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Views and Opinions.

The Modesty of Freethinkers.

I have more than once expressed the opinion that Freethinkers suffer from an excess of modesty. All around them they see reforms taking place, changes in ideas occurring, the gradual humanization of life transpiring, much of which may be traced directly to the efforts of Freethinkers of the past four or five generations. Yet in the majority of cases they are content to stand quietly by and allow themselves, as Freethinkers, to be ignored or snubbed, treated as though they were really very inconsiderable in numbers, and unimportant in influence. As a consequence, and without either intending or wishing it, Freethinkers play into the hands of the common enemy. Christians are permitted to strut across the stage, claiming credit for improvements which they could not prevent, but often struggled hard to obstruct. Writers on phases of social or mental history are induced quietly to ignore the part played by Freethinkers in the past, and to ignore their importance in the present, the misrepresentations of Christians are condoned, and, worst of all, injustices and unfairnesses can be perpetrated against Freethinkers which would simply be impossible if the latter were a little more assertive than they are. Where religious interests are concerned all experience goes to show that it is useless appealing to a Christian's sense of justice or of truthfulness. It is only when they who are in opposition to Christianity make their power felt that they can be assured of approximately fair play. And the sooner Freethinkers get this truth into their heads—and act upon it—the better.

* * *

The Boy Who Had no God.

Several events of recent date serve to enforce what has just been said. The first is concerned with a very brave attempt of two boys, both under twenty, at South Shields, to save a man from drowning in a very rough sea. The Coroner pointed out that the sea was a very rough one, the attempt to save the man was a very courageous act, the town was very proud of them, and not many would have had the pluck to do what they did. This, however, only

makes the following dialogue the more striking. I quote from the *Shields Daily Gazette* :—

When John George Angus (18), a wagon boy employed at St. Hilda Colliery and living at 11 Trinity Street, was called to give evidence he declined to take the usual form of oath.

"Why?" the Coroner's officer asked him.

"I don't believe in it," replied Angus. "I have just my own ideas."

The Coroner: Have you no religion at all?—No.

You don't believe in any God?—Yes, that's right.

After he had declared that he would speak the truth and had given evidence the Coroner asked him if his parents were believers, and Angus replied that his father was dead.

"Was he a believer?" the Coroner asked, sympathetically.

"Yes," replied the witness

And your mother?—Yes.

Then what's got hold of you?—Well, I've just been thinking things out.

"You are just eighteen, you know. It is rather early to come to a conclusion like that. Just go home and have another think and see what's wrong."

Coroners, as well as judges and magistrates, have considerable latitude permitted them, and I presume the Coroner was within his legal rights in saying what he did. All the same his remarks were quite unnecessary, and bordered on the impertinent. Any witness in any court has a legal right to dispense with the oath if he or she feels so inclined, and can refuse to answer any question beyond giving the ground of his refusal as either being without religious belief, or that it is contrary to his religious belief. Beyond that no judge in England has the power to go. To tell Angus to go home and think the thing out in order to see what was wrong, is just the usual religious impertinence. Off hand I am prepared to say that Angus had given more thinking to getting his opinions correct about religion than the Coroner had done. The latter had in all probability taken his religious views from his parents without any thinking at all, and gone on repeating them parrot fashion ever since. If Angus had come to a religious conclusion at fourteen it would have been quite all right. To conclude that religion is unsound at eighteen is, in the Coroner's opinion, proof that something is wrong. The Coroner's comments were foolish and out of place; and I am quite certain that these comments, not at all uncommon in other courts, would never occur if Freethinkers were a little more assertive in their Freethought than they are.

* * *

God on the Wireless.

The next incident to which I have to refer is in connection with the subject of the broadcasting of religious services—to the exclusion of other forms of opinion—on Sunday evenings. Quite a number of Freethinkers appear to have made up their minds to let the B.B.C. understand that they object to religion being broadcasted and other forms of thought boycotted. Personally, as I have already said, religion and party politics are two subjects that might

well be excluded. The primary object of broadcasting is not propaganda, and it should not be made use of to this end. But things are as they are, and a number of Freethinkers appear to have made up their minds to let Mr. Burrows, who arranges these programmes, know what they feel about the matter. Hardly a week passes without my getting copies of letters sent, and replies received. But Mr. Burrows is, apparently, a good Christian, and being such, his sense of fair play naturally works in a one-sided manner. He says he cannot promise a talk by a representative of the National Secular Society on Sunday evening, or any other evening, but he hopes that they who stand aloof from the orthodox faiths, will find interest in the talks by "Philemon" on Thursday evenings. "Philemon," it should be said, indulges in a few handfuls of commonplace and quite harmless ethical reflections of the kind with which many sermons are stuffed. And Mr. Burrows is quite Christian in his reference to the writer and "his friends," etc., as though they who object to Christian services being thrown at them are quite inconsiderable in number, and may safely be ignored. He either does not or will not see that the objection is to the machinery of the B.B.C., which is supported by public money, being captured by the clergy to the exclusion of any hint against religion. Once again if Freethinkers made themselves as well known as they should, Mr. Burrows would use a quite different tone. He assumes that Christians are the only ones that need to be studied because they are the ones that keep themselves well in the public eye. Freethinkers are ignored because they help Christians to ignore them.

* * *

Freethinkers and the Bible.

The next incident—the only other one with which I have space to deal this week—occurred in the House of Clergy on February 16. A clergyman there, the Rev. Dr. Kidd, Warden of Keble, in a discussion connected with the ordination service, remarked that he disliked "the statement that the Bible was the word of God." This was said to a gathering of parsons. But nothing happened. Dr. Kidd did not drop down dead, he was not struck with paralysis, there was no motion made that he should be prosecuted, or even that he should withdraw from the assembly. So far as one can gather from the published reports the assembled clerics appeared to have taken it as quite an ordinary thing to say when the subject of the Bible was under discussion. But all the same it is probable that not one of the clergy present had in mind—and not one per cent of those who read the report—to whom it was owing that this expression could be used in a clerical assembly without raising a devil of a row. Not one in a hundred would think of the men and women—excluding the work of such men as Spinoza and his successors—who had worked and braved ostracism and prison, the stocks and slander, to bring home to the public mind something of the truth about the Bible. They turn up a work on the history of biblical criticism, and beyond perhaps a casual reference to Paine, they will find nothing of the work of the militant Freethinkers of the past century who made it possible for these more "respectable" critics to say what they have said, and enabled a member of a Church of England Assembly to say that he disliked the Bible being spoken of as the word of God. The informed would see in that expression a signal vindication of the work of Freethought. But unfortunately the informed reader is a rarity. For the most part people take their information from established authorities, and it is generally to the interest of these that the people shall know only what they consider it is

well for them to know. Orthodoxy after martyring the reformer promptly buries him once he is dead. And it is to the interest of but a few to arrange for a resurrection.

* * *

Wake Up, Freethinkers!

So one might take scores of illustrations, from biblical criticism to birth control, from physics to sociology, and use them as illustrations of the same truth. Scepticism, said Buckle in a pregnant passage, is not an outcome of progress, but its condition. Before men can search for the new they must distrust the old. And the great work of Freethought has consisted not alone in its actual positive contributions to our stock of knowledge, but in the creation of a freer atmosphere in which rational enquiry could take place. Peter Annet stood in the stocks, Paine was ostracised and slandered, Carlyle spent over nine years in gaol, and a Christian cleric is enabled to say that he dislikes the Bible being called the word of God. Robert Owen, Bentham, Holyoake, Hetherington, Mill, Place, and scores of other avowed unbelievers work and strive, and a Sunday School Socialist is able to jabber about Jesus Christ and his glorious message for the poor and oppressed, with not a word of recognition of the labours of those who made his position possible. Sunday entertainments become an established fact, the franchise is extended to women, the treatment of the criminal gradually gets more humane. In all of these cases Freethinkers prepared the way, but to-day hardly anyone gives Freethought or Freethinkers the credit. And for all this, whether we take the impertinence of a court official, the arrogant ignorance of the B.B.C., the forced liberalism of the clergy, or the pandering to the churches by politicians, Freethinkers cannot be acquitted of blame. They are too modest, too diffident, too slow in contradicting the boastful utterances of Christians who claim credit for reforms that Christians have always done their best to prevent. The lies, the misrepresentations, the impertinence of Christians are made profitable chiefly because the ordinary man or woman is quite ignorant of the work of those who have made possible the greater liberties they have and the freer atmosphere they breathe. We cannot, of course, stop altogether the religious propagandist lying about his creed or about his opponents, or the very pious man exhibiting unfairness and injustice towards the non-religious. But Freethinkers, if they were a little more vocal than they are, might make it less popular than it is at present.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Creation.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis i., 1)

In the year 1659, Pearson published his famous *Exposition of the Creed*, which has always been pronounced the best statement of English theology, and its author was looked upon as the greatest and most distinguished scholar of his day. And yet "at the end of his exposition of Art. 1, he says that heaven and earth were created most certainly within not more than six, or at farthest, seven thousand years from the age in which he was writing." To Pearson every word in Genesis was literally true. Since the seventeenth century even the theological world has moved forward considerably, one result being the complete abandonment of the old chronology. As soon as geology became a science the Genesis cosmogony began to be finally discredited. To-day all advanced divines have definitely taken the side of geology, while only a small minority of blind or brainless believers still stand up for Genesis. Even an Anglican Church

dignitary, the late Canon Driver, had the courage, in his great work, *The Book of Genesis*, to declare openly that the first ten chapters are wholly un-historical. The original Commentary appeared more than twenty years ago. The present Bishop of Birmingham is most emphatic in his repudiation of the old legend concerning man's origin. In a new book just published, *The Inner Life*, to which he makes a contribution, "Dr. Barnes definitely states that a million years have passed since man emerged from a generalized ape-like stock." Indeed, the *British Weekly* finds fault with the Bishop for availing himself of every possible opportunity to repeat his theory of man's origin. In its issue of February 19 it says: "May we suggest, with great respect, that the subject of man's descent is becoming almost an obsession with the Bishop of Birmingham? In articles, sermons, lectures, he is constantly recurring to this theme, on which his views have long been familiar to the public. Is it necessary to make every public appearance the occasion for a pæan on the triumph of Darwinism?" We entirely differ from that view. We know what it is to have lived for upwards of twenty years with fear and trembling under the cruel tyranny of the wicked doctrine of the Fall; and the one purpose of this journal is to do its utmost to free the human mind from its horrible dominion.

To many modern preachers the Genesis story is not literally historical, but a beautiful parable to be spiritually understood and explained. In the *Church Times* of February 13, there is a most characteristic sermon, preached in Chichester Cathedral on Septuagesima Sunday by the Rev. A. H. Coombes, D.D., Canon in residence, who chose for his text the first verse in the first chapter of Genesis. He is an exceptionally able man and has a marvellous command of language. He says:—

For many long ages men thought that account was nothing more than a catalogue of facts. But we know now that it is far more than that. The march of knowledge has placed at our disposal a new method of ascertaining facts, and it is not of so much importance to us that the results obtained by this new method should be in exact agreement with the ideas we derived from reading the first three chapters of Genesis. What is far more important is that we should see in that account how wonderful God works in his dealings with men's hearts. For the Jews were in their origin a Mesopotamian family. And they shared with other men of their race a set of beliefs about the beginnings of the world and the origin of man. When God chose them to be the vehicle by which men should attain to greater knowledge of himself, he did not wrench from them these primitive beliefs. He transformed these beliefs gradually until, by the time they came to be written down, they had been purged of all their grosser elements and turned into a perfect medium for teaching mankind the fundamental truths of God.

That paragraph is very cleverly composed, but there are flaws in it which not only mar its beauty but despoil it of any real meaning. If the first three chapters of Genesis are not a catalogue of facts what on earth are they? If God exists, he produced the universe or he did not; he created a frail, fallible man, with an inclination to go wrong under certain circumstances, or he did not. The Bible declares that he did both, and the ascertained facts of the history of the world, and particularly of man, are absolutely unanswerable proofs that he did not. The fact is that science has made the existence of God at once absurd and impossible.

Dr. Coombes says that God made man in his own image, and then asks and answers thus:—

Have you ever thought what that means? It is just this fact that makes the world a reasonable

world. Just this fact that makes us able to find out things about Nature and to pursue our enquiries into the causes of things, for our minds are tiny copies of the Mind that made all things. Have you ever thought of the terrible consequences of that truth? For this mind was planted in man for a purpose. And the purpose is that we should learn to see God in all his works. But man has thwarted that purpose whenever he could. The first men of whom we read used the first piece of knowledge they ever gained to hide themselves from God, and their example has been imitated ever since. The wise men of nearly every race have been too wise to see God. They have seen facts, they have drawn inferences, they have constructed theories, they have explored avenues, but they have failed to see him, to whom all those approaches lead.

Has it ever occurred to Canon Coombes to think that if God there be, there can be no more unforgivable insult to him than to affirm that he made man in his own image? We know what man is like and what dark deeds he has committed in the past, and what frightful crimes he is capable of committing, and sometimes does commit now. The Canon says that the fact that man is in God's image makes the world reasonable, enables him to do things and to find out things about Nature; but it is undeniable that no man ever made such sublime discoveries about Nature and its living beings as Charles Darwin, and Charles Darwin was an Atheist. Christian men and women have very rarely distinguished themselves in the real service of mankind. During the whole history of the Roman Empire it is noteworthy that the majority of its good emperors were Pagans.

"God as Creator," if he ever existed, was a catastrophic failure. Had he been a perfect creator the so-called tragedy of Eden would never have occurred. A man perfectly made would never have gone wrong. As a matter of fact neither Nature nor man was ever made at all. Nature is matter in various modes and degrees of development. Matter is wholly independent of time, at once without a beginning or an end. Many forms of its ceaseless evolution have had a beginning and an end. Solar systems, for example, come and go. Out of this evolutionary process all sorts of things, good and bad, flow—tigers and wolves as well as milking cows and sheep. This earth may have an end, and the human race may pass away, but the evolution of matter may go on for ever. In this process there is no sign whatever of the operation of Deity. The reality of evolution is the most cogent of all arguments for Atheism. Science has politely but finally bowed the Creator and creation out of existence.

J. T. LLOYD.

Two Great Heretics.

The books which help you most are those which make you think the most.—*Theodore Parker.*

Souls tempered with fire.—*Matthew Arnold.*

SINCE writing my little pamphlet, *Freethought and Literature* (Pioneer Press), I have been taken to task by some correspondents, who allege sins of omission and commission. One friendly critic points out that I have omitted reference to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the genial autocrat of the breakfast table, who, it is suggested, deserves notice for his undoubted services in the cause of toleration in a country which has been well described as the Benighted States. Much of what my correspondent says is so pertinent that I willingly refer to a few points. Holmes was, like Emerson and Longfellow, a Unitarian, and his mental development is the more remarkable because he was brought up in a Calvinist home, his father being a minister. Young Holmes

early revolted against the crudities and cruelties of Orthodoxy, and when he reached manhood he was fortunate in becoming friendly with such notable men as Agassiz, Emerson, and Lowell, to mention but a few, and the effect on his receptive character was great and lasting.

Holmes's correspondence amply reveals his heterodoxy. Being remonstrated with for the mild heresies in the famous Breakfast Table Series, he wrote: "If somebody had not offended a century ago, we should now be hanging each other's grandmothers for witches." Replying to the Orthodox apology that the Christian Religion may, after all, comfort some people, Holmes said pointedly: "I accept such ideas and language as appropriate to the Retreat for Aged and Infirm Women, but not for you and me. Truth is often very uncomfortable." He is more severe in his remarks that "a very large percentage of very bad men are formed under Christian influences, but everybody knows that a great many good men grow up in this as in every form of faith." Holmes is quite clear and emphatic in his denunciation of Orthodoxy: "I cannot forget that it left William Cowper on his death-bed in unutterable despair; and I have seen enough of it in practice to feel sure that it has yet something to gain, and a good deal to be rid of." These quotations, taken at random, will send many readers to Holmes's *Life and Letters*, for they reveal a charming and delightful personality, faced by the uncivilized features in the Christian Religion.

Another correspondent takes me to task very strongly for stating that Charles Dickens, the world-famous novelist, was a Unitarian. My critic refers me to John Forster as saying that "upon essential points he (Dickens) had never any sympathy so strong as with the leading doctrines of the Church of England." This is simply Christian camouflage, and Forster must have written that sentence with his tongue in his cheek. Forster was a very timid and time-serving biographer, and he never permitted his small courage to outrun his extreme discretion, as may be seen in his extraordinary reticence in dealing with Dickens' domestic matters. And we have learned a great deal since Forster's very respectable *Life of Dickens* first cumbered the shelves of the circulating libraries.

Let us get down to facts in this affair. For some considerable time Dickens attended Little Portland Street Unitarian Church, where he had sittings and subscribed to its funds. If this is not evidence of his attachment to Unitarianism, my correspondent must be uncommonly hard to please. And, judged by the Articles of the Church of England, Unitarians are quite outside the pale of Orthodoxy, and are reserved for the same lurid fate as naughty Freethinkers. Even in the Unitarian fold Dickens was very broad-minded. Of mission work he was impressed unfavourably, as evidenced by his writing: "So Exeter Hall holds us in mortal submission to missionaries, who (Livingstone always excepted) are perfect nuisances, and leave every place worse than they found it."

Nor is this all. When that stalwart Freethinker, Robert Morrell, founded the National Sunday League, Dickens was heartily in favour of the movement for light and liberty. He not only helped the anathematised League with money, but also gave the proceeds of readings from his works for its benefit. Nor was this a sudden impulse, for, years before, Dickens wrote a pamphlet entitled, *Sunday Under Three Heads*, in which he castigated the then Bishop of London for his uncivilized views regarding Sunday recreation for working people. Dickens was very heretical. He had a very strong aversion from all dogma, and described himself as "morally wide

asunder from Rome," which is not a compliment to the religion which calls itself Catholic. Of Puritanism, Dickens was an uncompromising opponent. Even in the *Pickwick Papers*, the most light-hearted and irresponsible of his books written in the heyday of his manhood, he lashes religious hypocrisy with all the zest and abandon of an English Molière.

An amusing instance of the great novelist's playfulness with regard to religion was his naming a dummy book in his library *Evidences of Christianity by King Henry the Eighth*. Indeed, keen critics have always noticed the strong strain of Freethought in Dickens's writings; and Matthew Arnold, in his delightful book, *Friendship's Garland*, pictured himself taking his foreign friend Arminius to the House of Commons to hear the pious Sir William Harcourt "develop a system of unsectarian religion from the life of Mr. Samuel Pickwick." Dickens abandoned all church attendance long before his death, but it is abundantly clear that his sympathies were all in favour of a mild form of Unitarianism. If I remember rightly, Dickens wrote a *Life of Christ* which was so heretical and unconventional that it was suppressed by the critics on the hearth on the ground that it would hurt his reputation as a novelist. No edition has ever been issued in this country, but I have heard that it was issued in America. Despite the camouflage of Forster, Charles Dickens was a heretic, and not a Churchman. It is well, for Charles Dickens is one of the sweetest memories of his land and century.

MIMNERMUS.

The Conflict Between Roman Catholicism and Humanitarianism

II.

(Concluded from page 117.)

To those foolish Protestants who are holding out the hand of fellowship to the Church of Rome, and dream rosy dreams of a reunion of all the churches, including that of Rome, we commend the following example of how this priest regards their efforts, and their faith:—

The issues, then, are clear. Men are now faced by the choice of two offers. Humanitarianism is the one offer, Christianity is the other. By "Christianity" we mean true Christianity—Catholicism. As a form of Christianity, Protestantism scarcely counts to-day in the world of thought. Its Christian doctrines are watered down to the point of insipidity. At its best it has but a jumble of contradictory opinions to offer. Divisions have more or less nullified whatever influence it may have had in the past. Even the reunion movement is a part-attempt to close up the ranks in face of danger. Not only this, but thousands are feebly surrendering to the enemy. Even now Protestantism is honey-combed with Humanitarian thought. Its very foundations are being sapped away. But the Catholic Church stands before the world undivided, unmoved, unashamed, and unafraid.¹

And, he might have added, pitiless and unrepentent for all the misery she has caused and the blood she has shed. It is significant, says Father Dudley, that Mr. Wells did not choose a Protestant clergyman in his *Men like Gods* to represent the Christian religion as the enemy of Utopia:—

Mr. Wells was quite right in choosing a Catholic priest. The Catholic Church and Humanitarianism are deadly enemies. They each stand for what the other hates. One stands for the worship of God, the other for the worship of man.

¹ O. F. Dudley. *Will Men be Like Gods?* (p. 24).

We thank Father Dudley for this frank and open avowal; we could not have stated the position more concisely or truthfully if we had tried.

Christianity is not concerned with Humanitarianism, which is concerned with the well-being of the body. Christianity is concerned with the welfare of the soul. It regards the body as the fleshy vessel in which the soul is imprisoned during its earthly pilgrimage through this vale of tears, on its way to that heavenly mansion in the skies, which is to be the reward of faith and renunciation of all the sensuous joys and pleasures of this life. Father Dudley rightly complains of those Christians who put sin in the background, to whom "Social reform seems of more importance than salvation from sin. That is why Christ is looked upon, outside the Catholic Church, as a mere social reformer instead of a Saviour" (p. 69).

Of course Christ was no "mere social reformer." His concern was with the soul. The idea, so industriously put forward to-day, that Christ was a sort of itinerant socialist lecturer, is quite modern. This view was altogether unknown to the first Christians and the early Church. It was unknown to the Middle Ages, during which Father Dudley's faith ruled. Those "Dark Ages," the "Ages of Faith," which lasted a thousand years, during which the people lay prone at the foot of the altar and the throne, and Europe relapsed into barbarism and chaos. During this time, the only enterprise in which the Christian nations could be prevailed upon to unite was the Crusades, or Holy Wars, for the recovery of the tomb of Christ from the infidels. During two hundred years the Christian nations, urged on by the Popes and saints of the Church, launched army after army against the Mahomedans, draining Europe of men and treasure. They devastated the neutral countries through which they passed, like a plague of locusts. When they captured Jerusalem, they celebrated the event by putting the garrison and the inhabitants to the sword. Raymond d'Argiles, who was an eye-witness, tells us that in the Mosque of Omar the "blood ran knee-deep and reached the horses' bridles." All for the love of God, which Father Dudley tells us is the mainspring of morality and without which it cannot exist!

During the Great War our lying press spread a tale that the Germans were using the bodies of their dead to manufacture glycerine. The barbarous Crusaders did worse than that; they actually roasted the bodies of their enemies and ate them, killing many of their captives for the same purpose!

If the Crusaders had been successful in destroying the Mohammedan power, and stamping out their civilization, they would have prolonged the Dark Ages indefinitely; for, as Tylor remarks:—

Physical science might almost have disappeared if it had not been that while the ancient treasure of knowledge was lost to Christendom, the Mohammedan philosophers were its guardians, and even added to its store.²

For while Europe hymned and prayed in mental darkness, the Arabians had preserved the ancient treasure of Greek science and Greek literature, and it was this, flashing over Europe, that broke the spell of the Dark Ages, brought about the Renaissance—which is only another name for revival, or a new birth—and ultimately broke the power of the Church.

Let us take another illustration from history, and compare two conquests—one Pagan and the other Christian. During the first century the Romans con-

quered Britain, mainly because they regarded it as the recruiting ground of the insurgent Gauls, and therefore a danger to the Empire. They found the inhabitants savages, and they civilized them. They taught them to make roads and build houses; they put an end to the tribal wars; they established the *Pax Romana*, a peace that lasted three hundred years, and when the Roman Legions were withdrawn to defend the Empire from the barbarian hosts, the Britains made many appeals to Rome for their return; which it is not likely they would have done had the Romans been unjust and tyrannical. Three hundred years of peace! How many wars have taken place between Christian nations during the last three hundred years? It would take up the greater part of this column merely to enumerate them.

Now for the Christian conquest. In the sixteenth century the Spaniards discovered and conquered America. They found the inhabitants highly civilized, mild and peaceable. They lived under a Socialistic form of government by which every man, woman, and child was amply provided for. It is true that they were given to making human sacrifices on a large scale to their gods, but this was entirely due to religion, which is always the enemy, and Christians should be the last ones to find fault with another religion on the score of the blood it has shed. There was not the slightest reason for the Spaniards to interfere with the inhabitants. Spain had nothing to fear from them had they been ever so warlike; they could not reach Spain across the ocean. But the Spaniards descended upon them like a pack of ravening wolves, wherever they went they destroyed; they enslaved the inhabitants and forced them to work in the gold mines, and when they died off like flies, being unsuited to such labour, the Spaniards introduced black slaves from Africa and thus started that horrible trade which afterwards brought about the American Civil War, and has left the problem of what to do with the black descendants—who are increasing at a much greater rate than the white race—one of the most pressing, perplexing, and vital problems that any State has had to deal with.

The ruins of the great cities which the Spaniards devastated still remain to arouse the wonder and curiosity of the traveller, and testify to the quality of the Spanish fury. Great quantities of manuscripts, treasured up in the archives of the country, were wantonly destroyed by the frantic priests—the pious Spaniards always carried their priests with them—on the ground that they were "magic scrolls"; they were gathered together into what the Spanish writers themselves describe as a "mountain heap," and reduced to ashes. Says Prescott:—

Never did fanaticism achieve two more signal triumphs, than by the annihilation of so many curious monuments of human ingenuity and learning. The unlettered soldiers were not slow in imitating the example of their prelate. Every chart and volume which fell into their hands was wantonly destroyed. (Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, p. 33.)

So that we know nothing of the history or origin of these people and their civilization. Such was the Christian conquest of America.

The whole history of Christianity shows that the ideals of Humanitarianism and the ideals of Christianity are diametrically opposed. The Humanitarians strive for a better life here in this world. The Christians—true Christians—seek for a better life in another world. They renounce the joys of this life for that of the life to come. The modern doctrine of making the best of both worlds is not to be found within the pages of the New Testament, or in those Christian classics, *The Imitation of Christ*

² Tylor. *Anthropology*, (p. 324).

and the *Pilgrims' Progress*, which Christians extol so rapturously, but utterly ignore in practice.

Humanitarianism is Secular; as Father Dudley sneeringly observes:—

a condition of things in which the thoughts of men are not even coloured by religion; that blissful state around which the supporters of the *Literary Guide* form an imaginary circle and dance for joy.

But as Professor Clifford truthfully observed:—

When we love our brother for the sake of our brother, we help all men to grow in the right; but when we love our brother for the sake of somebody else, who is very likely to damn our brother, it very soon comes to burning him alive for his soul's health. When men respect human life for the sake of Man, tranquility, order, and progress go hand in hand; but those who only respected human life because God had forbidden murder have set their mark upon Europe in fifteen centuries of blood and fire.³

We quite agree with Father Dudley when he says "The Catholic Church and Humanitarianism are deadly enemies."² And, should he print another edition of his book he is quite at liberty to include the foregoing exposition of the truth of that statement.

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

We desire very seriously to call the attention of the clergy to the *Evening Standard* of February 17. Commenting on the King's illness that paper noted the immunity of the Royal Family from contagious diseases. It attributed this to the fact that they led an isolated life to the extent of not moving about in public vehicles or in promiscuous crowds as do ordinary folk. Now what we wish to point out is that it is part of the duty of the clergy of the Church of England to pray for the recovery of the King in times of sickness, and there is in the formulated programme of the Church performances a special prayer for the health of the Royal Family. And we suggest that for the *Evening Standard* to ignore these prayers of the clergy, to give them no part whatever in the alleged immunity of the Royal Family from certain disease, is treating the clergy and the power of prayer with contempt. We are astonished at the *Standard* and we invite the attention of the clergy to the matter.

It is not wise to attempt to discover a sensible meaning to anything the Bishop of London may have to say, but all the same one wonders what on earth was in his mind when he informed a congregation at St. Paul's that he "trembled to think what would happen to the Church in this country if they had no foreign missions." Does he mean that as it is quite hopeless to expect to convert civilized people the only chance of the Church gaining converts is to work among the uncivilized? That would be quite a sensible summing up of the situation, which is why we hesitate to ascribe it to the Bishop. It reminds one of a late Bishop of Exeter's famous defence of his action in confirming the inmates of the Western Counties Asylum. He said it was well known the weak-minded had a tendency towards religion.

An inquest was held the other day at Bournemouth concerning the death of a man who died while under treatment from a Christian Scientist. A doctor called as a witness said the man died from pneumonia, and a verdict was returned in accordance with the evidence. But the Coroner said it was unfortunate that the term Christian should be used as that was a religion. If

talking back had been permitted the Christian scientist might have retorted that prayer and faith were the only medicines recommended by Jesus Christ and by the New Testament, and the Coroner was therefore passing judgment on Jesus. We wonder what that Coroner would do if Jesus came back and tried to enforce his divine method of healing? That is a question we should like some responsible Christian to answer.

The Archbishop of Dublin recently issued a public reminder that in Ireland God is not attending to the weather as he might do. All the clergy were asked to pray to the Lord on February 15 for such weather as might relieve the present distress. We have not observed any remarkable alteration in the weather as a result, but we do like to see these servants of the Lord reminding Omnipotence that he—or it—is not looking after his job in a way that brings unqualified content to his worshippers. It is just like a deputation visiting a local council to ask for some improvement in the tram service or the water supply.

We see from the *Leeds Mercury* that two deputations have recently attended the Leeds City Council to urge that increased facilities for Sunday games should be granted. One of these deputations was concerned with golf only, and drew attention to the fact that the Corporation does already allow that game to be played on Sunday on land leased by it to a private club. It was urged, therefore, that it was inconsistent to refuse the municipal golfers permission to play their game on Sunday. Well, we wish the deputation luck, although we fear that logical argument is of little avail with the bigoted Sabbatarian. There is probably no question on which there is more Christian cant and humbug talked than that of Sunday recreations. One can understand the man who holds genuinely dismal religious views, and who maintains that Sunday should be a day set apart from the rest of the week, and a day on which neither work nor play should be indulged in. But the Sabbatarian is for the most part quite prepared to utilize the various amenities provided by Sunday labour. He does not refuse his Monday morning paper because of the Sunday labour it entails; he is usually prepared to eat hot meals on Sunday; receive a Monday morning post that has been sorted on the previous day; and make use of electricity and gas that could not be supplied but for Sunday labour. In short, his talk about the sanctity of Sunday is sheer hypocrisy. He finds his enjoyment in gloomy religious practices, and has no sympathy with the more cheerful person who finds his or her recreation in healthier and less morbid ways.

Incidentally Sabbatarianism provides a striking example of the way in which religion conflicts with modern civilization. In the primitive Hebrew civilization strict observance of the Sabbath may have been possible, and perhaps even desirable. But in a complex civilization such as ours it would lead to a literal collapse of society. A moment's consideration must convince even the most rabid Sabbatarian that the ordinary occupations of life must go on whether it is Sunday, or any holy day of the Church. Transport by land and sea, steel and iron works, foundries and mines, the maintenance of the telegraph, telephone, and postal services, and a host of other services that provide the physical basis of our civilization cannot be interfered with because a few cranks still cling to a theological system that grew up in a primitive community where none of our modern industries existed. And we fancy that if the most pious of Roman Catholics, or the most sanctimonious of Free Churchmen had really to choose between the "pagan" civilization they are so fond of denouncing, and Christianity, they would plump for the former without much hesitation. But of course they make no serious objection to the functioning of industry on their most holy days; all they really object to is people being able to obtain clean, healthy amusement on Sunday, and so ceasing to attend divine service.

³ Clifford. *Lectures and Essays* (p. 384).

⁴ *Will Men be Like Gods?* (p. 25).

According to Major Norman MacLeod, President of Uist and Barra Association, a minister in the island of North Uist, Hebrides, regarded the local war memorial as an incentive to superstition. He refused to participate in the memorial ceremony because a piper took part, and because, he averred, they were worshipping stone and lime. A case, we imagine, of professional jealousy. Or perhaps merely an excuse for avoiding listening to the bagpipes. One can never tell.

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham has issued an appeal to ministers of local churches for his unemployment fund. At a meeting of the representatives of the churches it was resolved that special or retiring collections should be made on behalf of the fund. Just at the present there is a good deal of public sympathy with the unemployed, and one may depend, therefore, upon the churches getting in the limelight where charitable attempts to palliate the evil are being made. One might believe that the professional theologian was in earnest in this matter if he denounced from the pulpit some of the social causes of unemployment. But that might be dangerous, and it would certainly cause the already diminutive congregations to dwindle further. Making collections of other folk's money is altogether safer.

On a charge of sacrilege, Milton David Hazell, John William Hills, and Edith Orange were recently charged at Lambeth. On Friday, January 30, it was found that St. Giles Church, Camberwell, had been broken into, and property to the value of about £9 stolen. Entry had apparently been effected through the crypt. It was stated that when the accused were arrested property was found on them connecting them with the theft. A remand was granted. Really we don't know what the Deity can be doing to allow such things to happen. In the good, pious days of old, such wretches would not have needed to be hauled up in front of a secular magistrate. They would have been struck dead, or something equally unpleasant. What with allowing St. Paul's to fall into a dangerous condition, and failing the Seventh-Day Adventists, God seems to be treating the faithful in a most irritating manner of late.

Mr. F. C. Watkins, the Socialist candidate for Mid-Bucks, has been holding forth from the pulpit. He was invited to do this by the minister of the Chesham United Free Church, who possibly has an eye on the Christian Socialists, or thinks that a little sentimental politics mixed in with religion will make it go down better. Mr. Watkins, according to the press report, "conjured up a picture of the world as it would be if the teachings of Jesus were obeyed." It must have been a bloodcurdling picture, we should imagine. One can get a dreadful picture of what Christianity in practice means by reading Lecky and other historians on the life of the anchorites in the early centuries of Christianity. Either Mr. Watkins is a very ignorant man, or else he is hankering after the Christian vote, for apart from the facts of recorded history, a little consideration will convince anyone that Christianity—and by that we mean the vague, mystical teachings contained in the New Testament, and not some form of modern Socialism, neatly tinted with biblical quotations—and civilization are incompatible. Christianity is essentially a selfish, anarchistic system of ideas, that bids its adherents turn in scorn from this world, and prepare themselves for the kingdom that is in heaven. No one would deny that the Roman civilization, even at its best, had many grave failings, but it was infinitely preferable to the dark ages of superstition and brutality that followed its collapse—a collapse for which Christianity is in no small measure responsible, by having inculcated a hatred for civilized life and citizenship. And any would-be social reformer of to-day, who seriously imagines that the application of Christian "ethics" to modern problems would give us a better civilization, is utterly incompetent to be a teacher or leader. We would suggest that Mr. Watkins should read the history of civilization and Christianity before

he indulges in loose talk about the desirability of applying Christian principles to modern social problems.

Mr. J. C. W. Reith, managing director of the British Broadcasting Co., Ltd., has a little soft soap for the Church in an address on Wireless delivered to clergymen. "He believed," he said, "that rightly handled and supplemented by the work of the Church people and ministers themselves, it would send people to the churches." We trust that Mr. Reith will continue by his pronouncements to put Christianity on the level of advertised goods, with the clergy, as expectant bagman, looking on—or listening in.

All that is representative of the good taste and feelings of the British Empire in the *Daily Mail* was brought to the front to rebuke the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, in the House of Lords, drew attention to the expulsion by the Turkish Government of the Greek Patriarch from Constantinople. *Vox populi, vox Daily Mail*, states that the Archbishop makes a mistake by intervening in what is after all a question of foreign policy, etc. The connection between the man of sorrows and the Archbishop and the *Daily Mail* is homeopathic—or homeopathic.

A telegram received from Christchurch (N.Z.) and published in the *Daily Mail*, reports the "bad relapse" of patients who were "cured" by Hickson when in New Zealand. That is only what one would expect. Many of these reported cures never take place at all, but are sheer lies to which the missionary, the patients, and the friends of the patients all contribute. In other cases, excitement causes a little temporary improvement, to be followed by a "bad relapse" about which neither the missionary nor the clergy say anything. These missions are among the grossest frauds perpetrated upon an unthinking public. Many a man who tries the same sort of thing, but without mixing it up with religion, finds himself in a police court charged with being a common rogue and vagabond.

The *Church Times* is delighted that the Irish Free State Government has declined to sanction Bills for divorce. So long as the unclean Christian view of marriage is maintained the C.T. cares little for the misery of thousands of men and women, and the evil consequences in many directions. But one can expect little better of men who hark back to a mythical Judean peasant, who embodies all that is involved in the ideal of celibacy, for guidance. The man or woman who contests the right to divorce to-day is hopelessly out of touch with all that is right and sensible in the discussion of the subject.

In the *Western Evening Herald* Katherine Tynan, the novelist, "gets away" with a number of statements on this question which could only pass because of the ignorance of Christians concerning their own creed and the habits of editors to pass anything so long as it praises the Christian religion as the embodiment of all that is good and wise. She says: "The Church to which I belong (the Roman Church) made marriage a sacrament for the dignity and ennobling of the human relation." We beg to tell Miss Tynan that the Church did nothing of the kind. The sacramental nature of marriage is much older than the Christian Church, and it takes its rise in the primitive belief that the specific functions of woman, as such, clothes her with a very dangerous form of supernatural influence. It is for this reason that we find with primitive religions the priest endowed with the duty of preparing the girl for marriage, and later the practice of prostitution in connection with the temple. The Church took this over along with many other savage customs that Christianity revived and strengthened.

How on earth could the Christian Church dignify and ennoble marriage when it held up celibacy as the ideal

state and only sanctioned marriage as a concession to the weakness of the flesh? The emphasis laid on the "purity" of the virgin state as contrasted with the married state is alone proof of this. The message of the Church is that of Paul: "It is better to marry than to burn." Marriage may be permitted in view of something worse. And we may remind Miss Tynan that it was a council of "the Church to which I belong" that once solemnly discussed whether woman was a human being, and only decided by a narrow majority that she was.

Miss Tynan also discovers in the writings of the Christian saints a great tenderness for women, and professes great admiration for the chivalry of the Middle Ages. For the first, we challenge Miss Tynan to find any literature in the world in which women are loaded with so many opprobrious and filthy epithets as in the writings of the Christian fathers. And for the latter, if Miss Tynan will get beyond mere phrases and look at the facts of the case she will find that there is hardly another period in the world's history in which a lower value was placed upon female chastity, or in which men treated women worse than during the ages of chivalry. A very sober historian, Hallam, has well said:—

In the amusing fiction which seems to have been the only popular reading of the Middle Ages there reigns a licentious spirit, not of that lighter kind which is usual in such compositions, but indicating a general dissoluteness of the sexes.....The violation of marriage vows passes in them for an incontestible privilege of the brave and the fair; and an accomplished knight seems to have enjoyed as undoubted prerogatives, by general consent of opinion, such as were claimed by the brilliant courtiers of Louis XV.

During these ages of chivalry it may truthfully be said that morals reached a lower point than at any other time during the last two thousand years. The gallant knights thought nothing of running off with heiresses, forcibly marrying them, or holding them to ransom. Rape was the commonest of offences. Monasteries and nunneries were hotbeds of vice, and as for the common people no good-looking girl was safe from the lust of these gallant knights, at the side of whom the worst of our modern ruffians would stand as a polished gentleman. And there was the infamous right of the first night, by which the Lord of the Manor—lay or ecclesiastical—claimed the enjoyment of the peasant bride for the first twenty-four hours after marriage. We advise Miss Tynan to stick to the field of professed fiction. It is ridiculous to pass that off as solid history.

After the ceremony of opening the Holy Door in St. Peter's was performed by the Pope there was naturally left a Holy Hole. Now if the Roman Church acts up to its business traditions there is here an excellent chance for big business. We feel sure that if pieces of that Holy Hole were sold to the faithful there are millions of them who would purchase. And in this case the supply is inexhaustible. The Pope would add to its value if he blessed each piece of the hole as it was taken away.

Five hardened young criminals were charged at Keswick police court with the hair-raising offence of playing football on Sunday afternoon in a place called Bell Close. One of the justices asked whether they could play in the park. To that Inspector Graham replied, "They should not be playing at all, but be in Church"; to which we feel inclined to say confound his impudence. It would appear from this that Inspector Graham's aim is to get people to Church and to use his position as a policeman to bring that about. All we can say is that the less the inspector has to do with the public the better. No doubt he would like to see the old law of compulsory church attendance properly enforced. At any rate it is not his business to express opinions about people going to Church, and it would have been just as well if the Bench had reminded him of this.

The Rev. J. J. R. Armitage has been casting his eagle eye and analytical mind over the Sunday newspapers. He says that together they represent a circulation of 11,000,000 copies. But he found that in 887 columns of reading matter there were only six columns of reading matter in which there was any mention of the Christian religion or acknowledgment of a supreme being. He concludes, therefore, there is no need for Sunday papers. We do not accept Mr. Armitage's figures, although we should be pleased to do so. But the statements made by the clergy are so notoriously untrustworthy that we are warranted in viewing them, on principle, with suspicion. We could find any Sunday more than six columns in which there is some mention of religion in the two or three papers we see. But the assumption because there is no mention of the business in which Mr. Armitage is engaged therefore there is no need for Sunday papers, is characteristically Christian in its impudence.

If Mr. Armitage will again go through the Sunday papers and note the character of those that do publish articles on religion and those which do not, he will find that the papers that make most of a religious article from some preacher or other are papers which make a special feature of divorce cases, sensational murders, and things of a similar kind. They know the calibre of their readers and prepare for their religious side as well as for their love of sensation, fondness for scandal, and thinly veiled pornographic tastes.

Some of the readers of the *Christian World* have been regretting that it does not publish statistics concerning the conversions at revival meetings. The editor explains that the figures furnished are misleading, and he gives as an instance that after a great West End mission thirteen cards were signed expressing a desire to join a church. Of this gallant thirteen twelve were already on the membership roll, and the remaining one was already a candidate for membership. We have pointed out this kind of thing time after time. The much advertised missions that one reads about are just so many frauds, and they who run them know it quite well. The same people are converted time after time, misleading accounts of great enthusiasm are circulated, and the whole thing is designed in order to give the outside public the impression that the Church is making rapid headway, and is full of life. We doubt if there is another industry in our midst which covers so much fraud and humbug as the soul-saving trade.

"Famous" spiritualistic mediums come and go with curious regularity, and the exposure of the last neither prevents a new one appearing nor shakes the faith of many in the old one. At present there is a medium named "Margery," wife of a Dr. Le Roi G. Crandon, who is coming to this country—if she is not already here. From the *Boston Morning Herald* we see that Dr. Morton Prince, the world-renowned Alienist, has offered 5,000 dollars for super-normal phenomena from Margery under laboratory conditions—which only means that steps will be taken to prevent imposture or misunderstanding. Now Dr. Prince is exactly the man to undertake such an investigation; that of a lawyer, or a man of letters, or an ordinary physicist is simply valueless. But "Margery" declines the invitation, and her husband attempts to ride away by sarcastically challenging Dr. Prince to produce a comet in the laboratory. Of course, the challenge is pure bluff, although it might astonish Dr. Crandon to know that there can be produced in the laboratory all the factors that eventuate in the fall of a comet, and even a miniature comet itself.

Dr. Crookshank's book, *The Mongol in our Midst*, is another broadside into the chronology of the Bible. Anthropology will now include Oceanic continents in its findings, and this, together with the recent discovery of the skull in Barotseland, will somewhat dislocate the Garden of Eden story.

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.

A. MILLAR.—Article on Burns received and shall appear as soon as possible. Unfortunately we have no means of stretching the capacity of our columns, and many articles are held over much longer than we care to delay their publication.

C. HASLAND.—Mr. Cohen has devoted a chapter in his *Theism or Atheism* to an examination of the argument from design in its old and new forms. The argument is not so much inconclusive as it is absolutely irrelevant to the point at issue.

J. SCHOFIELD (Detroit).—Papers are being sent as requested. Thanks.

J. STEPHENS.—We do not feel warranted in treating Paul as a mythical figure, although some of the epistles attributed to him were clearly not his. We could hardly do justice to your questions in this column.

J. ALMOND.—We are not sufficiently acquainted with the books you name to express an opinion.

H. BAYFORD.—Glad to hear that Mr. Saphin's lectures were so much appreciated by the Manchester friends.

E. CHAPMAN.—Always glad to hear from you. See "Views and Opinions."

We have received a reply from Mrs. Bridges Adams to the criticism passed on her article on education. We regret that space prevents us publishing it until next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 1) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice, afternoon and evening, in the Palace Theatre, Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare. Admission will be free on both occasions.

Next Sunday, Mr. Cohen will pay a visit to Leicester and will lecture in the evening at 6.30 in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate.

The Pioneer Press has just published a new book by Miss Ettie Rout entitled *Sexual Health and Birth Control*. Miss Rout is a master of her subject, and writes with a force and earnestness that cannot be easily overpraised. It is a book that all should read. For one thing, although that is not the most important thing in the book, it is the only work dealing with the subject in which justice is done to the work of Freethinkers

in connection with these subjects. Not merely to the work of individual Freethinkers, but to the freer atmosphere created by their work of mental emancipation. That is an aspect of the matter that some of the advocates of the now popular subject of birth control would do well to remember. An important introduction to the book is written by Sir Bryan Donkin, M.D., who pays a high tribute to the work of Miss Rout, and justly says "she speaks strongly because she believes firmly, and she believes firmly because she knows the truth of the facts on which she relies." Miss Rout is the author of a number of important books on the subject, and we have much pleasure in strongly recommending the work to all. The book is well got up, and is published at 1s. It will be sent post free for 1s. 2d.

Miss Rout has received already from many leading medical authorities and others some very striking testimonials as to the general nature of her work and of this, her latest production. We have only space for brief quotations from one or two. Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, Consulting Surgeon to Guy's Hospital, writes in high appreciation of "the magnificent work you have done and are doing," and adds that her mode of dealing with the subjects of her book "is so thorough and so knowledgeable, qualities which are possessed by but very few." Dr. Barbara Crawford writes:—

Miss Ettie Rout.....in her *Sexual Health and Birth Control*, gives clear enlightenment on these vitally important subjects."

Prof. Bickerton says:—

I quite agree with Sir Bryan Donkin as to the mischief done by well-disposed pious persons. Surely there never was so striking an illustration of the saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. I attended ninety lectures by Professor Huxley in 1870. At these he often talked confidentially to us mature teachers. He said that were it not for the opposing action of good people venereal diseases might be stamped out in a decade by medical prevention, and that the first step forward would be made when the moral and medical issues were separated. I am greatly pleased also that you are calling attention to the dysgenic effect of the present incidence of contraceptive action. I walked through King's Cross recently following a sensational funeral that seemed to have called out all the slum-dwellers of that neighbourhood. I have never, before or since, seen such a pitiable and threatening sight. The whole route was lined with dense masses of badly bred and ill-nurtured crowds. Half-starved ragged children stood in front of miserable, frail women, many of whom had babies in their arms and tiny children clinging to their skirts, while ranks of hungry, weedy, anti-social-looking men stood behind. After this fearful sight it has not surprised me to read that about 82 per cent. of recruits are rejected. Is not the action of our mistaken pietists and timid politicians actually creating a C3 nation? I hope your book will enable them to see the logic of facts and alter their action accordingly.

One of the many hundreds who have written to the B.B.C. about their Sunday religious service—letters which the gentleman in charge generally ignores when he is dilating on the satisfaction their Sunday sermons give—tells that he intends writing them regularly till the B.B.C. learns to be a little less the cat's-paw of the parson than it seems to be at present. He also suggests that other Freethinkers should follow his example. There is a good deal in this advice. Freethinkers are so used to being treated unfairly by Christians that many have come to take it as a matter of course, and to pay little attention to it. That is quite a wrong policy. We have never got anything from Christians till we were strong enough to demand it, and to submit to Christians quietly is to strengthen them in their arrogance and impertinence. We may have to submit, but there is no reason why we should do so quietly.

The National Secular Society has arranged for a Social Evening to take place at the Bijou Theatre, Bedford Street, Strand, on Monday, March 16. There will be a varied programme of dances, songs, etc. Admission will be by ticket, price 2s., which will include refreshments. Tickets may be obtained from either the Free-

thinker or the N.S.S. office, and none will be sold after March 14. At the Annual Dinner it was unfortunate that some intending visitors were not able to be present owing to their leaving their application for tickets till the last moment. We hope, therefore, that those who intend being present will make application for tickets as soon as possible. That will enable all arrangements to be made that will secure the comfort of those present.

On Saturday, February 28, the West Ham Branch is holding one of its winter Socials in the Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate. There will be the usual varied programme, and all Freethinkers and their friends are welcome.

The Highgate Debating Society discussed at its last meeting the question of "What is Truth?" There is a column report in the local *Gazette*, and we note some of the speakers—unnamed—appear to have got in some very shrewd and hard knocks at what is, perhaps facetiously, called Christian truth. That is quite good, and its publication in the local press is a good sign.

Mr. Clifford Williams addressed a very appreciative meeting of the Birmingham Branch on Sunday last. The Birmingham Branch is carrying on under conditions not the most favourable to its work, and we hope that local friends will give as much assistance as is possible.

Ethics.

V.

A DISCOURSE FOR NURSES AND CHILDREN—*Continued.*

We come now, nurse, to deal with the important subject of clothes, and their ethical significance. There are some persons who regard the morals of this question as being of especial importance, particularly missionaries to the South Sea savages and old ladies who live in Cathedral towns. The Christian bishops and clergy are always making it a subject for officious interference, and dictating to ladies how to dress; but all their pious admonitions exhibit a lamentable ignorance of the fundamental principles of morality. Listen to this, which I read in the newspapers a few days ago:—

Catholic bishops in Czecho-Slovakia have issued a manifesto exhorting parents to educate their children at an early age on the question of morality (!) The bishops condemn the manner in which young children, as well as women, are dressed, especially when they attend Church, and recommend all the clergy to post up notices on the Church doors, calling upon female worshippers to come decently (!) clothed.

Of course, in their agitation and concern about ladies' clothing, these bishops are only following the example of the Apostle Paul, whose epistles are full of instructions as to the way ladies ought to dress, and how they are to comport themselves. Widows, who are widows indeed, and young widows who are not widows indeed, and married and unmarried women, are all gratuitously taught the impropriety of wearing silk stockings and short skirts. They are told what sort of hats they are to wear and when to wear them. They are to keep them on when they go to Church, and take them off when they go to bed—this latter being most important, as in the case of a married woman the husband would run a grave risk of having a hat-pin stuck in his eye. And it was this same Paul, nurse, this pettifogging moralist, whom you may remember I told you Arthur Lynch regarded as the compeer of Aristotle and Plato, and Kant and Hegel, and Jeremy Bentham and Hobbes. Heavens above! what

a lot of strange bed-fellows one has to consort with in this ethical business! This confusion of morals with modes of dress, due largely to the pernicious influence of St. Paul, has permeated the whole of Christian thought on this subject. It is reflected in the Puritan and Quaker dress, in the conspicuous uniform of the Salvation Army and in the Sunday go-to-meeting clothes of the average worshipper. And these various modes of dress, translated into words, all mean this: Stand by, I am holier than thou! Nevertheless, the subject of ethics has a connection with clothes which must not be overlooked. The fop who is vain of his attire, we despise; the beggar whose garments are all tattered and torn, we pity; and the man who is suitably and smartly dressed, we admire, but these moral issues will be better dealt with under the Approbative desires.

Have you ever reflected, nurse, that nearly all the world's troubles began with the adoption of clothes. Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, as the song says, were happy and content, when they had no clothes to wear, and with bananas paid their rent. But this happy state of affairs only lasted until, in an evil moment, Eve took it into her head to adorn her nude figure with a fig-leaf. For as soon as Adam showed his appreciation of this artistic improvement, vanity and vexation, milliners and morals, and dress-and-corset makers, all sprang up like mushrooms. Of course, theologians and others give a sinister interpretation to this historic incident, and connect it with nudity; but we will leave these evil-minded persons to their own concerns. Rightly interpreted, it is apparent that the change—call it "fall" or what you will—was due to the dawning realization of the principles of art. The fiction of Adam and Eve having their "eyes opened" and beholding the moral offence of their nakedness, was only a priestly dodge to obtain a controlling influence over the female section of humanity; because you will notice that it is only in regard to female attire that these clerical busybodies concern themselves. A beggar in rags may go to blazes, so far as any ethical considerations in the matter of clothes appeal to their warped understanding. Of course, when these persons talk about morality in relation to clothes, what they really mean is the immorality of nudity. They are evidently of the opinion that nature made another serious blunder when she omitted to provide readymades to cover man's naked figure. Probably in time nature might have remedied this omission by making for his protection a tough hide like that of the rhinoceros or a furry coat like that of the bear, but as I have said, the early development of the artistic instinct frustrated the results that might have followed from nature's slow processes. But that such a conception of morals is purely artificial will, I think, be presently apparent.

The author of that interesting book, the *Shadow Show*, tells of having witnessed in Central Africa the holding of a market attended by about a hundred women, all buying and selling their wares, with not even the pretence of a fig-leaf to cover their nakedness. And to insinuate that the morals of these ladies is necessarily lower than those of their de-dizened sisters of the West, who so frequently find their way into the divorce court, is an insult to their innocence of heart and purity of thought. The son of a friend of mine, who had been out to the South Seas, was home on a visit and some of the old lady visitors to his father's house were curious to know if the ladies where he had been were clothed at all. "Yes," replied the youth, "they were clothed in thought." Whether the old ladies understood the subtle wisdom of this remark, and its underlying

philosophy is doubtful, but it expresses the very essence of clothes morality. It is a curious thing, but according to reliable testimony, the morals of the African natives, paradoxically it would seem, ascend in a descending scale, according to the quantity of clothes they wear; until we come to those who go absolutely naked, and who are the most moral of the lot.

There was once an old gentleman, nurse, named Sartar Resartus—which means the Tailor-patched—who wrote a kind of clothes philosophy, but he was one of those persons who believe that the longest way round is the shortest way home; and for that reason is difficult to follow in his meanderings. Nevertheless, he was a very learned man, and able to illustrate and embellish his wonderful thoughts with a wealth of classical and historical references, which a person of my humble education cannot fully appreciate. But we have this scholar's assurance that "the first purpose of clothes was not warmth or decency, but ornament." And in speaking of the practice of tattooing and painting the body, which, according to him, existed prior to clothes, he says that "the first spiritual want of a barbarous man is Decoration." So that in the views I have expressed I have very valuable and authoritative support.

The mention of tattooing reminds me of an incident narrated by Hermann Melville in his introduction to *Typee*. When he was in the Marquesas, the French had just hoisted their flag, and claimed possession of the islands. They invited the savage king and his queen, whom they had rigged out in some kind of incongruous clothes for the occasion, to the festivities on board their man-of-war. The sailors were all lined up on deck, and the band struck up some appropriate air on their arrival. During the ceremony, the old queen caught sight of a sailor whose chest was picturesquely tattooed. And unceremoniously leaving the side of the king, she crossed the deck to examine such a fine specimen of the tattooer's art. Not being able orally to express her appreciation and interest, and at a loss how to show it, suddenly an inspiration seized her, and to the consternation of the sailors, turned round and publicly exhibited a certain plump part of her anatomy, all beautifully tattooed—an exhibition which so shocked the French sailors, that they fled the deck. But Winwood Reade tells us, that in those parts of the East where the women go veiled, the men experience the same kind of moral shock at the exposure of a woman's face. Which shows that this class of morality is a mere matter of geography, and that as Comte says: Man makes his own moral world. If the feeling of moral aversion at the sight of a woman's face should appear mystifying to us, probably the action of the French sailors was just as mystifying to the cannibal queen.

Now, to come back to the bishop's manifesto quoted at the beginning, you will see that if those religious worshippers to whom it is addressed, had a sane and sensible view of clothes morality, instead of treating such a document as a serious epistle, they would laugh at it for the foolish and priestly imposition that it really is. These bishops will advocate a clothes education, a temperance education, or a religious education, but any effort that is made towards a genuine moral education meets with their sternest opposition. I have always had a feeling of sorrowful sympathy for the languishing ethical societies in our midst; but if they are ever to accomplish any really useful work, it is evident that they will have to follow the example of those ancient Jews, who while they rebuilt the city walls, always had the sword girded at their side to repulse any sudden attack of

their enemies. One of the purposes of these articles is to show that we can only practise the ethics of our particular situation, and undoubtedly there are occasions when the best argument is the sword.

I would like, nurse, to have dealt with various other aspects of this clothes question; to have noted, for instance, the peculiarities of national dress—not the least curious and interesting being that half Edenic, half barbarous garb known as the Highland costume. But, to use business phraseology, I have instructions not to overstock the department.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

"The Memoirs of a Positivist."

MANY years ago I now and again went up to the Positivist Church in Newcastle to listen to the really fine voice of Mr. Malcolm Quin and the splendid singing of his wife, who, hidden behind a folding screen, sat at the organ and rendered "Ora Pro Nobis" with all the fervour of a mediæval saint. The atmosphere of the Church was cathedral-like, from the lily-decorated altar down to the sparseness of the congregation, which never got beyond a half dozen or so. The pastor was solemnity itself, and as he came slowly pacing towards the altar in his red and black robes, with just the slightest inclination of his head as he passed the bust of the Founder, one felt that dreamy mental satisfaction that is at the bottom of all the civilized religions.

The star of Positivism shone brightly in those days. In the little tabernacle in St. Mary's Place reigned serene confidence in the Religion of Humanity. The head of the small community had the gift of great mental courage and he followed the gleam with the obstinacy of a Calvin. He was a poet, too, and for the use of his flock, he wrote a volume of hymns, some of which have the genuine ring of music. And on Saint's days and festivals the service was ornate and beautiful. I can still remember the sonorous chant with which he invited two friends of mine to step forward to be initiated into the Church. Ye "who dwell in darkness," was how it was put, for they had always had a gude conceit o' themselves. But the spirit of progress lurked within the walls of the chapel, and the march to Roman Catholicism, in so far as ceremonial was concerned, eventually left the pastor almost alone. The "religion of Humanity" pattered out.

And now Mr. Quin has written a book of memoirs. *Memoirs of a Positivist* (Allen & Unwin). He was a friend of G. W. Foote in the eighties; indeed, was always a friend and wrote for the *Liberal* and *Progress* under a *non-de-plume*. He has high praise for the dead. He writes:—

Foote was a man of honesty and courage.....a wider read man than any of the other Secularist leaders, and brought to his apostolate not only a poetic and historic sense, but the care and order of a deliberative mind.....On the platform he was argumentative and convincing, rather than vehement and dashing, and won his way by knowledge and good reasoning.

But when Foote saw that these good qualities simply counted for nothing with the bigots and decided to attack with ridicule and all the other weapons in the intellectual armoury, Quin protested, and that brought the following very characteristic letter from G. W. F.:—

MY DEAR QUIN,

In schoolboy language, which I hope is not inadmissible in your haughticultural system, I was deuced glad to see your fist again. It seems a very

Nov. 8th, 1882.

long time since I last saw you and I assure you I shall be very glad indeed to meet you in the flesh once more, and especially to make the acquaintance of your wife who, I am given to understand, is much the better Freethinker of the two.

I am so steeled against the criticism of enemies and the rebuke of friends that I am able to shake off your censures with an easy laugh; although I am somewhat surprised that your sympathy leans rather to the vicious and hypocritical law than to its possible victims. Liberty is more precious than systems; it overarches them all as the soaring azure dome of heaven overarches with equal ease a cottage and a pyramid, a hillock or a Chimborazo. I am ready to pay any price for it, and I am ready to fight for it against any odds. Hypocrisy shall not put me down. I detest it as the mortal enemy of mankind; and I feel such pleasure and such a sense of righteousness, in attacking it through the *Freethinker*, that I would not relinquish the task for any other. *Progress* will not supersede the *Freethinker*. It will work for the same ends—truth, justice, and humanity—in a more positive and serious way.

Thanks for your promise. I shall be glad of the article by the 25th. I send you a pamphlet which will enlighten you on the prosecution. The goal door is open. If I am thrust inside I will answer punishment for blasphemy with more blasphemy.

Yours faithfully,

G. W. FOOTE.

Mr. Quin states that the memorial praying for G. W. Foote's release from Holloway Prison was successful, and that John Morley, who was somewhat akin to the author in his religious outlook, signed it. That is not quite correct. G. W. F. did every hour of his time, and Honest John scunnered at the signing of the memorial. He first made sure that he was in good company before he put his name to it, which really destroys whatever importance there might have been about that particular blow for liberty of thought. Mr. Quin's book, however, is very readable, despite the fact that he is, and always was, a somewhat superior person, having a profound scorn for mere "criticism." But that is a good, nay, instinctive, "safety first" tactic for the religionist.

H. B. DODDS.

The Schools of a Revolution.

(Continued from page 125.)

XI.

THE *Conservatoire de Musique* had been closed since the Prussian siege, during which period an ambulance had been established there. On May 12, the venerable director of the *Conservatoire*, Auber, died. This decided the Commission of Education to appoint his successor and to reorganize the classes there. The choice fell upon a musician who had taken part in the revolution, named Salvador Daniel (1831-71). He had been a director of a music school at Algiers, and was well known in literary circles as the author of *La Musique Arabe* and as an authority on Oriental music. He had started the cry of "Music for the people," and had condemned the hierarchic administration which prevailed in the fine arts. In Rochefort's *Marseillaise* he had pointed out that the *Conservatoire* as a "free school of music," instituted by the great French revolution, had become under the monarchy a school for the "privileged." He had complained that the school had originally been placed by the Convention of 1794 in the hands of five inspectors (composers) and four professors (named by the artistes themselves), but now it had become governed by a Minister of Fine Arts, who himself

appointed the officials to the *Conservatoire*. Under the Empire," said Salvador, "the liberal idea no more existed in art than it did in politics. The system of State protection and subvention meant "privilege," and those who had access to the ante-chamber of the Minister of Fine Arts, easily slipped into the best appointments, whilst real artistes, compelled to follow the routine, suffered neglect. Salvador regarded that the prevailing system of protection was "not only useless, but very injurious to the true interests of art and artists," and he urged a return to a system that was "really democratic."

The revolutionary Commune of 1871 having appointed him delegate of the *Conservatoire*,¹ charging him with its reorganization, gave him the opportunity of realizing his ideas of reform. But alas! it was not to be. He first issued an invitation to the professors and officials to meet him at the school on May 13.² Five professors only responded, but Salvador was not discouraged,³ and another meeting was announced for May 20⁴. This time Salvador was accompanied by two "commissioners," who had been appointed to assist him. One of these was a student of the *Conservatoire* named Chollet, a nephew of a late professor of the school, and the other was his secretary, Paul Delbrett, a violinist of the *Opera*, from whose souvenirs the present writer was able to write the life of Salvador in the English translation of his *La Musique arabe*.⁵

At the meeting on May 20 two professors appeared, together with Rety, the secretary of the school, and Wekerlin, the librarian (a personal friend of Salvador's). Poor Salvador felt his position most keenly, yet so strong and fervid were his ideals, that even this blow could not daunt him. Turning to the few who had gathered, Salvador outlined his "reforms." One which is worthy of notice is his condemnation of the system of leaving a class to the sole direction of one teacher. Nothing destroyed individuality more than that. He suggested for the future that instead of one teacher, there would be ten or twenty, who would in turn take each class, and in each, expounding their principles, would broaden the intellectual horizon of the students, instead of narrowing it, as under the prevailing one-teacher system.

XII.

At the *Museum d'histoire naturelle*, the galleries and courses had been suspended for a considerable period, and on May 2 the Commission of Education decided to open them. A delegate to the Museum was appointed in the person of Ernest Mouille, and he was instructed "to arrange with the directors and professors for an early resumption of the classes; to attend to the preservation of the collections, and to take every useful measure which tended to safeguard the interests of the public, and the staff of the establishment."² The library was opened to the public on May 16, and two days later the famous galleries of anatomy and anthropology arranged by Cuvier, were likewise opened.

The old system whereby admission could only be obtained to the galleries by ticket was abolished, the Delegate for Education pointing out that it savored of "privilege" and the *regime monarchique*. "Under a *regime communal*, he said, "every gallery, library, collection, etc., would be open to the public

¹ The appointment does not appear in the *J.O.*, but he must have held the position from May 12.

² *Le Menestrel*, December, 1871.

³ Most of the professors had fled to Versailles.

⁴ *J.O.*, May 20.

⁵ *Music and Musical Instruments of the Arab* by Salvador Daniel and Henry George Farmer. (W. Reeves, London.)

¹ *J.O.*, May 4.

² *J.O.*, May 15.

at large, since the mere desire to read and study was sufficient authority for admission." Vaillant concludes his remarks on this question with these words:—

La delegation a l'enseignement tachera de l'elargir au plus tot dans le sens communaliste, c'est-a-dire pour l'interet du public studieux.

XIII.

Early in April, the artistic adherents to the Commune banded themselves together as a *Federation des Artistes* under the impulsion of the famous painter, Gustave Courbet (1819-77), himself a Socialist and an intimate friend of Proudhon.¹ The *Federation* appointed a Commission of Fine Arts, which included the names of many eminent artists. This Commission was installed at the Ministry of Fine Arts under the direction of Courbet, who had been nominated Delegate of Fine Arts. It was subject to the Commission for Education.² Among the painters of eminence in this Commission were:—Feyen Perrin, Amand Gautier, Arnaud Durbec, Hippolyte Dubois, Louis Gluck, Jules Hereau, August Lancon, and Oulevay. Among the sculptors were: Jules Dalou, Hippolyte Moulin, Agenor Chapuy, Auguste Ottin, Auguste Poitevin, and Joseph de Blezer. Among the architects were: Louis C. Boileau and Achille Oudinot. Among the lithographers were: Georges Bellenger and Andre Gill. Among the *artistes industriels* were: Ernest Chesneau, Eugene Pottier, A. Meyer, Ottin (fils). Here we have, not the "rabble" as history would assure us, but names which, if omitted from the annals of French art, would leave a serious hiatus.

The Commission of Fine Arts was charged by the Commune "to re-establish with the least delay the museums of Paris to their normal state, to open the galleries to the public....and to proceed with the annual exhibition in the Champ Elysees."³ For this purpose a *sub-commission for museums* was nominated, which consisted of Chapuy, Dubois, Gill, Gluck, Meyer, Moulin, Ottin, and Oudinot, with a *sub-commission for the annual exhibition*, which consisted of Boudier, Ottin (fils), and Gautier.⁴

The Central Committee had already assumed surveillance of the *Louvre* and *Tuileries* in March, but on April 12 the Commune gave the Commission of Fine Arts its mandate (as above) when the Commission itself issued the following:—⁵

The monuments (from an artistic point of view), the museums.....including the galleries, collections, and libraries of art.....are confided to the conservation and administrative surveillance of the Commission. It will arrange, conserve, rectify, and complete the plans, inventories, and catalogues. It will place them at the disposal of the public to facilitate study, and to satisfy the curiosity of visitors. It will report on the state of preservation of buildings, notify urgent repairs, and present to the Commune a frequent account of its work. It appoints the administrators, secretaries, archivists, and guardians, necessary for the service of these establishments, after an examination into their ability, and an enquiry into their character.....It dismisses for negligence, bad management, and proven malpractices.

On April 22 the *Louvre* opened the *Musee Lacazes*, the *Salle Henri III.*, the *Salle des Sept Cheminees*, the *Musee ds Antiques*, the *Musee des Dessins*, the *Musee Sauvageot*, and the *Musee de la Renaissance*. The officials of the *ancien regime* were allowed to

remain in office until May 13, when they were dismissed, and Achille Oudinot was appointed Communard Administrator, with Jules Dalou and Jules Hereau as adjuncts. Oudinot resigned on the 19th when Brives, one of the representatives of 1848, took his place.

The Commune was most maliciously charged by the European press with selling the treasures of the *Louvre*, in spite of official denials made by Dr. Albert Regnard, the Communard Chief Secretary of Police.⁶ The Commune was actually doing more than the Republicans had done during the Prussian siege for the safety of the art treasures of Paris, which the *Communard Journal Officiel* proves on almost every page.⁷

The *Luxembourg*, like the *Louvre*, had been closed since the Prussian siege, but the Commune made an effort to open it. Soon after March 18 Dr. Tony Moilin, the Communard official of the 6th *arrondissement*, ordered the place to be opened, but the Government officials put obstacles in the way. Again Regere, the Communard official of the 5th *arrondissement*, made an attempt, but without success. On April 3, Goupil, the Delegate for Education, appointed the artist, Georges Pillotel, as Inspector of the Luxembourg, but still the place remained closed. Finally the *Federation*, armed with its mandate, took the matter in hand on April 27, and the Government director was given instructions to open on May 15. This not being complied with, the *Federation* dismissed him, and appointed as administrator the famous Andre Gill, with Chapuy and Gluck as adjuncts.⁸ It did not open its doors, as Gluck as adjuncts. It did not open its doors, as place could be ready.

At the *Musee Carnavalet*, the *Gobelins*, the *Palais de l'Industrie*, the *Sevres* factory, the Communard Commission of Fine Arts took charge, and the reports of its delegates make interesting reading side by side with some of the so-called histories of the movement, which dub the Commune and its adherents as "iconoclastic."

HENRY GEORGE FARMER.

(To be Continued.)

"White Cargo" at the Playhouse.

EVERYBODY interested in real drama should go to see "White Cargo," a story of life on a West African rubber plantation. Dramatically and imaginatively it is refreshingly original: the acting simply superb and the staging superbly simple. Those of us who have wandered through London's weary waste of so-called "modern" plays, have endured the boredom of its musical comedies, suffered the stagnant anachronisms of its sex-dramas, and slept through its religious dramas, know what a rare experience it is to walk home from a play trying to remember every word and recall every scene instead of being filled with a fierce resolve to "forget it!"

For Freethinkers the chief interest of the play centres round the failure of a Christian missionary—a good-hearted, wrong-headed chap—to meet a quite ordinary tropical difficulty. A decent young fellow from a good Christian home is sent out as a cadet, keeps away from discoloured fornication, falls in love with a half-caste French negress, and insists upon marrying her, to the horror of the other white men. As a white man, the Padre would refuse to marry the girl to his fellow-countryman; as a Christian missionary, faced with the alternative of irregular intercourse *versus* legal mis-mating, chooses the latter. That was inevitable, as inevitable as the damnable consequences so pitilessly portrayed by the playwright.

⁶ See *Pall Mall Gazette*, May, 1871.

⁷ *J.O.*, May 17.

¹ *J.O.*, April 6.

² *Gaz. des B.-A.*

³ *J.O.*, April 13.

⁴ *Gaz. des B.-A.*

⁵ *J.O.*, April 13.

The whole play is a revelation of man's humanity to man—yet another proof that the good people are responsible for most of the bad things that happen, and the bad people responsible for most of the good things. And when fever strikes down the "poor bloody fool," the drunken, derelict doctor, the hard-case old skipper, the cynical stoker, the lean herring-gutted ship's engineer, and the well-meaning parson disregard all personal differences, sacrifice all trade profit, and head the empty river-boat for the nearest hospital on the bare chance of saving the young sentimentalist's life.

All the acting is fine: that of Franklin Dyall as "Weston—the man who stayed" is touched with genius.
E. A. R.

Correspondence.

A MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF MIND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My thanks to Mr. P. G. Tacchi for his pertinent query. I was aware at the time of writing the phrase "mind itself" that it might be taken as implying an entity: something having a separate existence. I, however, let the phrase stand in order to bring into bold relief my main contention that mind is more than a convenient word to cover one's inability to explain the phenomenon in question. Had I said "mind as such" it might have conveyed my meaning more exactly.

In his interesting little book, *Life, Mind, and Knowledge*, "Keridon" says:—

The basic article of my creed is that mere displacement or motion of matter can never give rise to consciousness, either as feeling or sense impression.

This may be so, but one would like some definite reason for this pronouncement, which, as it stands, is a mere *obiter dictum*.

The incipient form of life and mind arose with the origination of a compound which could perpetrate its existence through the common property of matter to be affected by the conditions of surrounding matter. In view of this fact why postulate an "ultimate substance"? In this common property of matter lies the possibility of all mental phenomena; and given the requisite organization the manifestation of mind is no more mysterious than is the fact that a vibrating tuning fork causes a like one in its field to vibrate in unison with it.

The most conclusive refutation of Idealism is the fact that the physical energies, Light, Sound, and Heat acted prior to the existence of organic matter, and that mind is the registration of these energies in a sensitive form of matter competent to receive them.

In watching the early struggles of my tiny offspring I have been reminded of Rousseau's striking aphorism: We suffer before we think. It is in child life where we should see most clearly that the origination and development of the senses and intellect is due to external physical energies. It would seem that it is easier to see the deliquescent than the patent facts of life.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

North London Branch N.S.S.

On Sunday last Mr. George Bedborough delivered an exceedingly interesting address, which was followed by an animated discussion. The smallness of the audience was perhaps slightly compensated for by the intelligence it displayed, but it is scarcely fair to our speakers to expect them to come long distances to address so few. To-night the debate on "Vivisection" between Mr. Palmer and Miss Bannister will, we hope, be better attended.—K.

Matter and its movements are the ultimate factors to which all things may be traced, while they themselves can be traced no further. They are the great X and Y, whose eternal and illimitable process constitutes the universe.—Buchner.

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.): 8, Mr. Hanson, "The State." The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at "The Castle," Shouldham Street, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Debate—"Is Vivisection Useless and Immoral?" Affirmative, Miss E. Bannister; Negative, Mr. T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham Road): 7, Mr. C. H. Keeling, "The Laughing Stock of the Animal Kingdom."

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

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2.): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Psychology and Morals."

OUTDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 3.15, Free Speech Demonstration to protest against the arrest of Mr. Guy Aldred. Speakers: Messrs. Aldred, Ryan, Keeling, etc.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street, Glasgow): 6.30, Mr. C. S. Service, "Imagination—Its Function in the process of Reasoning." Questions and Discussion. (Silver Collection.)

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 44th Anniversary of the opening of the Secular Hall. Mr. Harry Snell and special programme. Meetings at 3 and 6.30; Tea at 4.45; Dancing till 10.30. Anniversary Supper on Tuesday, March 3, at 8.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE (Palace Theatre, The Boulevard): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Moral Breakdown of Christianity"; 7, "The Logic of Faith and the Logic of Life."

AS CUSTOM ARBITRATES, whose shifting sway our life and manners must alike obey—No! Freethinkers cannot admit that; custom's chains are for Christians—not for us. You who have killed so many customs, why not slay one more by writing to-day for one of the following swords? *Gents' A to H Book, suits from 56s.; Gents' I to N Book, suits from 99s.; Gents' Overcoat Book, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Comprehensive Book, costumes from 60s., coats from 46s.* Slayers of sartorial dogmas.—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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