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## Views and Opinions.

### Our Superstitions.

The case of witchcraft reported from East Devon the other day, in which a man was summoned for assaulting an old woman whom he thought had bewitched his pigs, is not so uncommon as would appear at first sight. As a matter of fact in both Devon and Cornwall the belief in some form of witchcraft is fairly common, although, as one would expect, it is not obtrusive. And in other parts of the country there are to be found many believers in the power of people to work spells, or to cause ill-fortune to others. Among the European peasantry it is quite common, and together it stands as proof that in spite of all that has been done superstition is far from a spent force. From a point of view a little wider the belief in witchcraft is only a variant of forms of belief in good and ill-luck, and of charms in general. And this, as I have often pointed out, is a belief not confined to uneducated people. I had almost said to ignorant people, but ignorant and uneducated are not quite synonymous terms. A man may be very ignorant and yet have gone through a fairly complete course of education. But when one notes the belief in lucky days, or the faith in charms of one kind or another common in the so-called upper circles of society, it is quite clear that it will not do to make such beliefs characteristic of uneducated people only. In this connection the belief in witchcraft is only one form of a very widespread superstition, and any enquiry as to why this special belief lingers must be taken in connection with an enquiry as to the prevalence of superstition in general. It is the perpetuation of the general frame of mind that is important. Special forms of it are of subordinate interest only.

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### Why Did Witchcraft Decline?

Mr. Robert Lynd, writing in the *Daily News*, asks what is the cause of the decline of the belief in witchcraft? and draws the curious conclusion that it did so because people were outraged by the cruelty of the punishments inflicted upon witches. He cites the fact that more than 100,000 were put to death during a comparatively short period, and says that it became clear to people that however monstrously the witches behaved the witch finders behaved more monstrously still. That is a quite lame conclusion, and does not at all fit the facts. In the first place it would have

taken some very brutal punishments to have disgusted a Christian population in the seventeenth century, particularly when it was a matter of religion, in which cases men were able to be much more brutal with a keener sense of self-righteousness than ever they were able to be in mere secular matters. Men who were normally kindly by nature, and who did shrink from torture when it was a secular offence, were to be found applying it without the slightest compunction when the "crime"—to quote a recent Lord Chief Justice—was one of blasphemy or heresy. It is indeed one of the qualities of Christianity that a brutal nature can satisfy its tendency with the feeling that it is promoting the higher and the religious life. To be brutal, slanderous, vindictive as man to man, is sometimes difficult, but to be all these things in the name of religion and of religious morality is quite easy and comforting. Mr. Lynd is on stronger ground when he says that the belief in witchcraft did not die out because it was *proved* to be false. Naturally. As it was never *proved* to be true in order to be held as such, it did not need to be *proved* untrue to be rejected. But this is true of many articles of religious belief and not merely of witchcraft alone, although it would not do to say this in the columns of the pious *Daily News*.

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### A Darkened Counsel.

Oh, these newspaper men! How they mislead in the supposed art of enlightening! It is quite correct to say that many eminent men in the seventeenth century believed in witchcraft, but that leaves unsaid the much more important truth that these men based their conviction upon the Christian Bible and upon the unbroken testimony of every Christian Church. It was the Bible which declared, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." It was the New Testament Jesus who confirmed the belief that men and women could hold intercourse with devils, it was the Christian Church, orthodox and reformed alike, which taught the reality of witchcraft, appointed officers for its detection, and laid down elaborate rules for its extermination. No one can dispute these statements, but to make them in the columns of a newspaper which caters for a Christian public would never be permitted. You may attack witchcraft because few believe in it, and the Christian Church has been forced to cease teaching it. But you must not say that this deadly superstition was taught plainly by the Bible and by Jesus Christ, and that the influence of the Christian Church kept it alive, because there is still a professed belief in the Bible and Jesus Christ, and the Christian Church is still with us. The one important truth, namely, that it was due to the atmosphere created and perpetuated by the Christian Church, that the belief in witchcraft flourished, and that these 100,000 met their deaths is not uttered. That might have reflected upon the Christian Church itself, and while a current event lends itself to newspaper writing at so much per 1,000 words, the truth about Christianity would consign that writing to the W.P.B.

### How the Church Helped.

It is quite plain that the Christian Church could not denounce witchcraft as an idle belief, while it was itself committed to substantially the same teaching. Intercourse with supernatural agencies, either of God or the devil, was fundamental to its position. Nor did Christians ever question this. What they did was to discriminate intercourse with God from that with the Devil. And as the Church all the time took occasion to visit with the severest penalties anyone who was daring enough to question the fundamental belief, belief in Christianity itself had to be weakened before the subsidiary belief in witchcraft could be questioned. It was not, therefore, as Mr. Lynd fatuously assumes the severity of the punishments meted out to witches that destroyed belief in witchcraft—these were not more severe than those inflicted on offenders against other regulations—but because the development of thought was making it impossible for sensible men and women to retain belief in Christianity in the form in which it had hitherto been presented. Copernican astronomy, Galilean physics, the voyages of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the growth of chemistry, the growing perception of the principle of universal causation, were destroying the conception of the world on which Christianity rested, and out of which it grew. The belief in the supernatural was weakening, the belief in natural science was growing. A frame of mind was coming into existence which made Christian teachings read like so many fairy tales. It was the growth of Freethinking which killed the superstition of witchcraft; it was Christianity which was responsible for the death of that 100,000, and for the demoralization of which it was an expression. But one must not whisper these things in a British newspaper. It sounds too much like the truth concerning religion, and that is the last thing that may be told.

\* \* \*

### The Truth About Witchcraft.

What was the truth concerning this very widespread belief in witchcraft, and against which the Church waged so fierce a warfare? It is not very easy to answer that question. In the first place we have to rely upon the statements of Christians, and no one who knows the chronic inability of Christian authorities to tell the truth of their opponents will rely wholly upon that source of information. Next we have the alleged confessions of the witches themselves, but it is impossible to say here how much of these are put in a way to suit Christians. But it does seem that the Church was fighting more than a mere superstition. It allowed hundreds of superstitions that were not specifically Christian to go on without any special efforts at their suppression. But in the case of witchcraft it appears to have been fighting not merely another superstition, but actually another religion. Some years ago, in my *Religion and Sex*, I ventured the opinion that the history of witchcraft—the real history—had yet to be written, that much of it would seem to be the practice of the older forms of faith that were proscribed by the Christian Church, and that the witch cult would most likely be found to have a basis in the sexual ceremonies of the pagan religions. Three years ago a very important study of *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* was published by Miss Murray, which fully bears out what I had earlier suggested. She brings forward a mass of evidence to prove that there was a properly organized cult, and that in the main, along with certain sex practices, it was a survival of one of the old fertility cults, vestiges of which we still have in the ceremonies and the practices of the Church itself. And, naturally, being a proscribed religion and

shut off from the influences that were at work toning down the sexual side of the Christian religion it assumed more extravagant forms than would otherwise have been the case. This theory will explain the savagery of the Church in its efforts to suppress it. It was a survivor from the past, and an active enemy of Christianity. And the Christian Church in its efforts to suppress paganism had, as we know, two plans of operation. The one was to weave them into the Christian creed when possible, the other to suppress them with the most savage ferocity when they could not be assimilated.

\* \* \*

### A Question of Psychology.

All this illustrates what I have said in reply to Mr. Lynd's foolish theory as to the cause of the decline in the belief in witchcraft. I do not know any instance in history in which brutality against anti-Christians has ever aroused the indignation of Christians. Nor do I know of many instances in which the Christian clergy gave up the belief in witchcraft so long as they could possibly cling to it. Years after the date given by Mr. Lynd, no less a person than John Wesley, not at all a brutal or coarse type of man, could be found declaring that to give up witchcraft was to give up the Bible. And if the leaders of Christianity took this position their followers were not likely to be more advanced. It was the sapping of the Christian religion generally, the undermining of the belief in the supernatural, that caused intelligent men and women to outgrow the belief in witches and devils and gods, just as in another direction Jesus the demonist has given way to Jesus the Socialist. It is now being realized with these particular beliefs, as with religious beliefs generally, it is no longer a question of weighing evidence to see whether they are true or not, it is entirely a question of understanding the mental and social conditions which make people believe them to be true. Scientifically there is no better ground to argue such things as the Virgin Birth, or incarnated gods, or resurrections from the dead, or the possession of a soul that is independent of the body, than there is to argue whether in the course of a few days Santa Claus will be descending thousands of chimneys to bring presents to expectant children. In the one case all we have to do it to understand the child's mind in order to understand the belief. In the other case we have to realize the social conditions in conjunction with the adult mind at one stage of its development to understand why these Christian beliefs arose and why they linger. The religious gospel is that man is saved by his belief. The scientist prefers the gospel of salvation by understanding.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Christianity and Peace.

(Concluded from p. 787.)

CYRIL, however, was orthodox, and that, as Milman puts it, "hallowed every act, even every crime," at that time, while Nestorius, now patriarch of Constantinople, was hopelessly heterodox, but quite as cruel a persecutor as his brother of Alexandria, on which account he got to be known as Nestorius the Incendiary. What he wanted to stamp out was the rapidly growing Mariolatry which had already gained a firm footing in his diocese. He preached against it, his contention being that to call the Virgin Mary the mother of God was an act of rank impiety and should not be tolerated. To him God the Creator and God the Redeemer were omnipotent, infinitely glorious and possessed transcendent attributes, and with grand enthusiasm he exclaimed: "And can this God have a mother?.....Like can but bear like; a human mother

can only bear a human being. God was not born—he dwelt in that which was born; the Divinity underwent not the slow process of growth and development during the nine months of pregnancy." This may impress us as a very sound argument, but the hearers were the dupes of passion and pure argument did not appeal to them. That to which the Virgin gave birth was not a part of a being, but the whole of a superhuman being known as the God-man. Such was the popular view in the fifth century, and its chief champion was Cyril of Alexandria. First of all he wrote kindly letters to Nestorius, who answered them in the same spirit. Unfortunately Cyril's letters were not sincere, which is proved by the fact that, however friendly and even brotherly the epistles pretended to be, the writer at the same time availed himself of every opportunity to denounce both Nestorius and his views in his usually violent language. Ultimately a General Council was called to meet at Ephesus in June, 431, which proved one of the most unsatisfactory of all Church Councils. In the first place it met and transacted its business prematurely; that is to say, before the arrival of Nestorius and the eastern Bishops who supported him. Foreseeing what was about to happen, Count Candidianus, speaking in the Emperor's name, "inhibited the meeting; he condescended to entreat that they would await the arrival of the Eastern Bishops, he declared that they were acting in defiance of the Imperial Rescript"; but Cyril would heed no appeal, but went on with the Council's task, which resulted in the glorification of Cyril and his set. Milman describes the result thus:—

One after another the bishops rose, and in language more or less vehement pronounced the tenets of Nestorius to be blasphemous, and uttered the stern anathema. All then joined in one tumultuous cry: "Anathema to him who does not anathematize Nestorius." The Church rang with the fatal and echoed word, "Anathema, anathema." The whole world unites in the excommunication: anathema on him who holds communion with Nestorius."

The Council was illegal, and its verdict unjust, and the spirit that animated it wholly inhuman. Five days later the Syrian Bishops arrived, and on hearing what had been done by Cyril and his henchmen, they acted as Dean Milman describes in the following lines:—

They were received with great honour by Count Cardidianus, by the other bishops not only with studied discourtesy, but with tumultuous and disorderly insult. Nestorius kept in judicious seclusion. These Prelates proceeded to instal themselves as a Council, under the sanction of the Imperial Commissary. Their first enquiry was whether the former Council had been conducted with canonical regularity, and the sentence passed after dispassionate investigation. Candidianus bore testimony to the indecent haste and precipitation of the decree. But instead of calmly protesting against these violent proceedings, and declaring them null and void, as wanting their own concurrent voice, this small synod of between forty and fifty bishops, rushed into the error which they had proscribed in others, with no calmer or longer enquiry, before they had shaken the dust off their feet, they condemned the doctrines of Cyril, as tainted with Arianism, Eunomianism, and Apollinarianism; pronounced the sentence of deposition against the most religious Cyril, and against Memnon of Ephesus; and recorded their solemn anathema against the Prelates of the adverse Council (*Latin Christianity*, vol. i., pp. 212, 213).

The Church never knew by experience the real meaning of the word peace, but was in never-ending contact with war and its horrid consequences. Scarcely a year passed without its falling over head and ears into acrimonious conflict with some false

doctrine or other; and in its estimation the easiest way to get rid of the heresy was by putting the heretic to death. But let us move forward from the fifth century to the twelfth. Peter Abelard, being a native of Brittany, was more than half a Welshman, in whom were centred the characteristics of that race. A born orator he acquired most of the learning of that age. Ultimately he taught theology and published theological books which were very widely read. A charge of heresy was frequently brought against him. Last of all he was summoned to appear before a Church Council at Sens on June 2, 1140. His chief accuser was the distinguished St. Bernard, whose saintship permitted him to become the greatest persecutor of his day. He gave a list of heresies and condemned them with the utmost severity. Instead of replying with convincing cogency which he could easily have done, Abelard simply said, "I appeal to Rome." The fact was, though Abelard may not have known it, that Pope Innocent II. and St. Bernard were most intimate friends, and the result of the appeal was that poor Abelard was sentenced to silence for the rest of his life, and all his disciples to excommunication.

Arnold of Brescia was one of Abelard's scholars and admirers, and he too became a heretic whom St. Bernard found special delight in tormenting. When he once made his escape from society and none of his friends knew where he was, the saint traced and discovered him. Eventually he was tried and found guilty, not of denying the doctrines of the Church, but of assailing the vast temporal power of the Church. He was sentenced to be burned to death at Rome and his ashes were cast into the river.

Such has been the history of the Church from the beginning until to-day. Protestantism has been fully as warlike as Catholicism. In the sixteenth century John Calvin was supreme at Geneva. Servetus was a medical man of great distinction. He was also deeply interested in theology, and wrote a book. He sent the MS. of it to Calvin, accompanied by a rashly written letter. On the same day Calvin wrote to Farel, saying, "If he come, and my influence can avail, I shall not suffer him to depart alive." At heart the great reformer was a cowardly murderer. Servetus was tried for heresy on October 26, 1553, and, of course, found guilty and sentenced to be burned alive. Speaking of the trial the Right Honourable John M. Robertson says:—

The trial at Geneva is a classic document in the records of the cruelties committed in honour of chimeras, and Calvin's part is sufficient proof that the Protestant could hold his own with the Catholic Inquisitor in the spirit of hate (*Short History of Freethought*, vol. i., pp. 449-50).

If we read the history of Protestantism in Scotland and England our eyes will be opened to the fact that it is not one whit more tolerant and kinder-hearted than Catholicism. And even to-day most Protestant sects are torn and tortured by internal envy, jealousy, and strife. We learn from the *Belfast News* of November 29 that in the Episcopal Church there are those who would send Modernists to the foreign missionary field. It was claimed that the founders of the C.M.S. "would never have allowed any representative of the Society to go out to the mission field who did not believe in the Bible from cover to cover, or in the Virgin Birth, or the Christ. The C.M.S. has sent Modernists abroad, and the consequence is the renaming of the C.M. Society into B. (Biblical) C.M.S. Thus we see that in 1924 the Church is not yet in a state of peaceful repose. Strife about doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and vestments still disturbs its equilibrium; and our fear is that the world cannot experience perfect peace until the Church has been abolished.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Men of the Nineties.

Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;  
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.  
—William Cory.

Middle-class and upper-class education may be snobbish, may be slipshod, but it has one supreme virtue in that it gives the recipient a sense of being of value and importance.—James Gregson.

A GENERATION ago Vigo Street, Regent Street, was a nest of singing birds, and some very fragrant memories of a famous literary period are recalled in Mr. Bernard Muddiman's *Men of the Nineties* (Henry Danielson). This group of authors, ranging from Max Beerbohm to Oscar Wilde, richly deserves commemoration, and this very readable account contains so much information that it may be regarded as a valuable postscript to English literature of the latter end of the nineteenth century. Of this band of brothers-in-art several names stand out head and shoulders above the others and compel attention.

Oscar Wilde rightly occupies much space in Mr. Muddiman's literary survey of the last decade of the nineteenth century, and the historian of the "naughty nineties" wisely abstains from hyper-criticism. He points out that Wilde's reputation was built in the earlier decade, and that the period before the *debacle* only put the finishing touches to a career which was already important enough. Yet it must be conceded that had not Wilde suffered as he did we should never have had *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and *De Profundis*, two works which are poles asunder from *The Importance of Being Earnest* and other lighter works. The haunting *Ballad* has all the uncanny charm of a poem by Francois Villon, and seems to come with an entirely unexpected pathos from a writer whose earlier language was a craft as much as an art, and related to wall-papers and carpets, and not to life itself with its burdens of sorrow and death. The great river of life had previously flowed quietly past the poet while he languidly watched its ripples, and repeated: "Experience, the name we give to our mistakes," or "Sleep, like all wholesome things, is a habit," or "Merely to look at the world will always be lovely." How little did he then realize that one day he would be struggling for life in that same river, and that art-jargon is a sorry substitute for human sympathy. Wilde was like poor, dying, Heinrich Heine, who dragged his paralyzed limbs to the Louvre to see once more the incomparable Venus de Milo, and, falling at her feet, heard her say that she could not lift him up because she had no arms.

After Wilde, John Davidson commands attention. His was perhaps the greatest genius among the others, and his poetry is always personal in form and feeling. Davidson won his separate place in the literature of our country by his *Fleet Street Eclogues* and his *Ballads and Songs*. The appearance of the latter volume raised a storm, for the frequenters of Exeter Hall could not endure his *Ballad of a Nun* and *Thirty Bob a Week*, especially the latter. Respectable folk were indeed startled. Admirers of the placid and comfortable verses of Lewis Morris were unaccustomed to the beauty or the freedom of Davidson's muse. It was a long way from the sugary *Epic of Hades*, which was irreverently called the Hades of an Epic, to John Davidson's challenging verses. For, unlike Morris, he blew everything to melody through the golden trumpet of his genius.

Ernest Dowson was another genius. His verses have an artistry and a pathos all their own. They sound like laments, in a low voice, by one who does not know he is overheard. It is this pathetic unconsciousness which gives him so much of his charm, so limited, so exquisite within those limits. In his fine poem, *Dregs*, the lines seem to have been written for

the epitaph of a grave on which the earth was then but freshly stamped down:—

The fire is out, and spent the warmth thereof  
(This is the end of every song man sings!)  
The golden wine is drunk, the dregs remain,  
Bitter as wormwood and as salt as pain;  
And health and hope have gone the way of love  
Into the drear oblivion of lost things.

Quite simply Dowson chants his refrain of "All is vanity," and sings of "the tears in human things." The weary ways of men he would fain forget. That is the utmost of his hope; and it is, after all:—

The exquisite one crown  
Which crowns one day with all its calm  
The passionate and the weak.

Withal, he was an artist to his finger-tips. Such a line as:—

Our viols cease, our wine is death, our roses fail.

in its contrast with:—

They are but come together for more loneliness,

shows that his sense of verbal melody was precise and subtle. When everything is forgotten about the writer except a bare legend that he lived unhappily and died young, there remain a few poems which will always be sure of a place in the anthologies of the future.

These men had one thing in common. They loved art for art's sake, and they did one unforgettable thing in rediscovering London for art. Symons wrote of Leicester Square; Dowson of Dockland; Davidson made poems of Fleet Street; Benyon sang of white Saint Martin's, and the golden gallery of St. Paul's; Crackanthorpe sketched his London vignettes; Street talked of the romance of Mayfair. They were real artists, and Yeats rendered them befitting praise in his fine lines:—

You had to face your ends when young—  
'Twas wine or women, or some curse—  
But never made a poorer song  
That you might have a heavier purse.  
Nor gave loud service to a cause  
That you might have a troop of friends;  
You kept the Muses' sterner laws  
And unrepenting faced your ends.

Matter of fact folks profess contempt for poets, but it must be conceded that the singers have vision. When lion-hearted Richard Carlile was fighting the good fight for Freedom, his deeds of daring were watched by Keats and Shelley, two great poets, both Freethinkers and Republicans, who recognized that he was a hero battling for the most precious possession of humanity. Nearly a hundred years later, George Foote, fighting bravely in the same good cause, was heartened by the encouragement of two great poets, George Meredith and John Davidson. It was well and happily done. For poets look beyond the tumult and the shoutings of the day, and are touched by what Shakespeare calls "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

MIMNERMUS.

Does the Church favour goodness, virtue, mercy, charity, righteousness, honesty, purity, benevolence, good habits, and character, music, art, poetry, science, and all that tends to health and happiness in life? All these good things will remain and be taught and fostered in our homes, schools, and lecture halls with greatly increased facility and energy, when religion with its grotesque myths and fables shall have vanished from the face of the earth.—Otto Wettstein.

Unless you accept the testimony of the Bible as conclusive, what evidence have you of God's existence and man's immortality?—Gladstone.

## Professor Sayce and the Bible.

### II.

(Continued from page 790.)

As we have remarked, Professor Sayce says very little indeed about his defence of the historical accuracy of the Bible. He complains:—

I myself had now (1898) come to be regarded as a representative of the so-called "Orthodox" party and a defender of Holy Writ. It was in vain that I protested against being classed as a theologian, and explained that I dealt with the Old Testament simply as an archæologist.

But notwithstanding this protest, he claims: "With hardly an exception the archæological discoveries of the last thirty-five years in the Nearer East have been dead against the conclusions of the self-appointed critic and on the side of ancient tradition."<sup>1</sup> Which is an astounding proposition to make, if by "ancient tradition" he means, and he evidently does, the traditions recorded in the first books of the Bible.

Take the account of the slavery of the Hebrews in Egypt and of their escape under the leadership of Moses, of the ten plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea. Professor Sayce, in his book, *The "Higher Criticism" and the Verdict of the Monuments*, published thirty years ago, declared emphatically that discoveries among the records of ancient Egypt confirmed the historical reality of the account given in the Book of Exodus of these events.

Thirty years ago such a statement was disputable, and it was disputed; but there was a great deal more to be said in its favour than there is to-day. As Canon Driver has observed, the indirect circumstantial evidence "is neither large enough nor minute enough to take the place of the direct historical corroboration which at present the inscriptions do not supply for these parts of the biblical narrative."<sup>2</sup>

Professor Sayce founded his historical argument mainly upon the discoveries by Naville of the "store city" of Pithom; and of the fellow city Raamses, discovered by Petrie, both of which are mentioned in the Bible. But Professor Peet, who is Professor of Egyptology in the University of Liverpool, and has made a minute and exhaustive study of the subject, in his book, *Egypt and the Old Testament*, has shown conclusively that the ruins excavated by Naville were neither those of a store city, nor of Pithom; and of Petrie's discovery of Raamses he declares that there is "not a particle of evidence for identifying this site with the Biblical Raamses," and adds that the reasoning of these two discoveries "is typical of the way in which the facts of archæology are twisted and distorted in the service, so-called of biblical study."<sup>3</sup>

Apologists for the Bible have always claimed that the Egyptian names found in the Bible, such as Potiphar, Potipherah, Asenath, etc., were good Egyptian names belonging to the time when the Israelites are said to have been in Egypt, but Professor Peet points out:—

it is only quite lately that the efforts of Egyptian philologists have really succeeded in dispelling this illusion, which, indeed, still lingers on in the minds of the uncritical. Potiphar and Potipherah are two spellings of a common Egyptian name which means "He whom Ra has given." Names of the type "He whom such and such a god has given" are unknown in Egypt before the twenty-first Dynasty, and do not become at all frequent before the twenty-second, roughly the ninth and eighth centuries, B.C.<sup>4</sup>

According to the dates printed in the margins of the Authorised Version of the Old Testament, the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. A. H. Sayce. *Reminiscences*, p.p. 303-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Authority and Archæology* (1899), p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> T. E. Peet. *Egypt and the Old Testament*, p.p. 83-4.

<sup>4</sup> T. E. Peet. *Egypt and the Old Testament*, p. 102.

Exodus took place 1491, B.C. Is not this a definite proof of what the Higher Critics whom Professor Sayce so vigorously opposes, have always contended, namely, that these stories were written many hundreds of years after the time they are supposed to have happened?

It is significant that Professor Sayce makes no mention of the Oppression and the Exodus, but rests his case upon the following revelations of archæological research:—

First came the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets and its revelation of the use of writing in the pre-Mosaic age, then that of the legal code of Khammurabi, the contemporary of Abraham, and finally that of the Aramaic papyri of Elephantinê. With hardly an exception the archæological discoveries of the last thirty-five years in the Nearer East have been dead against the conclusions of the self-appointed critic and on the side of ancient tradition. (p. 303.)

If that is the best evidence the Professor can produce—and it is not likely that he would choose the weakest and neglect the strongest—then his case is hopeless. Take the first argument, as to the use of writing before the time of Moses. At one time it was believed that the art of writing was comparatively modern; the belief was justifiable then because there was no evidence to the contrary, just as it was at one time justifiable to believe that the earth was flat before scientists discovered it was round. But no one to-day would think of arguing that the Bible could not have been written in the time of Moses because writing was not invented at that time. I am not aware that the argument has been used within the last fifty years; certainly not from the Secular platform. Charles Bradlaugh, in dealing with the origin of the Pentateuch in his *Freethinkers' Text-Book*, fifty years ago, did not use this argument. Anyone using such an argument now would be regarded as upon the same plane as the advocate of a flat earth. It is scarcely worth while reviving an argument that has been dead for the last sixty or seventy years, for the purpose of slaying it again.

Then there is the discovery of the code of Laws of Khammurabi, dating from two thousand three hundred years before Christ, a thousand years before the time of Moses. It is difficult to see where Professor Sayce finds support for his campaign against the Biblical critics in this ancient code. We should have thought that the less said about it the better from his point of view. For it shows that the Babylonians of that time were a highly civilized, law-abiding people, with a code of laws in many respects superior to the laws of Moses. Many scholars indeed declare that the Mosaic laws are indebted to the Code of Khammurabi for many of their regulations.

Lastly we come to the Aramaic papyri of Elephantinê. These papyri were found in 1904 among the ancient ruins of Elephantinê, which lie on an island in the Nile, opposite Assuan, and were published by Sachau in 1911. They are written in Aramaic and belonged to a community of Jewish soldiers who were stationed at Elephantinê during the fifth century B.C., when Egypt was under Persian rule. These are the oldest Jewish writings, with the exception of one inscription and a few potsherds, in existence. These Jewish soldiers were mercenaries, fighting under Persian officers, and formed part of the garrison of this frontier fortress.

Now the curious thing is that these Jews seem to be quite unaware of the Deuteronomic laws, or of the prohibition of idolatry, or of the centralizing religious reform of Josiah in 621 B.C., when all temples were to be abolished except the one at Jerusalem. As Professor Halliday observes:—

There is throughout no mention of the sons of Levi or the sons of Aaron. Nor is there any evidence that

they possessed, administered or were acquainted with the laws of Moses. The Sabbath is nowhere mentioned. There is one curious reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, a document in which their observance is ordered by the Persian king.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, says the same writer, they "are not schismatics; they are conscious of no guilt in the matter; they even appeal to the High Priest at Jerusalem for help to rebuild their temple," which had been destroyed by the Persian conqueror, Cambyses, when he destroyed the Egyptian temples. "But," he continues, "their innocence extends yet remarkably further," for they not only worshipped Jehovah, but five or six other gods besides! And this was more than a hundred years after the laws against such practices had been passed. Were these laws in existence at that time? Here, in the first piece of genuine contemporary evidence that turns up, these Jews know nothing of them.

Such is the evidence that Professor Sayce claims in support of his attack on the Higher Critics of the Bible. It is a singular fact that although the Professor is in opposition to the great majority of the scholars, even in his own church, in the matter of Bible criticism, we also find him in opposition to the great majority of scholars in regard to the credit and veracity of an ancient secular historian, namely, Herodotos, the Greek, who travelled all over the civilized world, four hundred years before Christ, recording what he saw and heard. While writing this article we read in the current number of the *Times Literary Supplement* (November 27) in a review of a new translation of Herodotos:—

It would seem that the attempt made by Professor Sayce, over thirty years ago now, to prove Herodotos a systematic liar, of the brand of Ctesias, is now universally discredited. The voice which comes to us, so human and conventional, from a distance of over twenty-three centuries, is the voice of an honest man.

Professor Sayce seems to have balanced his unbounded faith in the historical truth of the Bible with extreme scepticism as to the truth of the secular historian, Herodotos. In both cases in the face of the great majority of those best qualified to give an authoritative opinion.

It would seem that however great Professor Sayce may be as a decipherer of cuneiform, as a philologist and an authority upon ancient languages he is not gifted in historical criticism. W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

## The Virgin-Birth.

WHEN we enquire about an event alleged to have occurred in the remote past, it is necessary, first of all, to trace the earliest notices of the fact, and to discover their authors, in order to see whether the records be authentic or spurious, and whether they are referable to unknown sources, or to persons of well-established identity. Now the question before us is this, Was Jesus conceived and born in a natural way, or did he owe his origin to a miracle? A belief long prevalent in the Church affirms the latter, and as the onus of the proof lies with those who make the statement, let us examine the documents set forth by the believers of the miracle in support of their view.

1. *The New Testament Scriptures.*—Of the twenty-seven different works in this collection, only two give

an account of the alleged miracle, and it cannot be proved that any of the others contains even an allusion to the event. The works describing the miracle are the Gospels respectively attributed to Matthew and Luke. These, however, do not profess to offer any deposition made concerning the event by the persons directly connected with it; and, moreover, uncertainty prevails as to their authorship, the value of the material used in their composition, and the date of their appearance, the earliest limit assignable for the latter being from seventy to eighty years after the alleged miracle. As the Gospels, four in number, are the only works in the New Testament which relate anything about the life of Jesus, and as they are solely occupied with this matter, it might be contended that we should accept them as being the standard authorities set forth on the question by the compilers of the volume and not marvel at the absence of further or confirmatory information in the remaining parts of the compilation. But this plea could only be admitted if a scrutiny of the four Gospels showed that they corroborated one another in their principle facts, and presented a series of harmonious narratives. Precisely in the case of the miracle before us, however, this requisite is wanting, for although the two Gospels specified allege the event, two others, attributed respectively to Mark and John, say nothing whatever about it, although the former appeared before and the latter after, the two previous ones. This silence is especially remarkable in the case of John, who is said to have been the bosom friend of Jesus and to have taken the mother of Jesus under his roof upon the death of her son.

Again, according to all these four Gospels, neither Jesus, nor his kinsman and forerunner, John the Baptist, ever made the slightest allusion to the miracle alleged to have caused the birth of Jesus. Moreover we learn from the same sources that the townspeople of Nazareth, where Mary the mother of Jesus and Joseph her husband lived, referred to Jesus as the son of Joseph; and that Mary herself spoke to Jesus of Joseph as his father. Besides this, although the narrative of the birth as given in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, most distinctly specifies Bethlehem as the place where the event occurred, we never find anywhere else throughout the whole of the New Testament any allusion to Jesus having been born at Bethlehem, but upon the contrary, meet with various references to him as being of Nazareth, and he is never once reported to have refuted this designation, though he had the best reasons for so doing, as the success of his mission to the Jews depended upon their knowing that he had come from Bethlehem, the Messiah's destined birth-place. As far then as the New Testament goes, the narrative of the miraculous birth occurs only in two works, the credentials of which are very uncertain, and is opposed by facts alleged in the same works and in others composing the volume.

2. *The Fathers.*—Passing references to the miracle occur in three Epistles of dubious authenticity attributed to Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who perished as a martyr, December 20, 115. One of these allusions, however, is accompanied by statements obviously untrue and therefore injurious to the credibility of the principal fact alleged. Aristrides of Athens in his *Apology for the Christian Religion*, addressed to the Emperor Hadrian about 130, refers to the miracle in the briefest possible way, and without mentioning whence he derived his information.

Justin Martyr, who died 166-7, gives in two of his works fragmentary references which when pierced together afford a complete account of the miracle as described in the Gospels attributed to Matthew and Luke, this being the first occasion whereon the narrative is known to have been recorded in an indubitably

<sup>5</sup> W. R. Halliday. *Discovery*, June, 1924.

authentic work, and by a writer of indisputable identity. The works of Justin, however, show to a demonstration that he had a credulous and childish mind, and was absolutely unfitted for historical investigation of any sort.

3. *The Apocryphal Gospels*.—Of these there are four dealing specially with the birth and infancy of Jesus, namely, the Protevangel of James, the Évangél of the false Matthew, etc., the Évangél of the birth of Mary, and the History of Joseph the Carpenter. These range from the age of Justin Martyr to the middle of the fifth century. They aim at giving a full and precise account of the birth of Jesus as described in the two canonical Gospels, and they effect this by blending the two accounts together and supplying a number of fresh details likely to improve the narrative by making it appear more connected and self-consistent. As, however, the allegations thus worked into the original fabric of the story, have no basis in the earliest known tradition, and are marked by traces of obvious design, there is the best of reason for regarding them as fictions of a later date, whilst the undertone of piety and earnestness which distinguishes them, and the works containing them, has an unsettling effect upon the mind by suggesting doubts concerning the good faith of those who first related the narrative. C. CLAYTON DOVE.

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## Acid Drops.

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"These cases are not common, and I hope this one will be a warning not only to Barbour, but to everyone else, that the law of God is very serious. I do not want to send Barbour to jail to spoil his life." Mr. Justice Banson made these remarks when he bound over, at Leeds Assizes, William Arthur Barbour, the young man who has been referred to as "the bogus curate." He was called upon to answer a charge that "pretending to be in Holy Orders, he did solemnize matrimony according to the rites of the Church of England at Queensbury, Yorkshire. While acting as *locum tenens* for the vicar, the Rev. Ernest Dawe, Barbour performed two marriage ceremonies. We wonder whether he would have been let off so lightly had his profession been any other than that of the priesthood? The "law of God" may be "very serious," but all the same it appears that one may engage in fraudulent undertakings in the name of the Deity with impunity.

But with all due deference to him we beg to remind this judge that he is wrong in his law. The law of England does not enforce God's law of marriage, but only its own. You can marry anyone you like, and anyhow you like in the name of God or the devil, and the law will let you alone. It will only interfere when you pretend to be an officer of the law and empowered to perform marriages that it interferes. And that was its ground of interference in this case. For the purpose of performing marriages a Church of England parson is an officer of the law. That is all there is about it. It is a pity that some of our judges by dragging in a lot of nonsense of the kind used in this case help to make the law a "Hass."

Modern journalism is a curious profession, and readers of newspapers would probably be surprised if many writers for the press were to tell them quite candidly what they thought of their own writings. They would then discover, probably, that when a journalist sets out to write a description about such a ceremony as the opening of Parliament it is the readers who are reading themselves and not the writers who are expressing themselves. For all they say is practically cut and dried before they say it. The Queen must be "gracious," the Prince must be charming, the King must be dignified,

the military must "glitter," the ceremony in the Lords must be "impressive." It has all been said before, it will be said every time, because it is what the public expect to see in print. And it might all as well be written the night before. We should not be at all surprised to find that a deal of it is.

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Miss Rebecca West did the descriptive report for the *Daily News*, and, after taking us through the usual remarks about the "packed crimson of the Peers' robes," etc., she bursts forth, "One would have to be inhuman, to have been brought up in the savage zone.....not to be thrilled by the two gilded thrones, the lesser one at the side for the Prince." We advise Miss West to try again, and to try after a course of reading in comparative culture. Then she will find that it is only as one can keep well within the savage zone that one can be thrilled by these gilded thrones and the pantomimic dresses of Peers and Princes. It is because they refer us back to the barbaric or the savage that they make the appeal to crowd instincts. The procession of some barbaric chieftain with his warriors and trophies is quite as impressive; is, indeed, of precisely the same order of things, and appeals to the same class of feelings. Miss West is dead wrong. It is not those who are in the savage zone that fail to be impressed by nodding feathers, and flowing robes, and barbaric symbols but those who are well within the zone that yield to their fascination. Personally, we do not object to those who enjoy these barbaric displays having them, but we do object to being told that one is a savage because one is not impressed by a parade of dresses that are more suitable to a Drury Lane pantomime than to a genuinely civilized people.

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With a tinge of doubt as to whether we as Freethinkers ought to bother about such things we draw attention to the following extract from a book, *John, Viscount Morley*, an appreciation by Brigadier-General John H. Morgan:—

Mr. Gladstone was a man of the world. He knew that in politics you have to take men as you find them. I remember Lord Granville once said to me, "I have known five of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers, all of whom have committed adultery." "And he started guessing who they were."

When our newspapers with the volubility and sense of turkeys in a farmyard try to deliver a stab in the back to Atheism by coupling it with free love and anything else that they say is to be found in Russia, they might remember, or be reminded of the above story, when, according to paid or hired historians, everything in the garden was lovely.

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Who can charge the Church with being unmindful of its social duties? There is, as even clergymen are aware, acute unemployment in the country. And so at a meeting of church people at Coalville, the Bishop of Peterborough having pointed out that the diocese was far too large for proper administration, it was unanimously decided to support a scheme for dividing it, and creating a new see of Leicester. And so we shall have a few more "fat" jobs for our underpaid clergy.

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After writing a newspaper article once a week for a year H. G. Wells has confessed that he found "periodicity" a "tremendous hardship." "My admiration for the masters of journalism," he adds, "has grown to immense proportions." After this frank admission by a man of Wells' intellectual calibre, we may, perhaps, feel more charitably disposed towards the mediocre type of man who, attracted by the Church, finds himself compelled to collect books of sermons, and to preach one of these each week to the congregation. If "periodicity" troubles such a man as Wells, it must completely paralyse whatever small mental ability the average parson possesses.

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Not quite so straight as a corkscrew is the following

gem taken from a book entitled *The Changing Church and the Unchanging Christ* :—

What Paul, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Luther, and John Wesley had, Jesus Christ was and is for evermore.

The author of this chime of theological bells is evidently "in the know" but clarity is not one of his virtues.

On the gentle art of having it both ways there is no end. Dr. A. J. Carlyle cannot be accused of pessimism but he has evidently great faith in promises. Here is his effort :—

The reaction of the Renaissance and the Reformation turned the Church for a time into almost the chief enemy of freedom, and it generally failed to support the movements for political and economic liberty in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But in the future it still has an important part to play "in the vindication and defence of human liberty.

From this, and visible signs, we presume that the fine flower of vindication and defence of human liberty is personified in Lord Danesfort. And if the cobwebs of law are spun much finer one will only be able to know what keeping the law is by breaking it.

Hurrah! the Rev. W. T. Smythe-Piggott, formerly of the "Abode of Love," at Spaxton, is reported to be back again. Thus, the fountain of inkspiration in Fleet Street will never run dry, not even during the dog days.

Superstition dies hard! The allegation that a woman neighbour, Ellen Garnworthy, had ill-wished him and had bewitched his pig was seriously put forward as justification for an assault in a case heard at Cullompton, near Tiverton, recently. The man was a smallholder, of Clyst St. Lawrence, named Alfred John Matthews, and he asked the Bench to order the police to visit Mrs. Garnworthy's house and confiscate a crystal which she possessed. Efforts by the magistrates to convince him there is no such thing as witchcraft, failed. The prisoner, who had scratched Mrs. Garnworthy's arm with a pin, and had threatened to shoot her, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment.

No doubt the magistrates were shocked, or perhaps the cynics among them were mildly amused by the case. But we wonder whether those of the magistrates who tried to convince the man that witchcraft is ridiculous, are Christians? In the very "sacred" book upon which Matthews took the oath to speak the truth before giving his evidence, is the phrase, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." In addition to that there is a circumstantial account of a visit paid by King Saul to the witch of Endor. If therefore the Bible is the inspired word of an omniscient Deity, the ignorant labourer who assaulted the old lady, is a good deal wiser and altogether more logical than the men who sentenced him to a month's imprisonment for attempting to restrain his neighbour from bewitching him. A Gilbert and Sullivan proceeding—to use a book to envelope a legal proceeding with an air of solemnity, and then to deny the fundamental teaching of that "sacred" book in the case under consideration.

The *Daily Herald* is in many respects a queer newspaper. On the one hand it publishes contributions from George Lansbury, in which Christianity and Socialism are vaguely identified, and biblical references are seriously made, on the other, articles by writers whose contempt for Christianity is quite frank, and often forcefully expressed. We are induced to make this comment by a paragraph which appeared recently in the "Way of the World" column of the *Herald*. Here it is :—

Canon Starr, I observe, feels that the Bible could be made a more popular book for general reading if it were issued in sections "in an attractive format" and with new titles. A sub-editor to whom I was speaking yesterday concurred with the Canon. He said there were quite a lot of "snappy little news stories" in the Bible, full of "real human interest." But they need to be set out so that people would read them. He was kind

enough to dash down a set of "heads" for one of the best-known of these "stories." Thus :—

"Mr. A.'s" Expensive Apple.

Eat More Fruit Campaign spreads to Eden.

Queer Serpent Story.

Tenants to be Expelled for Infringing Bye-Laws?

If this had appeared originally in a definitely Free-thought periodical we wonder what many of the devout readers of the *Herald* would have said? But the fact that a journalist can write thus of Christianity in a popular daily newspaper is a striking piece of evidence of the manner in which religion has lost its grip upon the British public. It also explains why a number of wide-awake parsons and priests are seeking for a new lease of life for their cult by attaching themselves to various non-religious movements, and associating religion and politics. And with that wide impartiality which has always been the peculiar characteristic of the Christian priest, some have no difficulty in proving that King, Constitution and Conservatism are synonyms for Christianity; whilst others find a subtle connection between red altar cloths and the red flag, and hail Christ as the forerunner of Karl Marx and Lenin. In this happy fashion the churches are certain to get some support from enthusiastic politicians.

During the unveiling and dedication of a war memorial in the Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, Durham, recently, the electric light failed. The service was proceeded with, however, the Bishop of Jarrow, Dr. S. Knight, drawing aside the cover of the tablet, candles and tapers being held by the rector and churchwardens. The Bishop should have pronounced the words, "Let there be light!" and so obtained a supernatural illumination for his work. If we were religiously inclined we might be tempted to think that the sudden failing of the lights was a portent of divine disapproval of this glorification of war, and this attempt to remind one of the ghastly years 1914-1918.

Our more evangelical Christians are so often presenting the heathen to us as depraved, almost inhuman wretches, who need the milk of Christian charity if they are to be made decent citizens of the world, that it is a relief to come across a more charitable description. Mr. E. H. Keeling, who was a prisoner of war in Turkey, gives (*Adventures in Turkey and Russia*, E. H. Keeling, Murray, 10s. 6d.), some interesting little pen-pictures of the Turks as soldiers. There are some good stories in his book. One of the Turkish officers issued daily notices to the prisoners which were translated by Turkish interpreters, and came out like this :—

Officers will always tidy the room. Why choose the pigsty? The chief cause of the uncleanliness are the dogs which many of you have procured. Moreover, these dogs show no capacity of receiving any training, because they are wild and ill-natured dogs, and only they are filthy to look at with the uncleanliness they cause. It is required to do away with these dogs beginning with to-day.

And,

It has been taken to my notice that English officers never stop kicking up a shinty in their rooms. Cards will be stopped. Let us not play cards or kick up any more shinty. You shall behave civilized. In future great supplies of liquor and cognac will not be drunk by our order as the floor of the house will go through. Besides being thus obliged to remonstrate with the civilized Christian officers about getting tipsy, the barbaric pagan issued this notice :

Everybody is obliged neither to cook food nor to have any sort of fire in the rooms where they live and lie, as a very slight carelessness as regards fire, cleanliness and neatness may be the cause of great dangers. If a fire starts it goes. Therefore, don't smoke in bedrooms for God sake.

One is amused by the quaint English of these notices; but one is also impressed by the fact that the heathen Turk seems to have been a very decent sort of person, with a good deal more kindness in his nature than is to be found in the average Christian parson or Non-conformist elder.



### 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.

O. J. BOULTON.—Much obliged. Good, but hardly witty enough for the satire.

SINE CERE.—The civilizations of Mexico and Peru, and the Roman civilization were the ones referred to. We are not surprised at your disgust with the Gipsy Smith mission. Many of the stories told concerning it are just lies. The frantic scenes described in the newspapers during the London Mission were based on a case or two. The newspapers—and influence—did the rest. It seems impossible for the papers to act with passable honesty where religion is concerned.

J. BELL.—Mr. Cohen is writing you with regard to another visit to Hull early in the New Year. Thanks for good wishes.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Miss C. Johnson, £2; J. Shipp, 10s.

TAB CAN.—We do not know what the Masonic Elks are, but it evidently involves one of those pantomimic parades, which from a royal procession downwards, seem to delight people. We are not worrying as to what will become of the cathedrals when religion is dead. We are a long way off that yet, and when that day arrives there should be plenty of reasonable uses to which these buildings could be put.

W. B. BULLOCKE.—Yes, the W.G.D. was intended for yourself. You may be quite certain that no one will be permitted to use the B.B.C.'s apparatus who is likely to say anything that can reasonably be construed into an attack on Christianity. Transmitting the particular form of ignorance of which Gipsy Smith is an expositor, is not very much different from the almost unbelievable stupidities in the shape of the majority of the Sunday evening sermons with which the ears of listeners are affronted.

MR. T. J. GREENALL, literature secretary of the Manchester Branch, asks us to say that he has several copies of Dr. Arthur Lynch's *Ethics*, published at 7s. 6d., and which he can supply at 4s., post free. His address is 34 Goulston Street, Pendleton, Lancs.

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

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

Owing to the Christmas holidays, the *Freethinker* for December 28 will be issued on Monday, December 22. This necessitates finishing off that issue on Saturday, December 20, so all news items that are intended for that issue must reach us not later than the first post of the 20th.

We hope that Freethinkers are making a special note of the Society's Annual Dinner, which is to be at the Midland Hotel, St. Pancras, on Tuesday, January 13. The attendance promises to be a good one, but we should like to see it a record one. Fuller particulars than are at present available will be issued later. Meanwhile we may say that tickets are now on sale at the *Freethinker* office, or they may be obtained from the N.S.S. Secretary, Miss Vance. The sooner those who intend being present apply for tickets the better. It enables the arrangements to go forward with the greatest smoothness.

Mr. Cohen had a busy time last week-end. The meetings on Sunday at Pendleton were excellent, in spite of the miserable weather, and the lectures were followed with evident appreciation. Mr. Monks occupied the chair on both occasions, and we are glad to hear that the Branch is working with a will, and making appreciable headway. That is as it should be, and as it usually is when the right kind of effort is made.

On the Monday evening, following a run over to Liverpool during the day, Mr. Cohen lectured to a fine audience at Bolton. This is a new Branch, but it appears to have well established itself, and the members are full of enthusiasm. Mr. Sissons occupied the chair, and made a strong appeal for further support. There were many questions at the close of the lecture, the meeting lasting about two and a half hours, and the interest was sustained to the end. It was, however, worth the effort, although it involved Mr. Cohen leaving for London very early on Tuesday, in order to be at the office by mid-day on Tuesday. And with two issues of the paper in one week, he will have earned a day or two off during Christmas. At any rate he intends taking it.

Dr. Arthur Lynch brings his present series of articles to a close with the one in the present issue. He will be commencing a new series in the New Year.

The International Freethought Conference will not take place next year in Rome, as was originally planned. Unsurmountable difficulties—we are ignorant of their nature at the time of writing—prevent the arrangements being carried through as planned. The Conference will, therefore, be held in Paris during August. We are sorry. There is an impressiveness about a Freethought Congress in Rome that cannot attend a similar gathering in any other part of the world.

## Karl Marx.

### VI.

#### REFLECTIONS, CRITICISMS, CONCLUSIONS.

A CRITICISM of Karl Marx, if it be at all effective, should be based on principles more deeply laid, more comprehensive in scope, more securely sustained by argument than his. That is the type of reasoning in these matters that I always hold before my mind.

In matters of psychology, which is finally the natural base of ethical and sociological studies, I am compelled to refer to my own book, *Principles of Psychology*, for I would not have undertaken the study nor published the results of my thoughts had there been in the field any work which had seized here even the essentials. Once in possession of this system I use it as an instrument, and the whole edifice of Hegel, and all that derives from it, falls to the ground. If anyone cares to examine Hegel in the light of the methods I have indicated in the previous articles on Kant, he will find that the ethics and the politics of the famous system-builder have their veritable origin in that obeisance to the Hollenzollern system which was by their forms of education

ground into the brains, into the bones, of every little German, so that they could hardly think otherwise than in accordance with its terms. That notion of the ethical supremacy of the State, especially of the Hohenzollern State, has been subjected to a practical test since 1914, and it has been shattered to extinction, except possibly in the minds of a few like Lord Haldane, or in those of Oxford whose professional pride it is to be impervious to any but consecrated ideas.

What has this to do with Karl Marx? Much. It deprives him, by his own claims as a pupil of the "mighty thinker," to appeal to any true philosophical basis for his system. They both finally, in search of "sanctions," come to tyrannies using brute force.

It is true that Marx expresses, even on a fundamental point, a sharp contradiction to Hegel. The underlying question involved in Hegel's position is one of some subtlety, and not susceptible of being elucidated in a short article; I have, however, dealt with it at length in my book in the chapter on Externality, where I have shown that, proceeding from the Idealist position and pressing home the principles consistently, one arrives at a perfect conception of objectivity, not as the "Common-Sense" school of Reid regards it, but as they ought to see it if they endowed their common-sense with illumination and delicacy of analysis. Karl Marx and Hegel are at loggerheads because they both hold inadmissible positions. I say all this dogmatically, but that is for the sake of brevity; the full discussion would spread wide and deep.

Coming now to the economic side, we find that the themes of Karl Marx are none of them new. He has worked out elaborately and developed the notion of "surplus value," but the essentials will be found in Adam Smith and in Ricardo, together also with the standards of evaluation by labour-time.

Though tracing them back, however, to such respectable and now orthodox sources, I am not convinced of their validity in the terms laid down by these economists. For Adam Smith I have a certain deep regard, for he was the first great master of analysis whom I encountered in my reading at an early age, and there is to me even now vividly present the sense of wonder and delight that I felt in the gradual unfolding of that fine instrumentation of the mind; but I am more and more convinced that his statement of the case can only be accepted if it be looked on as a part of a series of studies to be successively developed, and finally reviewed as a whole. And these last remarks apply necessarily to Karl Marx.

Thus, for example, the visible work of the labourer is not the only new thing put into the material; there is also the thought of the agent that directs that labour. The laying of bricks is important, but it is not the whole affair in the building of a house; there is also the architect's conception, his creative work, and his scientific planning of details.

The tendency of the Communist theory, and the actual effect in practice, is to depreciate the value of intellectual work as compared with manual labour. In this attitude, especially when assumed by men who have never done a stroke of hard work in their lives but who come forward as champions of labour, there is something of sheer perversity.

For a full discussion of the matter I must refer my reader to my *Ethics*, for though usually the proposition that intellectual work is on a higher plane than manual toil or routine receives immediate assent, yet in practice, both here and in Russia, other standards prevail. Here we have the value of high intellect degraded before the insipid nonsense of puppet shows; in Russia intellectual power is at present a dangerous possession, and the workman, though exalted, flat-

tered, cajoled, effectively leads a life of slavery. Both these conditions repose on principles which, however bedizened, are profoundly immoral.

In the introductory article I tried to indicate in what manner all the vast apparatus of our modern civilization might be regarded as corollaries of ideas that found their origin in the thoughts of great minds; yes, but these thoughts were necessary, and for one mind able to think out a great scheme, many millions can carry on routine work and perform mechanical services.

The standard in these matters should be found in the type of human product regarded as highest, and this implies a reference to complexity of development of mind, that complexity being again correlated to the conditions of the external world. To fix our ideas: Huxley said that even judged by sheer commercial value, one Faraday was worth all the kings in Christendom. From his thoughts sprang an enormous series of works which have helped to give to our civilization something of its external form. Incidentally it may be remarked, Faraday, in all his greatness, worked for a salary less than that of the valet of a lord.

The same line of argument will show the fallacy of the attempt to measure value by the periods of time expended on the work. As for some of the other parts of the Karl Marxian machine—the paper substitutes for money and the like—their puerility would have been shown in the great Russian experiment, had not some of the amusing results of the system been lost in view of the whole ghastly phantasmagoria.

Wherever Karl Marx has allowed himself to utter forecasts he has been discovered as deficient in judgment. His remarks on Ireland, for example, I find sympathetic in regard to his high and vehement aspirations towards freedom, but I can affirm that his description of conditions and his vision of the probable course of developments find no verification in fact.

But after all does this Communism of Karl Marx represent a high ideal, if only it were attainable? Yes and no. That is to say, we must here be eclectic. Most of us, I suppose, feel the force of his fierce blazing wrath with the accursed conditions of tyranny in the economic world, the unfairness, the exploitation; we detest the sycophancy, the time-serving hypocrisies, the frauds made only more odious by the smear of unctuous rectitude with which we are so familiar; and being something of a revolutionist myself—though here it is no longer necessary, I hope, to be "bloody"—I look upon the French Revolution, for example, as a "bloc," to use a phrase of Clemenceau; and while regretting excesses we do not dream of turning back on that account. And so in the Russian Revolution. What a spectacle was that of the Imperial Court—a poor fool of an Emperor entrusted with the destinies of millions of lives; an Empress mentally fed on the narrowest creed of the Church and State school, kind by nature but capable of abominable cruelty in her own fanaticism, placing the interests of her degenerate little family higher than those of the whole world of a million families, and finally ending in the wickedest forms of aberration under the influence of an ignorant, dissolute priest—all that had to go; but the reconstruction under the tutelage of Karl Marx has been the most disastrous failure I have hitherto known.

Indignation—the *sæva indignatio* of Juvenal—has produced more than "verses"; it has given us a gigantic though confused epic in which the metres roll along in rivers of blood and mountains of corpses. Yet vengeance is not a firm basis on which to build the future. Hate is a strong virile passion, but it is not a reconstructive principle. We must be fair at length even to the bourgeois, we must find the mean-

ing and use of all the forms of human activity and weave them together in one advantageous co-operation.

Truth, Energy, Sympathy, there we find the "Tripod of Ethics," and of these sympathy is not the least; but that does not mean that we should come to one dead level of talent and accomplishment and find our supreme happiness in eating in a soup-kitchen. Sympathy in its extended sense rather implies the understanding of dispositions and faculties dissimilar to our own, and freedom involves the ample development of every variety of excellence of which we all possess some possibility.

On the other hand that "concentration" that Karl Marx pictured—that separation as by a gulf between the mass of the proletariat and a few iron rulers—that has never resulted, as he predicted, from the normal evolution of the capitalist system; it has never been realized in any modern state but one, and that one is the Russia that sets up Karl Marx as a new Deity.

Is there no other solution possible? Yes, I think so, but the whole problem should be regarded as involving a greater scope and higher complexity of factors than Karl Marx has considered. The question demands also the assessment of ethical values, and this finally leads us down to a study of the principles of psychology.

As a practical conclusion I submit and here without elaboration, the following:—

While recognizing Democracy as the matrix of the citizenship of the community, we should aim at a system of successive selection so as at length to bring to the governance of things the best brains and the best characters. That governance should produce the minimum of interference with the individual development; but as civilization involves organization, so organization implies wide variations of function, with all sorts of correlations and mutual dependence. In this sense aristocracy, properly defined, is quite consistent with democracy; given equal opportunities to all, aristocracy should be the very pride of democracy; and finally, since it is well to crystallise these suggestions in a name, I say that they are included in the noblest word in politics—again properly understood—the Republic.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

### Mr. Arlen's Much Married Heroine.

WALKING along Charing Cross Road I happened to notice in a shop window a pretty green hat. It might be remarked that there was nothing strange in that circumstance. But the shop was not a milliner's, but a bookseller's; and stacked around this green hat were many copies of Mr. Michael Arlen's latest novel of that name. The title page informs me that it is a "Romance for a few people."

Reflecting that it was lucky that I had not my wife with me, who would have wanted the hat and would not have looked at the novel, I entered the shop, put down three half-crowns, and so became the possessor of Mr. Arlen's masterpiece.

The reading public are being told with tolerable uniformity by the literary critics that Mr. Michael Arlen in his novel, *The Green Hat*, has written the book of the year. There does not seem any reason for disputing this verdict. *The Green Hat* is a remarkable performance. If I may be permitted a phrase current among the more exclusive circles of the extremely pious, I should say that the author would appear to be very much a "man of the world,"

polished, clever, well-read, sceptical and a stylist. There is a debonair *méchanceté* about some of his pages that recalls to the sophisticated the wayward stylists of eighteenth century France.

Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Mercaptan* would have been delighted with *The Green Hat*, and he would, without doubt, have placed the book upon his shelves next to "Le Sopha" of *Crebillon Fils*.

Our novelist is very well aware, for, following Mr. Wells he is good enough to tell us, that no money can be made from a book that cannot bring a woman in with the first thousand words. Mr. Arlen is adroit. In a volume of three hundred and twenty-nine pages the lady appears at the seventh, and by the end of the three and fortieth the possessor of the green hat has parted with a virtue which the reader, upon further consideration, may perhaps be forgiven for doubting whether, as a matter of fact, there was at that time any virtue to be lost.

The writers of the Gospel narrative knew how to embellish their story by the introduction of one of those unfortunate ladies who Lecky in a moment of ironic realism referred to as being blasted for the sins of the people, and Mr. Arlen has not scrupled to follow a device which, if it were not exactly invented by St. John, was at least used by that inspired author with artistry and distinction. And, if the wearer of the green hat, in the modern story, was more fortunate than her sister in the Scriptures, in avoiding being taken in the very act of adultery, that circumstance had better be imputed to the greater discretion observed among contemporary European hotel proprietors as compared with that practised by the ancient pharisees, than to any improvement in present morals.

To change the reference slightly, it would not be essentially unfair, I think, to call Mr. Arlen's heroine a Magdalene. Of course, the lady is a very well bred Magdalene, an aristocrat moving in the best circles, wearing the most exquisite clothes and one, moreover, who, if she could not rival the matrimonial experience of the woman who lived near the Well of Sychar, had been legitimately married at least twice.

The story is mainly about Iris Storm, her unfortunate brother, and her friends, to one of whom, under Mr. Arlen, we are indebted for the recital.

Mrs. Storm was both beautiful and intelligent, but she was possessed of a body that craved caresses. Some of her acquaintances, behind her back, were good enough to call her cruel names, smacking of the acrid pages of the late Herr Von Krafft-Ebing. Had she married early in life the young man she loved all might have been well. But his father had other plans for his son. The Foreign Office has its victories no less than love and war. Because the older generation won the day, Mrs. Storm's first husband fell from a window on the first night of the honeymoon. Her second husband was killed in Ireland, a metal bullet neatly finishing the work that Cupid's arrow had commenced. Her brother blew out his brains. She, herself, nearly carried her old lover from the arms of his splendid wife, and could only prevent herself by driving a Hispano-Suiza car full tilt into a tree under whose branches, years before, she had played with her sweetheart in the sunlight.

The story is a sad one, and I confess that when I had finished it I hunted round my library for a copy of the *Burial Service*, which I finally unearthed behind a volume called *l'Œuvre libertine des Poètes du XIX. Siècle*; and I remember reflecting that books no less than men are not exempt from rubbing shoulders with undesirable neighbours. It was not until I had read "Man that is born of woman is full of misery, he is cut down like a flower, he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay," that I felt more serene. The wearer of the green hat comes

into, and goes from, the story with all the power of a symbol of life and death. To Iris Storm the condensation of human history in Anatole France's tale perfectly applies: "She lived, suffered and died."

The narrative is told cleverly, coming events throwing very fantastically their shadows before them. For a novel the book is full of unusual touches.

"She stood carelessly like a woman in George Barbier's Almanacks." It is not often that English writers can be induced to plead guilty publicly to an interest in the draughtsmanship of illustrators of *La Vie Parisienne*. There is a reference to that expensive book, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and to the novels of M. Paul Morand. Iris Storm found the latter "common," which shows that her taste in literature was not impeccable.

"Why does God do these things?" she asked in a suddenly strong clear voice, but I said nothing, knowing nothing of God." Mr. Arlen is very modern—and very truthful!

But if his hero knows nothing of God he knows quite a lot about other things. About, for example, Mr. Horton and the *New Voice* that old readers of the *New Age* will know how to interpret; about exclusive night clubs, Continental courtesans, French hospitals and English painters. In fact everywhere that fans are dropped, or champagne corks pop, or pretty girls talk to fashionable authors, Mr. Michael Arlen has the air of knowing all about it. Even the masterly amendment of Mr. Trehawke Tush whereby the chaste ears of the readers of the *Daily Sale* are saved from assault by the simple substitution for a "where" of an "as" does not escape him.

If Mr. Arlen has a message (and perhaps he has not) it would seem to be that all is well lost for love. The book is bold, unconventional, thought provoking, subtle, and, above all, interesting. It is an extraordinary novel. It is a best seller that will appeal to the taste of a man of intelligence.

WILLIAM HERBERT.

### Books and Life.

THERE is no end to the diversity of Mr. Eden Phillpots, and we trust there never will be. As a novelist he now holds an assured position that is not effected by the clamour of best sellers. In the novel before us, *The Treasures of Typhon*,<sup>1</sup> he has deliberately chosen a new form of expression, and for those readers who like directness, simplicity, together with something to think about, this story of the wandering of "Typhon" in search of a magic herb will come as a revelation. It is a concrete expression of the author's philosophy written in plain language, and we should hazard a guess in saying that he has taken Walter Savage Landor as his model. Aesop, La Fontaine, and John Gay have conferred the power of speech on animals; Mr. Phillpots makes the trees talk, and his novel is a forceful epitome of a philosophy that has evidently been tried in the fire of experience. Carlyle, when he was speaking without the evangelist's rant said, "Be men before you become writers." We have heard that theosophists are unable to fix a washer on a tap, and one would rather enjoy seeing Dean Inge in the rôle of a bus-conductor taking fares on the top of a bus on a wet day and turning the other cheek after receiving a poke in the eye with an umbrella. Mr. Phillpots' feet never leave the ground of common-sense, and, judging by the floods of words from theological, journalistic, and metaphysical quarters, that ground will never suffer from overcrowding.

A rough division of thinkers and writers may be made by classifying them under two headings: Platonists and Aristotelians. The former will spin cobwebs more

rapidly than the big spiders that spread their geometrical nets among the blackberry bushes. The latter are slow and move like the man who follows the plough. They may surprise by telling you that water wets and fire burns. You cannot interest them in mind-pictures of angels and heavens, or devils and hell; they will tell you plainly if you wish to discuss these subjects that they do not know what you are talking about. We think that Mr. Phillpots belongs to this class—who, like Spinoza, are deadly with a smile. The spectacle glass polisher who helped people physically to see also helped them to see in another manner; "But if," he wrote, "we have a knowledge of God equal to that which we have of a triangle, all doubt is removed." This is a pin-prick for the bladder of words; it is the Aristotelian jab at the clouds of fuzz mentioned by Browning in Bishop Blougram's Apology. We trust that Mr. Phillpots will get all the readers he deserves for *Typhon*; a reading of it will bring men and women home to themselves, which is the first step to the Socratic injunction, "Man know thyself," and a shutting out of the noise from the theological hurdy-gurdy.

There is just a suspicion that Browning was not playing the game when he gave us the picture of the sceptical Mr. Gigadibs sitting in a chair, speechless, not even capable of getting in a word edgeways in the torrent of talk from Bishop Blougram. Something similar to the sensational posters we see advertising films was the position of Mr. Gigadibs. We can see the heroine on the wing of an aeroplane; or the hero, with a lion chasing him, climbing a rope ladder into a balloon. Common sense tells us that this is all fake, with very remote chances of it happening in real life. A sceptic would have something better to do with his time than hope to use it effectively in converting a Bishop. And, if we are any judges of physiognomy, the well-fed appearance of Browning's face may even explain the epicurean cant in the Apology, with the Bishop as himself. There are no big prizes for truth speaking; the financial security of a man like Mr. Bernard Shaw enables him to be vocal for many, and this appears to be about the only use that money may be effectively put to in this our Iron Age. With Voltaire, unless we are blessed by the Gods, we believe that the consolation of this life is to say what one thinks, but we must have no illusion on the price we have to pay.

The hawk's beak and claws are admirably fitted for one purpose that can be comprehended without much argument. Looking up at bird life in the air on November 9 this year we observed a fight between a crow and a hawk. There was a meeting for a second when long beak would battle with curved and away flew the crow for rest and sanctuary on the cross at the top of a dome surmounting a church. No respite was to be had for the crow in this quarter and the battle was resumed; the warring pair disappeared out of sight into the west. All bird life was quiet in the gardens; house sparrows, hedge sparrows, blue-tits, robins, blackbirds and starlings were silent in the same way that an eclipse of the sun effects life in the fields and hedges. Coming indoors we turned up our diary and found, that over a battlefield at Achiet-le-Grand on November 9, 1918, we had witnessed a similar fight in the air when the hawk came down a blot of bloody feathers. Karel Capek in a conversation with us stated that the one human word "help" was the great division between man and other forms of life, and in his "Insect Play" defined this when the Tramp said, "Man can make a plan." Mr. Vincent J. Hands in a letter to this paper says that "Man can have a very definite purpose with Nature." We agree. He can, bearing in mind the magic of the word "help," bend Nature to his will to produce and distribute food, clothes, and shelter for all; but against this effort to satisfy the physical side of life will be found an array of bogeys to frighten him from doing it. Not the least, but the ugliest, is the priesthood with its "God's Will"—a clever incantation, which means the will of the priesthood, and its paymasters.

WILLIAM REPTON.

<sup>1</sup> *The Treasures of Typhon*. 6s. net. Grant Richards.

## Correspondence.

ARTHUR LYNCH'S "ETHICS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Again, to my regret, I must take up the burden—Pioneers, O Pioneers, as Walt Whitman cries. Mr. Panton butts in with his principle, "Egoism," but though no one, certainly not I, will deny the prevalence of such a motive in human affairs, that fact is not in itself sufficient to form the basis of an ethical system.

Will you permit me, even at the cost of some prolixity, to endeavour to make that clear? In the first place, taking a review of all the notable systems of the past I found that nearly all the great philosophers have started from the subjective standpoint and each has written his system round some favourite moral sentiment—to mention only a few, Hutchinson takes "benevolence," Adam Smith "sympathy," Hume a modification of this position, Kant and Hegel, in spite of all the cloudy language of false philosophizing in which they have involved it, obedience to the Kaiser, Dean Inge, the etiquette of Mid-Victoria, and now Mr. Panton, "Egoism."

Scanning these in my "purview," just as in my purview of religion, I come almost at once to a certain observation. None of these sentiments expressed in this manner and employed even in the developments the philosophers have given to them, can serve as the foundation of a veritable ethical system at all.

It was reflections such as these that determined me to press forward to their conclusions the studies I had already undertaken in order to display in scientific form a true exposition of ethics. It was not a question of taking up some sentiment, good or bad, and decorating it in literature or showing it in action, but rather first of taking a point of contemplation that would be independent of personal predilections. I did not intend to write an elaborated homily praising virtues and denouncing vices, for all that belongs to another mode; I did not—and this meets an objection of a noted French philosopher, Levy-Bruhl—even seek to make my *Ethics* "mandatory" or directly law-giving. Thus, interposing an explanation here, I do not say, "Drink not out of that pool," but I show that it contains cholera germs, and I indicate the consequences of swallowing those germs.

In other words, I want to explore the fabric—and that not only the visible material—of the world in which we live; to ascertain, in essentials, the constitution of the human being, in his mental as well as physical attributes; to observe the relations produced by the intercourse of man in society, cast in the total environment we have beheld.

I then want to find some criteria of development; then to ascertain the influences that favour or throw back such development. Here the temptation is to speak in terms of the doctrine of evolution; but I did not wish to assume that, still less to make a fetish of it.

In order then, at this stage, to find amidst the immense complexity of the subject great guiding lines, comparable to those fabrics that serve as the first framework of a ship, I am led to pose a series of questions as to how I shall discover these in the structure of the ethical system. In this way I have been brought to the formulation of what I have called the Tripod of Ethics: Truth, Energy, Sympathy. It would be valuable to lift these out of the general perspective if I had no other object than to find deep-going classifications to assist my exposition, but there is something more in it than that, as I have shown, to those who care to read with studious attention in my *Psychology* and in my *Ethics*.

Mr. Panton rather laughs at such references; but what else can I do? I have not made my exposition too long in either of these books, and therefore though I can give broad indications even in an article, I cannot in so brief a space reproduce the arguments of the volume.

The whole subject is to me extraordinarily interesting, and I hope it will yet be to all the world, so that I feel I must enter into a further matter: I have not, as will have been noticed, simply taken, because I liked them, these principles out of the air. They are governing principles, but they are not offered at the beginning

as axioms. An analogy from exact science will make this clear. When we are studying the constitution of the solar system we find that the law of gravitation, as expounded by Newton, is a governing principle. Yes, but that law did not appear at the threshold of the science of astronomy; it required a vast amount of preliminary research in physics, in mechanics particularly, and in mathematics before the way was clear for Newton; to mention a few out of hundreds whose work was contributory to the crowning result, we must consider Archimedes, Galileo, Descartes, Copernicus, Kepler.

Kepler found that the planets moved in ellipses; the Pythagoreans had declared that their orbits were circular, because a uniform movement in a circle was the most dignified manner of progression. Perhaps; but what Kepler was looking for was not a means of satisfying a popular sentiment as to the orbits, but an answer to his enquiry: What really happens? There you have the difference of spirit in a false and a true conception of the science of ethics.

Suppose, however, a Pythagorean is persistent and still prefers his circle, what then?

One can, as the Dublin jarvie to the passenger who paid him his legal fare, "L'ave him to God"; or one can, like Bernard Shaw's giant Christian in *Androcles*, reason with him. But to reason with him leads one step by step to the discussion of treatises of dynamics and to the contemplation of the foundations of the differential calculus. He may refuse to look, but then he cannot frightfully decry the Keplerian.

There is no science that does not eventually lead to considerations that at first view may seem extraordinarily remote and recondite. In the preparation of my *Psychology* I spent years, yes, literally years, in the study of such elementary operations as counting; but in the end, and it was that I was searching for, I got the clue that enabled me to prove that the categories of Kant were both redundant and insufficient; and since the establishment of these categories lies at the base of his Transcendental system, I was able to find as a waste product the destruction of all this vast metaphysical structure that has deformed the minds of generations of thinking men.

But then again, I cannot bring that home to anyone, like my friend the distinguished M.P., who after looking at the binding of my book, said, "Ah, yes, but at my college we were all for Kant."

Such are some of the reasons that give me confidence, and not "sublime recklessness," in referring Mr. Panton to my *Psychology*, and further to take up another challenge, I say that if any essential passage in *Psychology*, or in *Ethics*, be overthrown, I will remould the whole work, or if this be not possible in accordance with the fundamental principles I will burn them both and cease to speak; but I will not do so till such an argument be overthrown by an argument deeper based and more rigorously adduced.

And yet I can hear Mr. Panton saying, Egoism is the most profound of sentiments and the most universal.

That, however, is not the crux. With all the detriment due to too great concision I sum up: Having established certain standards of evolution the science of ethics seeks to determine the lines of development and the forces that make for that development in the passage from a lower to a higher phase of evolution.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

SIR,—I think the discussion between Mr. Lynch and myself has now reached a relative finality. Both Mr. Lynch and myself would subscribe to the lines of Shakespeare:—

Nature is made better by no mean,  
But Nature makes that mean: over that art  
Which you say adds to Nature, is an art  
That Nature makes.

We should differ though in our interpretation of this passage, and that difference marks the fundamental cleavage in our philosophies.

I have dealt, in this discussion, with all the main points Mr. Lynch has advanced, and refuted them (or so I claim) in simple terms. Mr. Lynch repeats them in more involved language and with greater caution, and

suggests, inferentially, that the simplicity of my answers is due to my superficiality. But Mr. Lynch is merely obscure in the act of trying to be profound. I am entirely familiar with all Mr. Lynch's arguments (he is nowhere so original as he claims) since they represent a phase in my own past mental development. Happily, I no longer mistake apparent plausibility for convincing demonstration. Mr. Lynch claims to argue logically from a well-founded base and reach his conclusions by rigorous and ascertainable steps. The whole difference between us is that whereas I actually practise this method, Mr. Lynch when he comes to deal with religion entirely ignores it. There is no possible point of contact between his conclusions and his premises. The way in which he seeks to show that Nature is conscious because man, a product of Nature, is conscious, is a case in point. Such reasoning would not deceive anyone who has thought the matter out in a common-sense way, and who has not been pre-occupied with a study of the fashionable obscurantists.

To return to fundamentals: if Mr. Lynch wishes to convince readers of the *Freethinker* that his conclusions are scientifically sound, I invite him to answer the following questions:—

1. Define, and demonstrate the existence of, the Deity invoked in his *Ethics*.
2. Demonstrate the existence of a soul in man.
3. Demonstrate the immortality of this soul.

If Mr. Lynch, adopting his own methodical canon, can answer these questions satisfactorily he will do more to justify his *Ethics* in the eyes of *Freethinker* readers than he has yet done in this discussion.

"Javali," in his last letter, justifies my complaint of captious quibbling, for he repeats, exactly, my definition of mind (which I adhere to) but in different words. If this was done *unconsciously* it was due to faulty understanding; if *consciously* it is an admission of captious quibbling.

I quite agree as to the need of clear definitions. My point had reference to *newspaper* discussions, which necessitates leaving unsaid much that one would like to say. Apparently Mr. Lynch for whom, primarily, I was writing understood me. Any misunderstanding on the part of "Javali"—well, that's *his* headache!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

#### CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

SIR,—Having read the excellent article by "Mimmermus" in the *Freethinker* of September 28 with regard to Charles Southwell, I thought perhaps it would be of interest to your readers to know that Southwell's grave is in the Symonds Street burial ground, Auckland, New Zealand. The small tombstone which is enclosed by a much weather-beaten wooden paling bears the following inscription:—

In  
Memory of  
Charles Southwell,  
Editor and Lecturer,  
Who died Augt. 17th, 1860.  
Aged 46 years.

Auckland, New Zealand.

S. GLADING.

#### North London Branch N.S.S.

A most interesting discussion and stimulating discussion took place last Sunday at the St. Pancras Reform Club.

Mr. George Bedborough opened by moving:—

That this meeting, recognising that the sole responsibility for religious education rests with parents and Churches, expresses its conviction that there can be no final solution of the religious difficulty in National Education until the Education Act is amended, so as to secure that there shall be no teaching of religion in State-supported Elementary Schools in school hours or at the public expense.

Mr. R. B. Kerr, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Eager, Mrs. Kerr, Mrs. Ratcliffe, and others took part in the discussion. Mr. Ratcliffe "chaired" most effectually, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

This was the last meeting of our winter session. We re-open on January 11 with a debate between Dr. Arthur Lynch and Mr. Palmer. Subject: "Is Republicanism a vital issue to-day?" Dr. Lynch will take the affirmative.—SECRETARY.

#### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 7.30, A Social. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at "The Castle," Shouldham Street, W.

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

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

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Problems of Race and Nationality in Africa."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Right Hon. J. M. Robertson, "Religion and Rationalism."

OUTDOOR.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. M. B. Laird, "Children Who Never Grow Up." Questions and Discussion. (Silver Collection.)

HULL BRANCH N.S.S. (Metropole, Albany Room, West Street): 7.30, Mr. Johnson, "Macaulay's Essay on Macchiavelli." Members and friends invited.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, "Jesus."

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