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Views and Opinions.

Piety and Character.

Newspapers will have noted the occurrence of "scenes" in connection with the performance of Mr. Caradoc Evan's play, "Taffy." Welshmen present did not like to see certain Welsh characters depicted as Mr. Evans has drawn them, and they resented in what is now coming to be quite a popular manner. They created a disturbance. We have not yet, apparently, developed beyond the stage when we display anger if anyone dares to suggest that everyone of our own countrymen is not a perfect gentleman. Of course, we know quite well enough that this is not the case, and no one would pretend—except a "patriot" in war-time—that the people of any country could be correctly described as either all villains or all monuments of morality. But in public we generally pretend that it is so. The utmost that any patriotic Briton would allow is that some of the people of other countries are as good as we are—much in the same spirit that the Christian so often compliments Freethinkers on being as good as Christians. A politician who said quite plainly that in the mass there was not really very much to choose between the people of any European country, that if we were better than another in one direction, they were probably better than us in some other direction, would be far from popular. It all shows "loyalty," if not intelligence, and when posturing in public intelligence is at a discount.

* * *

The Good and the Bad.

Of course, Mr. Evans did not intend people to think that all Welshmen were of the kind depicted in his books and in his play. They were selected types, and so far as we have been able to gather from Welshmen, fairly true to life in certain parts of Wales. But London Welshmen who show their devotion to Wales, by living in London, did not like it, and Mr. Max Pemberton, like a thorough-going journalist, saw a chance to write an article for the *Sunday Express*, in which he managed to say a great deal that is platitudinous and safe, but manages to miss—probably because that was also safe—the real point in Mr. Caradoc Evan's productions. We will not do Mr. Pemberton the injustice of saying that he does not

see the point, but only state the fact that he does not set it out. He says, what is obvious on the face of it, that many Welshmen are just and generous and honest and clean. A statement that is true of the Welsh, the Dutch, the Germans, the French, and of all other people. He also says, again a very obvious truth, that if we were to take many parts of England we could find some of the same sort of people that Mr. Evans depicts. There is, in truth, no monopoly of vice with any people or with any district—a truth of which we have often had to remind Christians when they have found an unbeliever who was a blackguard, and have attacked Freethinkers as though they must have robbed the Christian fold to get him. And while we are not concerned directly with either Mr. Evans or his play, the occurrence does open up certain questions which are not likely to be raised in other papers.

The Real Issue. * * *

Mr. Evans's point, in both "My People," "Capel Sion," and "Taffy," is that in certain parts of Wales, more than in any other part of the country, there exists a peculiar mixture of greed and lechery which is camouflaged, not to the outsider merely, but also to the individual himself, by the kind of religion that is current. We have characters that are peculiarly distasteful, but their piety is unquestionable and unquestioned. It is not questioned by themselves nor some very distasteful forms of lechery by their neighbours. They are constant in their attendance at chapel, they are, so far as one can see, sincere in their professions of religion, and while they would not shrink from very thinly disguised robbery, they would probably be the first to suggest that a decent living Atheist should be kicked out of the community. So that the real problem raised by Mr. Evans, and one at which none of his critics have even glanced, is the cover given by Christianity to detestable human qualities. And that really is a question that goes beyond the borders of Wales and embraces the whole of Christendom. Christians, naturally, will not face it. Non-Christians, particularly those of the respectable variety, will not face it either, because it might involve the suggestion, if not the deliberate statement, that of all the fundamentally immoral systems that exist in the civilized world Christianity is about the worst. And one cannot expect Mr. Pemberton to raise it, even if he sees it, because he is a journalist and novelist, and if he stated the issue carefully and plainly, there is not an English newspaper that would permit his article to appear. So far as Christianity goes, articles in papers are standardized. There are certain things that must be said, and there are certain things that may not be said. Every journalist knows this quite well, and acts accordingly.

* * *

The Religious Cloak.

But the fact is there. One of the outstanding facts to anyone who impartially studies the influence of

Christianity on character is the extent to which people will perform mean and dishonest actions under cover of religion. When one points to a Christian who acts dishonestly towards a Freethinker, who slanders him, or persecutes him, the reply is often made that it is not Christianity that is at fault, but the man's mean motives using religion as a cloak. But that is merely repeating the indictment by way of defence. The point is that the man is not conscious that it is a cloak for mean motives. When the notorious Terry was slandering Ingersoll, when other Christians have been slandering Freethinkers, boycotting them in trade, or imprisoning them, they were not conscious that they were acting intolerantly or dishonestly. They were acting under a sense of duty. A mean and contemptible character may have been there, that meanness and contemptibility might have expressed itself in some other form if it had not found vent in the religious world. But is there any other direction in which the motives would have been so camouflaged under the names of duty and morality as they were in the case of religion? Certainly I do not think so. Again, it is notorious that a very large part of the endowments of the Christian Church have been derived from people who acquired their plunder in more or less dishonest ways, and who by giving a portion of their gains to the Church felt they had secured salvation. The "pious benefactor" was often one who, if he had had his deserts, would have been swinging on a gallows or rotting in a prison. And when the days of the robber lords had passed away, the Baron of the Crags was changed into the Baron of the Bags, and the Christian with the money-bags managed to do what the other Christian with his men-at-arms had done. He acquired his wealth by slave-dealing, by murdering children in factories, by sacrificing women in mines, or by cornering the food of the people, and salved his conscience and gained public esteem by subscribing to foreign missions, endowing churches, or in otherwise promoting the Christian faith. And the Churches agreed with the late General Booth, of pious memory, that there is no such thing as unclean money. So long as it comes to the Church it is always clean.

* * *

Christianity's Failure.

Mr. Pemberton attempts an apology for the situation depicted by Mr. Evans by saying, "Education cannot destroy the animality which too often governs the countryside, nor has two thousand years removed some men far from the conditions of brutes." This does show some slight perception of the essential fact, but it is stated in such a way as to obscure it, and to give countenance to the popular theory of Christianity as a wholly virtuous system struggling against the wickedness of the world. Mr. Evans does not raise the question of the failure of Christianity to improve character, but the fact that it actually acts as a cover for the lechery and greed of his characters. They have not the slightest conception that they are not quite good Christians. They pray to their God to bless their enterprise, thank him when they succeed, and look upon their success as a signal mark of his favour. Of course, Christianity has not succeeded in turning men into admirable humans. That is a fact so patent that it hardly needs a newspaper article to impress it upon us. But why it has not succeeded, with its unrivalled opportunities, is another question, and why the Christian characters of Mr. Evans' should find actual encouragement and strength in their religion is a more important question still. We suggest that this is a question with which Mr. Pemberton, or some other publicist, might well deal. Why is it that Christianity has provided—historically and to-day—a cover for so much that is de-

testable? If he will do that he will have performed a public service of no mean value, and have displayed courage that is a little out of the ordinary. If he does attempt, I have not the least doubt but that the editor of the *Express* would refuse his article. So there it is again. When it comes to a question of mental and moral straightforwardness Christianity blocks the way on every hand. The old superstition must be kept up, and not only the old superstition, but the superstition about the superstition also. You cannot, it is said, fool all the people all the time, but at least our Christian press and Christian preachers are resolved to fool as many as they can, and for so long as it is possible.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Faith and Reason."

(Continued from page 595.)

DEAN INGE, as we have already seen, is hopelessly and uncritically enamoured of the idea that "Christianity is based on a transvaluation of values even more complete than that of Stoicism and the later Platonism," which is a statement that occurs in one of his *Outspoken Essays*, entitled "The Indictment against Christianity." In the discourse now before us he expresses the same idea as follows: "Faith is belief in the objective existence of a realm of values," which is a belief that lacks the slightest evidential support. If we ask him what he means by an objectively existing realm of values, he answers by calling it "the revealed attributes of God," which, unfortunately, are the exclusive objects of Faith, and, as such, are the only cause of what the divines describe as Christian experience. With that undiscovered realm we are not at present directly concerned, our sole point being that Dean Inge is fundamentally mistaken in regarding it as the chief factor in the determination of "the character and methods of the cosmic process," which belief "we have adopted because it seems the worthiest as well as the most probable." The Dean can be, and often is a profound scientific thinker and safe literary critic, but here he allows his supernatural belief to dominate and colour his natural knowledge, and is, as the great Robert Hall used to say of some metaphysician, "like a double Dutchman floundering in a continent of mud." That he does not understand and appreciate the situation is adequately proved by the following extract:—

A great part of the quarrel between science and religion arises from divergent opinions, not about the world as it is, but about what it will be. Faith, for a vast number of people, means a belief that the scheme of things will gradually or suddenly be remoulded nearer to our heart's desire. Thus, in forming our estimate of the world, we levy unlimited drafts on the future, like Mr. Lloyd George's Government. These drafts are not likely to be honoured. A sane idealism would look for its values in the world we know, around us and within; and as these values are real existents, and accessible to all who seek them in the right way, they will bring the faith of the scientist and the faith of the religious mystic very much nearer together. What estranges them at present is very largely that they reciprocally doubt the solvency of each other's investments in "futures."

The Very Rev. gentleman may hold consistency in contempt, but it so happened that six years ago he read a paper before the Church Congress on "The Christian Doctrine of the Future Life," in the course of which he said:—

The mass of the people asks for a religion without the Cross and without the Resurrection, a religion

which might well be summed up in the lines of Burns :—

The social, friendly, honest man,
What'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he.

This is very genial and jolly, but it is not Christianity.....Belief in immortality, firmly held, must needs transform everything for us in this world. It is a tremendous, and on one side, a terrible truth; if we do not feel it to be so, we are far astray. "Where your treasure is there will be your heart also." Secularized Christianity, my friends, the religion of the platform, has neither savour nor salt.

And yet in the utterance under criticism, delivered only a few weeks ago, the whole emphasis is laid upon the only world we know, in which "a sane idealism would look for its values." It is possible that the Dean is influenced by time and occasion. At a Church Congress a speaker is expected to proceed along more or less orthodox lines, while at an assembly of Modern Churchmen greater liberty of expression is naturally permissible.

The great fault of which the Dean is guilty in his Address to Modern Churchmen is that of confusing the cosmic process with what is entirely due to human intelligence and consequent activity. Humanity is but one of the innumerable products of evolution, and, taking the process as a whole, there is absolutely no escape from the conclusion that it is wholly blind, unintelligent, purposeless, and characterized by enormous waste and useless suffering. The Dean admits, however, that his view of it is based upon Faith rather than upon facts; upon his trust in God rather than upon his knowledge of Nature. In other words, Dean Inge is first of all a theologian, and only secondarily a student of natural processes; and when talking to a company of comparatively broad-minded brethren, he naturally assigns the first place to Faith. And yet, in spite of his championship of Faith, he is not in favour of the disparagement of the intellect. He says :—

Many modern writers, such as Kidd and Lord Balfour, have defended a faith based on sceptical anti-intellectualism. Lord Balfour sets up authority against reason. He calls authority the rival and opponent of reason, and makes it stand for "that group of non-rational causes, moral, social, and educational, which produces its results by psychic processes other than reasoning." It "coerces the operations of reason to a foreordained issue," which is fortunate, since "reason is a force most apt to divide and disintegrate." I cannot see why these non-rational processes, which coerce the operations of reason to a foreordained issue, should be called authority. They seem to me a dignified phrase for what a schoolboy calls fudging his sums.

At the same time, the Dean cannot be pronounced a champion of the Reason. Indeed, he frankly confesses that "we cannot afford to despise this revolt against the intellect." He does not know, but is disposed to think, that "the mechanism and determinism of nineteenth-century science are very unwelcome to the temper of our generation, which is wilful, superstitious, and sentimental"; but such a statement is dangerously misleading. It was in Queen Victoria's days that Darwinism arose and was accepted as the scientific explanation of the law of evolution. Herbert Spencer was a nineteenth-century philosopher, who made the theory of evolution popular in this country, and practically all the leading scientists of the twentieth century carry on their work on the assumption that the theory is true. It is very easy for the Dean to speak slightly of the super-structure which the naturalists of much less than a hundred years ago built on their scientific studies; but

to prove that it was unsound and bound to topple into hopeless ruin is quite a different matter. He proceeds thus :—

Then a revolt against Materialism broke out within the domain of science itself. Many biologists and most psychologists have broken loose from mechanistic determinism, as we saw in our Conference last year.

Many clergymen have fallen into the habit of telling sluch lies about science and scientists, and Sir E. Ray Lankester, himself a distinguished physiologist and naturalist, does not hesitate to dub them "maligners of science." He maintains, and has persistently maintained for years, that "the assertion that the theory of organic evolution as left by Darwin is now generally held to be inadequate is fallacious." His contention is expressed as follows :—

I have yet to hear of any duly trained and qualified biologist who is prepared at the present moment to maintain the existence of a "vital principle," or of a force to be called "vitality," which is something different in character and quality from the recognized physical forces, and has its existence alongside, yet apart from, the manifestations of those forces.

We have now seen with the utmost clearness that Faith is essentially irrational, and can only be held by those who not only misrepresent or reject all scientific knowledge, but also are profoundly ignorant of the all-sufficiency of Nature for all her children. Supernatural beliefs are impossible to independent, unprejudiced thinkers who have learned by experience that all they need Nature has in store for them. Their reason assures them that she is their all in all, and that she will never disappoint them when they put their trust in her. She never descends to favouritism, however, but treats all alike, only man's superior intelligence supplies him with the greatest knowledge of her resources. Reason bows religion in the generally accepted sense of the word, out of court, and refuses to have any dealings whatever with it. According to its teaching, our only duty is to be loyal to our own nature, and love and serve one another as children of our common mother, Earth. As Meredith wisely puts it :—

Love born of knowledge, love that gains
Vitality as Earth it mates,
The meaning of the Pleasures, Pains,
The Life, the Death, illuminates.

For love we Earth, then serve we all;
Her mystic secret then is ours.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Poets and Peace.

There is nothing else in history but the fight between freedom and tyranny.—*Arnold White*

When the sword glitters o'er the judge's head,
And fear has coward churchmen silenced,
This is the poet's time. —*Andrew Marvell.*

DURING the five years of the great war English publishers wallowed in war poetry, but since then there has been a very welcome change. One of the most noticeable books showing this transformation is *The Minstrelsy of Peace*, edited by J. Bruce Glaisher (National Labour Press).

This is a selection of verse by a pronounced Pacifist, and it is hardly to be wondered at that the editor found what he wanted in so extensive a collection of English literature, including, as it does, hundreds of poets inspired in almost as many moods as human nature permits.

Thackeray, whose genius lay so far asunder from

the Mount of Parnassus, charged all poets with militarism :—

And ever since historian writ,
And ever since a bard did sing,
Doth each exalt with all his wit
The noble art of murdering.

Mr. Glaisher had no difficulty in defending the poets against Thackeray's wholesale condemnation, but he was none the less partisan. For example, he quoted Robert Burns's bitter lines on thanksgiving for victory :—

Ye hypocrites! Are these your pranks?
To murder men and give God thanks?
Desist for shame! Proceed no further!
God won't accept your thanks for murder.

Such writing does not represent Burns's full view on war. He could hardly have written *Scots Who Hae* if he did. Let any reader ponder the following lines :—

By oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins;
But they shall be free.
Lay the proud usurper low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die.

Mr. Glaisher was just as cavalier in his treatment of Walt Whitman, the tan-faced poet of the West, who saw war at closer quarters than so many poets. It is all very well to quote the lines :—

My enemy is dead; a man divine as myself is dead;
I look where he lies white-faced and still in his coffin. I
draw near,
Bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face
in the coffin.

But Walt Whitman wrote many another strain, and there is no false rhetoric or brazen bravado in the touching tribute to the comrades of the Civil War :—

The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music;
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

It is an open question whether Mr. Glaisher did wisely in appropriating so many poets as Pacifists. The great poets, almost without exception, sing of both peace and war, for the simple reason that both conditions are incidental to humanity. Milton's hymn on "The Nativity of Christ" is magnificent poetry :—

Nor war, nor battle's sound
Was heard the world around,
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
The Kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

No one can deny that this is fine writing; but, in another mood, Milton wrote equally well in praise of General Oliver Cromwell.

Many modern readers imagine that Rudyard Kipling introduced a war-like note in his verse, which was absent in his predecessors. Yet years before Kipling was heard of, Oscar Wilde sang of the burden of Empire :—

For not in quiet English fields
Are these our brothers laid to rest,
Where we might deck their broken shields
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,
And many in the Afghan land,
And many where the Ganges falls
Through seven months of shifting sand,

And some in Russian waters lie,
And others in the seas which are
The portals to the East, or by
The wind-swept heights of Trafalgar.

Curiously, most of the best war poetry has been written by stay-at-home folk. The explanation is that soldiers are men of action, and seldom men of letters. When Walter Scott wished to write a poem on the Battle of Waterloo, he desired to get some local colour. With this object he questioned the Duke of Wellington. All the information he got from that great leader was, "It was a damned near thing." Wellington had none of the fluency of Thomas Campbell, who was as innocent of the alarms and excursions of war as a maiden aunt in a sheltered country vicarage. Yet how he describes a naval battle :—

When each gun
From its adamant lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

Once a gallant colonel wrote an immortal poem, "To Lucasta, On Going to the Wars," commencing :

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind,
To war and arms I fly.

and finishing with the glorious lines :—

I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

Colonel Lovelace's exquisite poem so impressed Tennyson that he said he would sooner have written those lines than all his own verse. Lovelace was sincere, for he died a ruined man, having lost all in the fratricidal struggle between Cromwellians and Royalists.

Poets have generally sympathized with peoples fighting for their liberty. Byron never wrote nobler verse than when he was inspired by the struggling Greeks. More enduring than the marble of the Genoese monument are those lovely lyrics in which Swinburne hymned his praise of Mazzini and the cause of Italian liberation. And it was from *Casa Guidi Windows* that Elizabeth Browning, the greatest of our women poets, chanted her praises of the soldiers of Italy. Even the austere Wordsworth hailed the great French Revolution in the laudatory lines :—

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.

And he also acclaimed the Haytian Insurrection. Indeed, the love of Freedom and its soldiers, has been a common possession of our greatest poets. However, it would be unwise to press the matter too far. The purely militarist element in poetry has been exaggerated by so many people, and for diverse reasons entirely unassociated with ethics or literature. The editor of this collection of verse had his justification, although his zeal outran its boundaries. The collection of verse may not be fare for the thoughtless, but may have its uses for those for whom thinking is one of life's pleasures.

MIMNERMUS.

"Back to Jesus."

V.

SANE AND INSPIRING.

THE language used by Mr. Knapp-Fisher and Mr. Bullett in describing the teaching of Jesus is, of course, exactly the sort of thing we get both from the Catholic Guild and the Christian Evidence Society as well as from the orthodox Protestant Churches. It is, therefore, worth while to take up a few more examples as given in the Gospels and look at them without fear or awe. For instance, Jesus cursing the

fig-tree just fits in with Mr. Knapp-Fisher's description of "a man who had never stooped to the sins and follies found in all other men." It is so true. But would he, in addition, tell us what sin and folly is more idiotic than cursing a fig-tree?

In Luke, 7th chapter, 36-46 verses, will be found a most edifying story. I hope readers will study it. Briefly Jesus, as usual, accepted an invitation to dine with a Pharisee. "A woman of the city, which was a sinner," brought a box of ointment, washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, dried them with her hair, and kissed them, and then anointed them with the ointment; quite a delightful procedure for any man to allow any woman to do. Even the Pharisee couldn't stand it, and said so. I must really give the "singularly sane and inspiring" reply:—

Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with ears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.

I want a frank and straight answer. Is this story an example for modern men? Are we to get angry if our host doesn't kiss us and wash our feet? If a "woman of the city" does both, are her sins really forgiven? Or are we to understand that this story must not be taken literally, but spiritually? And what then?

The truth is the whole episode is revolting to our modern notions of decency. If I thought any man would allow "a sinner" to kiss his feet, wash them with her tears, etc., I should be ashamed of my sex.

But washing feet was a speciality of Jesus's. He wished to wash Peter's feet and actually considered it unnecessary to wash more to be clean. "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well: for so I am," he said, with becoming modesty. "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Of course, Christians rarely mention this noble advice, and if they do, it is to pretend that the washing was only meant for the Apostles. I insist it is meant as all the other teaching of Jesus is meant, for the world to follow, and recommend it to Mr. Bullett and Mr. Knapp-Fisher as particularly "sane and inspiring." When Jesus talks about eating his body and drinking his blood, he is the very embodiment of "clarity."

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread which I shall give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world..... Verily, verily, I say unto you except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.

Even his disciples couldn't swallow this balderdash, for they said, "This is an hard saying." But I have no doubt all those good Rationalists who wish us to go back to Jesus will agree with Mr. Bullett, "Human wisdom can reach no higher than this." In case, however, he argues that this "hard saying" is spiritual or metaphorical, I wish most respectfully to insist that it is not. The hearers of Jesus anyway thought it was not so, for after saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" went away and "walked

no more with him." "Away from Jesus" was their slogan.

Was Jesus truthful? He said in his defence, "In secret I have said nothing." As a matter of fact, he constantly taught "in secret." "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Was that so? As E. P. Meredith says: "He must have well known that this statement was incorrect. For he contradicted this law, violated it, and trampled it under foot in a vast number of instances." Jesus said, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Is this true? Or is it one of those instances again, which must not be taken literally? How "sane and inspiring" is this!—"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted and their sins be forgiven them." Will those who call Jesus a "freethinker," or wish to lead us gently back to him, explain this, or is it another example of "an hard saying"? Or would I split my sides with laughter at its choice humour if only I had some humour myself?

But I am tired of further selecting more of the simple and beautiful teachings of Jesus out of the hundreds of examples staring anyone in the face if only he will read the Gospels for himself, and do so as he would any other book. I do not deny that here and there will be found ethics with which we can all agree—but are they distinctively Christian? What are Buckle's weighty words?—

That the systems of morals propounded in the New Testament contained no maxim which had not been previously annunciated.....is well known to every scholar.....to assert that Christianity communicated to man moral truths previously unknown argues on the part of the assertion either gross ignorance or else wilful fraud.

Why then go "back to Jesus?" H. CUTNER.

A Valley of My Own.

Down the valley of my men'ry
I have had some pleasant walks,
With the people in this valley
I have had some pleasant talks.

(No super-seer Sir Conan,
With his tricky dark seance,
Much less need one invoke his
Mumbling medium in a trance.)

The friends who have departed
From this world in peace or strife,
In this valley I may meet them,
Sad or joyful as in life.

Old comrades gone to foreign lands,
Or wandering far and wide,
In this valley, any minute,
I can call them to my side.

Down here my thoughts meander,
Free from custom, caste or creed.
Here all is peace and order,
For of law there is no need.

In this valley there's no landlord
To lay claim to stick or stone;
I pay no tithes nor taxes,
For this valley is my own.

JAMES NEIL.

Acid Drops.

We intended dealing with the *Daily Express* articles on religious beliefs of certain well-known writers, so soon as the series is completed. But we may note a sentence in the third article, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. "After a certain time," he says, "there followed my years of Agnosticism. I remained a firm believer in God." That quite demonstrates the truth of what we have so often said concerning the utter valuelessness of Agnosticism as a label. It means just what the user likes to make it mean. One man uses it, and explains privately that he means just the same as the Atheist, but people misunderstand the word "Atheism." Another says he is an Agnostic, but is a firm believer in God. And yet another says he is an Agnostic, but firmly believes in a "Power" animating the universe. It is a glorious term that means all things to all men. If it had had a definite antitheistic meaning it is quite certain that Huxley would never have used it. It is high time that men who really value definiteness of thinking and unambiguity of speech dropped it altogether. If they really believe in a God let them say so. If they do not believe in a God let them say that also. Plain speech pays best in the long run.

The Bishops appear to have been invited by the *Daily Express* to give their opinions on the various contributions, and they have taken up the position that these writers believe more than they are aware of, and are more Christian than they think. The Bishops are evidently thankful for small mercies. So long as a man of note will express a belief in a kind of sort of something, they are ready to claim him as a Christian. Anything rather than let the world run away with the impression that the intelligence of the modern world is rapidly outgrowing Christianity.

Another favourite line adopted is the old one that these writers, who all express very amiable sentiments with regard to duty, kindness, etc, are influenced by the fact that they come of a Christian ancestry, and are affected by a Christian environment. That is a very common argument, but it goes too far. For if we are to place the amiable sentiments of the *Daily Express* writers to the credit of their Christian environment, Protestants would have to place whatever is good about them to the credit of Roman Catholicism, and whatever is good about Christianity would have to be placed to the credit of the earlier Paganism. It would seem much simpler, and better, to take the social environment as influencing one's view of life, but that would involve rather too much common sense for any Christian Bishop to manifest.

We see from the *Church Times* that the *Express* offered it an advertisement of the series of articles, but they were refused. We do not know on what ground exactly, but we may safely say that it was suspected the articles coming from the journalists named raised the suspicion that they would not be orthodox, and it is part of the Christian policy to hide as much as possible the fact of what little hold real Christianity has on many public men and women. The *Church Times* adds that Mr. Arnold Bennett's views are such as may be seen any week in the *Freethinker*. Not exactly that, for we hope that the views on religion expressed in these columns are rather more exact and scientific than those held by Mr. Bennett. Still, we are obliged for the compliment, and it may well be that directly, and certainly indirectly, Mr. Bennett is very much indebted to the *Freethinker* for his opinions. Opinion on religion would not be what it is had the *Freethinker* not been steadily carrying on its fight for more than forty years.

The *Daily Express* appears, however, to be pursuing the usual policy with regard to the letters it is receiv-

ing. It prints yards of the usual silly and sloppy letters about living the Christian life, but none making a straightforward attack on Christianity, which would voice the opinions of large masses of people in this country are permitted to see daylight. One reader of this journal wrote to the editor saying that he was disappointed in the character of the articles, since "the policy appears to have been to commission writers who, at the worst, would write in a vein of 'reverent' Agnosticism, thus playing into the hands of the divines who answer each day." The writer added:—

Religion, above all things, stands in need of fearless discussion, and requires the tearing aside of the protecting cloak of "reverence." It is indeed the key to things. Why do clerical interests use their influence to suppress publication of any damaging hostile argument? Truth needs no such special protection.

All that appeared of the letter was:—

Religion, above all things, stands in need of fearless discussion, and requires the tearing aside of the cloak of "reverence." Truth needs no such special protection.

It will be noted that the central point of the writer's complaint was completely ignored, and against his will he was forced into the ranks of the "reverent" Agnostics. By some means or another the old humbugging game must be kept up, and the fact that there are millions of people who strongly repudiate Christian beliefs in their entirety must be hidden. One again asks whether complete honesty is ever possible with regard to such a creed as Christianity. It seems to poison all it touches.

If one reads the *Daily Express* one gathers that the whole world is discussing the articles on religion it has published, and the London Churches were besieged by thousands to listen in "breathless silence" to what the preachers had to say. But if one reads the other papers one knows nothing of this universal interest, nothing of the breathless interest and powerful preaching. Nothing of it exists. We do not mean by this that the articles are not creating some interest, or that preachers have not used them for a text. We cite the instance as an example of the value that one may properly place on the daily press as an index of public opinion. When it suits the interest of a paper certain things are presented as absorbing public attention. When it does not suit, these things have no existence. The newspapers do not even fulfil the elementary function of giving one the news—outside of murders or divorce cases.

And with the small attention paid by the average member of the public to serious reading matter, and his practically confining himself to the papers for his knowledge of the world, we have a peculiarly unenlightened, but, at the same time, sensitive state of the public mind. If all the papers had joined in telling their readers that the opinions of these novelists were the most important, or the most nonsensical, of recent pronouncements, you would have found scores of people repeating the statement—and believing it—as though they really had thought the matter out. When Queen Victoria died, we remember how every paper, together with the news of her death, published the report that the whole nation was plunged in profound grief. And to everyone who read it found himself plunged in grief. Had he merely read that Queen Victoria was dead, he would never have known how grief-stricken he was. One might pick out scores of similar illustrations, and while they would illustrate the power of the press—that we have not the slightest grounds for doubting—they would prove its inability to form an intelligent public opinion. As things are, the public is at the mercy of all sorts of "stunts," religious, social, or economic. One of the gravest dangers facing the world to-day is a population that can all read, a very small minority of which read anything of a serious nature, and the vast majority of which is at the mercy of this or that newspaper which trades upon the ignorance or mass-suggestibility of its readers.

The *Nurseyman and Seedsman* publishes a telegram from the New York correspondent of the Central News to the effect that Mr. A. E. Kundert, who has produced a hybridized gladioli, has been banned from the Strict Orthodox Church of Goschen, Indiana. The Church meeting declared that "If the Almighty had wanted gladiolus to be hybridized he would have made them that way." Hear, hear! That is the soundest piece of religious doctrine we have heard for some time. If there's a God he ought to know the kind of thing he wants, from gladiolus to Archbishops. And Mr. Kundert deserves to be doubly damned for thus impudently trying to improve on the work of the Creator.

The Cleethorpes Corporation has decided to stop all prosecutions for Sunday trading on the ground that they are futile. We congratulate the Corporation on its resolve, but had they said that the prosecutions were ridiculous, instead of futile, it would have been better. It is time Christians were made to realise that a religion should be able to stand alone, instead of being upheld by the arm of a policeman.

Mr. Saklatvala has been refused admission into America under a law which prohibits the entrance of people holding "subversive" views. That is a Capitalist country. In Russia the same policy would be pursued with regard to a propagandist who tried to enter there holding opinions "subversive" of those endorsed by the Government. That is a Communist Socialist country. Extremes meet, and from our point of view, there is nothing to choose between them. And in this country, we have appeals from numbers of people that the Home Secretary ought to suppress this or that kind of propaganda, while gangs of half-educated and hot-headed young men, under the names of Communists and Facists are engaged in breaking up meetings, the one in the name of a higher life, the other in the name of devotion to king and country. Again, we do not see a pin's difference between them. The rightness or the wrongness of the opinions championed have nothing at all to do with the issue. Opinions are not shown to be either one or the other by throwing stones, or by passing laws, an opinion that cannot get along without either is not worth holding.

We have nothing to do with the political opinions of either party, but we are concerned with the growth of club law, parliamentary or otherwise, and its implied threat to the one thing with which we are concerned, namely, freedom of opinion. And for some years there has been a decided tendency to use force in place of argument, and an implied, when not avowed, contempt for freedom of expression. The suppression of certain political opinions are advised on the ground that they are subversive of public order. But that is precisely the ground upon which the suppression of heresy has been advocated. And it surely makes little difference whether the heresy be of a political or a religious character. The word "subversive" only clouds the issue. Every advanced opinion is subversive with regard to something or the other. To say that an opinion is wrong is idle. The more we are convinced that an opinion is erroneous the more light we should show it. There is nothing like open discussion to prove an opinion to be wrong, and nothing will so certainly prevent those who hold it from seeing it is wrong, and, at the same time, exalt it into an infallible truth as attempts at suppression. As affairs stand, the Freethought party appears to be the only body of people in the country who will stand up for freedom of expression no matter what the opinion may be.

Mr. A. E. Kennard, once a boiler maker, now a proficient osteopath, attends patients regularly at St. Katherine Church Cree, Leadenhall Street. He has, it is said, effected many cures, but he has nothing to do with religion. It is all a case of manipulative surgery. But a parson belonging to the Church is always present,

and the *Sunday Express* heads its account of the cures with "Church of Many Miracles." So we have no doubt that the cures, which would take place just as well in a public-house, will be placed to the credit of Christianity. Otherwise we can see no need for either the parson or the newspaper heading.

There is some excitement in religious circles in Delaware. A local parson, the Rev. C. J. Bucknall, has been attacking Capitalism and Imperialism, and, as usual, finding that Jesus Christ was against both. How he discovers this one cannot say, but it is the fashion to find that Christ taught anything in which certain preachers happen to believe. At a meeting addressed by Mr. Bucknall, the chairman said that those who were not with them, were against them—which is quite scriptural—and that those who disagreed with them would go to hell, which is also scriptural. Then one member of the meeting said he would not be sworn at by the chairman, and the meeting broke up in confusion. So the point remains undecided as to whether people should go to hell on their own account or on the finding of the chairman. We give it up, but our sympathy is really with the Devil. If he has to put up with the company of the Devonshire Christians, his lot can be anything but a happy one.

Principal Jacks is considered to be a very good example of the better-class intellectual Christian. But when it comes to dealing with non-Christians, the high and the low Christian appears to be about on the same level. Speaking before the British Institute of Adult Education on September 18, he said that a well-made article of any kind revealed a religious exercise. But "a jerry-built house declared to him beyond all gain-saying that the men who built it were Atheists." We admit that, intellectually, Principal Jacks stands upon a much higher level than a mere journalist such as Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, but we fail to see any difference between that kind of statement and Mr. Fyfe's, that a man who was cruel to animals was an Atheist. Religious belief appears to do away with all intellectual distinctions and to bring people to a common level of imbecility.

The wise man usually takes an umbrella with him if the wind is in the south-west, and Professor Lake, with his eye on the weather-cock, anticipates the weather. He has, in his book, *The Religion of Yesterday and To-morrow*, rationalized the crudities of the Christian religion. Like the baker's loaf that got so small that it could be delivered through the letter-box, the Professor's version of Christianity gives us but the outline of a ghost. This extract, but one frail finger of a spook is a sample from bulk: "The word God will stand for the Immaterial Reality, or for the 'values,' truth, beauty, wisdom combined, or for purpose in the universe." We question whether ninety per cent. of Christians would understand what the Professor even means.

At an induction of the Rev. D. R. Barton, the new vicar of Thames Ditton, Archdeacon Blackhouse, said there was more fellowship in a village public-house than there was sometimes in a village church. It is to be hoped that these comparisons of the church with other establishments will continue. The Archdeacon's statement would be true if he had substituted a Lyon's Tea Shop; there is no comparison between the Church and the theatre, music-hall, or picture-palace, for it is now outside the stream of life with a creed that has no relation to facts. By instinct it is always on the wrong side of any manifestation of healthy growth in mankind.

In the course of sound reasoning in support of Birth Control, Dora Russell, in *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, writes:—

Personally, I do not believe that traditional religious teaching has anything to contribute to solving human problems. Its view of human nature itself is superficial and unsound. It has failed in the past and is still

failing. Birth control, to me as to others, comes in as part of a very definite view of life which is as important to us as Roman Catholicism to devout believers.

The only reason that the official element in Catholic circles can produce is that birth control is "evil." This is a word with almost an exclusive theological meaning, and constantly on the lips of obscurantists. Out of the fog of monkish metaphysics it has no meaning, and is useless in problems of life. The harm it has done as an inhibition is part and parcel of the general opposition to healthy solutions; one can only conclude that the Catholic Church is afraid of a shortage of raw material—it must be raw.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has been at it again. This time there has been revealed to his wife, in beautiful language, by a spirit from the highest spheres, that a terrible disaster will overtake humanity between 1925 and 1928. Unfortunately Sir Arthur says he cannot reveal what shape this disaster will take, but humanity needs it, and so this spirit from the higher sphere says it will come. But what on earth is the good of information of this kind? It does not tell us what kind of disaster, and we are, therefore, unable to guard against it. And Sir Arthur says he cannot reveal whether it will take a physical or a moral form—which is just a trifle artful for one who has been in communion with the higher spheres. For if there is an earthquake on a great scale, or a political revolution, or a king killed, or an epidemic breaks out, or a great war between the yellow and the white races, or a great rising of Africans, or parsons take to speaking the truth, or visitors from the other world take to talking sense, any of these might be claimed as a great revolution. On the whole, most people will read Sir Arthur's prophecy without their hair standing on end. For we have it on the testimony of Spiritualists themselves that those on the other side are not always truthful, and we all know that those on this side are not always sensible. So there it is.

We have received a postcard on which we are given the information that some 8,000 Christians have been turned out of their homes by "non-Christians." The reference is to the reported expulsion by Mohammedans in Mesopotamia. But to make the information complete it should have stated that they who turned them out were very religious people, who all had a firm belief in a God and a future life. And the enmity between the two sets of people is largely based on the fact of religious difference. That lends support to what we have always insisted on, namely, that while there may be some religious that are worse than others, there are none of them that are good. And whatever hatreds exist between peoples they are always made worse and more virulent by the presence of religious belief.

At the same time we would remind our correspondent that driving people from their homes is quite an historic Christian practice. Hundreds of thousands of Mohammedans and Jews were driven out of Spain with every circumstance of brutality, and for no other reason than that they were not Christians. Jews were expelled from England and parts of Germany and Holy Russia. Protestants were expelled from France. In fact, when it comes to brutality in this direction the world had nothing it can teach the Christian Church.

An official statement from America says that in New York State last year worthless shares to the amount of 500,000,000 dollars were foisted on the public. One Baptist parson in San Francisco sold gold mine shares with a promise of 600 per cent. interest on the strength of the statement that "God committed the gold reef to his company, which will pay generation after generation, if God wills." And if God won't, the dividend will not be forthcoming. Such a prospectus is generally evidence of the large number of fools that go to make up the population, but, particularly, that if one wants to make sure of netting the ripest kind of fool

there is no better method than serving up a dose of religion as a bait. It appeals so strongly to that mixture of cunning and greed that is so often found with certain types of religionists.

Some time ago we referred to the vision of the Virgin Mary seen by a peasant near Budapest. The girl, it appears, said she looked in the water when passing over a bridge and saw a vision of the Virgin. The Bishops have now pronounced the vision a delusion. We have heard of people seeing visions after looking too steadily into whisky, but never after looking into water. Anyway, we do not know that we need preen ourselves on being so very much above this peasant girl. We have had Sir Oliver Lodge with his whisky and cigars in the next world, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with his fairies, and it does well to recall the fable of the Angels of Mons in the early part of the war. In this latter case, in spite of the journalist who wrote the yarn protesting that it was all imagination, numbers of the clergy swore it was true, and there were a number of witnesses produced who said they saw the angels leading on the troops. There is really no limit to the things that religious credulity will swallow.

Some little time ago Judge Cluer told a woman who was before him, and who had had rather a large family, that she was doing her country a disservice in bringing so many children into the world. The Catholic League, which, in common with the Church, believes in having as large families as possible, passed a resolution severely censuring Judge Cluer, and sent him a copy. Whereupon, Judge Cluer replied, "The approval or disapproval of your Catholic League is a matter of complete indifference to your obedient servant, A. B. Cluer." We are not over fond of hearing judges and magistrates exercise themselves in giving little lectures on moral and economic subjects, they had better stick to their last, but Judge Cluer gave the correct reply to the impertinence of the Catholic League.

The British and Foreign Bible Society reports that on the Continent of Europe the greatest obstacle to the circulation of the Bible comes from the Socialists. We do not know whether that is the case or not, but if it is so, it does but accentuate what we have said above as to the growth of the idea of force in matters of opinion. The *Daily Mirror* says it is a statement that calls for explanation, as the Gospels are not economic treatises and have nothing to say about the nationalization of the mines or railways. For information on this point we must refer the *Mirror* to some of the English labour leaders, beginning with Mr. Macdonald, and it will find that Jesus taught that the mines should be nationalized, that old age pensions were to be established, to say nothing of the other points in the labour programme in this country.

A cutting is sent us in which a lady gives to an enquirer the *locale* of the hymn, "It pays to serve Jesus." If any information is required with reference to the truth of the statement we suggest that enquiries be made of a number of professional evangelists, or the Bench of Bishops. Like Omar's deity, they know.

It is interesting to note the shifts and turns made by Christianity in the face of developments never dreamed of by St. Paul. In the Hulsean Lectures, 1924-1925, delivered before the University of Cambridge by the Rev. A. C. Bouquet, and now printed in book form, it is stated that the highly-organized political secularism is the most serious danger to be faced by the Christian Church. To touch the heart of politics and the centre of this proposition, how many members of Parliament have the courage to affirm on taking their seats in the House of Commons? The greatest danger that can confront Christianity is that of being found out, and the searchlights of evolution in a hundred forms are bringing it to this state.

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.

J. KEY (Springfontein).—*The Moral Philosophy of Free-thought* was first published in 1822 under the title of *Sketches in the Philosophy of Morals*. The author, Sir T. C. Morgan, was a well-known doctor of his day, a man of very considerable attainments, and a complete Free-thinker. He was, we believe, closely associated with the celebrated Dr. Lawrence, whose *Lectures on Man* roused such a storm in the religious world on account of their materialism. As you say, it is saddening to think that we have to repeat so much that was available a hundred years ago, but for that Christianity is largely to blame. The work was reprinted only because someone was found willing to subsidize it. And there are many other fine early Free-thought works that might be published if someone interested would come forward and act in the same manner.

KERIDON.—We share your appreciation of Mr. Cutner's articles. Of all the sickening cant we know of that connected with the ideal Jesus is about the worst, and has least to support it.

D. MAPP.—Thanks for cuttings. It is quite correct to say that natural processes alone gradually alter the appearance of plants as of other things. On the other hand, it is not correct to assume that evolution, unaided by man, ever produces the finest possible types of either animals or plants. These are brought into existence by man directing the process of growth. Natural selection only serves to group character around a mean. It stops development as well as promotes it. It is man that carries it on as to produce the best possible. Religiously, whenever man interferes with God's work, he generally manages to improve it.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—"Belgravia," 10s.

ELLIOT (Toronto).—You do not send your address, or Mr. Cohen would have written you. We are glad you believe that there is a big field for the *Freethinker* in Toronto. We should like to get hold of some responsible person who would undertake the handling of the paper there.

W. J. W. BASTERBROOK.—We quite agree with your estimate of the *Daily Express* articles. They are an extraordinary revelation of commonplace phrasing and inability for serious analytic thought. If they are to be taken as indicative of the mental ability of our "leading writers," we have little on which to pride ourselves. We commence dealing with them in our next issue.

W. T. BLACKBURN.—Sorry we cannot place the lines, "My country is the world, I call no son of man my foe." Perhaps some of our readers may be able to do so. The first line is obviously taken from Paine.

E. G. ELLIOTT.—There is a certain brand of religion which appears to flourish with a type of Army officer. Smith-Dorrien's belief that we won the war by prayer and intercession is an example in point. If he brings no more sense into service matters than he does into his religion he should be placed on the retired list.

T. DUNBAR.—Thanks for sight of letter. We are very pleased to know that Freethinkers in Ireland are beginning to bestir themselves. As we have before remarked, there are few countries in Europe that need Free-thought more badly than does Ireland.

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

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

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

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

Lecture Notices must reach 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The Pioneer Press has just published, on behalf of the Secular Society, Limited, *God and Evolution*, by the Editor of the *Freethinker*. The booklet is a careful and candid examination of the bearing of the doctrine of evolution on religious beliefs, with special reference to Christianity. Thanks to the Dayton case, the question of evolution and religion is very much in the public mind at present, and this essay should prove useful to all. It is published at sixpence, and may be ordered through any newsagent or bookseller, or can be had direct from this office for one penny extra to cover postage. The whole edition ought to be sold out within a few weeks. It should prove a very useful gift to a thoughtful religious friend.

To-day (September 27) is Bradlaugh Sunday, and some of the London Branches are holding demonstrations. At Brockwell Park there will be a number of speakers, including Mr. A. B. Moss, Messrs. Saphin, Corrigan, Shaller, and others. Mr. Cohen has also promised to be present and speak. It is some years now since Londoners had a chance of hearing Mr. Cohen in the open-air, and Brockwell Park is one of the pleasantest of London Parks for a visit in any case. That is, if the weather takes a turn for the better. And we must surely get a change for the better soon.

We are glad to see that our lively contemporary, the *New York Truthseeker*, is insistent on the fact that you cannot harmonize evolution with Christianity. That is the proper line to take. Every sound Freethinker should agree with the Fundamentalist that Christianity and evolution cannot be reconciled. And we must drive home that lesson while the opportunity offers. Evolution is essentially a godless doctrine. Christians shouted that from the housetops some sixty years ago, and we must repeat it now that they are trying to annex a teaching they failed to crush.

Next week Mr. Cohen will commence his examination of the *Daily Express* articles, and we suggest that this will be a good opportunity for friends to order an extra copy or two and send one on to a likely reader. There is only one paper in this country that is likely to speak the plain unvarnished truth about the subject, quite free from cant about the sublime figure of Jesus and the sublimity of the belief in God, and that is this one. We really say this more in sorrow than in pride. It would be much better if we could point to another paper that does not mind saying the whole truth about Christianity, but the fact is there. And we again suggest that an extra copy or so of the paper for distribution would be good work. At any rate, we are printing an extra number of copies so as to be prepared. But readers should order their copies at once if the newsagent is to get the extra copies down in good time. Their order sheets go in about a week in advance.

The humbug of the whole thing is made quite plain by a leaderette in the *Sunday Express*, which solemnly remarks that the articles prove "that the men and women of our day still think of and yearn after God." We congratulate the editor of the *Sunday Express* on as

fine a piece of associated humbuggery as we have met for some considerable time. First of all a discussion is staged in which no one is permitted to take part but those who will either say they believe in a God, or how much they would like to. Then the world is informed that the articles prove how much men and women are yearning after God. And parsons—men of half-baked intellect generally—tap the writers condescendingly on the shoulders and assure them they are more Christian than they think. Is it possible for Christianity and honesty to run together? It is worth while putting this question once again.

Mr. J. Marlow, of 145 Walworth Road, S.E., is a news-agent who has made up his mind to give the *Freethinker* a fair show, and we are obliged to him for it. He sends us a photograph of his shop window, which displays prominently a copy of the paper, and he tells us it is always on view. Accompanying that is another picture of his bonny little girl, who is wearing a copy of the *Freethinker* as a kind of Freemason's apron, at a public meeting. The two pictures again remind us of what might be done with the paper if we were only able to enter on a strenuous publicity campaign. "More light" is our cry, intellectually and from a business point of view. Our enemies pay us a great compliment by their strenuous boycott, but it is a compliment which has its drawbacks. Mr. Marlow, by the way, is the author of the *Hyde Park Forum*, which has been advertised for some weeks in these pages. It is a rhymed satire on the various speakers and frequenters of Hyde Park, published at sixpence, post free, from the author. To those who are at all intimate with that intellectual bear-garden the essay will be full of interest and amusement.

Mr. George Whitehead will lecture in the Brass-workers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, Birmingham, at 7. His subject will be "The Religion of Bernard Shaw." From September 28 until October 2 Mr. Whitehead will address a series of open-air meetings in the Bull Ring and elsewhere. We hope Birmingham Freethinkers will give these meetings all the support possible.

The Gnostic Origins of Christianity.

II.

(Continued from page 597.)

PAUL himself was steeped in the lore of the Mystery-religions and Gnosticism. Tarsus, his native city, was, as Prof. Otto Pfeleiderer points out, "the Greek city, which after Alexandria, was the main seat of Hellenic culture." And further, "Not only Greek philosophy, but the heathen religions scarcely could be learned better anywhere than in Tarsus, for at that time, the mystery-cults were spreading from the Orient through the West. As early as Pompey's time, Tarsus was a seat of Mithra religion which had come from Persia and mingled with the cults worshipping the sun-god in Hither-Asia, especially in Phrygia, where it had taken over certain customs of the orgiastic religion of Attis and Cybele." Dean Inge, who probably would not thank me for quoting him, declares:—

It is useless to deny that St. Paul regarded Christianity as, at least on one side, a mystery-religion. Why else should he have used a number of technical terms which his readers would recognize at once as belonging to the mysteries? Why else should he repeatedly use the word "mystery" itself, applying it to doctrines distinctive of Christianity, such as the resurrection with a "spiritual body," the relation of the Jewish people to God, and, above all, the mystical union between Christ

and Christians? The great "mystery" is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). It was as a mystery-religion that Europe accepted Christianity.²

In Paul's Epistle to the Romans he speaks of his gospel "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. x. 16, 25). To the Ephesians he speaks of "the fellowship of the mystery" (Eph. iii. 9), and again of "the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. vi. 19). To the Colossians he speaks of "the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (Col. iv. 3). To the Corinthians "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery" (1 Cor. ii. 7).

Paul knows nothing of the four Gospels, never quotes from them, never mentions them, never quotes any sayings of Jesus, not even from the Sermon on the Mount or the Lord's Prayer; it is inconceivable that he would not have done so if he had known them. As Dr. Couchoud has observed: "The habit of reading the Gospels before Paul's Epistles in our Bibles causes us involuntarily to attribute to Paul the presentation of Jesus that we derive from the Gospels. This is a grave error. There is not one word of Paul's which warrant the supposition that he was acquainted with any historical legend of Jesus."³ Another writer remarks of the writings of Paul: "The silence of the Epistles as to any miracles or parables or sayings by a man Jesus, is extraordinary. Where the *Logia* [sayings] could be quoted with effect, they are not referred to, e.g. as to the tribute money (Rom. xiii. 7)."⁴

Paul did not derive his knowledge of Jesus from any writings or any disciples. His knowledge was the result of a direct revelation as he was journeying on the road to Damascus. A light shone from heaven and a voice announced that he was Jesus, and that is all the proof that Paul ever produced. He expressly declares: "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 11-12); that is, it was founded upon a vision.

Most of the earlier Gnostic sects were "Docetists," teaching that Jesus had only a seeming body and did not suffer. Simon said that Jesus only appeared in the form of a man, but was not really one. Basilides, the Egyptian, the leader of another sect, held that the body of Jesus was a phantasm and had no real existence, another person being crucified in his stead. Saturninus, another founder of a sect, held the phantasmal theory of Jesus's body. Valentinus taught that the body of Jesus was not made of human flesh, but was made to resemble it; the dove-like form which had descended into it at his baptism, leaving it before the crucifixion. This belief was so popular and so wide-spread among the early Christians, that "Docetism," as it was called, came to be looked upon by later Christian writers as one of the distinguishing marks of heresy. Is it likely that if there had been a real historical person named Jesus that such a tale would have gained credence and such popularity, and that in the earliest time? According to the Gospels, Jesus taught multitudes, would not some of these have come forward and said, "I was there, I saw him and heard him"? And after they had passed away, their sons would testify as to what their fathers had seen. No, the earliest Christians had no record, and no belief, in any historical Jesus. He was as much a myth as any of the Mystery gods such as Mithra, Adonis, Orpheus, Attis, and Osiris.

² Dean Inge, *Outspoken Essays* (1919), p. 227.

³ Dr. L. Couchoud, *The Enigma of Jesus*, p. 89.

⁴ G. T. Sadler, *Behind the New Testament*, p. 101.

¹ Prof. O. Pfeleiderer, *Christian Origins*, p. 156.

As Prof. B. W. Bacon rightly observes: "Paul is our earliest witness, and Paul has already determined to know no Christ save a Christ not after the flesh." The same writer points out that Paul has taken his material from the Old Testament. "Paul's Christ is essentially the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, exalted 'to make intercession for sin'" (p. 59). And further: "Since he [Paul] is speaking to men whom the conceptions of the mystery religions are the commonplaces of religious expression it should cause us no surprise that he uses their terminology" (p. 75). The religious phrases he uses are:—

The very vernacular of the mystery cults. No man can fail to recognize it who has any familiarity with the current ideas of the religions of personal redemption concerning assimilation to the nature of the dying and rising Saviour-god by gazing upon his image.....as to being "transfigured" into the same "likeness," as to immortality being the destiny of the "reborn," and the like. Paul is using the ideas, and even the language of the mysteries to compare the ministry of the new covenant and its revelation with the revelation to Moses and the old covenant. (B. W. Bacon, *Jesus and Paul*, p. 57.)

In reality Paul is a mystical Gnostic indistinguishable from the other Gnostics who abounded at that time and long before the commencement of the Christian era. Notice the mystical foundations he builds upon; there is nothing new about the Christian mystery, he declares. It is "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians i. 26, 27). The statement does not pretend to give any historical facts. It is pure religious mysticism. Take another statement of Paul's: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). It is clear that crucified here means something very different from being nailed to a cross. It is a mystical spiritual experience.

Most Christians believe that the Cross only became a sacred emblem after Christ was crucified upon it. The truth is that it is the most ancient of all religious symbols, and the most sacred. It was known to the ancient Egyptians, it was revered by the Minoans thousands of years before the Christian era. It was known to the Babylonians, and even to the ancient races of America. W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

Mr. Whitehead reports six successful meetings at Newcastle; the rain disposed of the seventh. The Sunday evening meeting was the best of the season. To-day (September 27), Mr. Whitehead will address a meeting at the Brassworkers' Hall, Birmingham, and for the rest of the week will conduct an open-air campaign in the Bull Ring. This finishes his outdoor mission for this year. During the winter season, if Mr. Whitehead's services are required, communications should be sent direct to Mr. Whitehead himself.—E.

The average clergyman is an official who makes his living by christening babies, marrying adults, conducting a ritual, and making the best he can (when he has any conscience about it) of a certain routine of school superintendence, district visiting, and organization of almsgiving, which does not necessarily touch Christianity at any point except the point of the tongue.—*Shaw*, Preface to "Androcles and the Lion."

B. W. Bacon, *Jesus and Paul*, p. 57.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

VII.

THE STORY OF THE BAPTIST.

THIS narrative is one of those which the three Synoptists copied from a more primitive Gospel; but the way Matthew and Mark introduce the subject is somewhat peculiar. Taking Matthew's account, that editor says (xiv. 1, 2):—

At that season Herod the tetrarch *heard the report* concerning Jesus, and he said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead.

Mark commences his account in precisely the same way (vi. 14). Matthew, next, makes use of the error into which the tetrarch had fallen to introduce the story of the imprisonment and death of John. He says:—

For Herod had laid hands on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Mark likewise makes this mistake of Herod the introduction to the story of the imprisonment of the Baptist, and in nearly the same words as Matthew. The latter editor goes on:—

For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

Mark, following the same plan, put this statement a little plainer—"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Both editors, in fact, commence telling the story backwards, after which they narrate it more in order. This story is as follows: That Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, had taken to himself Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and, being reproved by the Baptist for so doing, he had cast that baptiser into prison. Then, later on, "when Herod's birthday came [Herod made a feast, at which] the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist..... And Herod sent and beheaded John in prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother" (Matt. xiv. 3-11).

This Gospel story is a Christian fabrication, though it contains a small grain of truth. John the Baptist was an historical person—a crank, who preached and baptised near the Jordan—whom, after a short public ministry, Herod Antipas placed in confinement, and subsequently put to death. But the silly statements of John rebuking Antipas on account of his marrying his brother Philip's wife, or the dancing before him, of his oath, of the demand for the Baptist's head, and of John's immediate execution in consequence—these are pure fabrications.

In the first place, Antipas did not take his brother Philip's wife. He did, however, induce Herodias, the wife of his half brother *Herod*, to leave her husband and live with him. To make this clear, we have but to glance at the sons of Herod the Great who were living at the time of the Baptist. They were the following:—

- Herod—who had married Herodias, and lived in private life.
- Antipas—Tetrarch of Galilee, who had married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea.
- Philip—Tetrarch of Trachonitis, who had married Salome, the daughter of Herodias.

These three sons of Herod the Great were by different wives, and therefore only half-brothers. The first Herod was named after his father, by

whom (in his will) he was disinherited. Herod the Great, though a hard and unprincipled man, was great as a king, and his name was honoured throughout the Roman world. For this reason, Antipas assumed the name as a title (like that of Cæsar), and was called "Herod Antipas," or "Herod the tetrarch." Philip never assumed the name, though he could have done so, had he chosen.

Now, the concoctor of the Gospel story thought that the wife of Philip the tetrarch was Herodias. He says that Herod the tetrarch had taken "his brother Philip's wife," and he gives her name as Herodias. He had evidently never heard of the "Herod" who was living unnoticed as a private gentleman in Rome. The concoctor of the story, again, was not aware that the daughter of Herodias, whom he represents as dancing before an assembly of half-intoxicated men, was Salome, a grand lady, and the young wife of Philip the tetrarch, who would not be likely to demean herself by dancing before such an audience (Mark vi. 21)—even were her husband willing to countenance such an act.

In order to conceal the Gospel misstatement respecting Herodias being the wife of Antipas's "brother Philip," Christian reconcilers have elected to call the disinherited son of Herod the Great "Herod Philip," though they knew perfectly well that not one of the seven sons of Herod the Great had a second name. If we turn to a table of the "Herodian Family" in any Bible text-book, we shall find the disinherited son called "Herod Philip I.," and Philip the tetrarch called "Herod Philip II." As already stated, Antipas assumed the name "Herod" as a title, as did also, later on, king Agrippa; but Philip the tetrarch did not, and was never known as "Herod Philip." Josephus never called the disinherited son by any other name than "Herod," nor Philip the tetrarch by any other name than "Philip." Luke also says (iii. 1)—"Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of," etc. This was the "brother Philip" of the Baptist story.

There can thus be no doubt as to whom the primitive Gospel writer referred when he said "his brother Philip." The giving to Philip the tetrarch the honorary title "Herod" might, perhaps, be allowed to pass; but to give to the disinherited son Herod another name, "Philip," which this Herod never possessed, and to do it for the purpose of deceiving the uninformed reader—such a dastardly action is one which only a Christian reconciler could stoop to perform.

Coming now to the Gospel story, Luke tells us that "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar" (i.e. A.D. 28), Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan; shortly after which John was cast into prison, and Jesus began to preach. Now, if the Baptist had rebuked Antipas for marrying his brother's wife, it must have been *before* he was cast into prison, and Herodias must have gone to live with Antipas *before that*. The latter event, then, could not have been later than A.D. 28.

Leaving dates for the moment, we find that Antipas, when in Rome, saw Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod, and falling in love with her, he asked her to become his wife. To this the lady agreed, provided he first put away Aretas's daughter. But the latter, having been secretly informed of the compact, asked her husband for an escort to take her to Macherus, a castle on the borders of Arabia, subject to her father Aretas—which Antipas was pleased to grant. Arrived there, she made rapid journeys under Arabian escorts to Arabia Petrea, and informed her father of her husband's intentions. Upon hearing of such perfidy, Aretas sent a strong force against his faithless son-in-law; a battle was fought, and Antipa's army was annihilated. After giving a de-

tailed account of the foregoing circumstances, Josephus says (*Antiq.* 18, 5, 2):—

Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John that was called the Baptist.....For Herod, fearing lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion.....thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause..... Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death.

Josephus does not say how long the Baptist had been dead when the battle between Aretas and Antipas took place. When Antipas received news of the loss of his army, he wrote informing the emperor Tiberius, "who, being angry at the action of Aretas, sent orders to Vitellius [the president of Syria] to make war upon him." Upon receipt of this command Vitellius set out with a large force for Arabia Petrea, and, on his way, came to Jerusalem, where he stayed to confer with Antipas for four days. While there he received official notice of the death of Tiberius, so he returned with his army to Antioch. Tiberius died on March 16, A.D. 37; hence, the little domestic arrangement between Antipas and Herodias, and the battle that resulted from it, would be in the year A.D. 36.

We are now in a position to compare the Gospel story with the foregoing facts of history. In A.D. 28, Herod Antipas hearing of the influence which John the Baptist had obtained over the common people, had him arrested and confined in the fortress of Macherus. Some months later (A.D. 29), he caused the Baptist to be beheaded. Six or seven years afterwards, Antipas paid a visit to Rome, and took lodgings in the house where his half-brother Herod was staying. During this visit he became acquainted with this brother's wife, Herodias, and made certain overtures to her, which she accepted on one condition—to which he agreed. After a short stay he returned to Galilee; but here, one of his attendants who had overheard or discovered the little matter, planned with Herodias, mentioned the fact in strict confidence to her highness the legitimate wife of Antipas. Thereupon, that lady fled as fast as horses could carry her to Arabia Petrea, and informed her father Aretas—the result being a battle fought in the same year (A.D. 36), in which the army of the tetrarch was destroyed.

Now, looking at the Gospel narrative, it is quite clear that no reconciliation with history is possible. John the Baptist had been dead six or seven years when Antipas married his brother's Herod's wife; hence, the little stories of the Baptist reproving that tetrarch, of the daughter of Herodias dancing at the feast, of Antipas promising on oath to give her whatever she asked for, and of John's head being brought to her in a charger—these are all pure fictions, fabricated by the primitive Gospel-writer to account for the imprisonment and death of the Baptist. Matthew, Mark, and Luke found the incidents recorded in the primitive Gospel, and merely made revised copies of them.

But, if we set aside all dates, the conclusion we arrive at is the same.

1. Herod Antipas had *not* taken Herodias to be his wife when the daughter of Aretas set out for Arabia Petrea, and some weeks later, when the battle was fought, John the Baptist had been dead some time.

2. Herod Antipas would only have been allowed to use the fortress of Macherus as a prison while he and his father-in-law, Aretas, were upon friendly

terms. It must therefore have been *before* the flight of Aretas's daughter, when the Baptist was arrested and sent there, and some time later put to death.

AN EXAMPLE OF INADVERTENCE.

The editor of Matthew's Gospel represents Jesus as saying (xi. 12):—

And from the days of John the Baptist *until now* the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force.

These words are said to have been uttered while the Baptist was alive, and at a period when "the kingdom of heaven" can scarcely be said to have begun. No time had elapsed between "the days of John the Baptist" and the day upon which Jesus is represented as speaking: they were the same days. Only a writer who lived many years after Jesus and the Baptist could have employed the words here put in the mouth of the Nazarene. These words, too, could not have been used until the Christians had become a well-known sect, and had suffered persecution—a fact which again points to post-apostolic times.

ABRACADABRA.

Correspondence.

THOUGHTS ON "THE PASSING OF WALDRON."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Although "Mimnermus" has written with—on the whole—kindly feeling on the passing of our friend and theological opponent, the splendid work Waldron accomplished for freedom of thought in *other* directions demands recognition, and, surely, observes grateful tribute. His achievements as a parson or as an actor may, or may not, have been extraordinary; anyway they are a closed chapter, but with all the deference and respect due to your critical correspondent, I maintain as a playwright he was *great*. One of the daring pioneers who overcome almost overwhelming obstacles in "preparing and making ready the way" for a bigger, broader, fairer outlook on things that really matter, his plays were propaganda for a saner public opinion and attitude on the sex subject generally. It is to be hoped these plays will be revived, and the one he had just completed before his untimely death produced ere long, or published. He was always a clean, straight fighter, even when he championed causes we cannot but condemn (such as the late war, when he voluntarily rushed off to face the firing line, not to kill, but to minister to the wounded).

He was so original in his outlook—so free from the fetters of convention, so strong, yet with infinite tenderness and compassion for the weak, the struggling, and the suffering. I think his *lack* of ambition was the chief cause why "Mimnermus" "could not make a great story of what Waldron had done with his life." Any ambition in his nature was secondary to an innate *restlessness* with its incessant, insistent urge ever leading him to seek "fresh fields and pastures new" to exercise its activities. Had he been ambitious in the ordinary way there is no telling to what eminence he could have attained.

His bright, boyish enthusiasm, his absolute sincerity, his unassailable loyalty to the principles (and persons) he cared for and his, to the last, unsparing energy, these, certainly are "likeable qualities," and the list might be lengthened. No one who knew him could help feeling friendly towards a brave opponent who simply would not become an enemy! His goodness of heart was great, his self-sacrificing generosity unbounded, he was ever ready with helpful counsel and encouragement, and, when needed, financial assistance to struggling young literary aspirants, and many must there be who "felt a tug at the heart strings on hearing of his death." As "Mimnermus" has mentioned, he had his share of faults and failings—like the rest of us, and his views on theological and political subjects were

"wide as the poles asunder" from those of the writer, yet though differences of opinion sometimes formed passing clouds, our friendship stood the test of time, through sunshine, storms, and showers, surviving still. Amid ideal country scenery he passed peacefully, in his sleep, and has been laid to rest in the churchyard at Salehurst (Sussex), surrounded by the trees and flowers and songs of birds that he loved so well.

E. TWYNAM.

[We publish this as it is sent for the reason that it is concerned with what is taken to be an attack on a dead man. But we are afraid the writer can have had little real acquaintance with Mr. Waldron as "a clean straight fighter, with absolute devotion to principle." Not to have said at least this much in reply would have been to lay the readers of the *Freethinker* open to a false impression.—Ed.]

SIR OLIVER LODGE.

SIR,—You persistently refer to Sir Oliver Lodge as a "scientist." Why, and on what grounds? My student lays familiarized me with an excellent book by (Sir) Oliver Lodge on "Mechanics," but, because a Wrangler, senior or otherwise, is acute at mathematics, geometry, trigonometry, *et hoc*, is such a "scientist"? Calitho, Herschel, Newton, Faraday, Huyghens, Kepler I conceive scientists. A man (or woman) is not necessarily an organist because he can talk or write about the organ; nor is an individual theologian or a "preacher," though enlarging from a pulpit, whether Roman, Anglican, Protestant, or Nonconformist. Let us endeavour to term things that count by their proper names.

FREDK. J. CROWEST.

Freethought on Tyneside.

FREETHOUGHT on Tyneside has not, it must be admitted, lived up to its traditions these recent few years. This, of course, is no real reflection upon Freethinkers; there are quite a flood of circumstances that easily account for their inactivity in an organized sense. The situation is, however, saved as far as it can be by the continuous propaganda carried on by the Newcastle Branch of the National Secular Society. Every Sunday night during the recent summer months Secularism has been catered for; on the whole, with marked success. Under the strong and never-failing guidance of Mr. Bartram, supported by his family, we have kept the flag flying on the broad Town Moor, where the spirit of liberty reigns supreme. The two speakers, Messrs. Carlton and Atkinson, have done good work. This particular outdoor effort in spreading the "good tidings" of Freedom, has been accompanied by much real pleasure and satisfaction. The sale of literature has been, at least, fair. The repeated coming together of solid masses of people and listening, on the whole, very patiently to the expression of thoughts that must be disturbing to many, is an encouraging sign of the times to the interested adherents of Freethought. The old days, when the crowd was entirely hostile, have now passed away in this locality. Let us not be content with a single isolated effort, but, at the same time, let us not underestimate such. There is no movement that penetrates the utmost interstices of society as does the spoken and written work aimed at the spreading of Freethought.

J. FOTHERGILL.

"What keeps our friend Farmer Bramble from worship to-day?" anxiously enquired a vigilant minister of one of his deacons. "Four Sundays have passed since I saw him among us. I hope and trust it is not Socinianism that keeps him away." "No, sir," replied the deacon, "it is something worse than that." "Worse than Socinianism! You surely are not going to tell me it is Deism!" "No, sir; it is something worse than that." "Worse than Deism! You alarm me! It surely cannot be Atheism." "No, sir; it is something worse than that." "Worse than Atheism? Impossible! Nothing can be worse than Atheism." "Yes, it is, sir; it's *rheumatism!*"

Stray Thoughts.

ATHEISM grows slowly: religion may be caught in a night: for religion is the measles of emotion.

On the screen of the child-mind is projected that stirring drama, "The Ascent of Man." Cruelty, pettiness, boastfulness, herd-spirit, intolerance, and credulity—these are some of the sub-titles. For the child-mind epitomises the savagery of past millenniums. Said Christ to his followers: "Be thou like unto this little child." And, lo! it was so!

His goodness is over all his works. Yea, I've seen an owl dissect a shrieking mouse.

A king is an unfortunate creature condemned by his unthinking subjects never to be a man.

The diamond-studded maxim for all students of divinity and spiritism should be: The thicker the fog, the profounder the thought!

Theology is a bed of nettles into which both wise man and fool may stumble. While the fool calls his discomfort "seeing God," the wise man allays his smarting with the antidote of reason.

Ignorance, not Mary, was the mother of Jesus.

"All the world's a stage." And according to the preachers we all have forgotten our lines and speak our little piece merely by the aid of the prompter in the wings—the asbestos gentleman with an arrow-headed tail.

The Apostle's Creed: Much ado about nothing.

Æstheticism is, too often, but refined pettiness wearing a pretty cloak. The æsthete prefers a well-shaped head to a well-shaped mind, a neatly turned phrase to a neatly turned thought.

Many a so-called profound thinker or great writer has earned such reputation by a mere knack of putting into words the thoughts and desires of his fellows. By an ability to tell, oracularly, those of his own generation that that ought to be which they subconsciously think *should* be. Verily, the womb of prejudice hath conceived more "profound thinkers" than hath the womb of thought!

Only through the horned-rimmed spectacles of theology can the ridiculous appear sublime.

What is man's search after truth? Perhaps simply a craving for knowledge that will enable him mentally and physically to suffer less. And that so painful and age-long a search should be necessary! God's inhumanity to man makes countless ages mourn.

The mind of the masses is a slate from which the sleeve of fleeting interest wipes off the first faint pencilings of thought.

Most women give their admiration to the primitive, the ruthless—confounding this ruthlessness with strength. Perhaps because Nietzsche's youth and early

manhood was dominated by female influence his outlook is essentially "Feminine, all too feminine!" and not sufficiently, "Human, all too human!"

Though the worshipper's knee bends low, yet even lower droops his mind.

The scales of delusion are rarely likely to fall from the eye uplifted in ecstasy or from the closed eye in a bowed head.

By dim religious light we can descry only distortions.
D. P. STICKELLS.

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.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "What I Saw in Poland."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. J. Marshall, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 5.45, "Bradlaugh Sunday." Mr. A. D. McLaren, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3, "Bradlaugh Demonstration." Speakers: Mr. Chapman Cohen, Dr. Bhat, Messrs. Saphin, Corrigan, Hyatt, Brown, Shambrook, Constable, Moss, and others.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. F. C. Warner, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. G. Whitehead, "The Religion of G. Bernard Shaw." From September 28 to October 2 at the Bull Ring at 7.30.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—A Social Reunion in the D and F Café, High Street, at 7 p.m., tea at 7.30 on Saturday, October 3. Tickets 2s. 6d. each. On Sunday, October 4, at 3, in Saloon Hall, City Hall, "The Ghost of Religion—God and the Journalists"; at 7, "Christianity and Evolution." Questions and discussion. Silver Collection. Enter by Candleriggs.

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