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Views and Opinions.

The Sorrows of God.

We hope it will not be considered blasphemous, or thought conceited, if we say that God—if he exists—has always had our sympathy. His well meant attempts to create a perfect world and perfect human beings failed most miserably, and good intentions gone astray always deserve consideration. For many millenniums he lived a solitary existence until a son—but never a wife—was thoughtfully created for him, only for him to have the humiliating experience of finding himself put into the background in favour of the younger branch, and seeing him credited with having made an heroic attempt to correct the terrible mess that the rule of the other had got things into. Worse still, while the Son receives best part of the praise for anything that is right, the Father continues to get all the blame for things that go wrong. If there is an earthquake it is solemnly referred to as an act of God—not of Jesus, but of God. By millions, all sorts of diseases and calamities are regarded as coming from him, and as though to "rub it in," when he is asked to make things a little better, it is never for his own sake, never an appeal to his own good feelings, but always "for the sake of Jesus." The implication is obvious, and uncomplimentary. And the more numerous his avowed followers the greater the number of half-concealed insults he receives. In fact, the only ones who never offer him these deadly insults are Atheists, and those who run the risk of being charged with blasphemy. The Atheist does not blame him for earthquakes, or diseases, he does not accuse him of having to beget a son to help him out of the difficulties his management had created. The Atheist is the only one who never insults God, never flatters him, never troubles him with endless petitions, never gives him the least trouble. In a world of believers he is the only real friend that God Almighty has.

A New Terror.

And now a new terror is to be let loose on the deity. The other day the *Morning Post* solemnly published the announcement that "it has been determined to start a league, non-political, undenominational, and independent of caste or class, of those who are moved to pray daily, in private, for the recoronation of Christ

as King." The League is to serve as "a reparation for the blatant insults offered to his Name, and as a defence against the Atheism, bitterness, and class-hatred by which not England, but the whole Empire, is threatened." This League is not to be of the ordinary kind. Its operations are to be shrouded in a deadly secrecy—which will probably appeal to the class of mind that will stand for hours to watch a member of the Royal Family pass by, or is delighted to deck itself out in some pantomimic costume in order to figure in a public procession. No headship of the League is to be mentioned, so each member may think whom he will is chief. No names will be published. And to further preserve the mystery of the organization all letters are to be sent to the editor of the *Morning Post*, who will forward them to "those responsible for this "Movement," and these decide on the best measures "for the vindication of the honour due unto his Name." Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum!!! Whether the Lord will be informed as to who belongs to this secret League or not, we cannot say, but it would add to its gruesomeness if the Lord were to be bombarded from all quarters by prayers from unknown people. He would probably hesitate before refusing. It is one thing to ignore prayers of some Church or other that is always bothering him. But if no indication is given, how on earth can he tell whether he ought to grant the prayers or not? Really, some consideration ought to be shown, even to God.

* * *

A Tangled Situation.

Considering the Deadwood Dick tale which the *Morning Post* published some time back about a Jewish conspiracy for the overthrow of Christianity, a conspiracy which had been going on for several hundreds of years, and which was responsible for the execution of Charles the First, the French Revolution, and almost everything else, it is quite fitting it should now act as sponsor for this mysterious League of Prayer. And if Freethinkers find themselves suddenly and accountably moved to do honour "unto his name," they will, on reflection, know what is the cause of it. All the same, there are some features about it we cannot understand clearly. Who are the people who are urged to humiliation and repentance for these blatant insults to his name? One presumes they are Atheists. The *Morning Post* mentions Bolsheviks and Communists as though all Atheists must be either one or the other. This is, of course, not true, but one does not expect the promoters of the League of Prayer to bother about that. So long as the *M.P.* can make someone's blood curdle, it will do. But it is not the Atheists who are to make this act of humiliation and repentance but the believers, those who believe in prayer. And how can the humiliation of a good *Morning Post* Christian—one who does already humiliate himself, and who is already full of repentance, serve? One would think it is the wicked Atheist who should repent and ask God to forgive him—for not blaming God for doing all the wicked things Christians say he does. What has the

believer in prayer to repent about? It is a curious situation. A has done something wrong. So B is called upon to repent and humiliate himself as an act of reparation to God! Wonderful! It looks as though God does not care who does the kow-towing so long as someone does it. How will the sight of the members of the League of Prayer going flat on their stomachs cause God to overlook the fact that there are still some people standing erect? The more one examines it the sillier it looks. Is the deity really as stupid as his followers would have us believe he is? If so, it does look as though it is true that man is made in the image of God. The most sensible thing about the League of Prayer is that the leaders are not making their names public.

* * *

The Primitive Mind.

Several times I have had to point out that mental capacity has nothing to do with education. Give a fool the most expensive education and he will remain a fool till the end of the chapter. And I have also pointed out the mistake of assuming that superstition is found only among uneducated people. It is as common in the West End as it is in the East. It rules as much in fashionable drawing-rooms as in crowded alleys, the king on his throne is as subject to it as the newspaper boy in the gutter. *The Morning Post* is a good illustration of the truth of this. It is not a paper that is taken in by the "common" people. It is essentially an aristocratic paper. By that I mean it circulates among the mass of vulgar people that make up society—with a capital S. Its readers probably regard themselves as among the principal supporters of all that matters in our civilization. And yet here is an example of about as fine a piece of superstition as one could wish. The appeal for men to abase themselves before a tribal idol in order to gain his favour, because someone has insulted him, is a very primitive manifestation of savage religion. The idea that things will be other than what they would be, as a consequence of prayer, is an output of a mind that is completely untouched by science. That all this is done in the language of culture does not matter a brass button. The King kneeling before the national god in Westminster Abbey is not a whit intellectually more respectable than is some primitive chieftain kow-towing to his tribal Joss. The language in which this sort of thing is expressed the nature of the ritual that accompanies it matters not a bit. It is the mental attitude that matters. And the proposal to form a huge secret league, with a mysterious head, is just the kind of thing that appeals to the intelligence of a very young schoolboy playing at "The Masked Robbers of the Range." We shall not be surprised if it catches on with Christians. It is the kind of thing that would.

* * *

Our Skin-Deep Culture.

At the risk of being wearisome I must again say that this vogue of gross superstition in our society is one of the most disquieting signs of the times. Researches into the cultural history of the world show that over and over again the existing culture has been destroyed by an eruption of barbarism. To-day there is no fringe of barbarians surrounding our civilization and threatening our security. Our barbarians are within the gates, and they are more numerous than many imagine. Look at the way in which any new superstition—which means an old one in a new form—catches on. There is not a superstition from ghost-hunting to mascot wearing that does not command instant attention from numbers of people in all classes of society. Ignorant evangelists, calculating politicians, founders of supposed Eastern cults, sellers of charms, organizers of praying circles, writers who

hawk yards of nonsensical verbiage under the name of "mysticism," all have a market ready to hand. At the one end we have the *Morning Post* using this superstition to encourage unreasoning opposition to certain political views to which it objects, and at the other end we find the same appeal to religious feelings made by astute politicians for or against particular political opinions. It is the lesson of history over again—the pitting of unenlightened feeling against new ideas, the enlistment of barbarism against the plea for a rational discussion of all ideas no matter how opposed to what is customary or established. It is for this reason that religion in all its forms stands to-day as the deadliest enemy of social progress. Even the transference of the religious temper into the field of politics represents a grave danger. For all advance rests upon the possibility of variation and the encouragement of a wise selection. You cannot have too many conflicting ideas struggling for expression in human society; you cannot suppress them without incurring the gravest risks and suffering the heaviest of losses. The notion that you can get political wisdom out of fools merely by improving the electoral machine is not the least dangerous of the superstitions by which we are beset.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"A Reaper of the Whirlwind."

SUCH is the title of a most remarkable novel by Violet Tweedale, which fell into our hands a few days ago. The publisher is John Long, Limited, Norris Street, Haymarket, London, and the author has written at least a dozen other works of fiction. *A Reaper of the Whirlwind* was first published in 1911, though the present writer neither saw nor heard of it until now. Possibly the main object of the story is to shower discredit upon the Catholic Party in the Anglican Church by recounting the magnificent work done by the Modernists in London slums. It is not intended, however, to retell the story in the present article, but rather to glean a few facts therefrom which inevitably point in the direction of Free-thought. The novel opens with a conversation between Dr. Meredith and his wife concerning the marriage of Miss Graham, a girl of eighteen, and the only child of the Bishop of Woolminster, to Lord Edenbridge, a man of sixty. The marriage was for some years an exceedingly happy one, and there was an issue of two boys. Lady Edenbridge was an exceptionally beautiful and charming woman, whom all that knew her greatly admired and adored. Ere long she discovered that her husband was not in a normal state of mind, and that he was a member of a family in the history of which insanity had often been a calamitous feature. She also learned, alas, that her father had been fully aware of this sinister fact before he gave his consent to the marriage; and Lord Edenbridge had taken it for granted that she married him in complete knowledge of it. This supplies us with a most unfavourable introduction to the Bishop of Woolminster. He loved the aristocracy so much that he did not hesitate to sell his only daughter to it, at whatever cost to herself, and for this reason, Lady Edenbridge hated and despised him. The truth is that the Bishop had no conscience at all. Honest principles were entire strangers to him. Hugo Percival, son of a great friend of his in Devonshire, was invited to the Palace as an honoured guest, and stayed there for a long time, and was carefully nursed during a severe illness by Lady Emily, the Bishop's wife. When he regained his health and was ready to leave, the Bishop said to him: "What are your future plans, my dear Percival? When do you propose to take holy orders? I shall

have the greatest pleasure in assisting you in your career and finding you a good living." Percival expressed his gratitude for the deep interest the Bishop took in his affairs, but confessed that he was undecided as to whether or not he would ever take holy orders.

The Bishop stared with intense astonishment. "Why, my dear fellow, what can you mean? Not take holy orders when you have all your life been studying for the Church, and have such brilliant prospects of rising in the profession?"

This dialogue went on for a considerable time. Towards the end the Bishop said:—

You can afford to choose some charming well-born lady as a wife, and I will find you one of those charming old Rectories which, alas! very few of our clergy have the means to keep up. There you can live the life of a benevolent country gentleman, keep a couple of hacks, entertain to a certain extent, and make yourself a social centre for the benefit of your humbler neighbours. You have only to pay a curate a small annuity to take the rough work off your shoulders. I can point to hundreds only too eager to get the work, so you need have no qualms of conscience over that part of the business. I think you will agree with me that for a gentleman no more charming and delightful occupation can be found. To follow your present wild-cat schemes of hesitancy means drifting into idleness, with no sheet anchor in this world to which you can cling."

"Except a clear conscience, my lord."

"Clear fiddle strings." Again the Bishop's grey eyes flashed fire, and his next words were uttered in a tone where anger and disappointment triumphed over all assumed composure. "The conscience of a lunatic, Percival," he scoffed. "As your dead father's debtor, and your friend and spiritual superior, it is my duty to restrain you from utterly ruining your life if I can. I do not speak of my own cruel disappointment. Heroes for conscience sake take little heed of the feelings of others. I had hoped to be your benefactor. I cannot without expostulations see you give up for a mere whim the profession your father adorned, the profession in which the Almighty has been pleased to raise me to my present lofty elevation."

Is that kind of talk worthy of a father in God, or, indeed, of anyone who calls himself a man? He had no sense of honour, no love of truth, no respect for conscientious objection to anything he proposed.

The Bishop's wife approved of Percival's decision, saying, "If I were a man I would far rather join one of those strange sporadic growths, perhaps one of the many forms of dissent—in fact, anything rather than the Church of England, which is simply an upper-class institution, permeated through and through with caste." The wonder is how such a broad-minded and sensible woman could ever have become the wife of the Bishop of Woolminster. It must be borne in mind, however, that when she married him she was a very young girl, while he was a grown man, much older than she; but it was not long before her love-dream was shattered to atoms. Between Lady Emily and her husband there was scarcely a thing in common, and she saw through him with the utmost clearness, with the result that she withdrew more and more from the world, and people began to say she was hard and unsocial. They sympathized openly with the Bishop in having so cold a companion in his wife. They quite understood why he went out so often alone." But the people were fundamentally mistaken, being led astray by his plausible acting and clever concealment of his hypocrisy. The majority were deplorably deceived by him; but not so Lady Emily, Lady Edenbridge, Dr. Meredith and his wife, Percival, and a few others. These saw him in his true character, and their only

feeling towards him was that of burning contempt. Lady Emily was perhaps the only one who had the courage to denounce him to his face. Referring to Percival's flat refusal to go in for holy orders she said to him: "Leave him alone, Edward. You have no right to force your opinions upon him. If he does not feel himself equal to accepting the doctrines of your Church, he is only being honest in saying so." This plain-speaking on the part of his wife surprised and angered him beyond measure, but all he could say was, "Am I to conclude that you actually approve of Percival's dissent, his actually professed unbelief?" To this she replied, "I approve of honesty, no matter what it professes, Edward. I have come to think of it as the rarest and most precious virtue extant. I see so little of it here." That was a courageous and true utterance, for which Lady Emily deserved highest praise. She charged her husband with erecting his own creed into a standard of universal belief and with kindling a furnace seven times hotter than any ordinary anger for all who presumed to question his infallibility. In answer to this he simply said: "My infallibility is God's. I am his chosen instrument for the salvation of souls." She laughed harshly and continued as follows:—

Yes, yes! I know what you think. You determine not only that few will be saved, but who that few will be, and you never see your own danger. You are blind to your own rank inconsistencies; you are too deeply engaged in effecting a compromise between God and Mammon. Bah! Since I've lived here and seen how the clergy grovel and cringe before you, I hold them all in unutterable scorn. They are humbling themselves before temporal power and position, not before saintliness and goodness. Your own chaplain has lost all semblance of manhood in his obsequiousness and sickening subserviency to your smallest whim. You've unfitted him for any other work than a sawing and slavish idolatry of ecclesiastical rank and power.

By that fierce and unanswerable attack the Bishop was electrified and astounded, as well he might have been. His portrait was being accurately drawn, and he knew it quite well. He resented the process, but all he could say was, "I hope, now that you have so freely given way to your evil passions, you will try to make amends by prayer. I assure you I am not angry, only deeply, cruelly wounded, and in need of peace and prayer." Lady Emily, her scorn rising again, proceeded to complete the portrait thus:—

Prayer! Prayer may be good, but truth and honesty are better. You are clothed in purple and fine linen. You fare sumptuously every day, but Lazarus perishes unheeded at your gate. You preach a doctrine from the pulpit, you never attempt to carry it out in practical life. You denounce Judas who sold the Christ for thirty pieces of silver, and yet you sold your own child for a coronet and for gold—the only power that receives universal homage, that is venerated by all classes without a single hypocrite. You sold her for the rank a world steeped in ignorance and slavery looks up to and venerates. You sold your only daughter knowing what you did of her husband. You hid your knowledge from me and from her, and from the hour I discovered your real infamy I ceased to respect you. I lost all fear of you, because I saw you at last stripped of your coat of many colours. I saw you as you are, a worldling and imposter, without love, without mercy.

All bishops are not hypocrites; but it must be admitted that the very idea of a bishop suggests the possibility, if not the probability, of a temptation to practise autocracy. Why are bishops called lords unless they are supposed to exercise dominion over the minds and consciences of mankind? Their aim

is to secure uniformity of belief, and they do their utmost to enforce it. They do not *know* any more than we do, but they *believe* enormously more, and they so often mistake belief for knowledge.

J. T. LLOYD.

Sunday Opening of Theatres.

We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions.—G. W. Foote.

Religion, everywhere present, as a warp running through the woof of human history.—Herbert Spencer.

SHOULD theatres be open on Sundays? This is a question which has not received the attention it deserves at the hands of the advocates of a brighter Sunday. Long years ago the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, and some museums, were opened on Sundays. Long years ago hard-working townfolk sought health and relaxation by means of Sunday excursions to the country or the seaside. After much agitation the opening of the cinemas has been permitted on that weekly holiday. As the silent drama is countenanced on that day it seems very strange that the real drama should be tabooed, and that, as the result, a very large part of the working world should be precluded from obtaining any knowledge of the masterpieces of dramatic art. The present position is that a working-man may go to see *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* shown on a cinema screen, but he must on no account be permitted to see *Hamlet* performed by live players.

The ban on the opening of theatres on Sunday is conventional, and not religious. It is peculiar to Great Britain and Ireland, and, even then, only enforced on poor people. A wealthy man can invite guests to a musical comedy show at his house on any Sunday he chooses. A less wealthy man may join a Sunday dramatic society at the cost of a few guineas. It is only the British working-man and his wife who suffer this deprivation. Throughout the Continent of Europe theatres, music-halls, café-chantants, casinos, and all the fun of the fair, are all accessible on the weekly holiday. From Moscow to Madrid people enjoy themselves on that day in a way little dreamt of in this island. The Roman Catholic Church, the most formidable of Continental religious bodies, smiles indulgently at such harmless relaxation. Whilst a Catholic Cardinal would see no harm in a bull-fight, an English bishop would have a fit if anyone dared to suggest a performance of *The School for Scandal*. So much for British insularity!

Why this difference between British and Continental opinion? The answer is that it is a legacy of Puritanism. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and earlier, the theatres were open on Sundays. The prohibition of such amusements was an innovation that developed in the seventeenth century and grew into a custom that few were strong enough to resist. It is the old, old story of a fanatical minority, skilfully organized, coercing a careless and disorganized majority.

To the Puritan the Christian Sunday meant substantially the same thing as the Jewish Sabbath, and everyone knows what a nightmare that is. In Scotland the Puritan ideal completely gained the day. In England the Puritan success was never so complete, but it was strong enough to lay a very strong hand on Sunday, the effect of which is seen to-day. Curiously, all the modern prosecutions for Sunday trading are taken under an Act of Parliament of the reign of Charles the Second, who was not a Puritan in the strict sense of that word, nor respectable enough to be a churchwarden. It was another Stuart

monarch, James the First, who favoured the opposite ideals. In his *Book of Sports*, in 1618, he gave his authority to his subjects to exercise themselves on Sunday in dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May games, setting up of maypoles, and other sports.

How complete the Puritan revolt was against these innocent practices may be inferred from a comparison between the *Book of Sports* and the ordinances in force in New England settlements a little later. There the Kill-Joys had untrammelled sway, and legislated for slaves and not for men and women. If a descendant of the Pilgrim Fathers had his hat blown off by the infidel wind on the way to a place of worship he was permitted to run after it if he ran reverently, which condition must have been welcomed by the hat manufacturers. There was a time when walking for pleasure was punished mercilessly. Lest Britishers should plume themselves that they were more humane and cultured than Americans, it is useful to remember that in Scotland things were as bad. In Edinburgh whistling on the Sabbath was taboo, and in England every shop was shut, as though behind every counter lay a corpse. Even to-day the dead hand of the old Puritans lays heavy on our social life. How many thousands of foreigners must have had the shock of their lives when they reached London for the first time on a Sunday, and found the streets deserted save for a solitary policeman and a stray cat returning from a nightly ramble. Small wonder that they echo the words of old Froissart, "the English take their pleasures sadly."

The age of Puritanism is passing. When it has passed, it will be unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. It has left only one legacy, the vice of hypocrisy. The English Sunday can never be like the Jewish Sabbath, and it is a mockery to pretend otherwise. At present Sunday is the day when the rich man gives his choicest parties, and the day when the poor man gets drunk on his wife's housekeeping money. It is the day of social intercourse, from golfing engagements to dress parades. In fact, it is the day of leisure, and ought to be the day of innocent recreation and amusement. That it is not so is due less to public sentiment than to the presence of the clergy in our midst, who entwine the national life like poisonous ivy surrounds an oak tree. The clergy know that the public conscience is escaping them, so they continue to rely upon the policeman and the handcuffs to keep people Sabbatarian. It is time, and high time, that the advocates of a brighter Sunday took the field against the Kill Joys and the Puritans, who are as much out of date as their mouldy Acts of Parliament.

It is ridiculous that a man may laugh on Sunday at Harold Lloyd's pictured antics, and be forbidden to smile at Falstaff's jests spoken in character. The theatres should be opened, and, if you will, be restricted to the performance of the classic drama. Nothing but good can come from encouraging the best in dramatic art, which is the expression of ideas in a noble and beautiful form.

MIMNERMUS.

The Builder.

WE are all fools until we know
That in the common plan
Nothing is worth the making
If it does not make the man;
Why build these temples glorious
If Man unbuilded goes?
We build the world in vain
Unless the builder also grows.

EDWIN MARKHAM.

"Then You Deny Christ!"

A GRIMY passage led off from the crowded street of a Scottish industrial city, and I paused at the entrance. I had in my hand a guide-book, issued by the Town Council, and luring me to all sorts of museums, picture-galleries, historic churches, and martyrs' memorials. But, over the entrance to the grimy passage, a board carried the inscription: "Unity Hall." This mysterious name held me fast. I had (as is my custom when visiting a city at home or abroad) avoided the museums, and libraries, and "art" centres, and wandered in and out of the poorest quarters I could discover. I had seen shadowy closes, ghostly backyards upon which broken windows glared desperately, and dark staircases of stone winding up into gloomy recesses; and I had watched dirty children playing in wretched corners that seemed alien to all that was green and radiant. Rising over the hopeless alleys, and sooty mills, gleamed a college, where a very genteel band of Muses passed the hours and seasons in the pursuit of Truth and Beauty, Science and Art, Economics and Philosophy. The white walls of the college gleamed aristocratically over the slums. It was a paradox! Learning dwelt in the midst of filth.....

Ah! "Unity Hall!" Perchance, if I penetrated the dull passage, I might discover the secret of unifying a society so divided and disordered! I presently found myself at a humble door, which opened upon a humble lobby, which led into one of those humble Labour Halls to which modern Britain owes not a little of its democratic rebelliousness against the disgrace of bad social conditions. As a matter of fact, it was a Communist meeting-place, and, seated at a paper-strewn deal table, I found an earnest, spectacled young secretary, who was immersed in the business of agitation. As he was alone, I seized the opportunity for an interchange of views on economics, politics, Socialism, Communism, Freethought, history, and—oh! blessed word!—Utopia. Far be it from me to record our arguments (for we oft disagreed, as well as oft coincided) on current and perplexing issues. But we were entirely at one in a fiery and consuming hatred of the avoidable poverty which damned the mind and physique of tens of thousands of men, women, and children in that great "hive" (oh, clean and comfortable bees, pardon the term!) of industry and profiteering. I spent a profitable hour in the young man's company, and came out into the noisy street with a haunting sense of the misery and sorrows of the Plebs in the big city, on which the college smiled its aesthetic smile. One thing was certain. Social "unity" could never be attained until the problem of squalor and economic inadequacy was solved. I suppose (I did not ask my companion with the spectacles) that was the significance of the name of the Hall up the modest passage.

It so chanced that, by arrangements made by well-meaning friends, I was assigned that night, for board and lodging, to a suburban villa, where my host and hostess were Christian Scientists. No such announcement as "Unity" greeted the motor-car at the portals; but a variety of unwritten announcements breathed themselves from every chamber and corner of the mansion, in the demeanour of the family, and the serene deportment of the waiting-maids, and the announcements were threefold—Wealth, Class, and Satisfaction. Furniture and equipment spoke comfort; happy landscapes and "interiors" adorned the walls and the stairways; music charmed the "stilly night"; and, when I woke in the morning, I saw, from the tree-shaded lattice, a serene and shining river, bordered by dreamy hills. And, in a most singular sort of social "unity," the foul dens of the city

throbbed with chaos and disease a mile or two away—but invisible.

Before I left this house of the Three-fold Gospel, I had—here also!—an hour's conversation; and my host and hostess and I wandered along the topics of politics and social reform, and our way was gentle and smooth, and we, in due time, found ourselves on the border of Biblical criticism and Faith. I was not depreciating the value of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures when, in the course of our rambles round that theme, I said the Psalms were dated some three hundred years only B.C., and were none of them composed by King David, and that the Four Evangelic books belonged to the second century of the Christian era. As a matter of historic fact and clarity, I can understand these Bible writings far better when they are so dated than when absurdly assigned to impossible periods. Nevertheless, a quizzical expression on the countenances of my agreeable companions warned me to step with closer care; and it was a few minutes later, when we came to the subjects of health, healing, and happiness, that I lighted on the Christian-Scientific character of the household. I had praised, as I frequently do, the social policy of the Gospel of *Luke*, which promises bread to the hungry:—

"Those who hunger after righteousness," hastily remarked the lady of the house.

"So the Gospel of *Matthew* says," I commented, "but not *Luke*; for, in *Luke*, Jesus cries to the multitude: 'Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled.' And the same Evangelist affirms that salvation is to come to the poor, the lowly, and the beggars, such as Lazarus."

"But," said my friends of the Threefold State, "the bread for the hungry must be, as *John* declares, the bread of life."

"Would you not say," I asked, "that bread and health—physical bread and health—are the necessary foundation for a full and rich life?"

And, following on this question, I dilated a little on the value of the labours of such scientific researchers as Sir Ronald Ross, who had discovered the cause of malaria in microbes carried by mosquitoes, and who had splendidly increased the sanitation of the tropics. Without the patience and intelligence of such enquiries and discoveries, I said, humanity could not better its material conditions—

"Then you deny Christ!" broke in my respected host, and a curious gleam of indignation shone in his eyes.

I glanced at the clock. My train to London would leave in less than an hour, and I had some way to go to the station. It was impossible to open a battle royal on the question of Christ's divinity and medical qualifications. I just managed to draw from my devout friends an admission that they meant no rudeness to Ronald Ross; and they proceeded to assure me that no doctor entered their house professionally (I forbore any questioning as to dentists), and, if sickness threatened, they prayed.....and I just caught the London express.

Now I will go so far as to say (and I suspect the reader will assent) that, if every human dwelling in Great Britain were as amply provided with material aids and consolations as this villa which had afforded me a passing hospitality, the death-rate and disease rate and crime rate would be very considerably reduced. I should be so delighted with such a transfiguration that I should do little more than laugh at the peculiar people who called the result a "miracle," or ascribed it to the principles of "Christian Science."

The house of the Threefold State teemed with the achievements of plain, straightforward, human, non-theological science and invention—its drainage, its

general architecture, its gas-stoves, its electric lighting, its printed books, its musical instruments, its well-wrought furniture, its stores of clothing, its water supply, its telephone, its access to postal facilities, banking, and the invisible but very real protection afforded by social law and order. All these benefits can be traced through a long line of evolutionary process in national and European and beyond European history. Those two Christian Scientists were heirs—alas! I must say, ungrateful heirs—to an immense social heritage. Being ill-educated (even if High-school or college trained), they had never learned the simple truths of human development and human creativeness, and they thanked a shadowy Jesus instead of paying a just tribute to the toiling and suffering generations of men and women from primitive times to 1925.

I really believe the spectacled young man in Unity Hall was better educated.¹ F. J. GOULD.

As It Was.

DIRT and Christianity, at one time, seems to have had an affinity with each other. We can read of solitary old saints who scorned the use of water—and as there was little soap in those days, there may have been some justification for it—and pious ladies who never changed their shifts from one year's end to another, and all in the odour and sanctity of sound religion. There may be no necessary connection between the two, but it has often been there, and in no case more so than in Scotland during the sway of Presbyterianism. An English traveller reached Edinburgh in the latter end of the seventeenth century, and in his diary he writes of the unbelievable filth that littered the streets and the habitations of the people. "In the mornings," he says, "the scent was so offensive that we were fore't to hold our noses as we past the streets and take care where we trod for fear of disoblising our boots and to walk in the middle at night for fear of an accident on our heads. The lodgings are as nasty as the streets, and wash't so seldom that the dirt is thick eno' to be par'd off with a shovel, every room is well scented with a close stoole, and the Master, Mistress and Servants lye on a floor, like so many swine in a Hogsty. This, with the rest of their sluttiness is no doubt the occasion of the Itch, which is so common among them. We had the best lodging we could get, for which we paid £3 5s. Scots, being about 10d. a night English, and yet we went through the Master's Bed chamber and the kitchen and dark entry to our room which looked into a place they called a close, full of nastiness. 'Tis a common thing for a man or woman to go into these closes at all times of the day to ease nature." Edinburgh was, and still is, a city of many storied tenements, and it was the custom to retain the household slops until 10 o'clock at night, and then the windows were thrown open and with cries of "Gardyloo"—a phonetic rendering of "Gardez l'eau," the Scots of that day being bosom friends of the French—the whole mass of impurity was thrown into the streets. As an old poet put it; not he who spoke of Edinburgh as "Mine own romantic town," but another:—

Hark! the clock strikes ten;
Now from a thousand windows cat'racts flow
Which makes a deluge on the streets below.

¹Since writing these notes, I have had, from one of the best types of Scottish Presbyterian ministers in the city referred to, a letter in which he says: "Thousands of children spend their first five years in and about the dismal tenement stairs; I'm not surprised Communism thrives here."

Naturally, epidemics often made their appearance and swept the town of its weaker inhabitants. But if they had little medical and no sanitary science to fall back upon, they had an abundance of spiritual help, which, in the opinion of one historian, was a more direful visitation than the plague. The Presbyterian ministers were all powerful, and saw to it that the people walked in the way of God. No detail of a citizen's life was too trivial for them to miss interfering with. They regulated his coming and going; they banished him from the realm for "refusing to resorte to the preiching of Godis worde," and they burnt at the stake many of those who were suspected of heresy or of being in league with the Evil One. And heresy covered a multitude of offences. One Norman Galloway was "condemnit and burnt" as the local chronicler records it, for no other reason but the taking unto himself a wife, that being "cotrair to our actis, because he was ane preist. Ffor they will thoil (allow) no preistis to marrie but they wald punische and burn him to the deid, but gif he had passit (used) one thousand hurris (whores) he wad nocht haue been burnt."

That little gleam of tolerance never showed itself in the matter of witchcraft. The detection of it was a speciality of one of the Scottish kings, and although he on one occasion expressed the opinion that "Presbytery and Monarchy agreeth as well as God and the Devil," yet he hunted with the ministers with right good will when the hue and cry after witches was sounded. He was present when important cases were before the ecclesiastical courts and apparently took a leading part in devising experiments calculated to extract confessions, much in the same spirit as a vivisectionist would superintend the tying down of a rabbit on an operating table.

A well-known case is that of Dr. Cunninghame, whose confessions "made the King in wonderful admiration, who in respect of the strangeness of these matters took great delight to be present at these examinations." The "examinations" consisted of tying a rope round Cunninghame's head and twisting it up tight. They put him into a contrivance that crushed the bones and flesh of his legs, and when he declared himself ready to confess, they hurried him before the King so that the Royal theologian would not miss any of the show. But when the doctor recovered somewhat, he retracted. "Whereupon the King's Majestie, perceiving his stubborn willfulness, conceived and imagined that hee had entered into newe conference and league with the Devill, his Master." So "to make him confesse he was commanded to have a most straunge torment, which was done in the manner following; His nailes upon all his fingers were riven and pulled off with an instrument called in Scottish a Turkas, which in England we call a payre of pincers, and under every nayle there was thrust in two needels, even up to the heads. At all which torments notwithstanding, the Doctor never shranke anie whit; neither woulde he then confess it the sooner, for all the tortures inflicted upon him. Then was he with all convenient speede, by commandemant convaied againe to the torment of the bootes, wherein he continued a long time and did abide so many blows in them that his leggis were crushed and beaten together as small as might bee, and the bones and flesh so brused that the blood and marrow spouted forth in great abundance, whereby they were made unserviceable for ever. And notwithstanding all these grievous paines and cruel torments, he would not confesse anie things. So deeply had the Devill entered into his heart that hee utterly denied all that which hee before avouched."

Christianity, at that time, had been busy civilizing

Scotland for well over a thousand years, and it took another hundred or more before it got the people ready to abolish the witchcraft statutes. And even then the members of the Synod of the Secession Church shook their heads at the change and put it on record that it would invoke divine displeasure.

The reign of the Covenant was not all nightmare; humorous incidents occurred now and again, especially as viewed from our point of time. When England got rid of the Monarchy, the Scots proclaimed Charles II. King, he having signed both of the covenants—it is to the credit of Charles I., among other good things, that he point blank refused to sign either of them. Cromwell came north and while he and General Leslie were manœuvring against each other in the Lothians, a gang of ministers descended on the Scottish Army and demanded a religious test, a purging, as they called it. Half the officers and men were driven out of the army, being malcontents; that is, not agreeing in every jot and tittle with the theologians. Not content with this comic opera business, the ministers urged Leslie to descend into the plain and give battle to Cromwell, assuring him that God had already decided the issue. That was so, for Cromwell was up in Edinburgh dictating terms before the week was out.

There is an amusing story of a Mr. Blair, who was minister of St. Andrews, and in the first flight of sermonisers, attending, along with some others, a conference with the victorious Cromwell. That worthy was a fair good hand at expounding the Gospel himself, and on the occasion in question he talked for a solid hour at the Scotsmen. Now, nothing, I suppose, annoys a confirmed talker more than to keep quiet and hear the other fellow talk, but Cromwell had impressed one of them, and he made a remark to that effect as he and Parson Blair left the meeting place. "And do you believe him?" Blair replied, "If you knew him as well as I do, you would not believe one word he says. He is an egregious dissembler and a great liar. Away with him, he is a greeting devil." But if Cromwell was a greeting devil, he was also a fighting one, so the ministers of the only true faith had to turn their attention to the harrying of demented old women. And when Scotsmen had bred the vice of submitting to that particular form of bigotry from their systems, the ministers turned to obstructing dramatic art and every other thing that made for the gaiety of the nation. And they have not yet ceased, although their domain has been considerably narrowed. It is a long way from Norman Galloway being burnt to death for heresy to my lugs being clouted for whistling on the Sabbath Day, but the stages of the descent are clearly enough marked. And who doubts that, given half a chance, they would not work back towards the beginning.

H. B. DODDS.

Acid Drops.

"Modern Christians are hypocrites," said Canon Donaldson in a recent sermon which he delivered in Westminster Abbey. He added that "we regarded our unemployed tragedy as a tiresome economic difficulty, rather than as an outrage on the Kingdom of God, and regarded war as inevitable, instead of as a denial of God and as practical Atheism." After that we can quite believe that "Christians are hypocrites." The canon must know perfectly well that war is not practical Atheism. Freethinkers of all ages have been among the most prominent and vehement denouncers of war, and have done more to render war impossible by their high ethical teachings, and the general raising of the intellectual plane that has resulted from their activities, than have all the priests with their sentimental denunciation

of war in the abstract, and their hearty blessing as "just and righteous" of every international conflict that has arisen. It would be far more truthful to say that war is practical Christianity, for of all the great religions there has been none that has been a more fruitful source of wars, and massacres. The whole history of Christianity is one long, dark record of hate and passion, that from time to time has flamed up into wars that have been peculiarly savage and protracted. Merely to enumerate the various religious wars and massacres of the Christian era would require a good many columns of the *Freethinker*. And the canon knows all that. Furthermore anthropologists have noted the fact that the least warlike tribes are usually those so low down in the scale of civilization that they have not yet developed a priestly caste. It is when a society develops special warrior and priest castes that war becomes possible. That, too, the canon must know. And, finally, his own inspired book is full of horrible accounts of wars, and cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called an incentive to peace. Christians most certainly are hypocrites.

"Bones of unknown creatures, as many of them as there are bishops, shall be dug out of the earth, and monsters of a lost world shall live, and men shall be made to wonder." This is part of a prophecy contained in a Joanna Southcott box that has just been opened. It is not the box which the prophetess decreed should be opened only in the presence of twenty-four bishops, but another small black, iron-bound box which has been stored for thirty-three years in a cellar of a house in Hammersmith. The famous box is so big that three men are required to lift it, and its whereabouts is not known to many. In her will Joanna Southcott stated that in this sealed box she left revelations that would bring about the millennium. She stipulated that the box was only to be opened in a time of a grave national danger, and then in the presence of twenty-four bishops convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The history of this extraordinary woman is both interesting and instructive—instructive as showing how an ignorant domestic servant was able, not much more than a century ago, so to impose upon the public that she was received as a divinely inspired prophetess. She was, of course, a Methodist, and dictated prophecies in rhyme, and proclaimed herself to be the woman mentioned in the Apocalypse (Chapter xii.), and although sixty-four years old, affirmed that she was to be delivered of "Shiloh," October 19, 1814. She died of dropsy ten days later. Her sect at one time numbered about 100,000, and we believe she still has numerous adherents. At least as recently as two years ago some organization representing her held regular meetings in Hyde Park. As we have said, Joanna's career and the way in which this quite uneducated woman was able to persuade great numbers of people that she was a divine messenger is instructive to students of religion. It helps one to realize how in an even more credulous age such an illogical and unnatural creed as Christianity was able to make its adherents among the lower types of Roman citizens. But we can quite understand why the orthodox Christian sects look askance at Joanna. For one thing she is a rival with something mysterious that is likely to appeal to those neurotics among whom the evangelist makes his easiest converts; and in the second place her cult is not sufficiently old to be endowed with the solemnity that antiquity gives to all things. And yet if Christians only knew a little more about their own beliefs, they would realize that a century after the death of Christ the Christian Church was about as unimportant as Joanna Southcott's following is to-day, whilst to the sane and educated Romans of that period their teachings must have seemed as ridiculous as do those of Joanna to us.

A reviewer in noticing, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Mr. F. J. Gould's volume on *Thomas Paine*, makes the following significant observations: "The outraged sentiments which beheld in *The Age of Reason* all that was inimical to law, religion, and respectability have a somewhat faded appearance nowadays." And we pre-

sume that this state of affairs has not been brought about by the publication of such papers as the *War Cry* and the *Christian Herald*, or by speakers of the Christian Evidence Society.

In a letter to the *Times*, the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, writing as chairman of the Church of England Men's Society, appeals to "the Football Association and to all who may be responsible for arranging big matches on Good Friday that they will consider afresh whether after all Good Friday is a day upon which such matches can appropriately take place." "There is," the Bishop adds, "undoubtedly, among all classes, a growing sense of the incongruity of the modern manner of observing the day upon which we profess to commemorate our Redeemer's faith for us." The Bishop is probably right there, and he might extend his remarks to Sunday and holy days in general. The sensible tendency nowadays is for these brief periods of leisure to be devoted to healthy recreations and sports, and all the pleading of clerics who see a public growing ever less inclined to pay them special respect, is hardly likely to arrest this movement. The Catholic Church, with the Jesuitical wisdom that has characterized it throughout the ages, probably realizes the impossibility of resisting this modern impulse, and therefore gives its sanction to Sunday recreations. Those churches which persist in frowning upon Church holidays being used in a sensible way by the mass of the people, will merely make themselves rather more unpopular with the majority of Englishmen than they already are.

The total costs of the Dennistoun case are estimated at £40,000. We refuse to say that "this is a mad world—my masters," but we do affirm that in a Christian country where millions are spent yearly in teaching a pauper religion the above case fits in the picture. It also incidentally shows that the poor have not a monopoly of vices as our reverend pastors would have us believe.

Some men are born great, others achieve greatness and some have it thrust upon them. We do not know or care into which category Mr. Frank Hodges must be placed. His book, *My Adventures as a Labour Leader*, to judge by the title, gives one the impression of a record similar to those found in accounts of big game shooting, but, it certainly does presume to think that his adventures are of sufficient importance to give to the world. From a diversion on a tin whistle called a review we give the following extract:—

Once started, Hodges read everything that came in his way, went to night schools, joined a debating society. Then came the Evan Roberts' "religions revival" in Wales. Hodges "was caught up in it, shot straight by agnosticism into the waiting arms of religion." He set to work to prepare himself to be a Methodist minister.

The agnosticism that goes down to Evan Roberts must have been of very sickly growth, and Mr. Hodges' native wit no doubt put him wise as to the attitude towards religion that "pays" in public life. The book appears to be well worth distribution as a prize for regular attendance at Sunday-school and as a mark of vanity that has cost the Labour Party no small sum and not a few curses.

At a peace conference in London recently, the Reverend Thomas Nightingale, of the Free Church Council, suggested among other ways of minimising the possibility of war the union of Christian forces throughout the world. This is typical of most of the contributions made by Christians to the cause of international peace. Christianity, according to them, is the cure for everything, including war, in spite of the fact that during the nineteen hundred years that it has been in the world there has been scarcely a year pass without a war being waged in some part of Christendom, or by Christian nations upon the heathen. And if an international organization of Christians were any cure for war, the Roman Catholic Church would provide it. Yet in the last great war that Church either cared not or dared not make the slightest protest against a continuation of the slaughter. Roman

Catholic priests blessed the machinery of destruction of their respective countries, and English Catholics and German Catholics had no qualms about killing each other.

Another suggestion made by Mr. Nightingale is rather significant. He proposed that children in schools should have impressed upon them the horrors of war. Not the folly or immorality of war, but the stark horror of, say, men dying hideously of poison gas, or blinded and dreadfully mutilated. It is, we suggest, the bad psychology that one would expect from a Christian, and which no educationist would support for a moment. It might as easily produce a morbid state of mind, as make the child grow up with a detestation of war. Furthermore healthy beings are not usually to be frightened by the dangers attending a certain policy, from pursuing it if they believe it to be right. A man believing his country to be in danger, or thinking it is his duty to take up arms in some great cause, would not be deterred from that action merely by fears of poison gas or mutilation, or death. The correct policy would be to inculcate a contempt for war by showing that it is impotent to settle any dispute, and that it merely exacerbates the problem that it attempts to solve. At the same time, we suggest, history should be taught in such a way that the child comes to think of humanity as one big family engaged in a magnificent crusade against all the evil things in nature that make for human pain and unhappiness. In that way the combative instinct that is in each human being might be turned to useful account, instead of being used to let loose the horrors of war on the world. But of course such constructive proposals are scarcely likely to appeal to the man who argues, as the Christian does, that morality must be founded upon fear of punishment, and whose aim is to "reform" the "sinner" not by treating him as a psychopathic case, but by terrifying him into submission to a not very logical or workable code of morals.

A correspondent in a daily newspaper states that the Protocol requires the support of the Church, which has not spoken yet. We presume it is too busy unveiling war memorials.

Along with other writers such as Madame Blavatsky and Mabel Collins there now appears on the scene Mrs. Laurence Oliphant. This lady is the automaton of a book entitled *The Mediators and Duality*. It has been dictated to her by a Mind (capital, Mr. Printer) or Minds far wiser than our own. We are told that the object of the book is the helping of Agnostics to understand the teaching of Christ. Rubbish of this kind is evidence of self deception, and the authoress by publishing evidently hopes to pass on the complaint.

In the fourth of his Lenten Lectures delivered at Westminster Abbey, on the subject of "Peace or War?", Canon Donaldson remarked that "In life there must be conflict. The Prince of Peace was always in conflict, and, resisting wrong to the last, was crucified. His Church ought to be militant against all wrongs, social, industrial, political, and financial." It would be useful if, as a start, the Canon would tell us which among the several hundred Christian sects, is "His Church." Also, if the Gospels are to be credited, Christ was not particularly concerned with "wrong, social, industrial, political, and financial." True he talked a good deal of sentiment at times against the rich, and offered the poverty-stricken the dubious consolation of felicity in the hereafter. But one nowhere reads of a reasoned protest made by him against, say, the "farming out" of taxes that was common in his day, or the great social evil of chattel slavery. And his attitude on political matters, judged by the story of the "render under Cæsar" story, was the one usual to the fervent religionist of ignoring politics except in so far as they affect his religious beliefs. In the Roman civilization there were many criticisms that could have been levelled, both against the political structure of the State, and the slavery upon which that civilization was based. But on all these matters, where Christ might have made definite charges, and suggested practical remedies he was silent.

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.

ONE of our correspondents is anxious to have some knowledge of the whereabouts of a settlement known as the Whiteway Colony, if it is still in existence. Perhaps some of our readers may be able to supply the desired information.

E. SMEDLEY.—It is beyond us to explain what a parson may mean by anything he says. We have a constant suspicion that most of them mean nothing at all, but just get into the way of using words and phrases that sound well. Otherwise we cannot explain why they give vent to so much silliness.

J. G. FINLAY.—The copy of the report about which you write has not reached us.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Miss Rout's *Sexual Health and Birth Control* continues to attract favourable notice from authoritative quarters. The *Nursing Times* and *Journal of Midwifery* says: "Miss Rout has the courage of her opinions. She advocates birth control, both for the sake of the mother who may be broken down by excessive child-bearing, and for the sake of the other partner in cases of disease. She takes the broad, common-sense view of a woman of the world." The *Prescriber*, in its current issue, writes: "Miss Rout has a thorough knowledge of the subject, and her arguments would be very telling, but she would be well advised to moderate her language." That is quite a matter of opinion. We have had far too much bowing to this one or that in the hopes of currying favour in some directions or for fear of giving offence in others. Miss Rout's book is the first one on the subject of recent years that has not played to the religious gallery, and which has attempted to show the great part played by Freethought in inducing healthier and cleaner thought on the subject of sex. And, as we have had cause to point out quite recently, too many who are not religious themselves write in great fear of giving offence to those who are.

Spoken Essays, by John M. Robertson (Watts & Co., 7s. 6d.), contains seven addresses delivered by Mr. Robertson at South Place, with an essay on "The Naturalistic Theory of 'Hamlet'" reprinted from the

Criterion. The volume ranges over many subjects, a discussion of Utopias, in which Mr. H. G. Wells comes in for a rather drastic, but quite good-humoured handling, an interesting study of Cromwell, in which the balance is well held between an uncritical laudation and a study of the man in an historical setting, a very suggestive and timely essay on Utilitarianism—one of the best we have seen on the subject, and a couple of quite Freethinking essays on the theology of earthquakes and the theory of Cosmic purpose, and another acute piece of criticism of Lord Balfour's defence of Theism which really lets that special pleader off more lightly than he deserves. Altogether the volume shows Mr. Robertson in his best critical vein.

The one essay in the volume on which we feel impelled to utter a word of criticism is that entitled "Rationalism and Religion." With all that Mr. Robertson has to say against the use of the word religion we are in the most cordial agreement. At most he will only tolerate its use as a concession to our weaker brethren. Our words, he rightly says—redressing the aphorism of Hobbes—should be coins and not amulets. The excuse people make, he tells us, for the use of the word religion is that it has prestige, it possesses an *aura*, and those without the strength to make a clear and decisive break with established forms like the word because of the prestige it carries with it, in other words, its atmosphere of respectability. So far we are in entire agreement with Mr. Robertson.

Our point of disagreement, not unmixed with wonder, is in what respect Mr. Robertson imagines the word "Rationalism," which he opposes to religion, possesses any superiority? There may be, as he says, "a Rationalism which is scientifically agnostic," although even here one would have expected Mr. Robertson to have used the much more definite word Atheism, particularly when he is concerned not with philosophical agnosticism but with the opposite to theism. But in that case it is plain that the word is not in itself explanatory since he has to use Agnosticism to explain what his Rationalism is about. Rationalism by itself is quite a meaningless term, and it is descriptive no more of the man who believes in a religion, in a God, and a future life than it is of the man who carries about with him none of this mental lumber. A man who tries to prove the existence of God, or the rationality of a revelation, or the existence of a future life, or the existence of future rewards and punishments, may be as much a "Rationalist" as anyone else. In other connections Mr. Robertson would himself be the first to point out that this is the case. The other man may be wrong, but that does not prove that he is irrational. Even an acute Roman Catholic controversialist might make out a very plausible case in defence of the thesis that he too is a "Rationalist." In these cases it is not so much a matter of not reasoning as it is a matter of faulty logic. Professor Thomson, who puts in a plea for a God, in the name of science is not an anti-Rationalist; he is simply arguing faultily, making assumptions he is not justified in making, or drawing faulty conclusions from admitted premises.

There is not, we think, a single fault that Mr. Robertson can bring against "Religion" as a descriptive label, which does not lie with certainly as much strength against the use of "Rationalism." It is useless as a definition since to say we mean by it the belief in reason is to invite the retort, who does not believe in reason? We have never met a theologian who did not, although many have railed against its use, or, as they would say, against its unlawful use. And we think that on reflection Mr. Robertson will find that it is precisely because of its vagueness, precisely because there are so few who find fault with it that it has grown in favour with a certain number of people. It wards off criticism, it helps to keep them within the pale of respectability by marking them off from those dreadful Atheists and Freethinkers, and if it does not keep them with the crowd, it at least keeps them on

good terms with it. In short, if we may use Mr. Robertson's own words, it has an aura. It is not a coin, it is an amulet. And the world to-day needs more than ever it did fewer amulets and more genuine coins. There has never been any great lack of thinking in the world. What it has always needed, and still needs, is clear, logical thought expressed in definite and unmistakable language. And we are afraid that "Rationalism" does not quite satisfy this need.

The organization of Freethinkers in America is a difficult task, but attempts are constantly being made to that end. We see that a Michigan Rationalist Association has been started in Detroit, of which one of our readers and correspondents, Mr. Howell S. England, is President. We wish the Association every success, and if enthusiasm and earnestness will achieve it, its President will succeed. But we judge that in America the hide of orthodoxy is thicker even than it is in this country.

Bolshevic Atrocities.

II.

(Concluded from page 236.)

WHEN Dr. Ossendowski arrived at the island of Sakhalin, to carry out his geological and chemical investigations, he landed at Dué, where the Governor of the island provided him with horses and wagons, and three assistants, two as drivers and one as servant. All were murderers, the servant, named Karandashvili, had been a well-known robber chief, "a small Georgian, quick as a snake, with black hair and a dark face dominated by big, brown, fiery eyes, which never twinkled, but always as watchful as those of a beast," but whom he found "honest, willing, polite, and very useful during the journey through the wilds of Sakhalin."

Arrived at his destination, a village named Pogibi, inhabited by convicts who had earned their release, our author put up at the house of one of them, named Lisakoff and his wife, who was also a released convict, who had been granted to him by the prison authorities. This couple had a son, a boy of seven, named Mishka, "red as a flame, quick and merry blue eyes."

It must be borne in mind that the terrible events we are about to describe are not tales our author heard, or mere hearsay, but things he actually saw and took part in.

This Lisakoff had been one of the punishment-executioners, and the two drivers and the servant regarded him with looks of hatred, and it was noticed that he always carried his axe in his belt. However, Dr. Ossendowski found him very polite and obliging.

While sitting at dinner the door was suddenly thrown open and an escaped convict suddenly appeared and stated that the soldiers were close upon him. After a pause Lisakoff told the man to follow him, and hid him away in some bushes in a marsh. He had not long returned before the soldiers arrived in charge of a lieutenant named Nosoff, who asked Dr. Ossendowski in a most domineering manner who he was, a manner he soon changed when our author produced his credentials. After taking tea, with some strong spirits, which he had brought with him, this ruffian gave the order, "Handcuff everybody," which was done, with the exception of our author. Even the little child was handcuffed, and not understanding their meaning, was amused by their clinking as he shook his little fists, for which Nosoff gave him a kick, saying, "Be silent, you puppy." This wretch then enquired of each one if they had seen the convict, to which they all replied, No. "Very well," sneered Nosoff, "take his puppy and give

him fifty strokes of the whip!" Here Dr. Ossendowski intervened, but Nosoff produced a little book of printed regulations, justifying his proceedings.

Now it is no use attempting to shield the Czar's government, as some apologists have done, by pretending that these horrors were unofficial, and were against the rules and regulations; they were officially sanctioned and enforced. But, to get over this hideous story:—

As the soldiers seized Mishka and dragged him out into the yard, his parents turned pale and a nervous spasm contracted the mother's face. When the despairing cries of the child were heard, Lisakoff raised his brooding eyes to the officer and whispered: "Don't beat him, lieutenant, don't beat the child! I will tell everything."

The sobs of the mother and the clinking of the chains of the others accompanied this whisper from the father.

"Hey," roared the officer, "Enough!" As the soldiers brought the weeping Mishka into the room I went for a troubled stroll, not wishing to assist at the enquiry or to be called as a witness.

When I returned, I found a great change in the house. Lisakoff was in bed in a high fever, crying, groaning, and cursing. He had received 150 strokes of a heavy whip which had striped his back horribly and cost him much blood. My men had each received fifty strokes and were unable to travel further with me. The officer took away with him Lisakoff's wife as an eye-witness of the arrival at their house of the fugitive Vlasenko, whom the soldiers had found in the bushes of a marsh less than a mile from the compound. Little Mishka, deadly afraid, was crying his heart out in a dark corner of the room, not daring to approach his delirious father.¹

Dr. Ossendowski spent several days dressing the wounds of his men and Lisakoff, but finally had to return to obtain new drivers and a helper. Upon his arrival he reported to the captain, chief of the local garrison, the conduct of Nosoff, but was told decisively that they had definite regulations and could not change them. The only result of his intervention was that the authorities prevented him from obtaining fresh men to continue his journey with, and he had to send a messenger to Dué, to the chief of the prison administration, who issued a definite order to the captain to assist him.

Later on he met the wife of Lisakoff, her face white as chalk, her eyes more fixed and despairing, her lips even more tragically compressed than before. She told how she had returned to her home, only to find it had been burned down. Searching the ruins she found her husband's body with the throat cut and the skull smashed. Further away, in the bushes, she found the body of the child, his head crushed by an axe. This was the revenge of the three men Ossendowski had to leave behind disabled by the flogging. This was their revenge on the punishment-executioner Lisakoff.

Of the revenge taken by this poor, distracted woman we have no space to record, but our author concludes:—

Of course the punishment of the unhappy mother was severe and her fate ineffably tragic, for she probably never succeeded in passing a second time those walls which she had once left to begin the new life of freedom. Her fate I do not know, but I do know that the Russian laws as they were in Sakhalin were the cause of new and sometimes even more terrible crimes than those they sought to punish. The Lisakoff woman was the victim of these laws, for which now their creators and executors have paid with their blood, their fortunes and their country to the Bolshevick avengers (p. 212).

¹ Ossendowski. *Man and Mystery in Asia* (pp. 210-211).

This very Karandasvili, the Sakhalin convict and ex-robber chief, who had been appointed to Ossendowski as a servant, upon his arrival at Sakhalin, and who, as we have seen, was flogged by order of Nosoff—this very man, later on, says our author:—

became famous in various parts of Russia as a cruel and courageous leader of Red Partisan bands which the Soviet Government employed against the armies of Admiral Kolchak and Generals Beloff and Grischin.

And he was not the only one. Ossendowski says that many of these Sakhalin convicts survived until the time when the revolutionary government of Kerensky granted an amnesty to all who had been sentenced by the Czar's tribunals:—

Then these men, from the souls of whom the Czar's prisons had erased all human characteristics, came to the towns and for a time lay in wait, like the wild beasts they were, expecting easy prey. Their time soon came and brought them an excellent opportunity. When the authority in Russia was seized by the Bolshevics, they called these half-men, half-beasts, to execute their bloody sentences and put them at the head of the revolutionary tribunals, of the political enquiry commissions and of the all-powerful *Cheka*, so that the wretches whose bodies were slashed and torn by the salted rods eagerly embraced the opportunity to avenge themselves upon the representatives of the Czar's Government and society (p. 194).

They might have used the words of Shylock to his Christian tormentors:—

The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Ossendowski complains that the intelligentsia among the upper class, who had worked for and prepared the revolution, also shared the fate of the government officials and aristocrats, because they criticized the Bolshevics. Therefore he denounces the Bolshevics.

No doubt many friends of freedom fell, as they did in the French revolution, and for a similar reason. The fact is that the idealists who work for and prepare the way for a revolution, are seldom the men to carry it to a successful conclusion. They are often impractical dreamers and talkers, who are swept aside by the strong and ruthless men maddened by their wrongs and thirsting for revenge, who know what they want and mean to have it.

If the Intelligentsia had remained in power there is not the slightest doubt that the old devilish Czarist rule would have been re-established, with the help of the Allies, who were supplying arms and munitions in unlimited quantities to the invading white armies. But the Bolshevics were fighting with their backs to the wall. They knew what they had to expect from a restored Czarist monarchy, and fought with the courage of despair.

On the other hand the aristocratic leaders of the white armies, rotten and incompetent as they had proved themselves when opposed to the Japanese, and later in the Great War, still further proved their incapacity, in spite of the abundance of their resources in guns, ammunition and provisions. They were defeated and overthrown, one after the other; just as the foreign armies were who attempted to crush the French Revolution of 1793.

As to the aristocrats who are parading their woes to the world, they should consider themselves fortunate to have escaped with their lives. It is false to say they did not know what was being done, and were not responsible. All Europe has known for the last fifty years. I myself, when a youth, can remember hearing Prince Kropotkin, Volkoffsky, and other Russian exiles, who had escaped the horrors of Siberia,

lecturing in London upon their experiences forty years ago. I can also remember the sensation caused by Swinburne's magnificent protest against this government of Satan, and advocating Tyrannicide. Here are a few of the lines:—

Help is none in heaven: hope sees no gentler star:
Earth is hell, and hell bows down before the Czar.

Hell recoils heart-stricken: horror worse than hell
Darkens earth and sickens heaven; life knows the spell,
Shudders, quails, and sinks—or, filled with fierier breath,
Rises red in arms devised of darkling death.
Pity mad with passion, anguish mad with shame,
Call aloud on justice by her darker name;
Love grows hate for love's sake; life takes death for guide,
Night hath but one red star—Tyrannicide.

God or man, be swift, hope sickens with delay:
Smite and send him howling down his father's way!!

The matter was brought up in the House of Commons, and the Government was urged to institute a prosecution for inciting to murder, but the Government declined. Kropotkin, and many another, gave up everything, suffering barbarous imprisonment and exile, in protest against this devilish rule. The Grand Dukes and the others sat tight, living in luxury upon the agonies of millions, squandering the money extorted from the starving peasants on the gaming tables of Monaco and Monte Carlo, and in other even less reputable ways. When the army, by whose bayonets they ruled, was broken in the Great War, they were left defenceless and were called upon to pay the bill.

In conclusion, it should be borne in mind that the Czarist government was eminently religious. At the Court, the priest Rasputin was the power behind the throne. Almost every traveller in Russia before the war commented upon the piety exhibited by all classes of Russian society. Even the droshky drivers piously crossed themselves as they drove past the numerous Ikons, or holy images, to be seen in the streets. Even the houses of ill-fame were provided with Ikons, so that the devotees could pay their devotions to Venus and Christ under the same roof.

W. MANN.

The Anti-Christian Movement in China

EUROPEAN and American Christian newspapers in China are somewhat perturbed. An active anti-Christian movement has sprung up amongst the Chinese students, mainly in the missionary schools and universities.

Anti-Christian Leagues are being formed everywhere. In Nan Kin, students publicly destroyed Bibles. In Canton, during Christmas, student "anti-Christians" organized a gay carnival. In a missionary university of Chan Sha they demanded the abolition of compulsory attendance of the services.

Naturally after that, missionaries changed their psalm-singing into bleatings about "Bolshevism." However, they do not all take up this cry. Not long ago in Tien Tsin two naïve missionaries who tried to be "honestly consistent," suddenly appeared, and raised the question of separating missionary work from Imperialism. They held that religious propaganda must refuse the opportunities which place at its disposal the inculcation of Imperialism in China, i.e. missionaries in their work must not make use of extra-territorial privileges, etc.

But the entire missionary "brotherhood" nearly choked the two brave and ingenuous men with texts, pouring on them all their most Christian indignation for so contemptuous a reference to the holy blessings of the mailed fist, without which, even according to a common confession of missionaries, they are unable to plant the holy cross firmly enough in China.—Translated from the *Esperanto Weekly*, "Sennaciulo," by L. E. Hessé.

Those Terrible Secret Societies!

LET me confess I love a book with a punch in it. I do not mind if it is directed entirely against the views I hold most dear, so long as it is written with force and plausibility, I want nothing better. If I am sure it is wrong, but am unable to reply to it, then I am spurred on to further study. And if in spite of its cleverness I can answer it, then I feel inclined to pat myself on the head. In any case the book with fire and go, with combativeness and courage is the book for me, and I take it to my heart and recommend it to all my friends.

That is why I often enjoy a book by Mrs. Webster—just as I have enjoyed one by Edouard Drumont. The real anti-semite, as a rule, loves a fight. In the good old days, as Mrs. Webster is well aware, the spectacle of a hundred Christian Knights, emblazoned with crosses and fully armed, chasing a poor old unarmed Jew to his death was a very familiar one. A good many Christians would like to enjoy that spectacle now, but since they cannot, they have to be content with attacking him by the pen, and so, if they are unable to get in a veritable death stroke, they do what they can with such a book as *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*.

Of course, Mrs. Webster is not a new hand at anti-Semitism, and as she gets older, she has widened her outlook to the extent of not being content with attacking Jews, but includes "all the descendants of them, the Arabs, as well as the entire twelve tribes of Israel." This, I venture to submit respectfully, must be particularly hard lines on that estimable if quite harmless body of men and women, who proclaim from the housetops, that not only they but the entire British race are the descendants of the afore-named Israel. With a galaxy of gentry and nobility as an aristocratic nucleus, they have published innumerable works purporting to prove that Mrs. Webster, Mr. Chesterton, and the entire body of British anti-semites are in reality children of Israel and they can easily prove their assertions with the aid of a very large Bible reverently underlined in divers passages with coloured inks, showing that while the Jews are descended from Judah, Mrs. Webster and company share equally with them the veritable blood of Jacob through the Ten Lost Tribes. I do hope, one day, our talented and pugnacious authoress will look into the matter and either show us her own Holy Book is quite wrong as to her remote origins or tell the British Israel nobility and gentry, who have persuaded themselves that they are God's Chosen Race, that they are victims of absurd delusions.

Be that as it may, Mrs. Webster now claims she has found the true source of nearly all the secret societies and revolutionary movements which have upset so many of the European kings and have rather blown to smithereens the idea of the Divine Right to Rule in God's name. She has actually discovered the books known to all occultists for nearly 1,000 years as the Cabala! Stupendous discovery! Now, it is not my intention in a short article such as this to discuss the Cabala. The books contain a so-called secret doctrine, and they have been more or less translated. They have been studied by Jews for centuries and by many famous Christian mystics. They comprise all sorts of ideas and speculations on many subjects and the more credulous one is, the more holy they appear. I heard one eminent cabalist actually claim they contain allusions not only to all our greatest scientific discoveries such as wireless, aviation, electrons, evolution, etc., but those parts we don't understand refer to all the discoveries science will ever make in the future! One has to be very holy before

being allowed to study, for example, the *Zohar*, and it all depends how you read and understand the various expositions. If you are an orthodox Jew then ideas about God point Him out to be One and One only. If you are a Christian then you can easily find the Trinity in the Cabala. I am not sure whether Mrs. Webster looks upon Jesus as being the greatest Cabalist that ever lived, but if she does, then he must have studied the Christian part of the holy work. For not only has Mrs. Webster "discovered" the Cabala in general, but she has "discovered" there are really two doctrines therein: the good, which is Christian, and the bad which is purely Jewish. Of course, Mrs. Webster is very angry with those Jews who look upon the Cabala as being more or less bunkum, like Professor Graetz, who, again may I say it with respect, seems to me something of an authority on the history of the Jews. She much prefers converts to Christianity, like Ginsberg, and Drasch, who naturally became *plus royalist que le roi*, and who read into the demons and devils, the spooks and the spirits of the Cabala all the "blasphemies" they credit Jews with, against their newly discovered Lord and Saviour.

Mrs. Webster gets very cross indeed when she writes about the stupid obstinacy of the Jews in not accepting Jesus yet as the Son of the Living God and she loves quoting those people who write and foretell that all sorts of things will happen to the despised race unless they accept once for all the beautiful doctrine of being washed in the Blood of the Lamb. But, in particular, it is because the Jews are responsible for the *Sepher Toldos Jeschu*—as she spells the title of the little work known so well to the readers of this journal—that Mrs. Webster feels so bitter, and proceeds to prove why the Jews are really responsible for nearly all the revolutions, massacres, and plots that have filled history since Abraham spoke to God. I say nearly all, because with a magnanimity one can only put down to her innate fairness, the great authoress feels she can't justly blame them for everything she doesn't like. I have no doubt whatever that if you really wanted proof that the Jews killed William II., or that Strongbow was sent to Ireland to prevent the Irish from exterminating each other through the machinations of Irish Jews, or that it was not Bruce but some Scotch Jews that licked Edward II. at Bannockburn, or that Lambert Simnel or Jack Cade were really Jews, or that the Massacre of St. Bartholomew was really instigated by Jews, or that they were Jewish judges who sentenced St. Charles I. to death (and a Jew who acted as executioner), or that it was Jews who started the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, or who killed William of Orange, Lincoln, Carnot, the Empress of Austria, caused Clive to commit suicide—I had better stop here, but could continue right through a dictionary of dates—I am sure Mrs. Webster would cheerfully undertake the task. Her answer is plain, clear, and to the point. There is a society formed of the Elders of Zion who, lurking in the background and with the Cabala as text-books, have made war on society with the one object of destroying the world. You will find at the back of all the revolutions, etc., which disfigure our history the same ideas, and these ideas can be all traced to the Cabala. Examine, as Mrs. Webster does, the Gnostics, the Knight Templars, the Satanists, the Rosicrucians, the Albigensis, the Anabaptists, every subversive movement you like, and you will find they all spring from the Cabala. Of course, she doesn't say where the Elders of Zion manage to hold out, or how, through nearly 2,000 years they have been renewed. These are mysteries; but everything is in the Cabala, and that is good enough for her. Why, even the famous Protocols of

the Elders of Zion given to a gasping but slightly incredulous world by Nilus are really derived from the Cabala. Not that Mrs. Webster *now* believes the Elders actually wrote them. She tells us *now* she never said they did, but it must have been heart-breaking to make the confession. But their *real* author, Maurice Joly, never made up the destructive doctrines of his book—he *must* have got them from the Elders of Zion. And when Mrs. Webster gets down to brass tacks she gets away with it with unbounded enthusiasm. Do you want proof, for example, that the execrable Marchioness de Brinvilliers (you can read all about her in Albert Smith's once famous novel), became a wholesale poisoner through the Jews? It is quite easy—she got the poison from her lover, St. Croix. He got it from an Italian called Exili, who got it from a disciple of Paracelsus. Now Paracelsus, being one of the most remarkable men of his time, an occultist and an initiate, naturally knew all about the Cabala. So there you are; it is, as some famous house furnisher says, so simple; for, of course, the Cabala is the text-book of the Elders of Zion, who are Jews, and therefore modern Jews are entirely to blame for the wave of poisoning which spread over part of France in the seventeenth century. Mrs. Webster regrettably does not stop to give us the *names* of some of the Jews among the poisoners, but, alas, that is a mere detail. The Christians who did the poisoning were in reality only tools of the Jews, who supplied the poison. There are quite a large number of cases like this in her book, marvels of historical research and damning indictments of Jews. She even drags in Cromwell and knows exactly why he allowed Jews to return to England. He was a friend of Manasseh Ben Israel, a famous Cabalist, and that settled it. As for the French Revolution, Mrs. Webster is quite on safe ground because undoubtedly Jews did take part in this terrible upheaval, though somehow one would never credit Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Condorcet, Mirabeau, Marat, Danton, Robespierre, with having Jewish blood in their veins. But stay—my eagle eye seems to have alighted on something which surely Mrs. Webster can find time to investigate more fully. Robespierre—*pierre* is the French for *stone*—and *stone* is the English for *stein*—surely *Robespierre* may be *Robestein* or *Rubenstein* or *Rubystein*, just as one would say *Diamondstein*, which is unmistakably Jewish. And if it could be proved that Robespierre knew the whole of the Cabala by heart and was a mere tool in the hands of the Elders of Zion, why once again would her marvellous accusations against modern Jews be vindicated. Only it can't be proved.

I fully expected Mrs. Webster to say something about Casanova, for what he didn't know about the Cabala was surely not worth knowing. But as he looked upon it as bunkum and used some of its formulas to extract money from credulous dupes, she does not deal with him, but introduces to us once again her supreme villain—more like a hero I sometimes feel in her estimation—the great and only Adam Weishaupt, the greatest master of conspiracy the world has ever seen, the head of Illuminism and (except Jesus) the greatest adept the world has ever seen. His big idea was to destroy the world, and as he went to the Cabala for his ideas how to do it, the Jews were really to blame. A man with such a name as Adam Weishaupt ought to have been a Jew, and Mrs. Webster is nearly tearful she can't—as yet—prove it. This is a pity because the Jews, in his case might have been proud to claim him. But there you are. Nearly all the big names we get in Mrs. Webster's books, nearly all the assassins and villains and scoundrels generally are not Jews, but, thank

goodness, Jews are always lurking in the background. That is some consolation.

As far as I can see, according to Mrs. Webster, whatever happens to Jews, is really their own fault. Why do they blaspheme against Jesus? Why don't they accept him and his devils and miracles, the stupid, obstinate race? How can anyone have any pity for a people who produced such a blasphemous work as the *Sepher Toldos Jeschu*? I recommend her to read Leo Taxil's *Vie de Jesus*. It will make her hair stand on end. I can't recommend her to read Volney, Dupuis, Robertson, and Drews (who are not Jews) and who prove, in my opinion, that Jesus is myth pure and simple. She seems quite incapable of understanding them, but until she can reply to their arguments (and so far she has not done so) she can't very well expect Jews to accept as their Saviour somebody whose existence in the past eminent Gentiles flatly deny.

Lastly comes her attack on Bolshevism, with which she, quite rightly, says Jews are notoriously connected with. Well, a good many of the race-look with profound dismay at their co-religionists' advocacy of what, to them, seems the maddest and stupidest economic experiment that ever took place. But surely even Mrs. Webster does not want us to believe that it is the Jews, and the Jews alone, who are responsible for Communism? It is supported by hundreds of thousands of eminent Christians as well as by people of no religious faith, and most sensible people refuse to believe that here again are Elders of Zion lurking in the background and poisoning the minds of their dupes with vile extracts from the Cabala. The great Freethinkers, Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Foote, Spencer, and a large number of their followers—among whom are many Jews—were as bitterly opposed to the economic slavery of Socialism and Communism as Mrs. Webster herself. But their case is based on reason and not on such credulity as she shows in believing that the Cabala or any mystic doctrines handed down for generations is responsible for the activities of British or any other Bolshies.

The Jews inspired fear and hatred in medieval times among ignorant and ferocious people who, unhappily, were enslaved by Christian doctrines. Nowadays we have passed all that. We Freethinkers have civilized Christians, and if we can frame any indictment against the Jewish race let it be by reason and argument and not by silly vituperation based on the superstition and nonsense of the Cabala.

H. CUTNER.

Society News.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.

The Annual General Meeting of the Branch was held on Saturday, April 4. Mr. E. Monks (the President) occupied the chair. The Balance-Sheet showed a deficit, but it was hoped that by the time the report appeared this would be considerably reduced. The auditor pointed out that had it not been for the Social Committee, which contributed forty guineas to the general fund, the deficit would have been much larger.

There was only one nomination to the presidency, Mr. Monks and he was duly elected for the seventh time. Mr. Monks expressed his thanks for the honour done him, and said he regarded the Secular Society as representing a movement he valued above others. Messrs. Baily, Crompton, Pulman, Rosetti, Turner, and Willis were re-elected vice-presidents. Mr. H. Bayford, the retiring Secretary, said he had been in office for four years, but felt that the office was one which should go round. He would still do his best to aid the Branch as a private member. Mr. W. Collins was then elected Secretary, with Mr. C. H. Black as assistant Secretary.

Mr. T. F. Greenhall was re-elected literature Secretary, Messrs. Bayford, S. Cohen, Richards, Selferino, Unsworth, and Miss Williams were elected to the General Committee, and Messrs. C. H. Black, J. H. Black, Mrs. Ballard, the Misses Mapp and Unsworth were elected to the Social Committee, with power to co-opt. A delegate was also appointed to attend the annual Conference. The Branch thus enters upon its ninth year of existence—as the new Manchester Branch—with a constantly sustained membership and in a firmly established position.

I take this opportunity, in issuing my final report, of taking official leave of the members of the Branch. Apart from business concerns, my first acquaintances in Manchester five years ago were members of the Manchester Secular Society, and I can now number among these many of my personal friends; and while I recognize that the office of secretary is not one which is eagerly sought after, I have valued very much the confidence placed in me in conducting the work of the Branch. In saying this I have only to add that whatever assistance I can give will be given to the new Secretary, Mr. W. Collins, of 14 Longfield, Prestwich, Lancs, to whom all future communications should be addressed.—HAROLD I. BAYFORD.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

We are hoping for a good rally to-day (April 19) to hear the debate between Mr. Ratchiffe and Mr. Everett. Both gentlemen are good debaters, so North Londoners may look forward to an interesting evening. Come and bring a friend with you.—K.

Evolution Disproved.

GOVERNOR AUSTIN PEAY has signed a Bill which makes it illegal to teach "the theory of Evolution" in the schools of Tennessee. The governor, deeply religious, says the Bible disproves the theory of evolution.

That settles that, and everybody in Tennessee should be happy.

The thing, however, could be carried farther. Another Bill might be passed and signed by the governor, forbidding teaching of the theory that the earth is round.

The Bible also "disproves" that, for it is written in Revelation: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor any tree."

The statement that the earth has four corners of course is absolute proof that it isn't round. Nothing that is round has four corners. The learned governor of Tennessee in a moment of leisure might read some little book on embryology. Along the lines of pre-natal evolution, it would interest and surprise him to see what he looked like at the age of two months, about seven months before he was born. You would almost rather descend from a monkey than from a six-weeks-old embryonic human, which is a terrible thing to look upon.—Arthur Brisbane, "The Detroit Times."

Do I propose then, that every citizen shall be free to follow his own reason, and believe whatever this enlightened or deluded reason shall dictate to him? Certainly, provided he does not disturb the public order. It does not depend on man to believe or not to believe; but it depends on him to respect the usages of his country. If you insist that it is a crime to disbelieve in the dominant religion, you can condemn the first Christians, your fathers, and you justify these whom you reproach with persecuting them.—Voltaire.

If a few people know of a young man in the neighbourhood who, maybe, has not a good constitution—he may not be healthy enough to be wicked—a young man who has shown no decided talent—it occurs to them to make him a minister. They contribute and send him to some school.—Ingersoll.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 7.30, General Meeting. 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 Immortality a Fallacy?" Affirmative, Mr. C. E. Ratchiffe; Negative, Mr. H. G. Everett.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham Road): 7, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, "Where Are We?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Dr. Bernard Hollander, "Worry: Its Psychological Origin and Treatment."

OUTDOOR.

FINSBURY PARK.—3.30, a Lecture.

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

ALL Freethinkers invited to write for new illustrated list of Boots, Drapery, and Ladies' Wear. Suit lengths (3¼ yds.), 21s., or Suit to measure, 50s., patterns free.—S. GOTT, 219 Hall Lane, Bradford.

TAKE THE COURSE opposite to custom and you will always do well. For you, the sartorial course opposite to custom trends in our direction. In taking it you will assuredly do well. Write to-day for any of the following corroborations:—*Gents' A to H Book, suits from 50s.; Gents' I to N Book, suits from 99s.; or Ladies' Resplendent New Book, costumes from 60s., frocks from 41s.* The custom is to boycott *Freethinker* columns. The opposite is our course. Help us to do well.—MACCONNELL & MARE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

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