, though subsequently he recommended peaceful methods in England and America, Marx preaches force. "Communists disdain to conceal their views and their purposes. They openly declare that their ends can only be attained by the forcible destruction of all existing social order. Let the propertied classes tremble before a Communist revolution. The workmen have nothing to lose but their chains. Workmen of all countries, Unite!"

The last phrase I saw in Moscow reproduced in every European language, and flaming out from a thousand walls like a signal of battle. This manifesto has been extolled in many countries for its dynamic power, and Bertrand Russell declares it is "almost unsurpassed in literary merit."

With all due respect I desire here to enter a caveat. The manifesto contains flashes of biting satire, compendiums of laboured arguments, philosophical disquisitions, mordant attacks, flaming phrases, and, finally, a thrilling call; but it is not well composed. The ideas are the ideas of Marx, but the hand is, I think, mainly the hand of Engels. It is too short for a treatise, it is too long for a manifesto, it is filled with incongruous materials, theory, programme, and bulletin; it drags in parts, it limps, it loses itself here and there in Hegelian nonsense, it is confused and broken-backed. In saying this I have no intention of denying its great appeal, or, when it finds a free run, its rare rhetorical force, but we must not exaggerate its importance. One merit is that Marx, unlike some of our own great Labour leaders, meant what he said, and said what he meant.

Yet the manifesto had no great effect when it was delivered to the world; it required the revolution in action to render it in all its significance, and that revolution was produced by a thousand factors besides the propagandist activities of Karl Marx. In the next article we will examine his "Capital."

ARTHUR LYNCH.

Acid Drops.

Newspaper readers will be aware that the General who has set the Chinese army most firmly on the approved Western road of militarism is a Christian. It appears he stands no nonsense when dealing with the traditional Chinese bias in favour of kindly methods in even warfare. It is now stated that the five thousand Shensi troops that General Feng commands are all ex-bandits and their depredations in Tientsin are causing great disorder. Foreign guards are required to protect non-Chinese from molestation, and the native police have tendered their resignations as they are quite unable to maintain order in the face of this Christian army. What a fine revivalistic campaign General Feng might run with his five thousand ex-bandits! If he could bring them over here on tour he would sweep Gipsy Smith and his kind out of the road. It is astonishing what a liking the type of men commanded by General Feng have for Christianity.

"If you cannot laugh in God's house, I don't know where on earth you can," said the Bishop of St. Albans recently, when giving his reasons for calling a meeting in a parish church. No doubt many of the bishop's colleagues are often tempted to indulge their mirth as they assist in the solemn tomfoolery which takes place each week in the churches. But other folks, a little more intelligent, or more scrupulous, are more likely to be made sad by the thoughts of the pernicious influence that religion exerts.

Wireless enthusiasts at Belfast are up in arms against the closing of the Broadcasting Station on Sundays, and litigation is threatened to compel the directors to give Belfast licence-holders the same programmes as people in England and Scotland enjoy. It is stated that local killjoys are responsible for the ban. We wish the people of Belfast good luck in their attempt to smash this impudent attempt to impose a gloomy theology upon them willy-nilly. The calm assumption made by Christians that they have not merely a right but a duty to thrust their views concerning Sunday recreation upon their neighbours, makes one wonder whether these pious souls will ever learn good manners unless Freethinkers take the offensive against them. What annoyance broadcasting on the Sabbath can cause to the most holy of Christians it passes human comprehension to understand. But most assuredly the evangelical Christians and Salvation Army bands that compete, in some quarters of our great towns, with vendors of watercress and winkles on the Sabbath, are a public nuisance, and Freethinkers and others could not be charged with intolerance if they started a campaign to make such noisy meetings illegal on Sunday. Such a campaign might make Christians realize that their peculiar views and behaviour are as offensive to many people, as the desire for mild Sunday amusement by non-religious men and women is objectionable to them.

The Bishop of Bristol is a wise man. He has refused permission for a spiritual healing mission in his diocese, expressing the opinion that there is a real danger in such gatherings. If the results were disappointing there might be dangerous reactions. Probably the bishop realizes that the whole miserable business is fast disgusting decent people, even though they may be Christians. He regards medical skill, he says, in a sense as the successor of God's method of healing in ages gone by, and a very shrewd way for a churchman to regard it. Medical science fails from time to time, but, on the whole its results are certain and beneficial, and altogether untainted by quackery. Which is more than can be said for healing missions.

The Bishop of Southwark has adopted a similar line of argument. "I wish to protest," he said in his address at a recent Diocesan Conference, "against that line of

thought which refuses to see God in His healing power in the medical profession and in the great hospitals." A good example of the modern attitude of the Christian apologist, who claims everything good and useful that the human mind has discovered, as being in some mysterious way a divine revelation.

We should like to be the first paper to welcome Lord Dawson, in Nietzsche's language, as one our "first men," and when our public men think less of their little selves and more of mankind of which they are a part, they may begin to speak and induce us to listen, taking Lord Dawson as a model. Giving evidence on Birth Control at Sion College, he said that:—

Mere statements that it is immoral, is contrary to the teaching of Christianity, or is condemned by the Bible, will only bring disrepute on those who make them; and especially among the young, who matter most.

He had plain words also for the Roman Catholic Church, whose experts from monasteries and nunneries are themselves ruled out of court in these matters.

We believe it was Mr. Ezra Pound who pointed out the great number of advertisements for purgatives in religious papers. In a cabalistic or acrostic or mystic manner this may explain the development of faith healing.

What is called in boxing "mixing it" is now going on between the Bishop of Birmingham and the Bishop of London. Probably the scrap is as real as the political sham battles that take place between the Right Hon. So-and-so and Sir Who-is-it. Lloyd George, Galloper Smith, Ramsay Macdonald, the Tsar, the Higher Power, the idealism of Philip Snowden, the Russian Church, and Bolshevism, are all in a diatribe by the Rev. Dr. Hector Macpherson written to the *Daily Herald*. Covent Garden is a sight early in the morning, but it all means a cauliflower in a housewife's saucepan. And the lovely mix-up above means that the Bishop of Birmingham and the Bishop of London appear to be worrying each other. More power to their four elbows, and let us not forget what was left of the two Kilkenny cats.

What beacons of light and learning are our Bishops! How wonderfully do they dispense words of wisdom:—

Men become Bolsheviks not because they have read some revolutionary leaflet, but because they have experienced the horrors of bad housing, the sufferings of unemployment, and cramping restraints to self-expression imposed by unfair conditions of labour.

Why doesn't the Bishop of Southwark say what he means? A Bolshevik is one who does not think as I do. As Byron wrote, "The hackneyed and lavished title of Blasphemer—which, with Radical, Liberal, Jacobin, Reformer, etc., are the changes which the hirelings are daily ringing in the ears of those who will listen....." A little amulet to put in your pocket, dear Bishop: Forget what the Press has taught you to say, and kill bad ideas with better ones.

We admire Dr. Hector Macpherson, F.R.A.S., much more than the Dr. Hector Macpherson who tries to fit advanced theology into the present dispensations. Freethinkers, whose faculty of wonder has been considerably exercised in the contemplation of people with murder in their hearts over a bit of bread or a plaster saint, are not likely to lose that faculty in the contemplation of the external world in all its changing moods and phases. Writing of clouds, Dr. Macpherson states:—

There is something awe-inspiring in the idea of these great flying clouds, rushing away from our system into an unfathomable abyss. But as to their place or function in the scheme of things we are utterly ignorant.

This is somewhat of an attitude of sanity towards phenomena; it is only when a cocksure Bishop or an emotional

parson enters on the scene with a ready-made theological explanation that we begin to feel for a club. Well, Doctor, we will tell you what the clouds are; they are Juno's arms, they are Jove's cattle, they are the chariots of saints, they are the blinds that are pulled down by celestial servants, they are the umbrella maker's friends, they are a variation from blue, they are put there for artists to paint, to give a farmer joy or otherwise, to spoil a lady's hat, to give a violet a drink, or possibly they are only there to give the Gods a rest from looking at the activities of bipeds.

The Vicar of St. Matthew's, Southsea, has been going for Dr. Barnes, the new Bishop of Birmingham. He says that the appointment is an insult to the whole Church, and adds that "the application of physiology, mathematics and psychology to the doctrine of the real presence of the Son of God in the Sacrament turns a divine mystery into something merely ridiculous." We quite agree with the outraged vicar so far as the last statement is concerned. No one has the right to apply scientific principles to Christian doctrines if he wishes them to remain a "divine mystery." A thing understood is of no use to the Church. Where is the sense of applying chemistry to the miracle of the turning of water into wine, or physiology to the virgin birth, or common-sense to the resurrection of Lazarus? These things must be believed, not understood. And there is no merit in believing things that are sensible. The merit lies in believing a thing which common-sense tells us is sheer nonsense. And Christianity does not say that a man will be saved by understanding. He is saved by believing. And, evidently, the greater the nonsense he believes the more certain his salvation. We should say the Vicar of St. Matthew's will have an extra-sized harp allotted to him.

At the Oxford Diocesan Conference recently, the Rev. I. Parr, vicar of Bledlow, High Wycombe, told his fellow clerics some unpalatable home-truths. "There is an appalling amount of slavery and bondage of one kind and another in the country parishes," he said. "Those who should have been foremost in bringing about amelioration or freedom for one another are notorious in ever opposing all such measures. I say it is appalling, it is tragic, that Church people should be notorious in this way—notorious for their blindness and lack of zeal." The vicar is probably sincere in making this insinuation that Christianity stands for freedom and real progress. But he cannot be a keen or critical student of history, or he would know that from its inception to the present day the Christian religion has always opposed movements towards freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of speech and the Press, political freedom, and social freedom. Nor can it very well do anything else, since its whole spirit is a persecuting one, that issues from a blind, dogmatic belief in revealed truth, and a divinely ordained system of conduct. If the Rev. I. Parr earnestly desires to help on the cause of human freedom, and genuinely desires to see a saner human society come into being, he must drop the prefix to his name, and turn away from the Church that looks back regretfully to the Dark Ages when it was the mightiest engine of oppression that the world has ever known.

The Church has discovered that it has social responsibilities. Cynical Atheists and sceptics may be inclined to suggest that it is merely that the Christian priesthood is prepared to adopt any means that promises a little advertisement for their creed, and a bolstering up of their waning influence. Be the explanation what it may, the London churches are, it appears, to be put to a really useful purpose: they are to be converted into eating-houses! According to a Press report 10,000 boy clerks in the City of London are compelled to eat their mid-day meal in fine weather in the streets, and on wet days in underground warehouses and cellars. A suggestion that several churches of no architectural value might be saved from the demolition which threatens them, to

be converted into restaurants, has been put before the National Council of Social Service. In an interview, the Rev. P. B. Clayton, vicar of All Hallows' Church, E.C., said, "No desecration is involved in eating in church. The multifarious uses of the nave of St. Paul's should be sufficient to remove objection on the part of anybody to the use of consecrated buildings for consuming food. The sanctuary could be partitioned off."

If this quest for popularity continues we may find the churches used for a multitude of useful Secular purposes, much as they were in the pious days of old. John Finemore, in his *Social Life in England*, gives this little pen picture of old St. Paul's in the reign of Elizabeth:—

When the visitor had expressed his astonishment at the immense size of the great church, he found it was a market and a meeting-place as much as a church. Hawkers rambled up and down trying to sell their wares; other men loudly chattered and struck bargains, while the transepts served as a short cut from one side to the other of the churchyard. A constant stream of traffic thus flowed through the church—porters bearing loads, people hurrying through on their business, one man even pushing a handcart. At one corner of the church was a group of public letter-writers, each with his pen, ink-horn and sheets of paper, waiting for customers. At another, servants stood about, hoping someone would come to hire them. The great middle aisle served as a fashionable promenade, where gallants showed off their fine clothes.

Possibly our ancestors were frugal-minded folk, or else too poor to tolerate hundreds of buildings among the finest in the country, standing empty the greater part of the week, and never serving a really useful purpose. Certainly the proposal should commend itself to Mr. Chesterton as a turning back towards the pious Middle Ages.

One may always trust the Bishop of London to say something stupid. The other day he said that although he did not believe the evidence on which men like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Conan Doyle, and Marshall Hall, K.C., accepted a future life, yet they might claim these men as being on their side. But if the bishop does not accept the evidence he ought to believe they are wrong. To accept the verdict, and reject all the evidence brought forward to justify it, is exactly the kind of muddle-headed reasoning for which the Bishop of London established a reputation even in his younger days. He certainly does not improve as he grows older.

Application was made to the Middlesex County Council for permission to open cinemas on Sunday. This was opposed by the Rev. W. Sandbay on behalf of the Middlesex Sunday Committee; in other words, the Churches who run a rival show on that day, and do not want competition. On this Mr. Sandbay was refreshingly frank. "The Churches," he said, "do not want this competition," and he pleaded, "Give us a chance in our work." Poor Mr. Sandbay! He has a divine religion which nothing can destroy. He is backed by an Almighty God, who can, obviously, do as he pleases. He preaches a religion which, he tells us, mankind is hungering for, but he adds, we cannot stand competition. God Almighty cannot be expected to withstand a cinema; the power of the Lord Jesus cannot be expected to overcome the attractions of a film depicting the wonders of the wild and woolly west or the sentimental slobber of a "Mother's only boy" film. If you open the cinemas he thinks you will close the churches. Well, really, if we are so afraid of open competition, we fancy we would get rid of our principle and look out for something with more backbone in it. Anyway, Mr. Sandbay lets us see the kind of policy that made Christianity, and the kind of policy that can keep it alive. In the end the Council refused permission. We have no doubt that the members had been well looked after by the parsons before the matter came up for discussion. When it comes to back-stair work the ordinary parson can give a professional politician points.

Our Sustentation Fund.

WE have decided to fix December 7 as the closing date for the *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund. This will mean that the Fund will have been open two months, which will have given all who intend to subscribe time to do so. Many subscribers have urged us not to close the Fund in too great a hurry, but it is not a feature of the paper which we wish to perpetuate longer than is absolutely necessary. We take this opportunity of thanking all those who have already subscribed, and also to assure others who have written us that in their case we cheerfully take the will for the deed. And, if during the coming twelve months, a fair proportion of our readers would make it their business to secure only one or two new subscribers we might soon find ourselves in a position to be able to do without such appeals. And a Free-thought paper with a paying circulation would establish a record in the history of Free-thought journalism. It is worth fighting for.

Previously acknowledged: £330 12s. 9d. A. B., £1; H. Hurrell, £1; Miss A. M. Baker, £1; W. Napier, 5s.; J. Harvey, 5s.; J. M., 10s.; S. Clowes, 5s.; W. Clowes, 2s. 6d.; M. T. S., £1; S. H. Waite, £2 2s.; O. Friedman, £2; E. Oliver, £3 3s.; D. G. Sharp, 5s.; B. Lee, 2s.; J. Black, 10s.; J. Stirling, 5s.; Mrs. J. Stirling, 5s.; The Widow's Counterpart, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. M. A. Bogg, 2s. 6d. Total, £345 3s. 3d.

This Fund will close on December 7.

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.

- D. G. SHARP.—See this week's acknowledgments. Thanks.
- A. W. DAVEY.—Sorry to hear of illness of the family. Please don't bother about the other matter. We are quite content to take the will for the deed.
- V. J. HANDS.—Thanks for information. Have made a note of it for future guidance.
- H. B. LINNELL.—Of course a thing is not necessarily true because we say it. That is surely a piece of gratuitous information. But your own letter does appear to prove the hypnotising power of mere words over plain common-sense.
- H. SHARP.—Pleased to know that the member for North Croydon announced himself in favour of the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws and of religious teaching in State schools.
- T. MAY.—We do not know Mr. Constable, but note your report that he has been giving Free-thought addresses in Finsbury Park, and they were well received by those who listened. There are any number of Freethinkers in Clapton and Hackney if they could be brought together to do definite Free-thought work. The abstention of these makes it harder for those who are carrying on, and to that extent they are helping the "enemy." They do not always realize this.

R. J. STEVENS.—Thanks for verses, but they are rather too late to be of service. Such things must be topical or they fall flat.

A. J. LEAKIE.—Glad you enjoyed the meetings at Weston-super-Mare. We are very strongly of opinion that the Freethinkers of Bristol ought to get a move on and arrange for some meetings.

L. T.—Quite correct, but there is nothing to prevent anyone acquainting his executor with what he desires in the way of a funeral service.

MRS. C. SHEPHERD.—We note the initial in acknowledging your subscription should have been "C.," not "E." as printed.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 23) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Stratford. He will use the same title as the one for the Parkhurst Theatre—"Things Christians Ought to Know," although it will not be the same lecture. That would not be possible unless someone took a shorthand report of what was said and the lecturer memorised it afterwards. Stratford Town Hall is easily accessible by bus, tram and train from every part of London, and the usual full hall is expected.

Mr. Cohen had two capital meetings at Weston-super-Mare on Sunday last, and the success warrants other meetings being held during the winter. There is no doubt that the persistent propaganda there has had its effect, although there are probably fewer places in Britain that are more completely under the control of Church or Chapel. Still, the time and spirit makes its influence felt, there as elsewhere, and, to borrow a once famous political simile, the flowing tide is with us. Mr. Ford admirably occupied the chair on both occasions.

Three of our medical readers have written us with regard to our notes on Faith-healing, and our opinion that medical men should speak out plainly concerning these religious exploiters of ignorance and suffering. They have written to the Press, but in each case their letters were refused insertion. We publish below a letter that was declined by the *Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Chronicle*:—

SIR,—It is time that someone in a position to do so spoke frankly in the Press concerning the question of faith-healing, the sensational revival of which has of late engaged so much public attention. I have watched in vain for a contribution to the papers from some medical man whose name, unlike my own, would carry a well-recognized authority.

Only in default of this have I set out to lay before the people as briefly as possible some simple facts of common medical knowledge, which may remove from their minds all mystical and obscure conceptions regarding faith-healing.

Let us commence with the reflection that medical science recognizes two kinds of complaint—that which has its origin in the mind, and that having its origin in the body. The former type of complaint may result in an ailment of the body, and the latter in an ailment of the mind. An example of the former is paralysis due to shell-shock; of the latter, insanity due to chronic kidney disease.

These examples are extreme, and in each case the origin of the trouble is easily distinguished, and treatment readily directed to the cause; but in the multiplicity of cases approaching the mean we have every degree of distinctiveness regarding the relative influence of bodily and mental factors in causing the total discomfiture, or complaint. Consequently there is every degree of difficulty in deciding where to direct treatment, until the point is reached at which the only rational course is to treat both body and mind.

So much for diseases where body and mind interact in the production of the patient's trouble.

Now, setting aside treatment of the body, how do doctors treat the mind? By all forms of suggestion—words, actions, surroundings, all things which engender in the patient's mind ideas of recovery, and by psycho-analysis, which is beside the present discussion.

In treating the mind what is the first essential? To establish a firm belief on the part of the patient that treatment will be successful. It does not matter how you do this. Cure will be equally facilitated by all methods which result in equally strong belief.

Economy of space forbids me to elaborate the inferences which may legitimately be drawn from the foregoing statements, but in their simplest form the intelligent reader will discern them to be as follows:—

1. Faith-healing is evidently familiar to doctors, and its status in medical science is a natural and not a supernatural one.
2. Cases vary in their suitability for and accessibility to such treatment.
3. The results of treatment, even in cases judged to be suitable, would *a priori* be expected to be variable.
4. The results of treatment in cases indiscriminately chosen should be more variable still.

These inferences are substantiated *a posteriori* by the facts.

May I, in conclusion, make two observations? First, I have little or no criticism to offer regarding the use of religious faith, or any other kind of faith, for the relief of suffering humanity. My quarrel is only with one who claims for his cure a supernatural, a miraculous character, and thus elevates the eager hopes of the sufferers out of all proportion to the possibility of their being realized. Secondly, to attribute failure to the unworthiness of the Church is merely a reflection on the Church, and to attribute it to the spiritual imperfection of the sufferer is an insult to the crowds of afflicted people who daily hobble to Mr. Hickson's Mission, and daily hobble home. On the other hand, to attribute it to natural and inevitable conditions is a reflection on no one, is at least rational, and has the added virtue of being sincere.

This and other letters confirm what we have often said concerning the character of our newspaper Press. None are quicker to expose a fraud or a quack—when something is to be gained by the exposure. But fraud and quackery practised in the name of religion must be left severely alone—unless it is attempted by some poor devil who has not had the wit first of all to associate himself with some church or other.

There appears to be only one fault to be found with the discussions at the meetings of the North London Branch and that is the smallness of the audiences. To-day, we hope North Londoners will make a special rally to hear Miss Ettie Rout, whose excellent and outspoken articles published in the *Freethinker* in the early summer must be well remembered by all our readers. As there will be counter attractions in both East and South London, we hope the North will remain faithful to its own meeting place and try to bring friends along, especially those who are still unconverted to the idea of birth control.

The late Mr. Fred Wood was a very hard-working member of the Society, and a much liked member of the South London Branch. Sunday next is the anniversary of his birthday, and it is a pretty thought on the part of the Branch to hold a "Fred Wood Memorial Meeting." There will be several speakers, including Mr. Mummer Owen and Mr. F. Baker. Mr. Wood was not one to seek notice, but we are sure that if he were here he would be the first to appreciate such a mark of respect being paid to any old servant of the Society. We hope the meeting will be worthy of the occasion.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti lectured twice on Sunday last to good appreciative audiences in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester. Mr. Rosetti was in excellent form, and there was a good discussion at the close of the evening meeting.

We are asked to announce that the Finsbury Branch of the N.S.S. has started a reading and discussion class. Full particulars may be had of the Secretary, Mr. I. Mason, 23 Yonge Park, Finsbury. North London Freethinkers will please note.

Cause and Effect.

Can we foretell the effect of the tiniest pebble dislodged from a mountain side? It may modify the lot of humanity more notably than the publication of *Novum Organum*, or the discovery of electricity.—*Anatole France*.

It is customary to represent primitive man, and others who share his superstitious outlook on life, as lacking in a sense of causation. In truth this is not so. The sense of causation is there all right, what is lacking is the healthy discipline that results from continuous, and carefully checked experiment. No one will say that the old lady who thought we should never have fine weather until Mr. Bottomley was released was lacking in a sense of causation! So with the savage: deficient in what we know as *natural* causation, his lively imagination and terror of the unknown, yet causes him to postulate the most dire results ensuing from the neglect of some futile and ridiculous ritual.

Since I attained to years of discretion I have always marvelled at the hold that the belief in free-will has upon the educated intelligence. The facts of our daily experience are, one would think, sufficient to show how illusory the belief is; how fictitious the boasted freedom. When Polonius says of Hamlet: "His will is not his own, for he himself is subject to his birth," he is merely referring to the limitations a heir to the throne naturally has to endure; but it is true of us all in like degree.

Our "freedom" consists in the power to choose between a few strictly determined courses of action (and that, in this world, usually means choosing the least of a given number of evils) which we proceed to do under the influence of the strongest motive! And that is the extent of the freedom, the bestowal of which the theologians seem to think is the mightiest achievement of an omnipotent Omniscience.

In looking back over my past life I am always conscious of the vast part played therein by apparently trivial and insignificant incidents. I have met men and women, casual acquaintances, who have changed entirely the tenor of my life. In the short time I have been upon this earth, my life has possibly been more adventurous than most, but I cannot doubt that it is the same with all of us in varying degree. But man is an incorrigible egotist, and in his most necessitous hour will boldly proclaim that he is captain of his soul and master of his fate.

A full realisation of the outcome of our individual acts would surely tend to paralyse human action. Just as it is impossible to perform a truly disinterested act, so—in a world such as this—it is difficult to perform an act the outcome of which shall be entirely beneficial. Thus: the abolition of slavery resulted in the death, from starvation, of thousands of slaves, who cursed the names of their liberators. Instances could be multiplied indefinitely. The realisation that the path to hell is paved with good intentions has oppressed many souls. Anatole France tells the story of a man who endeavoured to escape the possible horrors of human action by becoming a recluse and living in a state of tranquillity. But France shows him with remorseless logic that even in that condition he has not escaped as he thinks, adding that even death is no escape, since "to die is to accomplish an act of incalculably far-reaching potentialities."

In illustrating the far-reaching effect of human actions, Monsieur France says, "It was an act neither original nor deeply pondered.....to which Alexander or Napoleon owed their appearance in the world. Yet millions of human destinies were involved." I have met many men and women who seriously thought that the lot of humanity was too tragic for them to bring another life into the world to share its misery. It was useless to point out that if everyone thought alike the race would soon come to an end, since this might be regarded as a desirable consummation. There is, however, comfort in the thought that many might live to bless such a life. I have never thanked God that I was born, but I have met many who have inspired within me a deep thankfulness for their appearance in my life. But, again, the propagation of the species is not a matter that has passed under the conscious control of man to any appreciable extent. Here, too, fortune is God.

A short time ago I happened to make the acquaintance of a lady who told me she was an astrologer. The statement was made more or less challengingly. I could see she invited—nay, demanded—my opinion on this ancient science. I gave it in a few well-chosen words of quiet scorn. She became deadly serious; I could see I was in for it.

She began by asking me if I believed in determinism. I said I did. "You will also grant that certain planets do exercise a big influence on our terrestrial life?"

I asked her to explain. She then went on to explain that the sun, to begin with, was the source of our life, and she showed in a very entertaining way how not only our physical bodies but our mental characteristics differed according to geographical position, citing the two extremes of the Eskimo and the African native. She then pointed out the influence of the moon on the tides and indulged in some interesting speculations on the possible relation between this and certain natural functions peculiar to women and certain of the lower orders, including, I believe, the sea-cat. From this she went on to deal with her experiences in astrology and finished up by casting my horoscope—a fairly accurate summary of my character and disposition.

Now, I have all my life been interested in occultism. When yet a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the notorious medium, Mrs. Piper—the lady who was largely instrumental in converting Sir O. Lodge and Alfred Russell Wallace to the spirit cult—took me on her knee whilst her spirit guide prophesied that one day, if I lived long enough, I should be a man! I was weaned on the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. The passage of years has strengthened my scepticism, but made me wary.

Faced with this heavy frontal attack I knew that it was useless attempting to dig in; I should only

lose my heavy artillery in the mud. I accordingly decided on a flanking movement. I invoked my spirit guide—primitive man. I pointed out to the lady that her so-called science was merely primitive animism writ large, and that it was wholly discredited by modern science. I dealt with her fetish from an anthropological and psychological standpoint, showing her how these manias rise up and die away and how they are always rooted in the same psychological soil—credulity and ignorance. Before she could answer, I picked up my hat and fled. It was a beautiful "get out!"

I have since had time to reflect at greater length on the foregoing. I do not believe in fortune-telling, not because there is essentially anything impossible in it—the fact of everything being determined makes the future readable given the requisite knowledge of all the factors at work—but because it is inconceivable that anyone could master the complexity of events. As for astrology it is unthinkable that being born under a particular star seals for ever one's fate and fortune. Life is not so simple as all that. I, personally, know of twins who are as different temperamentally, and from the standpoint of material fortune, as it is possible to be. And that to me sounds the death knell of astrology.

'Tis wonderfully interesting this question of cause and effect. I know a lady who follows the ancient science of midwifery, who has a truly wonderful conception of causation. She believes you can avert any disaster, or even determine the sex of a human embryo, by touching wood at the psychological moment. In fact I myself am at this very moment suffering abominably from toothache because my wife—but that is another story!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Chats With Children.

"IN THE DUMPS."

It amuses me when I hear that religion *consoles* people. Anything less consoling I cannot imagine. If religion is true of course we must put up with it, just as we should have to submit if a volcano destroyed London, or if the sea flooded half England. But in that case I doubt if sensible survivors would kneel down and praise the volcano, or sing songs to the sea, saying, "Thy Will Be Done."

If religion is true we owe all our ills to God, and yet we are supposed to find comfort in the worship of God. One member of the Trinity is even called the "Comforter," doubtless to show how very different he is from God the Father who is said to be "a consuming fire," and God the Son, who said "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell."

Honestly I don't pretend that life is a bed of roses, even without a God. I only claim that no belief in God can add to our cheerfulness or make the world seem better to live in.

One way to avoid "getting into the dumps," is to try and help other people to get *out* of the dumps. We cannot do this by telling God that we are all miserable sinners and that He, who created evil, is the only really good person.

It is no use religious people pretending that they too can smile. They set aside one day in the week when there must be no amusements of any kind. Actually the title "serious" is often used by pious people as another word for "religious." A priest may smile but he must not laugh, a Christian may "relax," but he must never be "frivolous." The "good" Church folk hate the word "pleasure."

I want to be practical. I know how easy it is to be "in the dumps." I would like to show you the way out if I could.

If a young Freethinker gets into the dumps sometimes, at any rate he has no love of dumpiness, he has no creed which encourages it, he is not bound to accept it as a wise God's eternal decree. He can fight against it without being afraid of hell. He can say he hates evil, without being accused of railing against God.

It seems to me a natural thing for the young to hate dumpiness, and to practise what I have heard them call "galumphishness," which seems to be a desire to avoid the "blues" all the time.

Most people agree that we ought to be cheerful. Only they often add silly words such as, "except of course when we can't help ourselves," or "one can't always be cheerful," or "circumstances alter cases."

Anybody would think we were begging cheerful people to be cheerful. That would be a waste of time. There is no need to comfort those who are happy. We need not tell people to smile when glad. We might as well beg the earth to look bright when the sun shines.

What we want to tell ourselves is to avoid being in the dumps, and to find a way out when bad luck drags us there.

We learnt during the war that a dump is a very horrid heap of things that goes off bang! A dump is meant to "put the wind up" our foes. A friend of mine who had to work on these dumps all through the war told me that lots of our men were killed by our own dumps "going off." After the war most of the dumps had to be blown up—they could not be sold!

Let us take a match and blow up our own dumps. It must be a bit of fun to destroy our dumps instead of letting them destroy us! Blow them up! Blow up (in one sense of the word) all who love to live in the dumps.

Sometimes cold water is better even than a match when we want to get rid of the dumps. It sounds heartless, but there is an awful waste of sympathy in the world. Cold water will make our friend get out of the dumps much more than all our kind words of sympathy.

Those who are in the dumps need help to get them out, not sympathy to keep them comfortably there. When your help is of real use to anybody you ought to give it. If help is no use, or if you cannot help, just cheer up and try to cheer up those in need.

If a tear or a clasp of the hand will help, give when you can, but you will most often find a smile and a brave word (or perhaps a good square meal) more welcome, useful, and lasting.

You can help nobody by getting depressed, low-spirited, in the dumps. It is easy to be dull. Any fool can find excuses for "tears, idle tears." I dare say there are reasons for running away from life's work, but the best men never run away. The best part of a man is his will to take the sting out of fate. We can face real ills best if we make up our minds not to get in the dumps over things which do not matter.

Suppose, instead of finding good reasons for being in the dumps we make up our minds that there are better reasons for hating the dumps. Let us act as if even pain (our own pain) will end some day; let us try to find cures instead of finding tears for everybody's pain. Loss of a friend, even a dear friend, is too real for us to add to the sting by mere gloom. "Good spirits" need to use their wings often before they will help us to bear the burden of grief,

for the only good spirits are our own courage, and what is called a brave face.

I do not ask you to lie, even to yourself. You will know quite well when a bolt falls strong enough to kill you—if not, it won't matter much to you. Bad luck may clip your wings and then nobody can blame you for not being able to fly. There is such a thing as a tragedy. But it is not of these I write. We only make real sadness cheap, and drag down noble regrets when we weep over the small ills of our life.

If we do wrong we must not waste time in vain sorrow over it. Forget it and don't do it again, or bear it in mind as only leading us into the dumps.

bear it in mind as something that once led us into the dumps.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Spiritualism and Conjuring.

II.

(Concluded from page 726.)

HOUDINI deals with many of the most famous mediums—particularly with their exposures. The famous Fox Sisters and their confession are fully treated and we are also told how D. D. Home, the most famous perhaps of all mediums and one who was "never caught or exposed," was caught and exposed. For instance, Browning, who certainly did not like Home or the way in which Mrs. Browning was turning spiritualist, caught hold of a face that Home was materialising, "and discovered it to be *the bare foot* of Mr. Home." Stuart Cumberland is quoted for one of Home's experiences in Petrograd:—

He had dematerialised a splendid row of emeralds lent the "dear spirits" for the purpose of the test; but up to the time of his departure from the seance, the emeralds, for some occult reasons, had declined to materialise and be given back to the confiding owner. They were, of course, in the spirit land engaging the attention of the spooks, who seemed to have a pretty taste for valuable jewels. But the chief of the police had not that faith in spiritual probity generally accepted at the court, and before leaving the palace, Home was searched and—so the story came to me—the dematerialised emeralds were found materialising in his coat-tail pocket. They had been placed there by an evil spirit, of course.

Home was politely asked to leave Russia, but the story survives, and is one which we can bet Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would never repeat when making one of his marvellous eulogies of the departed mediumistic saint.

Houdini gives profuse details of his dealings with mediums and fully explains and exposes the most famous of them—such as Dr. Slade, Ann O'Delia Diss Debar, Mlle. Eva, Eusapia Palladino and many others. The spirit photographers also have a tough time, but really, as an old photographer myself, I have hardly any patience with this form of spiritualistic humbug. I remember, when at a packed meeting of the Magic Circle, some of the spotless photographers were completely exposed, one gentleman asked to be allowed to show his absolutely genuine spirit photos. He would show us the head, say, of his uncle and then one of himself with his uncle vaguely floating somewhere in the background. When I asked him to explain how it was that the light and shade on the original photo of the uncle was repeated in exactly the same manner on the "spirit" photograph, he flared up violently and asked me if I dared call him a liar? That proved the genuineness of spirit photography beyond a doubt! As a matter of fact, anyone has an infallible preventive in double exposure or changing dark slides if a Kodak or a similar roll-

film camera is used and a number of exposures—say, two or three—first made on some outside scene unknown to the medium and the film developed after the "spirit" exposures by an ordinary chemist in the usual way. The medium must not be allowed, of course, to touch the spool in any way. I can guarantee no spirit photographer would allow such a test, and if Sir A. Conan Doyle sees this article, I trust, if he has such implicit faith in his photographers, he will accept my challenge. There will be no such luck however.

Houdini, of course, is claimed by spiritualists to be a medium and Mr. Hewat Mackenzie, in his book, *Spirit Intercourse*, actually uses one of Houdini's well-known illusions as a proof of his power to dematerialise into nothing and rematerialise back again into his original form. It would be, of course, useless to point out to Mr. Mackenzie that Houdini's feat is purely a trick. He will always use the conjuror as an example of materialisation just as spiritualists persist—though he was hated by them during his lifetime—in claiming Mr. Maskelyne as a heaven-born medium. I should like to quote Houdini's fascinating book *ad lib*, but it should be read in its entirety. In conclusion, let me quote the following:—

From A. M. Wilson, M.D., Editor, *The Sphinx*.

MY DEAR HOUDINI,—For almost sixty-one years I have been witnessing and investigating Spiritualism and Spiritism.....Up to this time I have not met a medium, celebrated or obscure, that was not a gross fraud nor seen a manifestation that was not tricky and that could not be duplicated by any expert magician.....I repeat, that from my first seance in 1863 until this date of 1923 I have never met a medium that was not a fraud or seen a manifestation of any kind or character that was not fraudulent.

From Francis J. Martainka, maker and seller of magical apparatus in New York for over forty years:

DEAR MR. HOUDINI,—In answer to your question if I believe in Spiritualism or the possibility of the return to this earth after death, how can I believe in such a thing as Spiritualism, when for more than two score years as the prominent magical dealer and manufacturer of mysterious effects, I have supplied almost every known and thousands of unknown tricks or apparatus to the great majority of magicians.....In the forty years' experience I have never seen anything that could convince me that such a thing as Spiritualism existed.

It seems to me in the face of such testimony and the fact that even the simplest trick can deceive the most astute conjurors (as Houdini willingly concedes), that Spiritualism is nothing but an exploded fake, and it rests with believers to shatter the damning evidence of such a book as Houdini's if they wish to prove their case before the ordinary intelligent public.

H. CUTNER.

The Kingdom of the Unknown.

The first man who first guessed a personal cause to fill the gap in his infantile knowledge, took the first step to found the Gods, and he became the first Priest, claiming the authority of the God he had created; power and prestige were his and his successors, for through the Gods the Priests became the sole interpreters of the unknown, and for ages this province formed their kingdom, and the Priests through whom the God spoke defended right valiantly all the ways of approach; by the power of their God they mined the roads to knowledge and trenched the very avenues of thought, guarded and perverted even the way of experience and realities, and sank all who ventured on the sea of inquiry, and zealous were they to defend the kingdom—for a kingdom over-run would shake the stability of the

king, and with the monarch dethroned the courtiers would be debased and spoiled—and the people lauded the priests of the God whom they feared, and scorned those bolder among them who would explore the kingdom; yet little by little the borders of the unknown became the known, but the Priests and the God remained supreme for the inter-land was still theirs, for to this day no man knows all the kingdom, and maybe, the last man will never be fully able to fill the first man's guess, even though all roads to knowledge were his, and the defenders of the road long since overcome, he may still march, still explore, till he finds his steps falter at the impenetrable mystery of the unknowable—to which the old Priests in their defence had long ceased even to give a name, for they had learned at last that to give a name to the king imported no knowledge of the kingdom.

J. W. W.

Correspondence.

ARTHUR LYNCH'S "ETHICS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—First, *re temper and temperament*: I aim at a certain cheerfulness of spirit even amid afflictions; that to me is a veritable condition of living. If I write with asperity of bishops, deans, Oxford thinkers and London philosophers of the official stamp, politicians and tame poets, it is not because I think they have wrong notions but because they are fundamentally immoral; that is to say, they do not seek the truth or set their minds to any great ideal; but, held by falsehood, pomp, sham, ruled by strong material interests, they brazen out their misfeasance by high-sounding titles and smug hypocrisy. These people hold back the work of human enlightenment.

But how be angry with Mr. Vincent Hands, who has intelligence, wit, and—pardon, I had almost written "Purpose" here, and with a capital P!

And now to the arguments. I join issue with him on the "twice two makes four" basis.....No. His solution is merely formal. If he will read my *Psychology* he will find a conception more fundamental. That we can speak of "twice two makes four" implies a something of stability in the order of the Universe, and a correlation of our mental states with physical conditions. Further, he will there gain an insight into an aspect of the question of Relativity, and he will see how Einstein, and his professorial satellites, have mixed up three distinct questions, and on the psychological side contrived to talk bosanquetic nonsense. Einstein is there the spiritual descendant of Kant, who was the metaphysical son of the bedevilled witches and impotent saints of the Thousand Years of Night.

And now, not to labour this little discussion too much I come to Purpose. Here boldly this time I use a big P, for Mr. Vincent Hands bestows a big N on Nature, and he speaks, though I think not with scientific rigour in the description, of "Nature's ends." Given the true insight here we come to touch the hem of the garment of Purpose.

The more we penetrate into the meaning of phenomena the more we become impressed with a sense of order, and a discovery of certain harmonies; and this is so true that many of the great results of science have been obtained by imaginative leaps inspired by such conceptions.

Darwin himself sought for "mind" in nature, and Plato expressed an equivalent conception by saying "God geometrises." In our day, as may be seen in his letters to Stieltjes, Hermite, one of the most brilliant of mathematicians, preferred the term "discovery" to invention, even in the development of the calculus as an instrument of research.

Please do not tie me to Paley, or to Plato, or even to Darwin; my own writings are, at any rate, the most independent and the most objective of all in this domain.

The critical question is really: Is Nature conscious? Here, if we slightly modify the query, Is there consciousness in Nature? we can reply at once, Yes, for our human consciousness is a part of nature.

I have given reasons to believe that the mode of reasoning is, in its elements, similar in all animals, and that

there is no break of continuity or essential difference in processes between instinct and reason. Our consciousness is correlative to physical conditions. Now if we ask, are there other physical conditions correlative to other, even higher, forms of consciousness, who shall answer dogmatically? I do not say, "Yes"; I do not say "No"; for the moment I am content to be styled agnostic. I do not desire to avail myself of a popular fashion of thought, nor am I solicitous of avoiding any kind of agreement with it; I simply ask: How in nature does the matter stand? That is the spirit of the Aletheian system.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

"NATURE AND MIND."

SIR,—It behoves one to walk warily when criticising others. In his letter, "Arthur Lynch's 'Ethics,'" Mr. Vincent Hands appears to have fallen into the very metaphysical bog from which he would warn others. He contrasts the "ends" of inorganic and organic Nature with those of human beings, as though the latter were not within the category of the organic. To talk of the "ends" of "Nature" savours of a dual inconsistency in that it personifies and limits what really are eternal cosmic forces. How can there be "ends" in an endless cause-effect chain—in a boundless and eternal matter-energy flux? How again can there be—as he states—"waste" in the universe? The fall of a leaf disturbs a distant star. Surely Mr. Hands is not no anthropocentric as to claim that a light or heat wave is wasted unless it effects changes in a sentient being. Finally, is he not making of "mind" a material entity when he states that it "adjusts means to ends"? I submit it is the protoplasm, here of amœba or fish, there of frog or bird, and there again of ape or man, that effects the adjustment of means to ends conducive to the survival of these organisms, and it is the *processes* and *states* obtaining in their protoplasm during, or in relation to, such adjustments that constitutes what is called "mind."

JAVALI.

BIRTH CONTROL.

SIR,—Mr. Pell began this discussion by affirming that even before the Bradlaugh-Besant trial the upper classes were less prolific than the lower. His figures seemed to me absurd, but I was not in a position to answer them at the time. I have now, however, looked into the matter, and the proof is pretty clear that before that date the upper classes were at least as prolific as the others. In his *Vital Statistics*, William Farr, formerly Superintendent of the Statistical Department of the Registrar-General's Office, estimates that in 1874 the average number of births to a marriage was 4.57 (page 97.) As I pointed out some weeks ago, the average number of living children of peers who had been married twenty years was in 1878, according to *Debrett*, 4.7. Of course, in a few cases this included second families, but on the other hand it omitted all the children who had died within the twenty years, who are unfortunately not mentioned in *Debrett*. The second factor easily offsets the first, so that in 1878 the average number of children to a marriage in the peerage was certainly not less than 4.7, as against 4.57 in the community as a whole. Immediately after the Bradlaugh-Besant trial the birth-rate of the upper classes began to fall; then came the aristocracy of labour; then the better paid unskilled labourers; while even now the birth-rate has not fallen appreciably among the casual labourers.

It is therefore evident that in or soon after 1877 a difference arose between the upper and lower classes which was before then entirely unknown in England. Birth controllers say it was due to the Bradlaugh-Besant trial, the Truclove trials, and the immense agitation in the country which resulted. Until some other perfectly clear and intelligible explanation is given, they will continue to accept that explanation.

R. B. KERR.

Perfectly normal bodies and sane minds never dream nor possess spectres. Dreams and visions are symptoms of disturbed bodily functions and abnormal cerebration. From the voiceless slumber of the unnumbered dead there comes not a word.—Dr. C. E. West.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (174 Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Debate—"Has Man a Soul?" Mr. V. Harris v. Rev. Hugh Parry. 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, Miss Ettie Rout, "Freethought on Sex Problems."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, "Frederick Wood—Memorial Evening."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Arthur Linecar, "A French Play."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "What is Wrong with the Schools?"

STRATFORD (Town Hall): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Things Christians Ought to Know."

OUTDOOR.

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

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. Joseph McCabe, 11.30 in the Saloon, City Hall, "Recent Explorers after God"; 6.30 in the Grand City Hall, "Moorish Splendours in Spain" (Lantern Illustrations). Questions and discussion invited. (Silver Collection.)

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