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Views and Opinions.

More Journalistic Religion.

In the rush of newspaper articles dealing with religion—or perhaps one ought to say which pretend to deal with religion—we are still waiting for a newspaper which will forget that its chief purpose is to cater to the big drapers or the racing public, which will take its courage in both hands and arrange for some articles that actually undertake to tell the world what educated men really do think about religion. So far all that has been done is a number of journalists, having learned off a variety of phrases which religious people are in the habit of using, repeat them in various ways. Their readers meeting with the familiar words are satisfied. They do not set them thinking; they call for no knowledge to appreciate them; they are as harmless as dill water to a flatulent infant, and they do not anger the churches. For if they dismiss very gently a number of the things that the parsons themselves are discounting, they pay lip-homage to the name of Jesus, and insist on the indispensability of some sort of a religion. Never was there a time when a man might gain the reputation of being an advanced thinker with so little thinking and with so little risk.

The Miracle of Jesus.

I do not see the *Sunday Chronicle* regularly, but several readers have sent me a copy of a recent issue containing an article by Alexander M. Thompson ("Dangle," of the *Clarion*), and one asks me what I think of it. One is inclined to reply as Thackeray did when he landed in America and someone asked him what the British public thought of Martin Tupper. "Sir," replied Thackeray, "the British public do not think of Martin Tupper." And really there is nothing in Mr. Thompson's article to think about. When a man tells you that the world has no nobler message than that which He delivered in Judea nineteen hundred years ago—the Gospel which still stands in unapproachable majesty of simplicity amongst the mightiest influences that ever affected the history of mankind," we know that he is not really thinking himself, and he does not invite thought on the part of his readers. He has just

looked up one of the stock sayings of the clergy and with very little alteration has given it to his readers as a consequence of his own profound studies. And when he goes on to say that while all other miracles of Jesus may be dismissed, "the miracle of this untutored teacher's emergence from an obscure Galilean village to overcome the might of the Roman Empire," etc., we know that we are just reading a reprint of one of those cheap religious tracts that are written by knaves to impose on fools. For we do not suppose that in the whole of Christendom there is a scholar of repute who would seriously contend that it was the ethical teaching of Jesus that overcame the Roman Empire. It is strange that when this form of historical superstition is getting past its day in the pulpit it should be revived in the newspapers!

* * *

Unfathomable Nonsense.

Some of us are old enough to remember "Dangle" as a one-time ardent worker in the Socialist movement, and one is inclined to seriously ask whether Mr. Thompson really intends his grown-up readers to take the following "as it is writ":—

But even those of us who cannot believe the First Chapter of Genesis, nor accept the ethical ideas of Joshua or David, must have some sort of religion to save us from despair. In the face of war and cancer and consumption, in the face of cruel crimes, and the no less cruel torments of famine and poverty, we must believe that all this suffering has some unfathomable beneficent purpose, or be driven to madness by the monstrous horror of it.

In the presence of death we all feel the need of religion. There is a sense of awful mystery, a glimpse of something sacred beyond imagining in our relation to the infinite, an overpowering conviction that this cannot be the end—that our very yearning for an answer to the riddle is proof presumptive of the sequel's certainty.

How does one believe in an unfathomable beneficent purpose? If it is unfathomable how does one know what it is? How does one even know that there is a purpose to fathom? One does not wish to accuse a newspaper man of writing on religion without intelligence, but if Mr. Thompson means anything at all, he does not mean an unfathomable purpose, he means that in all he describes there is a good purpose, and in that case it is not unfathomable. And one would like to know in what way are we to see beneficence when we see people dying from cancer or consumption, or when we see crime and cruelty, famine and poverty? Mr. Thompson says we must believe it to save us from despair. Really, there is no more detestable picture than this mewling and crying for some stupid belief to console one in the face of facts. The man who goes honestly to the whisky bottle to drown a grief offers a much better spectacle of manhood. He at least is honest enough and bold enough to admit that he lacks the strength to face things as they are, and intends, deliberately intends, to drug himself into unconsciousness for the time

being. A religion that so effectively robs a man of the better part of his manhood has not, after all, much to commend it. It strikes us as a little more manly to face things as they are, to say that cancer, and crime, consumption and war, are bad things, and to strive to destroy them because we believe them to be bad, than to say "they look bad, they are bad, but let us try and believe they are a hidden good, lest we despair." That is not manly, it is only Christian. No wonder that Heine said Christianity is a religion for cripples. There is no profit in telling lies, even when one tells the lie to oneself. That only crowns a vice with stupidity.

Play the Man!

* * *

Neither is it true that in the presence of death all need religion. That is just pulpit rhetoric. All includes everybody and there are millions of people in every civilized country in the world who have no place and no use for religion in the presence of death. What is Mr. Thompson to make of them? What is the use of offering them such verbal stupidities as "a glimpse of something sacred beyond imagining," what is something that is beyond imagining? A stick without two ends, would fill the bill, but plain people call that nonsense and so have done with it. The fact of death calls for no religious explanation; the sorrow felt in the presence of death calls for no religious explanation. What does need explanation is the fact that some men—not so many as Mr. Thompson imagines—in the presence of death begin to whine and cringe, and allow their egotism to gain the mastery of their common sense. And the explanation of that lies to hand. It lies in the fact that for centuries Christianity with its doctrine of eternal damnation made men afraid of what might happen after death, and twisted and distorted every natural feeling and affection in the interest of one of the vilest lies that was ever foisted upon the human race. Happily the race is outgrowing this, and if Mr. Thompson will refrain from hawking round pulpit twaddle and address himself to the facts he will discover that very few people who are dying, and very few who face death, trouble themselves at all about religion. Christianity made death terrible for its own purposes, and now that the doctrines on which the terror of death rested are wearing thin, the feelings that these doctrines evoked are still appealed to as though they were an inalienable part of human nature. A brave man—a mentally brave man—faces death as he faces life. He sees the joy of life and the sorrow of death in their proper proportions. It is the coward who abases himself before one and calls out for comfort in the presence of the other. It is an outcome of the peculiarly unmanly type that Christianity tends to foster.

Incoherence.

* * *

Mr. Thompson's catch-penny phrases commences at the beginning of his article, and it goes on to the end. He heads it, "Give Christianity a Chance!" and talks about "rekindling the light of religion after nineteen centuries." Christianity has had every chance, and it has failed. And if the light of religion needs rekindling after being buried for nineteen centuries what becomes of the teachings of Jesus that conquered the Roman Empire, "comforted multitudes of stricken and sorrowing mourners," "inspired the finest developments of our civilization," and "inspired the enquiring minds of Shakespeare and Darwin"? If the light of religion has been out for nineteen centuries how has it acted as the inspiring force for all this time? If it has not been out, but all the time has been operative, why this

talk of rekindling it and giving Christianity a chance. Really one expects a little coherence even with nonsense. But Mr. Thompson is not even consistent in his nonsense. One part of his nonsense contradicts the other part. No doubt it will please many. When Charles the First was asked to account for the popularity among the people of a certain unintelligent bishop, he said, "I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense." In some directions things have not much altered during the past two and a half centuries.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christmas.

TO-DAY, the fourth Sunday in Advent, we are within hail of Christmas, a Christian festival for the celebration of the most astounding and incredible mythical event ever conceived, namely, the becoming flesh of the second person in the Holy Trinity. This is seriously taken as literally historical by multitudes of people who believe in the inspiration and infallibility of the New Testament. In the estimation of the Apostle Paul Christ was a being "who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." The whole of Pauline Christianity is packed into that short but amazingly subtle passage, which is quoted again and again in the religious press as a record of truly historical facts. It is only fair to admit, however, that there are a few higher critics, such as Dean Inge, by whom such passages are not literally interpreted. Nevertheless, the truth is that to the overwhelming majority of Christians the New Testament account of the Incarnation appeals as strictly historical. In John's Gospel we read that the Word of God which was God "became flesh and dwelt among us." In Luke's Gospel, the virgin Mary is visited by an angel who says unto her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." Consequently, later on in the same Gospel, we read that, after Jesus was born, an angel appeared to some shepherds who were "keeping watch by night over their flock," and said unto them: "Be not afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people; for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Here is a virgin who has never known a man, giving birth to a Divine-human babe whose father is the Holy Ghost, and it is the birth of this supernatural being that will be celebrated anew this coming Christmas Day. Apart from this alleged event there could have been no Christianity; and how those who do not believe in it as related in the New Testament can still call themselves Christians is to us an insoluble puzzle. Unbelievable as the story doubtless is, no one who casts discredit upon it has a moral right to cling to that which has sprung directly from it, as many Modernists seem to do.

Curiously enough, we learn that the doctrine of incarnation is not exclusively Christian. In China, for example, incarnate gods are common. Sir James Frazer says:—

A register of all the incarnate gods in the Chinese empire is kept in the *Li fan yüan* or Colonial Office at Peking. The number of gods who have thus taken out a licence is one hundred and sixty. Tibet is blessed with thirty of them.

Northern Mongolia rejoices in nineteen, and Southern Mongolia basks in the sunshine of no less than fifty-seven. The Chinese Government, with a paternal solicitude for the welfare of its subjects, forbids the gods on the register to be reborn anywhere but in Tibet (*The Golden Bough*, p. 103).

In like manner, it is brought home to us that Christmas is by no means an exclusively Christian festival. We are all aware of the striking likeness between Christianity and Mithraism. This similarity relates to both doctrines and rites, and in the opinion of the ignorant and prejudiced Christian fathers it was due to a trick of the Devil, "who sought to seduce the souls of men from the true faith by a false and insidious imitation of it." In the *Golden Bough* we read:—

There can be no doubt that the Mithraic religion proved a formidable rival to Christianity, combining as it did a solemn ritual with aspirations after moral purity and a hope of immortality. Indeed the issue of the conflict between the two faiths appears for a time to have hung in the balance. An instructive relic of the long struggle is preserved in our festival of Christmas, which the Church seems to have borrowed directly from its heathen rival.....The Gospels say nothing as to the day of Christ's birth, and accordingly the early Church did not celebrate it. In time, however, the Christians of Egypt came to regard the sixth of January as the date of the Nativity, and the custom of commemorating the birth of the Saviour on that day gradually spread until by the fourth century it was universally established in the East. But at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century the Western Church, which had never recognized the sixth of January as the day of the Nativity, adopted the twenty-fifth of December as the true date, and in time its decision was accepted also by the Eastern Church. At Antioch the change was not introduced till about the year A.D. 375 (p. 358).

Such is the view of the origin of the Christian Christmas held by a writer who has no axe to grind, but is animated only by a desire to state the truth. But why was the twenty-fifth of December finally fixed upon? This question is answered by a Christian writer, a Syrian, who thus testified:—

The reason why the fathers transferred the celebration of the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December was this. It was a custom of the Heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day and the festival of the Epiphany on the sixth of January. Accordingly, along with this custom, the practice has prevailed of kindling fires till the sixth.

Sir James Frazer adds that "the heathen origin of Christmas is plainly hinted at, if not tacitly admitted, by Augustine when he exhorts his Christian brethren not to celebrate that solemn day like the Heathen on account of the sun, but on account of him who made the sun."

The Heathen origin of Christmas is thus now a fully attested fact, and it is only in its Heathen interpretation that it possesses any reality for the present generation. It is frankly admitted by numerous Christian scholars that the Gospels contain much purely legendary matter, while other scholarly critics maintain that the historicity of Jesus cannot be regarded as convincingly established. Neither his virgin birth nor his resurrection can be looked upon as a firmly demonstrated event. In its leading article

the *Christian World* of December 3 quotes the following verse by Thomas Hardy:—

If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel
In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so,

and then observes: "'*Hoping it might be so.*' May we not say that to hope greatly enough is to make it so? All too truly may we say that our too faint hope, our too cold faith, have prevented it from being so. The star shines eternally in the Eastern sky; it is only our heavy eyes that fail to note its radiance." The whole of that article is so vague and hazy that it is quite impossible to tell whether the writer believes in the miracle of the Virgin Birth or not. Of one thing, however, we are absolutely sure, namely, that no amount of hoping, however sincere and ardent, can possibly result in converting the belief in the supernatural birth of Jesus into an objective reality. The message of Christmas is true and comforting only in relation to the so-called new birth of the sun, which occurs without fail every time the winter solstice comes round. However dark and gloomy it may be on Christmas Day we know that the sun has turned round and that spring and summer, with their innumerable golden gifts, are already absolute certainties, and consequently all hearts are mightily gladdened. The sun, head and ruler of the solar system, is the greatest and grandest object known to us; and we are not in the least surprised to learn that to millions of people it has been and still is an object of genuine worship. We are directly indebted to it for life and all its delights. It has never yet failed to bestow its good gifts upon any of the planets revolving round it. Already its return to our part of the world has commenced, and it never greets us either empty-hearted or empty-handed; and in its promised light and warmth we are solemnly called upon to renew our zeal in the wholesome service of our fellow beings, realizing that upon our attitude and action depends the future of our race.

J. T. LLOYD.

Keeping Abreast of Truth.

I daresay every blackbeetle thinks it must have a complete explanation of the universe as one of the indispensable qualifications of a respectable cockroach.
—Bernard Shaw.

WHAT a change there is in the attitude of scientists towards the Christian Superstition! A few decades back the leading men of science, not content with upholding the banner of Physical Science, actually carried the war into the clerical camp. Professor Huxley, for example, was the fiery apostle of Evolution, and also one of the severest critics that the Christian Apologists had to encounter. Huxley's famous written debates with Gladstone on some of the scientific shortcomings of the Old and New Testaments excited enormous interest, and the monthly review in which it appeared sold like the latest work of a popular novelist. Professor Tyndall's memorable address at the British Association's meeting at Belfast roused as much attention as an Irish election. As for the writings of Professor Clifford, there was little to distinguish them from the utterances of Charles Bradlaugh, so pronounced was their Freethought; Herbert Spencer, the most distinguished of the philosophers of his day was an out-and-out Freethinker. Other names leap to the memory, but these must suffice to remind us of the militancy of the late nineteenth-century scientists.

To-day scientists do not trouble themselves about the Christian Religion. They do their own work in their own quiet way, and do not seem to worry what the priests are doing. This attitude may make for personal comfort, but it does not materially assist the cause of science itself, or of human progress. The great general public is lazy and just a little stupid, and usually imagines that as scientists no longer stress antagonism between Physical Science and religion, that these old enemies are at last reconciled. And, to make matters worse, an Obscurantist like Sir Oliver Lodge is always busy telling people in dulcet accents that so far from science and religion being divorced, the couple are actually on their honeymoon. Other scientists may raise their eyebrows at this Brummagen audacity, but their very silence actually appears to imply consent.

The blunt truth is that Sir Oliver Lodge is a reactionary of the worst type. He always seems to be speaking far more as the rector of Birmingham University than as a serious student of science. Of science in its broader aspects he appears to be as innocent as a Pekinese on a cushion. There is, for instance, a science of comparative religions. Sir Oliver Lodge invariably talks and writes as if there was only one religion and one Holy Bible, whereas a well-instructed schoolboy might reasonably have heard of the *Sacred Books of the East*, a shelf-full of volumes necessary to a cultured man's library.

One of Sir Oliver's latest outbursts is well worth noting. Speaking at Christ Church, Westminster, he talked upon the subject of Evolution. Remember that he was addressing an unsophisticated audience, and not a gathering of scientists, or even scientific students. This is what he said: "It is a mistake to oppose evolution to creation; it should be regarded rather as a method of creation."

Can camouflage be carried further? Why is it a mistake to oppose the mythical story of the creation of "Adam" and "Eve" and the talking snake to the serious contentions of scientists? Science knows nothing of the "Garden of Eden" and its strange occupants, save that the whole silly story is an ancient legend. And, as for the early books of the Christian Bible, a perusal of Ingersoll's *Some Mistakes of Moses* might be worth the attention of the rector of Birmingham University. If that volume is not in the University library, the rector might find equally valuable information in Colenso's pungent criticism of the Pentateuch, which is all the more remarkable because the writer was both a Christian and a Bishop of the Anglican Church.

Really, Sir Oliver Lodge is not quite so innocent as he pretends. In his address before the congregation at Christ Church he actually admitted that there were two accounts of creation in the Christian Bible, and both were the work of a poet. How did Sir Oliver get this information? It must have come from Freethinking critics, for they were the first to point out the human and literary characteristics of the so-called sacred volume. And he did not tell his audience which of the two accounts of creation in the Bible was the truer one. Evolution has been accepted by the world of science, and it is too late in the day for anyone to challenge it except in terms of science. To merely point to an old legend in an ancient volume is a joke in exceedingly bad taste.

This, be it remembered, is not an isolated outburst on the part of Sir Oliver. He is continually translating scientific terms into theological meanings. Speaking at Charing Cross Hospital, on the occasion of the Huxley lecture, he let himself go in the following manner:—

Spiritual things advanced continually through

higher and higher things towards perfection. This is the real meaning of evolution. This is why the physical universe existed. This is the real aim and purpose of the ultimate and infinite term "God."

Nonsense of this kind is no more science than acid-drops are diamonds. It is very like the ordinary pulpit utterances of the clergy, when they attempt to make orthodox platitudes acceptable by using a scientific vocabulary. That doubting Thomas Huxley's name should be used on such an occasion is to insult the memory of a courageous and distinguished scientist.

Nearly seventy years ago Charles Darwin demonstrated that man has attained his present state through a gradual process of evolution from a lower and less perfect state. The general admission of this truth sweeps away at once the old legends of the Christian Bible which men were taught for many centuries to consider a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a fallen race at once disappears. With it goes the myth of the Devil, and many other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize theological teaching. With it also goes the Biblioatry which, like so many other idolatries, has enchained and cramped the human intellect. The Bible of the ancient Hebrews must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank among the sacred books of other and older nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance. And, strangest of all, this intellectual lever, which will finally overthrow the Christian superstition, has come among us so quietly that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new knowledge, but compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been trifling. Silently and steadily, for over half a century, Evolution has been resistlessly pushing its way till the majority of educated people accept it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals" while this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose very innocence forbids knowledge of science, the new theory must appear like Banquo's ghost to the amazed Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their crosses, candles, and prayers, and see the awful shape fronting them. "Adam," "Eve," "God," and "Devil" are driven out from the Garden of Eden, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by Charles Darwin, with the more potent weapon—a steel pen.

Sir Oliver Lodge, and others like him, may defend the Christian Religion from the conclusions of science, but they cannot put the clock back. The Christian Bible is out of date, the church services are out of date, and the priests are out of date. All are becoming unbearable to persons who take themselves seriously. The rebellion against Priestcraft and all its works is greater to-day than it ever was.

New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth,
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.

MIMNERMUS.

To affirm that a given religion is false, no longer denotes great boldness of intellect or even much intellect. The veracity of any religion whatsoever is to-day a subject for controversy only for the various European clergies who make their living out of it, or for those belated rationalists who, like their master, Kant, are ever awaiting the propitious and lucrative hour for opportune conversions.—Remy de Gourmont, "*Glory and Idea of Immortality.*"

The S.P.E.

THE latest publication of the Society of Pure English (Tract No. XXI.) is of more than passing interest.

It contains an admirably readable paper by Sir Richard Paget, on "The Nature and Origin of Human Speech." The paper was originally delivered before the "Institut Général Psychologique" in Paris, and printed in their "Proceedings." In its Englished form (partly re-written by the author, specially for the S.P.E.), it is valuable as a summary of the main results of Paget's expert and accomplished research, and represents the latest state of knowledge concerning the acoustics of speech.

It is however his remarks on the origin of human speech, to which our readers will turn with eagerness. The evolution of speech has seldom been so concisely stated. The imaginary picture Sir Richard Paget draws of his conclusions is none the less interesting, even if still leaving abundant scope for other imaginations to vary the picture and extend it to cover a far wider field:—

In the beginning man no doubt used his larynx to roar and grunt with, as his animal ancestors had done before him. He also used grimaces, as the anthropoid apes still do, to express his emotions of pleasure, pain, anger, and affection, etc.

As his hands became more occupied with craftsmanship he specialized more and more on movements of his face, lips, and tongue as a means of expression.

Then he found that by blowing air through his mouth or nose (or both) while he was grimacing, the grimace became audible at distances up to, say, fifty yards in calm weather—so as to be recognizable by ear alone, without the need of sight. He could now communicate with other individuals in the dark, or when his or his listener's back was turned.

It was at this stage that speech was really developed; the inaudible smile became a breathed or whispered "ha, ha"—the gesture of eating became the audible (whispered) "mnya, mnya"—the gesture of sucking-in drink in small doses was the forerunner of the modern word "soup."

Finally came the important discovery that it was possible to combine the laryngeal roar, or grunt, with the oral gesture.....the same discovery formed the origin of vocal inflexion, and ultimately of song.

The miscellaneous articles in the same "Tract" include amusing comments on the various ways of spelling Mahomet. "We want one name for the one man," complains the writer, Mr. H. W. Fowler, who is tired of

letting the learned gentry bully us out of our traditional Mahomet (who ever heard of Mohammed and the Mountain); no sooner have we tried to be good, and learnt to say, or at least write Mohammed than they are fired with zeal to get us a step or two further on the path to truth, which at present seems likely to end in Muhammad with a dot under the "h."

Remarks on American slang will amuse English readers who are, however, reminded that it is not easy even for them "to separate off Milliner, Draper, Mercer, Upholsterer, Haberdasher, Hosier, and what was the exact business of John Gilpin's friend, the Calendar?"

The article, "Obstacles to Spelling," is no dry-as-dust treatise, but a couple of well-told stories bubbling over with humour.

The Editor of the S.P.E. Tracts (presumably Mr. Robert Bridges, the poet laureate) has a never-failing wit to brighten his pages. A correspondent who objects to the S.P.E. periodical being called

"Tracts," writes that "Tracts" are usually given away. The editor replies that "That is true..... especially of such tracts as no mortal would dream of buying," and in amplifying this answer Mr. Bridges tells this story of the circulation of the Bible in China:—

A man who was employed in selling Bibles to the Chinese was in a state of extreme elation, and exultantly announced to everyone the unprecedented success of his mission. The demand for Bibles was already so great that his stock was quite sold out and he was telegraphing for unlimited supplies from home. My friend, who knew China, was puzzled.....On enquiring about these American Bibles he found they were handsome, substantial volumes, sold at a nominal price, and that the people having discovered that the two fat volumes provided solid material for the soles of two pairs of shoes of better fabric and at less cost than they could otherwise procure, had naturally taken advantage of the offer, and were truly "shod with a preparation of the Gospel."

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

A Falling Faith.

THE clergy are constantly discussing the question of why people do not come to Church. Great Revivalist campaigns were tried, without result. P.S.A.'s, slum missions, and social meetings did no better. Then it was said that brighter services were required, with better music and singing; this also was tried, but without the desired effect. Then it was said that the sermon was too long, the sermon was shortened; but all without avail; the stubborn people still remained outside. As the old writer of the Book of Proverbs remarked: "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, at the Church Congress held at Eastbourne last October, told the assembled clergy to their face that bad sermons were responsible for the empty pews: "I have no doubt at all," he is reported to have said, "that the average preaching to-day is less thoughtful, less painstaking than it was in our fathers' days, and for mending the lack we need more midnight oil, or, what is better, more forenoon hours with closed doors, steady if miscellaneous study, and big notebooks."

Dean Inge, later still, complains that when he looks round his congregation he finds it mainly composed of women, and he prefers speaking to men; he finds no inspiration in speaking to women. This is not very diplomatic on the Dean's part—to say nothing of the ungallantry of it—for he stands the chance of offending his best customers, and if they leave the Church, he may as well put up the shutters and retire from the business. But perhaps the Dean sympathizes with those ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages, who debated as to whether women had souls to be saved.

Another point. Would the sermons produced by burning the midnight oil, appeal to the feminine taste? Suppose they drove the women away, and yet failed to attract the men. The remedy would be worse than the disease. High churchmen would say that it is not the midnight oil that should be burned, but more incense, and we think, of the two, the ladies at least would choose the latter.

Why don't the people go to church? All kinds of reasons are given but the real one. The real reason is the scientific spirit of the age is against religion and the supernatural in any form. People do not go to church because they do not see the necessity, and consider it a waste of time. The

clergy, however, will not admit this view of the case; on the contrary, they declare, with monotonous iteration, that there is no conflict between religion and science. It is true that they swallowed the evolution hypothesis, as they did the Copernican astronomy, after fighting desperately against both. They accepted them because they had to accept them, but they show their real feelings in the eagerness with which they welcome any criticism, however ignorant and foolish, against Darwinism or evolution.

We were surprised therefore to see a clergyman candidly admitting the truth of the matter in the October number of the *Hibbert Journal*, in an article entitled "The Present Predicament of Christianity," by the Rev. Thomas J. Hardy. So candid and impartial is his statement of the case that, like the fly in the amber, one wonders how it got there; its appropriate place would have been the columns of the *Freethinker*.

The article commences by asserting that the object of Christianity is "to offer and effect and advance the union of man with God." But the conception of God—held to-day by those who still believe in a God—has changed. Formerly, man was regarded as distinct from God; Christ being the connecting link in reconciling man with his maker. But, even when reconciled, they were still distinct. The Christian of former times would have regarded the man who claimed to be at one with the Creator, as either a blasphemer or a madman. As the writer points out:—

To-day, however, in our own country and in the West generally, this basis distinction is fading out, and no small part of the "indifference" which is such a puzzle to "the minister of reconciliation" is due to the fact that Christianity appeals to a sense which is no longer present in men's minds—the sense of a metaphysical as well as moral distinction between God and man. Immanentism, the conception that God is life-force, only "personal" in so far as realizing itself through successive forms of life, cuts the ground from under the Christian appeal; for where there is not felt to be any distinction there can be no desire for union.

The teaching of Spinoza in Holland, of Novalis and Goethe in Germany, of Senancour in France, of Coleridge and Wordsworth in England, and Emerson in America, has, says the Rev. Thomas Hardy, "proved penetrative and irresistible." "The universal watchmaker of Paley was past revival, and the disciples of Wordsworth slowly won their way till the new conception orbbed itself in the *Lux Mundi* school, and gained perhaps its most consistent Christian expression in the works of Dr. Illingworth. Time, however, has shown that this was but a half-way house—with limited accommodation." The holders of this view of the immanence of the deity were slowly pressed on into immanentism. The mass of the people, he further remarks, have a kind of genius for seizing the ultimate bearing of new ideas, and:—

The grand discovery of the age was perceived to be this: that the various representations of "deity" which had hitherto consoled or troubled man were nothing more than symbols or personifications of energy; energy latent and apparent everywhere, and articulate in man. Other conceptions—the immanence of deity, *c.g.*, which attempted to retain the old while adopting the new—were but a compromise, and those who had no vested interest, spiritual or temporal, in the old conception, turned a deaf ear to these semi-tones—if, indeed, they heard them at all. Deity was coming into its own in Man, bursting its chrysalis in people like Mr. Bernard Shaw. The

idea, it must be confessed, was tempting. If immanentism means the apotheosis of Man, there are very few of us who need converting.

The difference between the immanence of deity, says our author, and immanentism, is that immanence "makes nature and humanity a sacrament," and is reconcilable "to the mediatorial character of Christianity," whereas immanentism assumes that God is identical with nature and man, and "the word 'God' is but another name for nature and man."

In other words, the immanence of God means that nature, or the universe, is interpenetrated by God, in the same way that a sponge may be interpenetrated by water. But immanentism assumes the identity of God with nature; they are the same.

We must by no means be taken to endorse these meanings and distinctions, and we fear that if the salvation of Jones, Brown, and Robinson depends upon the correct interpretation of conundrums such as these, then he is in a parlous state.

Again, if God is submerged in the universe, it seems to us that we have lost his address. What is the use of praying to our Father in heaven? We might just as well say Colney Hatch, or Hades. On the other hand, as the reverend gentleman points out: "If God be identical with nature and man..... all that has hitherto been distinctive in the human mind, of God—omnipotence, omniscience, and other perfections—are effaced..... To offer men who believe this a means of union with God is to talk nonsense. Their reply is: We have God already; or more cogently still: we *are* God." W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The following frank statement ought to close the loose mouths of those pious fanatics who glibly relate the glib inventions about the death-beds of unbelievers. We doubt if it will, though. "Lying to the Glory of God" is a fixed habit with a certain type of the Lord's benighted. Thus the Rev. R. J. Campbell says:—

As far as my observation goes—and I have had plenty of opportunity of forming a judgment—not many people exhibit fear or distress in their last moments. The dying seldom seem to realize fully what is taking place. They are more or less in a dreamy condition even if conscious, which frequently they are not.

The reverend gentleman also says that our consolation must ever be that the terrors of death are in the imagination only; our shrinking is from the unknown. He omits to add that it is the men of his cloth who have peopled the imagination with these terrors, by means of horrific tales about the vengeance of God and His everlasting hot grid. Ridding the people's minds of unfounded fears is a useful aspect of Freethought work overlooked by some of its critics. It may be styled intellectual sanitation.

The high priest of the City Temple, Dr. Norwood, confesses that he came out of the Great War less simple than he went into it; that he hates the damnable thing so bitterly that he can conceive of no argument that would take him into another. Dr. Norwood and others of his cloth, however, were in the last war, not quite so simple as he would have us believe. They preferred praying to fighting. We venture to say that what kept them out of the war, *as fighting men*, was not so much that they could conceive of no argument that would take them into it, but that they thought the arguments that would keep them out of it so much the sounder—and safer. Possibly though, at the back of these arguments there may have been also a patriotic motive. These godly men feared the nation might go hopelessly to pot if there were fewer parsons, and so led to a dearth of enlightened minds, like those of the Bishop of London

and Mr. Woodbine Willy, to direct its affairs. We think that fear was unfounded.

The quaint part about the war was that some few of these followers of the Man of Peace managed to secure the Military Cross, a fighting man's decoration! But this, we understand, was often awarded to chaplains for volunteering to do first-aid work under fire. That is, for helping the stretcher-bearers bandage the wounded, and this only very occasionally. But for doing this, an ordinary private's work, they had no scruples about taking officer's pay. The stretcher-bearers did the hard graft, and the chaplain took the decoration.

Among recent wills proved are those of the Rev. Fielding A. W. Hamilton-Gell, Rector of Glastonbury, Devon, £67,691; and of Canon Charles T. Ward, of Woodford Green, Essex, £23,615. Seemingly, the profession which teaches "Blessed are the poor," and "Lay not up for yourselves riches upon earth," is a moderately lucrative one. Still, if the Biblical injunction against hoarding riches is meant to be obeyed, the deceased gentlemen will spend a very cosy Christmas.

They are not all Fundamentalists in America. From the notice of a book, *Seventy Summers*, by Poultney Bigelow, wherein the author recounts stories of his travels, a good story is to be extracted. We might call it "mass production" of religiosity:—

He tells us how Isidor Mandelbaum, when arranging for his vast Passion Play in Chicago, visited Ober-Ammergau in search of "business" and local colouring, the kind you can take home in a suit-case. "Vat you call *dem* guys?" he asked as the twelve Apostles moved solemnly across the stage. "Those are the Apostles," said his tame Christian courtier in awestruck accents. "Hot stuff—they're great!" said the Mandelbaum. "We must have some too. I'll put on a hundred!"

Spasmodically, through the letter box, there comes from the International Bible Students' Association a communication. This time it is a "Message of Hope" in the form of a pamphlet, closely printed, but hardly worth the time spent on reading it. Copious passages from the Bible are paraphrased; there is a plentiful use of capital letters, and we are told that Catholics and Protestants are both on the wrong track. As a sample of verbal intemperance we read that: "Jesus Christ, as glorified king and great executive officer of Jehovah God, has become the rightful ruler of the world." And this specimen is merely child's prattle, and as ineffective as the blow struck on Odin's forehead by the hammer of Thor. The International Bible Students' Association has money to spend apparently; we will say no to nobody that tries to make the world a fit place in which to live, but the I.B.S.A. will have to use a better currency than the one soiled by the hands of Catholics and Protestants.

On the lighter and brighter side of the book world we notice a book entitled *Talks to Woman: Addresses to Mother's Meetings*. By Coulson Kernahan. It is described as containing "Thirty addresses, cheerful and sensible, on such subjects as neighbours, washing day, husbands, setting a good example, worry, lending a hand, faults, grievances, etc. Each is followed by a prayer." The second subject is arresting, and although we would not interfere with anyone who thought they derived benefit from prayer, we are set wondering if there is choice of two according to the weather.

"Don't worry, old chap," said a Liverpool parent to a driver of a motor-van who accidentally killed his son, "it's an act of God; nobody blames you." One appreciates the kindness of the parent in not blaming a man for what was a pure accident, but we should like to know just what he thinks of God.

After the conclusive evidence in the *Daily Express* that we are a Christian country, William Davis, a labourer, was sentenced at Marylebone to twenty-one days' imprisonment. As far as we can gather from the report his crime was soliciting alms by attempting to sing.

We are indebted to the *Methodist Recorder* for the following quotation from a book of travels:—

A missionary in China was at one time highly delighted at the Chinese in his district craving for copies of the Bible. He was undeceived when he discovered that these Chinese were concerned not for their immortal but their mortal soles—for they had discovered that the copies of the Bible, with additions of plaited grass strips, made excellent sandals for their feet.

But that, at any rate, left it open to the missionaries to repeat that many of the Chinese were beginning to take their stand upon the Holy Book.

Tennessee is still carrying on the war against evolution. In the Southern Junior College, Cooltena, the students, urged on by a couple of evangelists, made a search of the "College" for all books dealing with evolution and made a public bonfire of them. It is astonishing how true to type Christianity runs when it is left alone. Book-burning was always its favourite pursuit, when it was not abandoned for man-burning. And one can imagine the type of student this kind of "College" will turn out. Of course, one cannot make this kind of evangelical preaching a legal offence, but it only serves to illustrate what we have often said, namely, that the worst kind of criminal is the one that the law cannot and never will be able to touch. At the side of these evangelists a burglar, or murderer, is a quite harmless member of society.

The Catholic *Universe* advertises "A companion to H. G. Well's *Outline of History*, a series of articles by Mr. Hilaire Belloc, to be published in that journal in twenty-five weekly instalments. We are informed that "it will be one of Mr. Belloc's most remarkable works." No doubt! Something so remarkable as to make reputable historians rub their eyes in wonder. As Mr. Belloc is likely to furnish only such facts, and conclusions from them, as are acceptable to the juvenile intelligence of the Catholic Faithful, we suggest a more apt title would be *The Child's Companion, or Chronicles for the Credulous*. When published in book form, these fairy tales and fancies are certain to sell well—Mr. Belloc can be assured of that. For has he not the Lord as his ally, a God only too willing to act as assistant Sales Promoter in return for a few prayers?

These be terrible times, for, according to Audrey, Lady Petrie (in a Catholic journal):—

We are living in a time of great moral danger. Evil is broadcast in thought, word, and deed throughout our beloved country. Divine worship is ceasing and Paganism is rampant. Seventy-five per cent. of our manhood are outside the churches. What can we, a handful of Catholics, do to remedy this terrible state of apathy and infidelity?

Obviously so desperate a disease needs as desperate a remedy, and one, too, that will get down to the very root of the trouble. Lady Petrie's remedy is—a "crusade of prayer." "No doubt we often pray selfishly," she continues, "but in this our country's need should we not combine to storm Heaven; for when we are gathered together to pray in His name, surely He will be with us? Others may talk of the evil and the danger, but we Catholics, who know where to seek help, *must act*." That's the style; a mass attack on Jehovah, just to let him know that he ought to be up and doing, and not dreaming how he could make another world or two out of nothing, and letting the Devil run this one.

We note that the editor of a Catholic paper prints Miss Maude Royden's strong warning to her readers (on which we recently commented) to refrain from marrying at all costs to themselves if the would-be partners have different religious opinions. And the editor thinks the warning so pointed that he heads it "Wise Counsel," but he omits to give reasons for his commendation. We however very much doubt that he would agree with our comments of last week, that religion is better calculated to promote ill-feeling between the partners than is any other subject. And even if he were to agree with us on this point, we know he would lack the courage to say so. For our remarks might set the more intelligent of the Faithful wondering why a religion that claims to establish world-wide Brotherhood should have the dire effect of separating those who might otherwise live amicably together were it not for the hate which their religion engenders. Once you get the pious to ponder on that, the Church is likely to lose a customer.

If Spiritualists continue their efforts they will at least contribute a little fun to the gaiety of nations engaged in the unromantic work of clearing up the china shop after a visit from the bull. From many weary and depressed soldiers during the Great War Mr. Denis Bradley gained the unspoken thanks and gratitude for his sane remarks found in the read and re-read papers that reached the front. He was, although he may not have known it, the champion of youth against the sadism of old age. But now, something seems to have happened; the daily papers have picked him up. A message from Bonar Law would lead us to suppose that the medium was an inefficient telephone exchange. Here is what was said by a thoraxless spirit supposed to be the late Scotch Prime Minister: "Keep on as you are going. I will try to get through and help you. Don't commit yourself yet." Some people like ham with a frill on it; others like life with a spice of sensationalism, and twenty men will gather round to watch one digging a hole in the road.

After a column and a half of fulsome drivel about the Bishop of London, a dusty gentleman with a dusty brain space, in speaking (in *John Bull*) about the alleged atrocious condition morally of London, finishes up with:

He is the captain of London's millions of good people; this happy warrior of God. Why is he, then, as little feared by the organisers of vice as Falstaff, with his regiment of scarecrows, by the King's enemies? The question not only boggles the imagination; it sets the mind thinking.

Well, lots of things may set the mind thinking. But we have never noticed anything penned by the dusty gent., anonymously or otherwise, that would lead us to suppose him to possess something capable of being set thinking. The pre-requisite to thinking is—something to think with; but that is not essential when one writes for popular papers, or is "a happy warrior of God."

The *Daily Sketch* recently had a slap at the British Broadcasting Company, in which it said: "According to its more violent critics, it is employing the most archaic methods to exploit one of the most modern of inventions." With the truth of this we are not now concerned. But we think that the reverse of the statement would provide our readers with an apt commentary on the B.B.C.'s Sunday services. That is, the Company is employing one of the most modern of inventions to exploit the most archaic of ideas and methods of thinking.

The editor, in commenting on the speeches that preface the various items, says: "A severe sub-editing of such oratory is urgently needed." But for that "oratory" known as the Broadcast Sermon, we think something more drastic than sub-editing is needed. We suggest expurgation as the proper remedy. But then we always have preferred fact to fable and fancy, and

sense to nonsense. One of these days, in the absence of the preacher through sudden illness, some humourist will read out an item meant for the Children's Hour, and no one will be one penny the wiser—in both senses of that phrase.

In a notice of the book, *William Archer as Rationalist*, we come across the usual patronage from the superior reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement*. It is familiar with many of us, but this particular case is such a good specimen that we must throw our net over it: "Possibly it is a pity that Christianity, as a developing religion, has not developed a little faster. As it is, we believe that Archer spent much of his strength in killing things already moribund." With regard to that last sentence, it will be remembered that a few weeks ago in England a church bell was tolled to call for prayer against "foot and mouth" disease. The blessing of battleships and colours still goes on; war memorials cannot be unveiled without a representative in attendance of those whose ideas on self-preservation were well developed in the last war, and rural England is still in a firm position under the thumb of the squire and the vicar. In Bootle, Lancashire, a school teacher has been pulled up for telling his pupils exactly the same thing that turned Tennessee into a branch of Barnum and Bailey's. A crick in the neck is still a complaint in the country, and what the reviewer may say in private with his friends requires more courage to say in public than is usually found among writers on books.

Mr. Edmond Holmes is a veteran of letters, and although the feather bed of Christianity still holds him, there is just a chance that he might fall out of it. As a thumbnail sketch of a Christian attitude the following expresses a truth, but not new:—

Intolerance is generated, in part at least by secret self-distrust. We persecute dissentient opinion because its existence makes us doubtful—though we will not admit this—of the truth of our own convictions, because we resent its challenge to our faith.

The other truth is that Christianity encouraged persecution as a duty that was owed to his God.

After the novelists came the journalists. When these gentry have finished with religion there will be nothing left of it except the institution of going round with the hat. An appeal is made in the *Morning Post* by the Rev. Donald Moore in which he suggests, "that to commemorate the signing of the Peace Pact, an appeal be made for at least £1,000,000 towards the erection of Churches." This must be the joke canonical; the Rev. Gentleman is prepared to subscribe the first pound to the fund. We are also prepared to subscribe a similar sum towards the erection of a war memorial for the 50,000 exempted clergy, who urged men to fight, prayed for victory, blessed the colours, and generally hastened the funeral of the biggest imposture on mankind.

On the same page in the *Morning Post* as this joke, will be found a revelation of the two-headed mule reasoning that she does not expect nor hope that it reflects the opinions of the average man. There is the £1,000,000 appeal in commemoration of peace; in the next column is a long letter from a military correspondent who is worried about recruiting and wants to sow the seeds of Imperialism. In the next column is an announcement that new barracks at a cost of £150,000 are to be built for the Gordon Highlanders. In the same issue (December 2) there is a long account of Earl Jellicoe's outline of a naval policy, which is estimated to cost seventeen shillings per head of the Dominion population, and twenty-three shillings per head from the population of Britain and the Irish Free State. To complete this picture there is a report of an address by Mr. Walter de la Mare on "What is a Ghost?" Let no one after this make the reproach that we lack a sense of humour.

"Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

THE purpose of this Trust is to acquire sufficient funds which, by investment, will produce an income of £400 annually, the capital remaining intact. It is an endowment secured by legal Trust Deed, administered by five Trustees, of whom the editor of the *Freethinker* is one. It means giving the *Freethinker* permanent financial security, and is thus a businesslike and sound scheme, which should commend itself to all supporters of the Cause. A full explanation of the Trust was given in the issue of the *Freethinker* for October 4, and any further information will be given to anyone interested.

Previously acknowledged, £3,443 5s. "Mathematicus" (2nd sub.), £5; T. Baron, £5; A. Rowley, 15s.; "X. Y. Z.," £1; A. Ballard, 10s.; "Poor Old Nixie," 10s.; J. Breese, £10; Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Rosetti, £1; H. O. Harland, 5s.; A. J. Fincken, £5; T. H. Gunning, £1; F. Reed (Birmingham), £1; Mr. and Mrs. Terry, 10s.; F. C. Wykes, £1; J. Hayes (per A. Millar), 5s.; T. Roberts, 6s. Total, £3,476 6s.

In addition we hold promises of three sums of £50 each, to be redeemed on condition that seventeen others will promise a similar amount.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the "Freethinker Endowment Trust," and crossed Midland Bank, Limited (Clerkenwell Branch). All letters should be addressed to the Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

POOR OLD NIXIE.—Your calculation over-estimates by full seventy-five per cent. We are pleased to know that you so much enjoy the *Freethinker*. There are few papers that appear to stand so high in the estimation of its readers, and the number who read the paper every week possibly exceeds the number who actually subscribe for it. If all became subscribers it would pay its way.

H. R. SMALL.—We are obliged for the suggestion, and no doubt you are right that a great many would regularly subscribe to the Endowment Fund, if they were called upon. But we are afraid we cannot arrange for that. We have placed the matter before the Party, and we must leave it to those who are sufficiently interested in the future of the *Freethinker* to subscribe in the usual way.

MR. J. W. WOOD suggests that readers of the *Freethinker* would be further indebted to its writers if, when they refer to a book likely to interest Freethinkers, they would by way of a footnote mention the publishers and the price. We pass the suggestion to our contributors to act upon when possible.

H. B. DODDS.—Thanks for MSS. Shall appear as early as possible.

A. S. E. PANTON.—The exact wording was "the dictatorship of the workers," which was declared to be "a necessary expedient....dependent upon the thickness of skulls." We fancy that when a dictatorship is declared to be necessary until such times as people appreciate the benefits of a certain régime, we are warranted in taking that to imply the use of force to secure its imposition. And we do not believe in dictatorships of any kind whether of the Church, or the workers, or the aristocracy.

R. MILES.—We have no intention of discussing the rights or wrongs of Communism in these columns. We agree with you that there are several forms of Communism. What we are concerned with in the *Freethinker* is the

securing for all forms of opinion freedom of expression. And that means we are opposed to the use of force, by any class, to impose its opinions upon others. We bracketed Mussolini with Moscow because we see no reason for differentiation. We are not concerned with the rightness or wrongness of the opinion that is suppressed, but only with the fact of suppression.

J. W. WHITE.—We regret very much to hear of the death of our old friend, Newrick Richardson. He deserves all the good things you have said of him. He was a brave man in the best sense of the term, and faced life always with his head up and smile on lips. We take this opportunity of congratulating you on the delivery of a very fine address at the graveside. It was worthy of the occasion.

F. C. WYKES.—Thanks for cheque for Endowment Fund, also for promise to send again.

A. C. ROSETTI.—We are obliged for good wishes. Of course if all *Freethinker* readers made up their minds to subscribe to the Endowment Fund as a Christmas gift, the whole sum would be secured by the end of the year. But we are not optimistic enough to think that is likely to happen.

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 61 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, 61 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 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

A little time ago Mr. Cohen received an invitation from the Vicar of Stratford to hold a public discussion with Canon Storr, of Westminster. This was agreed to, and the subject suggested was "Should We Believe in a Personal God?" The date of the debate has been fixed for the afternoon of Sunday, January 3. It is a very long time since Mr. Cohen had a debate in London, and this one should be interesting to Freethinkers, and—we hope—to Christians.

Mr. Cohen's audience in the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday last was hardly up to previous meetings in point of numbers, but there was no mistaking the pleasure with which the lecture was listened to. The Town Hall is a very large building, and an audience that would be quite good in an ordinary hall, leaves many vacant seats there. Perhaps the cold weather had something to do with the smaller meeting. Mr. Clifford Williams occupied the chair, and, as usual, discharged his duties with complete efficiency. There were a few questions at the close of the lecture.

Mr. F. E. Willis, J.P., will be the lecturer for the Birmingham Branch to-day (December 20). The meeting will be held in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, at 7. His subject will be "The Sacred Birthday," and we hope the hall will be well filled.

The National Secular Society's Annual Dinner is fixed this year for January 12. The place is, as before, the Midland Grand Hotel, so that all who attend are assured of a comfortable evening. London Freethinkers will make a note of the date, and we hope to see a number of friends from the provinces.

There was only one fault found with the National Secular Society's Social, held on December 10, and that was there was not enough of it. Some of the younger members found ten o'clock too early to close, but the conditions of the place prevented a later hour. Perhaps that can be amended on another occasion, but the hall was well filled, and everything went off quite smoothly, owing largely to those who attended notifying their intention in time. The musical portion of the programme was excellent, and Mr. Ratcliffe discharged the function of M.C. in his usual efficient and agreeable manner. The speaking was confined to a brief address from Mr. Cohen, who took care not to encroach upon the limited time at the disposal of the visitors.

Several times we have been asked to open a Sale and Exchange column for the use of readers. We have decided to give it a trial, and shall commence the experiment with the first issue in the New Year. The column will be for the use of private individuals, and the charge will be sixpence per line. It should be a success, as a number of our readers must have articles for disposal, and Freethinkers may as well use their own journal as any other.

Remy de Gourmont.

It is possible for anyone to pass a life-time in asking questions; as a subject of debate one might ask whether man is a body with a voice, or whether he is a voice with a body? And if one is intellectually dishonest words can prove anything—to many. Schopenhauer hit the nail on the head when he wrote that many people wanted to know but few wanted to learn; and this is a fair estimate of the level of thought. The simple fact that water wets has not yet been grasped to judge from the quality of modern footwear, and fashion, by a miscarriage of providence, has introduced what are called Russian boots. That they appear to be chiefly worn on bright sunny days is part of our argument and serves as an introduction to a provocative book¹ given to us by a well-meaning friend.

With our eye, the full moon appears to be as big as sixpence; astronomy convinces us that our eye is a liar. Portuguese soldiers in the late war, sniffing the gas sent across the lines, were under the impression that there was a banquet of pineapples taking place somewhere. To travellers in the east there is the mirage, and in the west there is the commercial business of philosophy bearing the academic seal. With the business of theology all that seems necessary, is to roll off the tongue long strings of words to enter the carefully prepared ears of a congregation taken advantage of as children.

A small volume containing nine essays entitled *Decadence* is before us, and the reading of them was in some ways as delightful and disconcerting as a journey to a foreign country; they all challenge accepted ideas of truth, and the author has used his rapier of penetration with an effect, the value of which must be determined by the reader for himself. In the first essay entitled "The Disassociation of

Ideas," we are at once brought in touch with a master mind. We read: "There are two ways of thinking. One can either accept current ideas and associations of ideas, just as they are, or else undertake, on his own account, new associations or, what is rarer, original disassociations." In this method we are reminded of the aphorisms of Patanjali where the student is counselled in the art of thinking.

From the above extract, which is a black-eye for the mentally slothful, readers may see at once that a definite note is sounded. It is critical, challenging, querulous, and, after a little thought, profoundly true. Applied to some of the high-sounding words in our verbal currency it brings about strange results, and Gourmont's method cannot, by its very implications, ever hope to become popular. Applied to the vocabulary of theology it acts as a consuming flame; to other words associated more intimately with things that matter it acts as a seat of judgment on the credentials of what pass for current truths.

Gourmont plays with his subject in this essay and, as an illustration of his thesis, he cites the case of a house-painters' strike in France. The workmen carried a banner on which their demands for social justice were summed up in the cry, "Down with Ripolin." It will be known that Ripolin is a paint that anyone can apply, but in the case of the strikers it symbolized injustice. The workmen had simply resolved an abstraction into something concrete. Our own country has a proverb in which an idea is clothed in the purple and fine linen of common sense, and disassociation of its meaning will reveal that English wit is as profound as Russian mysticism—without epilepsy. "A nod from a lord is a breakfast for a fool." Here it will be noted, there is nothing to eat, the idea has nothing to do with anything physical, and the words have been used to signify an attitude of mind.

Applying his dialectical scalpel to the famous phrase in the Bible, "Woe to the rich," he states that, "thus understood, the idea of justice appears contaminated at once by hatred and envy." Whilst it may be the subject for mild laughter to see Bishops and other fixed stars of the religious firmament following Christ in a first-class railway compartment, our steady purpose of analysis will bring us to a clear understanding of a side of religion that has always been emphasized in this paper. It is not whether the Christian religion is true or false so much as a comprehension of how and why people came to believe in it. This attitude will also be applied with success to the phenomenon of Spiritualism.

In order that we may not be accused of wanting to quote the whole of this delightful book, for the giver of it warned us to moderate our transports, we will only give one quotation more. It contains altogether nine essays, and the fifth entitled "Women and Language," is one of the finest panegyrics of Woman that it is possible to read—for the simple reason that the author, with a master's touch, deals only in the bare bones of truth. With hammer strokes in prose he gives all with ears to hear and sense to understand an unforgettable and truthful portrait of her without whom the world becomes a wilderness, and the hairpin a useless contrivance.

Compared with the rôle of the ignorant mother who plucks, like a flower, the first word blossoming on her child's lips, the teacher's rôle amounts to almost nothing. It is the mother herself who sowed this word which has just bloomed.....A woman's idle chatter, differing so slightly from that of the little girl talking to her doll, is the child's first lesson, and the one whose importance surpasses every other.

¹ *Decadence and Other Essays on the Culture of Ideas*, by Remy de Gourmont. Authorized Translation by William Aspenwell Bradley. Grant Richards, Ltd., St. Martin's Street, London.

There are many other glowing periods in his praise of woman and all have their roots in the hard facts of existence. The remaining essays in the book can be read with profit and advantage; an acute mind gives us his helpful and illuminating thoughts on "The Roots of Idealism," Glory and Idea of Immortality, Success and the Idea of Beauty, Subconscious Creation, the Value of Education, Stéphane Mallarmé and the Idea of Decadence, and Of Style or Writing, but in them all, he uses the method remarked at the beginning of this notice.

What then, is Remy de Gourmont's value, or contribution to thought, in so far that we can grasp his purpose and use it in our daily lives? To answer it briefly would be to state that he would have us intensely critical of the meaning of words used in the currency of speech. From the words themselves we go back to the things they represent, and when we have reached them our work of disassociation commences on the particular truths for which they stand. The process is somewhat the same as the peeling of the onion in "Peer Gynt," but a little more satisfactory. It is an analytical function pure and simple. And we believe that when properly applied it spells disaster to the theology that is delivered six feet above contradiction, with the Brawling Act (1860) in reserve. This book of essays is not for children. It will be read with pleasure and appreciation by those who can see in the ten novelists' caper a religious advertisement. It will find a kindly reception by those who only read newspapers by the placards, or, if they do read them, only do so to find what is not there. And it would be useful to any of the millions of readers, if only it made them ask themselves if the reading of newspapers was even worth the eye-strain.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The Brothers of Jesus.

And some have friends who give them pain.
—Dean Stanley, "Hymns Ancient and Modern," No. 20.

LET the reader, if endowed with sufficient imagination, suppose that a candid and sensible teacher delivered the following address to his Bible class.

Have you ever thought how wicked the brothers of Jesus were, and what a trouble they must have been to him? Towards the end of his life, say, six or seven months before he hung upon the cross, those hard and cruel men tried their best to ruin him by driving him straight into the hands of his enemies. He was tarrying at his modest house in Capernaum, and they came to him, and twitted him about concealing himself, and dared him to go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles, which was drawing nigh; and they did this although they knew quite well how dangerous it was for him to show his face in Judæa because the Jews were seeking to take his life. "Depart hence," they said, "and go into Judæa, that thy disciples may behold the works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world" (John vii. 1-9). Thus they threw doubt upon the reality of his signs and wonders; and accused him of doing hole-and-corner miracles, which might be only shams. They told him to go to Jerusalem and do something. Did they not know that he had been there twice, and won the notice of all men by driving the merchants out of the Temple and by healing the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda? If unaware of this, how is it possible that they had never heard of what he had done in

Galilee, where they lived? What about the water turned into wine at Cana in the presence of their mother? What about the cure of the centurion's servant; the raising of the widow's son; the stilling of the tempest; the expulsion of the devils from Gadara; the raising of the ruler's daughter, the feeding of the five thousand; the walking on the sea; the feeding of the four thousand; and innumerable other wonders performed at Capernaum, Bethesda, Nain, and elsewhere, all over the district. How could the brothers of Jesus doubt his power and pretend that his miracles were done in secret, and perhaps not genuine? They knew him from the very beginning, and they had said their prayers at the same mother's knee. How strange and terrible then was their unbelief. How it must have wrung his heart, for if his brothers did not believe in him, who was likely to do so? But this is not all. How dare his brothers grieve him then when they knew his power! One able to still the raging sea and call the dead to life, could not be a person whom it was safe to anger; and one capable of blasting a fig-tree because it did not produce fruit out of season, must have been a person easily exasperated. Were they not afraid that he might do to them what he had done to the swine across the lake?

It is plain that he felt their mistrust; their mockery; and their vile insinuations. He knew that they believed him to be an imposter, and the miracles to be spurious; and that, without taking any account of his purposes, they despised him for his methods, forgetting that the former were noble enough to excuse any defect the latter might present. Yet, instead of punishing them for their taunts, he submitted himself to the supreme humiliation of practising deceit. "Go ye up unto this feast," said he, "I go not up yet unto this feast."¹ Then after they had departed, he went thither, "not publicly, but as it were in secret." What a mystery of suffering! The brothers of Jesus were they who should have been the most proud of him; they who should have helped him with all their might; they who should have been the first to hide any deed of his likely to compromise him before the world. But the reverse was the case. They looked upon him with contempt; they assailed what appeared to them his weakest point; and they tried with their taunts to drive him onwards to destruction. We shall never be able to fathom the cause of this great wickedness; but perhaps it was necessary to complete the service of sorrow through which Jesus had to pass for our redemption. Besides, the case offers a number of valuable lessons for those who approach it in a right spirit. There are many lonely hearts even in crowded houses; and in the multitude of kinsfolk there is often neither help nor sympathy. Let all who suffer thus comfort themselves as seeing him who is invisible. Let them think of the brothers of Jesus, and take courage. The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, what will they call them of the household? Let such troubled ones remember that with all their afflictions their saviour was afflicted; and may the angel of his presence comfort them!

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

People are beginning to find out now that you can't study any religion by itself to any good purpose. You must have comparative theology as you have comparative anatomy.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

¹ The revisers add, "Many ancient authorities omit yet."

"When I am Dead."

No man liveth to himself alone is no pious sentiment, but a very literal fact.

The population of our country alone is, say, fifty million souls, then what of the population of the entire world? That fifty million and the rest—consciously or unconsciously—exercise an influence in my life, and, aware or not, I respond or react to its impulse. Such stupendous numbers suggest an infinite diversity of the character of mankind.

Let us contrast Crippen with Shakespeare or Charles Peace with Charles Darwin, and consider that on the most conservative estimate man has attained his present mental and moral status by a process of intermittent growth in the compass of some hundred thousand years.

I shall never know, even remotely, that fifty million who populate our isles. In mental and moral pigment I shall have something in common with them all, in much else I shall be strikingly dissimilar. Should I commit an anti-social act my name might be murmured on the lips of men and I should become notorious. If I should create new thought in the realm of philosophy, contribute new knowledge to science, a fresh concept to art, or a sublimer benevolence to philanthropy, my name might be linked eternally with the great benefactors of mankind. Thus we react upon one another.

Although a young man I am in reality very old, as my ancestry and the above figures connote. In me "the living past" and the present coningle, and their strident and discordant voices resound their interminable jargon of conflicting faiths, philosophies, and ideals. If the Divine Imminence is reflected in my nature I am at any rate conscious of its counterpart. If the spirit of altruism testifies my benevolence, selfishness acclaims me self-centred. If I plead my ideals Love, Sympathy, Forbearance, history shrieks in derisive laughter that I burned Bruno and Galileo and made Socrates drink the hemlock. If I assume a demure countenance and assert dogmatically that statesmen could have peace abroad if they willed it, I am reminded foolishly that I cannot get along with my neighbours.

I once dogmatized on Predistination. I believed that all was fore-ordained and with equal arrogance in time asserted the freedom of the will, and modified that in turn with the doctrine of Determinism. The narrowest of Nationalist patriotisms was mine; the halos, the glories and the courage of the soldier held me entranced; and with an even fervour later, I held that courage and cowardice had their basis in fear. I was conservative in habit, liberal in thought and judgments (sometimes). Labour was the effort to balance both conceptions.

With "Omar" did, I "frequent doctor and saint" the enigma is yet unsolved and seemingly insoluble. Before Nietzsche I was Nietzsche, I lived "dangerously." I hunted and was hunted. Then it was my "will to live"; later, hunting became fashionable, and my "will to power." I accepted "Master Morality" while I was master; when I lived with the "Widow in the Bye Street" I held "Slave Morality" a detestible doctrine. My dreams were reflections of activities and excitements of my daily life, and nightmares I knew not. These came at a much later date when I trudged through slushy streets in the lamplight of early winter mornings fearing the mill-whistle might cease its monotonous note and the work gates close against me.

The future I understood not, nor the day after in these early times. Outside the present I had no concern. Concern for the future came gradually.

It took shape and form with the process of development. Something of me was threatened dire pains and penalties of hell-fire. Then I thought of the future.

Father Furniss had described in a booklet for children intimately and with remarkable coolness every dormitory and corridor of a place for bad boys and girls, which was warmer than Scotland in December. The description palled on me for I did not read to the end. The nearest I got to panic fears of hell where Father Furniss misfired was when I reflected on the insecurity of my job in a period of unprecedented unemployment.

Atavistic, maybe, perhaps only reminiscent in mood, like Jack London I go back "before Adam." Then I worshipped the Serpent, the Tree, the Phallus and the Sun, the Thunder and the Lightnings, everything remote that I feared and dreaded. In each succeeding phase I fashioned my after life, comprehending the exaction of each stage in my evolution. So the process went on.

The images I made in stone and wood gave place to the conception of an anthropomorphic God, and the happy hunting grounds reflecting the primitive communism of an earlier sojourn on earth, gave way to heaven, "a place of many mansions" synchronizing in my imagination with the densely populated tenement dwellings in Glasgow where I resided. Theologians told in books in the public libraries what they did not tell me in the pulpit, and in consequence my anthropomorphic God was etherealized in terms of Pantheism, Transcendentalism, Divine Imminence, and Pragmatism. Among Greeks, I deified the beauty in man and symmetry in nature. Among Romans, I was the practical man, a maker of laws and of roads.

Belief in God and its concomitant a future life were ultimately relegated to the store of decapitated dolls and the decimated army of tin soldiers in the nursery. God there may be, but the churches have not interpreted him aright. He remains yet unidentified. A future life there may be, but Spiritualists and Theosophists so far have failed to make it either rational, logical, or attractive.

They tell us that we pick up the thread of life beyond, just where we dropped it here. The attractiveness of that presentation of a future life, however, depends very definitely upon the angle we view it from. Unwittingly or not, that doctrine is the grossest materialism. It is an appeal in the main to the comfortable devotees of the cult that they will not find matters there, more irksome than here. It tells the rickety child nourished on the dole that the comfortable will still sit in cushioned seats and drink from exquisite china and that none shall dispossess her from her three-legged stool and a drop of tea from a jam-jar.

Sir Oliver Lodge believes in immortality, though many Spiritualists do not. Sir Oliver Lodge believes that in countless ages to come we shall realize our ideals. Does he think we desire the same things and have the same aspirations? Doubtless he may assume that such desirable things as a reconciliation of Capital and Labour, of friendly relations between nations is an aspiration of all. He may be right, but how can we know, and if we aspire to different things, how can we be sure we may not mutually destroy both? If again we do realize our ideals there must come a time when we cease to aspire?

I look back on the past and I do not see it in roseate hues. If I saw the sun rise I also saw it set. I knew nature in all her moods and I saw all man's accomplishments. Sometimes he soared to heights of Godhead; sometimes he was a Devil. I look on the present—only nature is unchangeable, reluctantly

she yields her secrets to man. Man himself is wonderful. He can transport himself in the sea like a fish and in the air like a bird. In the not distant future he will see and speak with his brother between Europe and the Antipodes without visible contacts. He has added laurels to his name in every branch of science. He talks of theology and morality as much as he did in the past and with as little result. Only one blemish has man—he has not learned to feed his family.

I am not a cynic, and if I am not an optimist neither am I a pessimist.

An optimist often describes a man with a comparative good health, light responsibilities and limited imagination.

The pessimist often is a chronic dyspeptic or a man with a liver.

They are questions of health, not aspects in viewing life or its phenomena.

I have said enough to show that I am concerned—very keenly concerned—about the present. When man can feed and clothe and shelter his kind, when he has brought education and culture within the reach of all, made the avenues to Science and Art accessible to and desirable by all, he may then chase any will o' the wisp if he is minded to. If I can help towards that consummation in the little time left to me I shall doubtless grow weary in the effort as I tire at the end of the day—then echo with Landor: "I warmed both hands before the fire of life, it sinks, and I am ready to depart."

H. A. KERR.

Correspondence.

MIND AND MATTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your continued article in the *Freethinker* of the 6th inst., under "Mind and Nature," you make some astounding assertions when dealing with the analysis of Berkley of our knowledge of externality, which you endorse with the appellation—impregnable. Of course, you are entitled to say this, but it is another matter to justify it. Huxley's "file" has been broken by very sound teeth, and it would be, I am sure, interesting to see it repaired.

Granting that we are conscious of sensations, this is only one aspect of the matter, and certainly does not fully exhaust it. The vital question to answer is: "Whence these sensations?" No philosophical idealist has, to date, done so, without, in the attempt, arriving at the logical conclusion, "We know nothing." He commences with the terms "unknown cause" of sensation, and ends with the terms "unknown cause" of our knowledge of nature; a contradiction *par excellence*. Knowledge is not a "consciousness of a sensation" but the consciousness of the identity between two or more sensations. This does not in any way give us a knowledge of the cause of these sensations, but only a knowledge of the subjective aspect, viz. of sensations as such. If one wishes to be conscious of the cause of a sensation of pain of a particular type, say a "left hook" blow; by a process of reasoning he will (possibly with some doubt), connect the impacting left fist with a swollen jaw and its accompanied pain. He will not, fortunately, experience the pain before contact with the external fist. Repetition will give him a *thorough knowledge* of "left hook" pain, if no advice is available.

It is strange that in saying the arguments of Berkley and Hume destroy each other, you do not see that they prove both. That they were not conscious of this their terminology proves; but Berkley used his "mind" and Hume his "matter" to explain themselves, and in refuting each other's argument, each thought they had dismissed "Mind or Matter" as the case may be, to the realm of non-existence (although they still existed, mark you), instead of which they only proved the useless-

ness of discussing or arguing about words instead of that which those words represent.

It is not very edifying to read that we "believe in an unknown cause," of the confusion of "names" with "aspects of experience," especially as the former is stated to be "an existence." Of course, I have reason to suspect that all this nonsense has method in its madness; that is to say, I cannot accept without reservation that this part of the article is a true example of what is generally a very analytical mind.

While bearing in mind what I have just previously said, I must say that the last few lines of the article are choice. While Materialism, Atheism, or the mechanistic conception of nature are dependent on the above "unknown cause," because "they do not depend on the reality of matter" the Godite is chided for his belief in something that "is dependent upon the abstraction mind," whatever that may mean, and is relegated to the asylum of ignorance. Indeed this asylum has many inmates. Who is the more logical of the two? my sympathy is with the latter.

A. S. E. PANTON.

[I did not say that Berkley and Hume destroyed each other. They do not. What I said was that by the same process of reasoning that Berkley argued against our knowledge of "Matter," Hume argued against our knowledge of "Mind." Both these terms were printed within quotation marks—for obvious reasons. I admit that "unknown cause" is not a good phrase, but one is entitled to take something for granted in the case of one's readers, and I thought my meaning was sufficiently clear to avoid a lengthy explanation. My calling Berkley's position impregnable obviously applied to his analysis of knowledge, and to his statement that we *know* nothing of "Matter" apart from our sensations.* Matter as an hypothetical construction, as an assumed cause of sensations we all know, and if anyone knows more than that he is the man I have been waiting to hear of for a long time. I agree that it is useless arguing about words, instead of discussing what the words are intended to represent, which is my reason for calling the attention of Mr. Panton to the difference between a logical or hypothetical construction and a perception. If this distinction is borne in mind we can believe in the reality of "Matter" in the only sense in which a sound science has ever used the term.—C. C.]

CENSORSHIP IN THE LIBRARIES.

SIR,—The following is taken from the *Liverpool Echo* for December 4, 1925:—

A LIBRARY INCIDENT.

I went into the Picton Library the other afternoon, and applied for a few anatomical books. When the librarian saw my slip he almost fainted. "You cannot have such books," he said, and added, "and don't ask again!"

Why shouldn't a free citizen read anatomical books? I am thirty-two years of age, and am as ignorant of my internal organs as when I was two years. If a doctor (who only can have such books from the library) is allowed to know all the secrets of my organs, why shouldn't I, who own them? Besides, a knowledge of one's own anatomy helps one to a better idea of how to look after it in the right way.

Why should I not read and study anatomy?

In any case, a free library should be free; and if a doctor can have anatomical books, then so ought free citizens, even me.—W. D.

I have been given to understand that this kind of incident takes place nearly all over the country, not merely from religious bigotry but very largely under pressure from medical societies. Evidently the priests and the medicine men are not entirely separated. Part of my letter of protest to a local paper has been printed.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

The ministers come next in point of talent.....I have talked with a great many of 'em of all sorts of belief, and I don't think they have fixed everything in their own minds, or are as dogmatic in their habits of thought as one would think to hear 'em lay down the law in the pulpit. They used to lead the intelligence of their parishes; now they do pretty well if they keep up with it, and they are very apt to lag behind it.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

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North London Branch N.S.S.

The debate on "Psycho-Analysis" between Mr. Rex Roberts and Mr. H. Cutner provoked a good discussion, but it was generally felt that the subject was too wide to be dealt with in the course of an evening's debate. However, Mr. Roberts has promised to give another lecture in the New Year, followed by open discussion, on the Freudian theories, and we are sure that all who were present last Sunday will look forward to it with interest. To-night, Mr. J. H. Van Biene, who is a great favourite with North Londoners, will give an address on "Corn Plasters for Cancer." Come and discover what it is going to open out!—K. B. K.

Obituary.

It is our sad duty to record the death of Mr. Newrick Richardson, who died at Chester-le-Street, on December 8, after a somewhat intermittent illness extending over many months. Deceased was well known in Chester-le-Street and Newcastle districts. Known, as he himself used to say, as "the mad infidel," but much respected by all who knew him, and greatly endeared to those who had the pleasure of his intimate acquaintance. Having lived for over seventy years he had experienced many of the joys and sorrows of life. Over thirty years ago he went to work in the American mines. After a short stay he returned home to die, broken in health, his limbs racked and twisted with rheumatism, etc., and given up by doctors as hopeless. Yet he lived by his own careful study of himself to be married a second time, and outlived both his wives, and also a family of five. From early manhood an earnest and staunch supporter of Freethought, sometimes, when racked with pains, he has been so determined to hear Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant lecture, that he has had to be carried to the halls on the back of a friend. Never missing an opportunity of saying a word for Freethought, or Socialism, or offering a kindly word of sympathy, or doing a generous action, and with his outspoken genial and humorous manner, and witty stories, he won the respect of many who hated his opinions on religion. He had many hard struggles with adversity, and only during the last few years succeeded in building up a business which sustained him in comparative comfort and enabled him to subscribe generously to the cause he loved. Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S. thus loses one of its oldest members, who will be greatly missed by all who were fortunate enough to have made his acquaintance. Deceased was followed to the grave by a large number of mourners, amongst whom were friends from Stanley, Shields, Gateshead, Pelton, and Newcastle. Our comrade was conscious to the last, knew he was dying, and cracked a joke on the possibility of his living again, and then went to sleep as peaceful as a child. At the grave Mr. John White, of Stanley, read very impressively an eloquent address which was written by the deceased, and used some years before on a similar occasion.—J. G. BERTRAM.

With deep regret we have to record the passing of another Old Guard in the person of Mr. William White, late of Tottenham. Mr. White was aged eighty-four, and his proudest memory was of his connection with Charles Bradlaugh, whom he knew intimately for many years. Mr. White was always a keen reader of the *Freethinker*, and kept piles of old copies, the perusal of which interested him to the last. The interment took place at Islington Cemetery on December 14, the Secular Service being conducted in accordance with the last wishes of the deceased. We tender our sympathy to the bereaved relatives.—G. W.

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.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Stanley Hall, Hallam Street, Great Portland Street, W.): 8, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "The Star in the East." With Lantern Illustrations.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. Joseph H. Van Biene, "Corn Plasters for Cancer."

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

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "The Institution of the Family in History and Religion."

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

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INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. F. E. Willis, "The Sacred Birthday." Questions and discussion cordially invited (Collection.)

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. G. C. Mackay, "Physiognomy." Questions and discussion. (Silver Collection.) The Committee will meet half an hour before the Lecture.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, a Lecture on "Europe and the Catholic Church." Questions and discussion invited.

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