

# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN    ■ ■    EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

*Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper*

VOL. XLVI.—No. 12

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 1926

PRICE THREEPENCE

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## Views and Opinions.

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### Progress and Christianity.

No one finding it possible to say just where or how or when Christianity has had any favourable influence on social or political life, the customary way out is to fall back, as does Lord Oxford, on its indirect effects. The inference we are thus asked to draw is that although, at its worst, Christian teaching was hostile to social developments, and at its best was merely passive in the face of forces that lay outside its sphere, yet once these reforms were on the way we must give Christianity the credit for their being. Thus, although for centuries Christian teachers openly sneered at the possibility of what they called "mere morality" being sufficient to save man, and although "Confessions of Faith" and "Articles of Religion" protested against the notion that good actions apart from belief in Christ could be of any value, yet we must believe that improved ideas of morality are an outcome of the indirect influence of Christianity. Or in spite of the fact that the position of women legally and socially was lower in Christian Europe for very many centuries than it was in Pagan Rome, and although Christian teaching had it that woman was the source of all evil, that she must give unquestioning obedience to her husband, and that the whole of the Canon law was dead against her, we must again attribute the modern movement for the equality of the sexes to the mysterious influence of Christianity. There are many mysteries connected with Christianity, but the strangest is that by which Christianity, while in spirit and avowed teaching moving in one direction, yet manages to set things going in quite an opposite one.

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### Christianity and Intolerance.

Lord Oxford, as we have seen, follows this curious line in his quite uncalled-for apology for Christianity. And, presumably, two things mentioned by him—toleration and peace—are to be taken as examples of this indirect but beneficent influence. "It is strange," he says, "that the last lesson Christendom has learned through the ages is that of religious tolerance." Look for a moment at the facts. No other religion has been so universally, so completely in-

tolerant as Christianity has been. Mohammedanism is often cited as an example of an intolerant religion, but Mohammedanism has had, at least, its period during which it was splendidly tolerant of other forms of faith, and in theory has always permitted differences of religious belief. But where, at any period of its history, has Christianity officially tolerated religious differences? Persecution for purely religious difference was unknown to the Roman law, prosecution for it became part of the established policy of the Christian Church in all countries, and accompanied by the very worst forms of judicial procedure, under which to be accused was equal to being convicted. The establishment of the Inquisition was, as H. C. Lea pointed out, not an attempt to create a more efficient instrument for dealing with heresy; it was created because Roman law had left no legal machinery that could deal with such an offence. The institution of heresy as a legal offence punishable by death, or imprisonment, or political disqualification, in the countries covered by the old Roman Empire, was distinctly a Christian creation. And Protestantism meant no improvement, save that avowed religious differences could not but make for a purifying of the intellectual atmosphere. But Protestantism gave to Europe the curse of a State Church, and thus enlisted the legal assistance of the State in support of religious intolerance. And although Buddhism is not a religion, yet there is the enlightening fact that in all its history Buddhism has never been associated with an act of religious persecution, while Christianity, north, south, east, or west, has never ceased to promote it. One would like Lord Oxford's explanation of that circumstance.

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### Native Bigotry.

A phenomenon such as this cannot be accidental. It cannot be attributed to the influence of politics on religion, because political life moves naturally and inevitably in the arena of discussion, and discussion implies, not the existence of differences only, but the possibility of settling such differences by a series of compromises between diverging views. Moreover, historically, it is political life that has acted as a modifying force on religion instead of *vice versa*. And the intolerance which is implicit in all forms of religion becomes active and paramount in Christianity. Christianity is a doctrine of exclusive salvation. It is Christianity or nothing, with heaven and hell as alternatives. Christianity is, again, cursed with the possession of a "sacred" and inspired volume, and with that progress is impossible, while intellectual charity is doomed. There is no room for doubt or hesitation. If Christianity is true, the elimination of the heretic is a religious duty, an act of social sanitation. There is as good a reason for eliminating the heretic as there is for eliminating the carrier of some deadly disease. From the Christian point of view the heretic threatens human welfare in both this world and the next. Unquestionably this is the best and the most charitable view to take of Christian persecution and intolerance, and the only



thing that will explain the intolerance of otherwise good men and women. And even in our own days we have a man such as the Rev. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead, roundly declaring that a man who does not believe in immortality ought to be ostracized from human society.

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#### Is Persecution Dead?

It is, therefore, not the native intolerance of man that infects Christianity, it is the inherent intolerance of Christianity that poisons the better aspects of human nature. And it is surely asking too much for us to accept the position that although nineteenth-twentieths of Christian history has been characterised by the most unscrupulous ferocity and intolerance—and that during the time when Christianity had the greatest power—we are to take a modification of this of recent years—during a time when the power of Christianity has been reduced to its lowest—as evidence of the influence of Christian teaching. The assumption is almost too absurd for discussion. Lord Oxford says that, "In the religious sphere the persecution of opinion is no longer fashionable, if it is not altogether out of date." There is just that amount of truth about this statement which enables it to be quite misleading, without its being altogether false. So far as Lord Oxford himself is concerned, and many others also, it may be taken for granted that the last thing of which they would think would be to persecute anyone for a difference of opinion. But it takes considerably more than one swallow to make a summer, and numerous as are those who are altogether opposed to persecution on account of religious differences, we have not yet reached the point when we can accept the statement cited without serious qualifications. It is true that it is not now fashionable to imprison or burn men for heresy or unbelief, but there is a far cry between these extreme examples of religious intolerance, and the acceptance of genuine religious equality. The most that can be said of the mass of Christians, even to-day, is that they accept passively the existence of anti-Christian opinions, because circumstances no longer permit their forcible suppression. But within limits they are as fond of persecution as ever, and their intolerance is nourished by their religious faith.

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#### How Christians Persecute.

We do not think that anyone engaged in public life can honestly doubt this. We wonder how it would look if one could get Lord Oxford to sit down and write the names of those in the political world whose real opinions about Christianity are never expressed because of the disastrous consequences to their political careers? Or the candidates who would be cautioned about saying anything against Christianity during an election campaign because of the religious prejudice that would be excited? Or the number of scientists, men of letters, etc., who carefully keep their opinions to themselves for fear of what may happen if they are known? And what of the teaching profession where teachers confess that for them to be known as Freethinkers often means ruining their chance of promotion. Or tradesmen who find that to be known as Freethinkers means loss of custom? Or the very many newsagents who are threatened with the same punishment if they display the *Freethinker*? Or the public institutions which boycott it? Clearly all this is a form of persecution of opinion, and to say that this is no longer fashionable and out of date, is to deny the commonest of facts. More, I do not hesitate to say that the existing form of religious persecution is far more detestable and more degrading than the older and more

spectacular form of burning or imprisonment. A man may submit to openly applied force with no sense of personal degradation. The cause of his submission is patent, and he need not be altogether ashamed. But submission to the petty form of loss of business, promotion, or public prestige, degrades because nearly all who submit are ashamed to confess the reason of their submission. No man can constantly give way to this kind of persecution without a feeling of meanness that must have a disastrous effect on character. And even with the bigot it is equally deplorable. A straightforward intolerance is not inconsistent with a certain strength of character, but a bigotry which shelters itself under a form of liberality and seeks to justify itself on some wholly alien ground, leaves the bigot without even the consoling strength of strong and definite conviction. Under existing circumstances both the persecuted and the persecutor sink to a lower level than was the case when intolerance was open and unashamed.

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#### War and Christianity.

We do not think that very much need be said as to the influence of Christianity on war. We are too near the last "great war" for that. In that war, all over Christendom, no single body of men worked harder to inflame the mean and petty and narrow passions on which war thrives than did the Christian clergy. And since the war ended no body of men have done so little to prevent the outbreak of war in the future. Lord Oxford says that in itself Christianity is neither a pacifist nor a militant creed. That also need not be discussed. The important point is that during the whole of its history the Christian Church has never been found wanting in the effort to cover war with a cloak of religious and moral justification, without which militarism might be much weaker than it is. And, as Lord Oxford confesses, the admixture of Christianity in European wars has smirched the one without spiritualizing and purifying the other. Had the Christian clergy universally withdrawn themselves from association with war, resolutely declaring that it was not their mission in life to excite hatred and dissension, we might be much nearer an era of general peace than we are. But they are to the front in all warlike preparations. They bless battleships and big guns. They decorate their buildings with battle trophies as a Red Indian used to decorate his tepee with scalps. They encourage military organizations in connection with the young, and take a prominent part in all military displays. Established and Free Churches are alike here—the latter complaining only that they do not get as large a show as their rivals. Only one Christian body—the Society of Friends—has been consistently against war, and they are not alone such a small society as to be numerically insignificant, but appear to be in process of disappearance.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### THE GOD IDEA.

The difficulty of understanding the functions of a personal ruler in a universe which the march of knowledge is showing us ever more clearly as self-ordered and self-ordering in every minutest detail is becoming more and more apparent.....The immutability of the fundamental laws of nature and motion, more particularly the grand generalization of the conservation of energy, and the substitution by science of an orderly for a disorderly conception of nature, makes it impossible to think of occasional interference by God with this world's affairs. Accordingly, the value of petitionary prayer falls to the ground.—Prof. Julian S. Huxley, "Essays of a Biologist."



## Prayer.

### II.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* for March 11 there are two remarkable sermons on prayer by two distinguished clergymen, the Dean of St. Paul's and Dr. W. E. Orchard. The Dean's text is 1 Cor. xiv. 15: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also," and his first observation is that "prayer is the inner side of religion." What, then, is religion? It is what is called "the sense or experience of the presence of God," and the claim naturally follows that "prayer is that elevation of the mind to God by which we become conscious of his nearness." Dr. Inge continues thus:—

Prayer is thus the supreme act of the human mind. It is the characteristic activity of that simple part of the human soul which underlies the different faculties—the will, the reason, and the affections. We cannot pray with our surface self; we cannot pray with some poor fragment of our personality. Prayer needs the whole man. What Robert Browning says of religion is especially true of prayer: "Religion, all or nothing." An eminent man, not himself a believer, is reported to have said, "It does not take much of a man to make a Christian, but it takes all there is of him"; and the remark shows true insight. Religion and prayer, which is the heart of religion, takes all there is of us.

That is well conceived and elegantly expressed, and assuming the truth of religion, the definition of prayer is wholly accurate as well as beautiful; but is religion true? Naturally the Dean takes its truth for granted, but it is utterly impossible for us to do so. The existence of God is an object of belief, resting on no ascertained or ascertainable fact whatever. Knowledge of God no one has ever possessed, or ever shall possess, and, in its absence, prayer would be and is sheer mockery.

It inevitably follows from the foregoing definitions that prayer is, even for the most ardent believers in God, a supremely difficult duty. The Dean says:—

Prayer is real work, needing effort. If labour is prayer, according to the proverb, prayer is also labour. Our evening prayer ought not to be said when we are half asleep. In prayer, as in other kinds of work, the power of attention and concentration is much more important than spasmodic demands or long rests. To multiply devotions is not to advance in devotion. Vain repetitions are worse than vain, for, like all passive impressions, which do not pass into will and deed, they deaden the receptive faculty, and they become fainter on each repetition.

All that is perfectly true if God exists as a loving Heavenly Father to whom the human race is an object of never-dying affection; but if Atheism is true, all prayer, whether it contains vain repetitions or not, is a wicked waste of time and energy. Even on the assumption of the truth of religion, does it not strike one as passing strange, if not uncomplimentary, that the loving Heavenly Father has to be endlessly wheedled, coaxed, and cajoled into supplying the needs and desires of the children of his heart? As a matter of undoubted fact, most Christians treat God "as if he were a benevolent fairy who grants us our wishes if they are properly backed by the name of Jesus Christ, used as a charm." Indeed, even the Gospel Jesus seems to regard himself as the being who by his life and work has rendered it possible for God to hear and answer prayer, and grant the forgiveness of sins.

Dean Inge holds a peculiar conception of the value of prayer in various directions. As a sample take the following:—

The truth of the historical documents of the Church for us consists in their prayer value, the use we make of them in our devotions. Those which have been created by the life and love of the Church, and which can only be understood by life and love in the Church, are true for faith as the vehicles of truths which can only be understood by us in symbol. Now this line of thought, which is welcomed by many as affording a refuge for faith from the attacks of criticism, seems to me partly true and partly dangerous. It separates faith from knowledge far too much, so that we are sometimes invited to acquiesce in contradictory accounts of the same thing. We are told that the same event may be untrue to science and true to faith. I am afraid that way of arguing is in danger of taking away from us the historic Christ. It separates between the historical Jesus and the object of the Church's worship.

Does the Dean really believe that there is any connection whatever between the Church's faith and knowledge? He speaks as if he does, but he omits to state where it is to be found. He refers to the "historical Jesus," but fails to inform us where his story is recorded. Surely, he has not the audacity to assert that the Gospel Jesus is an historical character. Can a being said to be born of a woman who had never known a man, a being who could call the dead back to life, and who by dying himself and rising from the dead became the Saviour of the world, a being in whose person a human and a Divine nature became for ever united, and thereby brought into existence what the theologians call a Theanthropical individual—can such a being be regarded as in any sense or degree historical? History has never regarded such a character as anything but legendary or mythical, which is equivalent to pronouncing the Gospel Jesus completely unhistorical.

Curiously enough the Dean, after writing the passage quoted above, puts in a good word for reason, saying:—

An irrational faith is not really faith at all, and we shall not find the prayer value very great of doctrines which are held in defiance of our reason. It is not the office of faith to take sides with the feeling and the will against the reason. Faith arises above these conflicts between the faculties, and only assures us that there is a harmony not fully understood behind the discord, and that the truth if we could know the truth, would be found to satisfy the just claims of our moral and intellectual, and emotional natures altogether, though now we cannot always reconcile the apparent contradictions between them. It is, I am sure, useless to talk of the prayer value of documents which insult the understanding.

Now, as a matter of simple fact, all documents in which the supernatural is the dominating factor are of necessity irrational, and ought to come under the condemnation of the Dean of St. Paul's. The four Gospels are undeniably such documents, and yet as depicted therein he finds "the historical Jesus," and does not approve of any separation between him and "the Object of the Church's worship." Such a view is without a doubt fundamentally irrational.

Of course, such points of literary criticism do not really affect the subject of prayer, though they do undoubtedly considerably lessen the prayer value of certain passages of Scripture. The lesson which both Dean Inge and Dr. Orchard seek to bring home to their hearers and readers is that prayer signifies communion with God which is possible only by faith.



Of the reality of such a communion no doubt whatever can be entertained; but it must be borne in mind that the degree of its reality is in exact proportion to the strength of the faith. That is to say, prayer is fellowship with a being who is merely an object of faith, but not at all of knowledge. Nobody knows there is a God, countless thousands are firmly convinced that there is not, while a small minority are equally assured that there is, and it is in exact proportion to the strength of this assurance that prayer prevails. In other words still, prayer is a purely imaginary communion with a purely imaginary being, and this is the reason why comparatively so few people pray, and why their number is continually on the decrease. We are familiar with the saying that superstition dies hard, than which nothing can be more true, but our comfort lies in the fact that it is passing, however slowly, through the process of dying. This is why it is so difficult to persuade people to attend prayer-meetings. They may not exactly disbelieve in God and prayer, but their faith is not strong enough to make them deeply interested in either; and this lack of interest will ultimately blossom into positive disbelief.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Papa in Petticoats.

Many people have not yet caught up with Voltaire, much less with the twentieth century; and for them it would be a considerable advance if they were to become Voltaireans."—*Bernard Shaw.*

THE Pope of Rome is the ecclesiastic who addresses the largest congregation in the world. Compared with the Papal dignity other archbishops seem petty and parochial, and belauded Transatlantic evangelists less than the dust. Using the language of his office, a pope utters words which are heard from Bolivia to Bermondsey, from Stockholm to the South Seas. The rhetoric may be enfeebled, the language Latin, and the platitudes exhausted, but the Papal patriarch possesses something of the tragic character of Tithonus, "immortal age beside immortal youth." His unique position with regard to the huge numbers of men and women who hold their rule of faith from the largest of the Christian churches is striking, and nothing was more remarkable than the late Pope's attitude on the Great War. Unlike the Archbishop of Canterbury he never made the silly mistake of including national flags, battleships, and machine guns among the most sacred emblems of religion, and he again and again deplored the awful waste of life among Christian peoples. That his warning was treated with utter contempt by Christians was not his fault, and the Pope was spared nothing that the energy of the militarist parties and the hypocritical indifference of the Christian world could make him suffer. Publicly he stood, the Lear of thankless and disobedient children, shrill in his menaces, but keeping unimpaired the dignity of a paternity rejected and insulted.

The events of the Great War showed clearly the ebb-tide of the political power of the Papacy, and the bitterest and most caustic commentary on the daring diplomacy, which under Rampolla, the Papal Secretary of State during two decades, sought by political strategy for the restoration of the Pope's temporal power. It was Rampolla who suggested the Roman Catholic Church's remarkable flirtation with Republicanism and Socialism, echoes of which are heard of in other churches to-day. When Leo XIII. died, Rampolla would have been elected to succeed him, but for the veto of the then Emperor of Austria. Another

pope was elected, and Rampolla's dream was ended. He lived thenceforward in retirement, his diplomatic combinations crumbled into nothingness, and with the Great War went the last hopes of political dominance of the greatest and most powerful of the Christian churches.

The paralysis of the great Roman Catholic Church has been a slow process during many generations. There was a time when she was as broad-minded as her young Anglican sister. She once had her intellectual wing, her scholars, her statesmen, her thinkers, who found her borrowed mummeries and stolen creeds susceptible of mystical interpretation. The ignorant, bigoted, evangelical party, always the most numerous, prevailed gradually over these, and exterminated them literally by fire and sword, rack and gibbet, leaving themselves more ignorant and more bigoted than before. By slow and slow degrees the whole Roman Catholic Church was made over to their likeness, and its death-sentence was signed.

It required centuries to produce this dire result. The very triumphs of Freethought throughout Europe indirectly contributed to this end. Every Roman Catholic who became a Freethinker assisted this process. The more brains that were drawn out of the Romish Church the more did the huge mass part with its intellectual leaven, and tend to flatten down to a mere mass of superstition, ignorance, and intolerance. What constitutes the chief obstructive character of the Roman Catholic Church is the abyss which now separates it from the highest intelligence around it; the live, alert brains of scientists, and the leaden, moveless stereotype of dogma. To-day the voice of the Roman Pontiff, at which kings once trembled, attracts less attention than the photographic representation of Charlie Chaplin eating his boots.

As belief has waned in England, the Anglican Church has sought more and more to imitate the methods of Rome. The Ritualists have taken part possession of the Church of England. Maybe they have not yet done all that was dreaded by timid Non-conformists, but they rule the ecclesiastical roost, and the archbishops and bench of bishops are powerless. At this hour there are covered by the banner of the English Church men who hold the extremest doctrine of the freedom of the individual, and creatures who are willing to bend the knee to a monkey, provided that it wears a monk's cowl. How long will this battle between Romanists and Broad Churchmen last? That a large and increasing number of the Anglican clergy were coquetting with Rome caused, some years ago, attention in the Roman Catholic Church, and the then Pope actually got the quaint idea of reconverting England, and of reimposing the yoke which our ancestors threw off. But there are some things even popes cannot do, and one of them is to force the clock back. The English people will, as a nation, refuse to acknowledge Papal (and Italian) supremacy, and bear, only temporarily, the lesser evil of the priests of the State religion.

In darkened and superstitious times the power of the Roman Catholic Church was great, but it finished in this country with the blood-red glare of the fires at Smithfield. It was never at any time so unquestioned and unresisted as in Italy, Spain, and France. There is a wholesome obstinacy in British blood, which is cooler than that of the Latin races. It shows itself whenever the whip is cracked too loudly, as Charles I. and James II. knew to their cost, and as the long contest for the freedom of the press and speech also proves. Priestcraft can never do its worst in England. We shall never again, as a people, permit the cesspool of the confessional; we shall never again submit to the poisoned weapons of Priestcraft,



its hypocritical affectations of celibacy, its tyranny in the home, its officiousness in public affairs, its menace and robbery at the death-bed. Priestcraft had not a safe seat on British shoulders in the Ages of Faith, even before the days of the Reformation. It is an impossible dream now that there is an organized national Freethought party.

It was once said of a Texas busybody who was tarred and feathered and conducted out of the town in which he lived, "There was no room for such a Paul Pry in our civilization." Can we be surprised that many citizens feel that way concerning the political activities of the Romish Church, which for so long has stood against the freedom of Democracy and the liberties of the people. It is the devotion of Roman Catholics to obsolete forms of government and antique modes of thought which makes them a danger not only to Europe but also to civilization.

MIMNERMUS.

## Theology Yields to a Greater Power.

### II.

(Concluded from page 172.)

THE Hebrew psalmist sang: "The heavens declare the glory of God." On this text Comte's comment ran: "At the present day (1835), to minds at home in true astronomical philosophy, the heavens tell of no other glory than that of Hipparchus, Kepler, Newton, and of all the rest of the men who have cooperated in stating the laws of the heavenly bodies." In this spirit he lectured during twelve years, in his modest Parisian flat, to a group of philosophers and professors, on the principal sciences. He quoted the latest scientific researches; he lucidly summed up the main doctrines, and always on a basis of evolution, always counting the wide and deep frameworks of knowledge which we call "sciences" as the creations—*one might say, the works of art—of men; or rather, of humanity, the collective human mind.*

In his later works, he traced the social creations—household, village, city, nationality, internationalism, agriculture, manufacture, arts—through the ages to his own day. He struck out two Calendars—(1) Historical, dividing the year (very rationally, too!) into thirteen months of four weeks each, with a spare 365th day, or two in leap-year; and allotting to every month, week, and day the name of a man or woman worthy of remembrance in the story of civilization ("Jesus" not included, as being too indefinite, though two of the Gospel-writers, "Luke" and "John" are inserted); and (2) Social, commemorating such phases of life as Family, Fetishism (Animism), Polytheism, Intellectual Providence (that is, the Thinking Power, or, as we say to-day, Universal Conscience), Womanly Providence, and so on. As the most vital force in civilization, he placed Womanhood, with its implications of the wife, mother, conservator, representative of order, manners, mercy. No historian ever took a wider sweep in his survey, though, since he died in 1857, he inevitably missed the helps which he would have gained from Darwin, from archæologists such as Arthur Evans, from anthropologists and folk-lorists such as J. G. Frazer, and the rest. He held (and so do I) all phases of the past in honour, deeming them all consecrated by the service, suffering and industry of both the common mass and the social leaders, each age making for progress amid its peculiar obstacles, and with its peculiar enthusiasms. In spite of the crimes and follies and errors, he appreciated the central human

heart of it all with reverence and gratitude. Of this extensive human life battling unweariedly with uncountable difficulties and natural dangers, he said:—

The whole order of things is summed up in the being [human race] who studies it, and is ever perfecting it. The growing struggle of Humanity against the sum of the necessities under which it exists offers to the heart no less than to the intellect a better object of contemplation than the necessarily capricious "omnipotence" of its predecessor [that is, the God of orthodoxy].

In almost a burst of poetry he blazed out his immense and joyous acknowledgment: "Everything we have belongs to Humanity, for everything comes to us from her—life, fortune, talents, knowledge, tenderness, energy."

As he neared the end of his labours, he pictured the Future of Man. I have read the great Utopias, from Plato's to More's and Morris's and Wells's. None is so broad and deep as Comte's—with its priesthood of science, moral supremacy of woman, universal education, universal industry, universal beauty, universal peace, universal language, universal coinage, universal republic embracing the five hundred republics of the globe; and so on, in a vision exciting enough for Don Quixote and splendid enough for Shelley; and all (if I may adapt a phrase of Shakespeare) "without a drop of God." He modelled his new society too fast; all pioneers do that; and it is a noble error. Better is it to be a miscalculating prophet in love with mankind than a dry old living skeleton that never has a social vision. The trouble with so many "Positivists" has been that, instead of learning from the intellectual valour of this Frenchman, and catching fire from his sociological wit, and then busily adapting themselves to the calls and messages of the day, they have too often shut themselves within the four walls of Comte's scheme, shifting never a point, and waiting for the world to come and live in the steel house. Profound lessons may be culled from Comte, but his genius lived, not in his Utopia, but in his magnificent mottoes, of which I cite these:—

Live for others: family, country, Humanity.

Act from affection, and think in order to act.

Live openly.

Knowledge, or vision, in order to foresee and to provide.

The obligation to serve is common to all.

Love for principle, and order for basis: progress for aim (in other words, Fraternity as universal mainspring; Scientific Order, Moral Order, Artistic Order as social and educational foundation; and perpetual evolution towards the Better).

In the temper and direction indicated by those remarkable maxims, civilization may, and will, march towards manifestations of social life far more glorious and astonishing than any yet revealed in supernatural "Scriptures," or modern Humanist forecasts. Swinburne strikes the right note for us when he exclaims to the genius of Humanity:—

Thy face is as a sword smiting in sunder

Shadows and chains and dreams and iron things;

The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder

Silent, the skies are narrower than thy wings.

The enthusiasm which recognizes and desires to cooperate with this genius of the centuries is a power greater than the faith created by the old theology; greater, not in actual passion, but in an intelligence which makes the passion act with keener directness and more practical value.

But to obey the grand motto of the Greeks: "Man, know thyself" (Comte re-phrased it: "Man, know thyself in order to improve thyself") needs education. Here we arrive at the nucleus-atom of our problem. When man was little known, God seemed



to be much known. As man becomes more known, the Gods are less acknowledged. The conclusion is simple but strong—theology, in the last resort, will be suppressed by a universal knowledge of Humanity, in its history, and in the capacities which spring from the experiences of its past. Under the head of history, one must take in every phase—the prehistoric time of ice, and caves, and stone tools, to the time of machinery on earth, in water, and in air, and the time, only now seen in hope, when mankind will control its productions universally, and distribute that wealth for the universal good. It was just this historical view, inspiring love for the race that expressed itself in so vast a drama of pain, heroism, and persistence, which Auguste Comte emphasized more than any previous thinker.

I have long watched many developments taking place in the people's education in this country, and have even tried to gauge the changes that mark progress in school-systems all over the world. As one who has trod the boards of hundreds of schools, and looked into the responsive faces of many tens of thousands of school-children, and judged the growing values of school-methods and school-literature, I will say that modern education is slowly, but unconquerably, moving towards this ideal of the history of Humanity as motive and standard. I have done a little to impel opinion on that road; but it looks like the feeble picture by an infant's hand, as compared with a masterpiece of a Titian,<sup>1</sup> and the masterpiece is yet to be made by the educationists of to-morrow. But that way lies the secret.

The "revelations" of the Gods were but (as Swinburne says) "grey histories hiding thy clear features." The real revelation is just at the opening page. Kings in days gone by looked into their treasures, and never saw such riches as the child of even to-day may delight in when tracing the story of man. And the child of to-morrow will catch a larger glory.

F. J. GOULD.

## Tall Tales from Tibet.

### PHYSIOLOGY EXTRAORDINARY AND AN ELASTIC LAMA.

A LITTLE KNOWN and unexplored country provides an irresistible temptation to such "archers of the long bow" as may chance to visit it.

Karl Freidrich Heironymus, Baron Munchausen, has been dead for a hundred years, but his mantle of humorous exaggeration has fallen upon other shoulders. That Tibet the Mysterious should afford a field for fantastic stories is therefore to be expected, and thus some imaginative jokers have almost succeeded in surpassing the efforts of the worthy baron.

We have heard of Mahatmas, Occult Hierarchies of Perfect Lamas, and similar wild fowl, whose natural habitat is Tibet, but few up to now have come into actual contact with them, or can tell us exactly what they are able to do.

One of these gentlemen is Dr. Ferdinand Ossendowski, who, some years ago, escaped from Bolshevik Russia into "the secret places of Tibet." If he were in the habit of regaling the Bolsheviks with stories of the kind which he relates concerning Tibet, it is not surprising that he had to flee into secret places. In Tibet the doctor made the acquaintance of a certain lama priest whose skill in poisons earned him such a reputation that "whenever he comes to a monastery the local god ceases to eat and

drink for fear of his activities." This unwelcome guest, as may be understood, is besought with gifts to transfer his patronage elsewhere, and if he does so there is great rejoicing. Hardly less pleasant are the performances of another lama, who is alleged to be in the habit of plunging a knife into people with a view, it would seem, to anatomical research. This eccentric physiologist operated on a shepherd. With a few strokes of his knife, says the doctor, he opened the man's chest, and "I saw the man's lungs softly breathing and the distinct palpitations of his heart .....a little while later I was still more dumbfounded at seeing the shepherd with his coat still open and his breast normal, quietly sleeping."

The Tashi Lama at Shigatse is credited with greater powers. At his command "the lamps and candles before the statue of the Buddha light themselves and the images begin to speak and prophesy." But the Dalai Lama, as may be expected, far surpasses even this, though in what particulars we are not told.

From these sublimities it is a sad descent to an "incarnate Buddha," who was a great card player, always drunk, and addicted to making side-splitting jokes that greatly offended the other lamas. I trust I am not doing the doctor an injustice when I suggest that this lama was one of his boon companions.

The next witness to the mavelous is Major Cairncross, not altogether unknown to fame in Calcutta, Bombay, Colombo, and other places. He was in Tibet a few years ago and stayed there a couple of months until he was induced to leave by the joint persuasions of the Tibetan and the British authorities. But although he only got as far as the Chumbi Valley just across the border, he succeeded in "seeing things" vouchsafed to few, if any, others.

In the course of a lecture not long ago he described how he met an old priest who was easily Tibet's oldest inhabitant, being no less than two hundred and forty years of age. This elderly gentleman, as the Major said, was undoubtedly a genius, and he knew the integral and the differential calculus, although he had never heard of Newton. "He had the power of appearing and disappearing at will and of extending his limbs." Scepticism is a sad handicap to research into the "occult," and I must ask to be excused if I suspect that Major Cairncross was endeavouring to extend the limbs of his audience.

The elastic lama, however, was "the most mystical of all the mystics of the interior of the Himalayas." He was "the prince of mystics," as we can well believe. He was also what our American cousins would call a "calamity howler," for he prophesied a great war, followed by an intense famine, in 1927 and succeeding years.

Major Cairncross was present at a ceremony when this venerable priest caused a glass to split into pieces "by the force of cerebral waves concentrated on it." Certainly "some" brain wave! He was also "the teacher of Madame Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society." So now we know at last the real genesis of modern theosophy and the inspiration of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. Mrs. Besant is quite prepared to accept the gallant Major's testimony, for, commenting upon his lecture in *New India*, she says:—

Our non-Theosophical readers will peruse with interest a telegram headed "A Himalayan Mystic." There is nothing in it to surprise any Theosophist, except the fact that One of the Occult Hierarchy should permit a stranger to see anything of Him. But it may be that—in view of the great changes coming upon the earth and the wide spread of the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom by their pupil,

<sup>1</sup> I did my best to sketch methods in my *History the Teacher* (Methuen, 4s.).



H. P. Blavatsky, and by their faithful servants in the Theosophical Society—the way may have been opened for the Elder Brothers to come more directly into touch with the outer world than has hitherto been thought wise.

Now that Mrs. Besant has at last produced the World Teacher, who unites in his own person all the characteristics of the Buddha, the Christ, the Jagat Guru, and possibly of Padma Sambhava, the "wizard priest," patron saint of Tibet, as well, we may get some confirmation of all this. Possibly also we may have some manifestations which will throw those of the elastic lama himself into the shade.

E. J. LAMEL.

### Acid Drops.

The accidental turning on of the electric light led to the exposure of Mr. Frederic Munnings, a famous "direct voice" medium, in the act of manipulating a trumpet that was believed to be floating round the room by spirit agency. It is only just to say that the exposure was made public by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. Dennis Bradley, and other spiritualists. But no one accuses Sir Arthur, or any other prominent Spiritualist either of fraud or conniving at fraud. The charge against them is that the readiness to believe dupes them first of all, and then they proceed to hand it on to the public on the strength of their reputations. Sooner or later everyone of these producers of direct voices, spirit photographs, etc., are found out at the same game, and Mr. Munnings was one whom Mr. Bradley went into raptures over. And the curious thing is that exposure after exposure leaves these men substantially untouched. They are ready to be fooled by the next spirit fakir that comes along. And but for the accident of the light being suddenly turned on this seance would have been added to the number of the wonderful experiences of Doyle, Bradley, and Co. And it was of Mr. Munnings that Mr. Bradley wrote that he would defy anyone living to produce the phenomena by trickery that Mr. Munnings produced. Mr. Munnings has now answered Mr. Bradley.

Hundreds of bulls and horses and eight or twelve men are killed every year in Spanish bull-rings. The Christian spectators do not mind. They assemble because they desire to see blood shed. Now, however, the Spanish authorities have forbidden the use of worn out horses for this pretty recreation. Mr. Arthur Mee, commenting on this, says that young Spaniards are deserting the bull-ring for the football field; public opinion is becoming more civilized. What he might have pointed out is that the Catholic Church, as a church, has never, so far as we are aware, condemned or forbidden this brutal pastime. Possibly, though, when the faithful have become still more civilized, the church will consider it politic to forbid the faithful to patronize these revolting shows. But that won't be yet awhile. Catholicism is always a few hundreds of years behind humanity.

A "merry musical hour" after the ordinary service is the bright wheeze adopted by a Wesleyan minister, the Rev. G. H. East, at the Wesleyan Chapel, Devonshire Park, Keighley. It appears that the congregation here had dwindled so very sadly that Mr. East had to get the people into the chapel or get out himself. Hence the little aforesaid wheeze to capture the crowd on Sunday evening who, as a Methodist paper puts it, "in hundreds were wandering up and down the Shipton road." The success of the venture, we learn, was extraordinary; the large chapel was packed. We think the Keighley people ought to be very grateful to Mr. East for saving them from an hour's boredom on the Christian Sabbath. What a game it all is! First, the parsons prohibit, as far as lies in their power, all wholesome recreation and amusement on Sunday so that people are driven to wandering aimlessly up and down the streets.

Then along comes a very philanthropic parson and provides the crowd with an hour's "sacred" music, plus a brief address, to while away the utter tedium of an English Sabbath. And no doubt the parson feels an inward glow of satisfaction to think that he has been able to give a brief hour of "spiritual" amusement to a crowd whom he and those of his craft, by means of the Lord's Day Observance Acts, have succeeded in robbing of most of the means of obtaining wholesome recreation. What a contemptible game it is these parsons play! It is, of course, the working classes who suffer most by this sabbathising of the seventh day. The other classes have plenty of means for enjoyment. Yet though this is so, we do not note the Labour Party doing anything towards altering this state of affairs. It remains for Freethinkers to do that. Our Labour leaders are too busy addressing Pleasant Sunday Afternoon gatherings.

While preaching recently at Westminster Chapel, London, the Bishop of Durham was seized with a sudden fainting fit and became unable to conclude his sermon. The Bishop, it appears, was making an appeal against the secularization of the schools and the general tendency to reversion to Paganism, with special reference to the possible developments of Russian Bolshevik anti-religious influences. The *Sunday School Chronicle*, seemingly referring to Dr. Henson's preaching at a chapel, remarks: "It is to be sincerely hoped that no narrowminded Anglican will attach any moral to this unfortunate incident." This prompts us to remark that we sincerely hope no superstitious Christian, noting the subject of the Bishop's discourse, will read into the incident the moral that the Devil fights on the side of the anti-religious. For, seeing that Christians can always discern the hand of God in things that happen to Freethinkers, we think it quite likely that they might make such an inference. But we assure the pious that His Satanic Majesty (like his alleged co-ruler, God) does nothing. If he really did, as Christians fancy, help Atheists, this journal would have an income like that of leading contemporaries of the gutter press which have spasms of religiosity when circulations begin to drop.

Truth crushed to earth will rise again. This, for example, from the *Baptist Times* :—

In the history of the Church no wounds have been so deep as those inflicted by nominal disciples. The persecution of the world has been small in comparison with the havoc caused by mistaken or apostate followers. The Inquisition was not set up by the world, but by sincere though terribly mistaken men who thought themselves Christians. The massacre of St. Bartholomew was carried out by those who came straight from the mass. No persecution can ever be right, yet in the name of Christ wounds have been inflicted and are being inflicted on His own people.

But one does not expect truth to get up in quite such a hurry as this.

In a recent work on the Political Consequences of the Reformation, Professor Murray says that it gave the world freedom. If that is true it is only, to use Clifford's simile, in the sense that two thieves, who have knocked a man down, permit his escape while they are fighting over the share of the booty. In that sense we may say that the man owes his life to the thieves. Naturally while Europe was dominated by a single Church freedom was impossible. But freedom has been equally impossible whenever any Christian Church has wielded unchecked power. The Reformation itself arose as a consequence of things that lay outside the sphere of religion, and the divisions among Christians could not but make for a larger measure of freedom for all. But to think of Luther, or Calvin, or Knox as in any sense devoted to the principle of freedom is to forget what they did and why they did it. What they demanded was freedom for themselves to differ from others. The last thing they would permit was freedom for others to differ from them if they had the power to prevent it. And, as we have often said, one's belief



in freedom is expressed, not by demanding the right to differ from others, but seeing to it that others have the right to differ from us. Tried by that test we should like to know of a single Church, with the power to act otherwise, that fills the bill.

One of the most startling announcements we have seen for some time we came across hanging outside a Church. It ran, "Stop and Think." We should say that the parson belonging to that Church was trying to commit suicide. On looking closer we saw that you had to stop and think whether you were going to hell or not. But one can never be quite certain that people will take words in quite the sense in which one writes them. And it is just possible that some will give the sentence its literal meaning, and stop where the sentence stopped. And that for the Church would be disastrous.

In one of Harmsworth's weeklies is an article which we fancy was supplied from the Salvation Army Press Bureau. The writer says that the Founder took many years to get used to the necessity of governing the "Army" as a dictator. He tried at first to run it as a democracy. This failed; so he took up the burden of government. But he did it with great shyness. He never desired to make a new sect. He had no ambition to be a Pope. Then came the question as to what form the organization should take. The result was the adoption of the military form, and the establishment of an army of soldiers of Christ. Little by little all desire for dignified proceedings faded out, and in order that it might catch men "the Army" was prepared to do anything in any way; to sing anything in any way; and to advertise by its uniforms the existence in the midst of men of soldiers of salvation. To do anything, to say anything, so long as a church or chapel or sect prospers. That is Christianity all the world over.

In the cause of temperance, the National United Temperance Council are using a quotation of Shakespeare: "Oh that men should put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains!" With a slight alteration the quotation might serve against the Christian religion. Thus: "Oh that men should put an enemy into their brains to steal away their sense!"

The Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Bingley, complains that at a recent service there were eighty halfpennies found in the collection. So he administered a stern rebuke to these givers of halfpennies. "Picture yourself," he said, "handing your offering to God in person." Really the picture of eighty stolid Yorkshiremen marching up to the Great White Throne and solemnly handing God Almighty a halfpenny each is rather funny. But, after all, it may be that was all they thought his management of affairs was worth.

Lord Hugh Cecil denies that the Church is a failure. On the contrary, he thinks it more effective than ever. It depends, perhaps, on our measure of effectiveness. Lord Hugh's standard appears to be that all sorts of movements find room within the Church, which may be true, but that is only because the Church is afraid to stand for some definite doctrine or for definite doctrines for fear of losing its hold on the people, and on the other side it is ready to snatch at any social movement that promises popularity in order to attract those who may be caught in the clerical net. If that is effectiveness, the Church is effective enough, but most people would be inclined to take that as an indication of weakness.

Meanwhile it is quite clear that the standard of quality in the Church sinks steadily lower. It is not merely Freethinkers who say so, it is a complaint made by those inside the Church, and who are anxious to know what may be done to remedy it. The truth of the situation is that the Church is feeling the effects, on the

one side, of the Freethinking propaganda that has been and is being carried on, and on the other side of the social and other developments that are steadily turning the mind of the people away from religion. Just imagine what would be the fate of a Parliamentary candidate who stated plainly that we could only gain social salvation by believing in a certain number of Christian doctrines. Even many-avowed Christians would hesitate about voting for him. It is true that he may talk glibly and vaguely about the translation into social practice of the teachings of Jesus, but that is no more than an appeal to established sentiment, and means nothing at all. People ceasing to look to the Church for either counsel or guidance, and they will continue to do so in an increasing measure.

Freethinkers are in for a rough time in the Great Beyond. There is no doubt about that. God does not like people who are intellectually honest. We infer this from certain statements made by the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, D.D., minister of Westminster Wesleyan Central Hall. Just as here Christians grow in power and service, so yonder they will develop likewise, he believes. He is certain that the training Christians receive here will continue in the future; for unless that is so, our earthly experience will be wasted. He believes with Maurice and Spurgeon that ministers will continue to preach, especially those who died early with their ministry unfinished. The process of training and instruction will be continued in heaven. But, according to this doctor of divinity, there is no possibility of the poor Freethinker enjoying all these nice things. Listen to these words of hope:—

But while all that is true, I find no hint in Scripture that those who have rejected their definite opportunities of salvation here will receive others yonder. I don't see it. I cannot find a hint of it. The only "Larger Hope" I can find grounds for in Scripture is for those of whom I have just spoken, who cannot be judged for the misuse of opportunities they have never had, and whose unfinished work seems to demand opportunities for completion. For those others who have rejected and have disobeyed "their heavenly vision" I do not see how you can close your eyes to the fact that there is penalty beyond the grave.....I can't shut my eyes to the fact that the warnings of our Lord Jesus—call them "hyperbole" or "imagery" or what you will—are warnings of something too terrible for human language as to what will happen to those who in this life have been rebels, wilful rebels, instead of obedient, and rejectors instead of acceptors of offers of Divine assistance which have come to them.

Poor old Freethinkers! They are not, it seems, to be literally roasted on the Heavenly Grid, but are to be tortured mentally for ever and a day. It would appear that Freethinkers having damped out one hell-fire, Christians have promptly lit another, and of a more dreadful kind. But why are unbelievers, the rebels, to be treated with this refined cruelty? Because they are intellectually honest, that's all. God doesn't like people of that kind, who openly declare Christian doctrines are absurd, inconsistent, bad, and barbarous. He prefers frightened slaves rather than fearless freemen. What a God! And what choice company he keeps!

Texas, the American State with a woman Governor, is instituting an Evolution ban. An anti-evolution law is now before the Senate. The Text-book Commissioners, whose duty it is to say what books shall be used in the State schools, have ordered the word evolution to be taken out of all text-books they have purchased. They have excised illustrations, deleted the word evolution used in a general sense, and all specific reference to the process of evolution of species, and changed the titles of the text-books. All this they have done for the love of Jesus. They are determined at all costs to evolve among the children that lower type of mentality which will accept without question the Word of God as delivered to the saints. From all this our readers will see that the battle for Freethought is over. Our superior critics are right. Freethinkers are wasting their energies flogging a defunct nag. Christianity is as dead as a doornail, and the critics have ordered its coffin. R.I.P.



### 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.

MR. D. MACCONNELL would be obliged if any Sierra Leone reader could put him into touch with Miss. H. Fearon, late of 25 Magazine Street, Preetown.

A. URE (W. Australia)—Whether at home or abroad there are certain forms of mental atavism which appear to flourish with Christianity. The cuttings you send are good specimens, but we have dwelt upon so many of the same kind lately that we must let them alone for a few weeks.

J. BRYCE.—Received. Thanks.

J. STEPHENS.—We are obliged for selections. Always useful. Better times in store, we hope.

H. A.—We are feeling all right again. Just a temporary indisposition, troublesome because unusual.

W. J. MILES.—Shall look forward to your promised visit.

J. LANIBLE.—Thanks for cutting. Quite useful.

J. G. FINLAY.—Thanks for your very warm appreciation of our efforts. We do our best, and it is encouraging to find that appreciated.

E. SMEDLEY.—The man who says that because savages speculated about the nature of the planets, therefore science rests upon savage forms of thought as does religion, discloses such a hopeless state of mind that argument is almost impossible with him.

THEIST.—We do not require "God" to act wisely or well in order to prove his existence. We are content if anyone can show that he acts at all—well or ill. The argument that if there is a God he must be good is almost as silly as most arguments one hears in support of the belief in the deity.

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

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

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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.

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

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen is to-day (March 21) delivering a lecture on "The Way to Study Religion" in the Century Theatre, Archer Street, Westbourne Grove. The last meeting there was a huge success, and if our friends have worked at advertising it this time as well as they then did, the theatre should be again crowded out.

The second of the course of lectures arranged by the West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. at the Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E., will be delivered by Mr. Saphin,

and will be accompanied with lantern illustrations. We intended calling special attention to the lecture by Mr. R. H. Rosetti on Sunday last, and it was entirely the fault of those responsible for the arrangements that we did not do so. We simply cannot remember all that is going on all over the country, and if Branch Secretaries will make it a point to let us have a reminder of what is forthcoming we are always glad to give whatever publicity we can. But we are glad to learn that the opening meeting was a good one. The lecture was followed by many questions, and the Branch is well pleased with the start made.

Mr. Cohen's article in the *Manchester Evening News* some weeks ago continues to agitate Manchester Christians. In the *Manchester City News* for March 6 there appeared an article by the Rev. H. H. Johnson, which says it is a reply to Mr. Cohen. It is a production that reads much like a Christian Evidence harangue of some forty years ago. Mr. Cohen was unable, owing to absence from home, to reply in the following Saturday's issue, but the editor of the *City News* intimated that he would place space at his disposal, and the reply appears in the issue dated March 20.

We have nothing to do in these columns with the political opinions of aspirants for either Parliamentary or Municipal honours. But among the candidates for the West Ham Board of Guardians are, we notice, Councillor H. B. Price and Mrs. L. E. Broome. Both the lady and gentleman are good Freethinkers, and those who agree with them in their political views should see to it that they get all the support they can give. Mr. Price has had many years' experience of both Council work and work on the Guardians. The Committee Rooms of Mrs. Broome and Mr. Price are in Chapel Street, and those who can see their way to help will know where to go.

A debate between Mr. Clifford Williams and Prof. Wood on the subject of "Christianity versus Secularism," has been arranged to take place to-day (March 21) at the Bordesley Green Working Man's Club, Birmingham. The meeting is open to members and friends only. The secular case is in quite safe hands, and should do much good in introducing Secularism to those who are ignorant of what it stands for. The debate will commence at 8 o'clock.

Mr. George Bedborough paid his first visit to the Birmingham Branch on Sunday last and gave a very interesting address on "Penal Law Reform." This is one of the topics in which Mr. Bedborough excels, and we are not surprised that his genial and telling way of dealing with a subject pleased everyone who was present.

The Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. is holding a Whist Drive and Dance on Saturday, March 20, in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, at 6.30. This will be preceded by an American Tea in the afternoon at 3 o'clock. These functions are being held in aid of the funds of the Branch, and it is hoped that there will be a good muster of members and their friends.

The thoughts of any man of letters concerned to keep poetry alive cannot but run uncomfortably on the precarious prospects of English verse at the present day.....Whether owing to the barbarizing of taste in the younger minds by the dark madness of the late war, the unabashed cultivation of selfishness in all classes, the plethoric growth of knowledge simultaneously with the stunting of wisdom, a "degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation".....or from any other cause, we seem threatened with a new Dark Age.—*Thomas Hardy, Preface to "Late Lyrics and Earlier."*



## The Golden Age.

### II.

(Concluded from page 170.)

ROMAN Catholic apologists claim that the Middle Ages, when the Church was supreme, were the Golden Ages; that the people were happier and more contented; that the poor especially were better cared for, by charity administered by the monasteries, who provided for the helpless and the indigent. The truth is that the monasteries took from the poor a great deal more than they ever returned in the shape of charity. Upon this point Dr. Coulton observes: "The editor of a Belgian chartulary writes what might be written of every other monastery from the eighth to the thirteenth century, 'The dues paid by serfs constituted one of the richest items in the revenues of the Abbey of St. Trond.'"<sup>1</sup>

After quoting, from contemporary medieval documents, the oppressions under which the serfs laboured, Dr. Coulton declares:—

Similar evidence could be produced from preachers and moralists of almost every generation in the Middle Ages. Gautier de Coincy, in the thirteenth century, reproduces the ordinary commonplaces: "The serf is poor, sad, and downcast, he has little bread and an evil cough.....sometimes he has little enough of rough black or brown bread" (p. 21).

Gautier complains that the serfs give "tithes not as Abel gave, but worse even than Cain did." Worst of all "many serfs hate the clergy even as Esau hated Jacob.....little they love them, and still less do they believe them" (p. 21). This reveals a somewhat different state of affairs to the idyllic pictures drawn by the Catholic historians of the happy and contented state of the workers and their love of the Church.

Throughout the Middle Ages there were sporadic outbreaks and revolts by the serfs and peasants, the writhings and heavings of the workers under the lash of oppression and injustice, only to be crushed, time after time, by the superior forces of the lords, lay and spiritual, and, "In all these revolts," says Dr. Coulton, "the insurgents turned at once against both regular and secular clergy, except in so far as poor clerics led the rising themselves" (p. 356). Strange conduct this, if, as the Catholic apologists assert, the Church was the protector of the serf, and a fountain of charity to the poor.

That some charity was distributed by some of the great and wealthy abbeys and monasteries, may be true, but, considering that they drew by far the larger part of their revenues from the tithes and other burdens extorted from the labouring classes, where was the charity and generosity? The fact is that after filling their own pockets and providing for their own wants, they simply handed back a small proportion of the plunder to the poor, who should never have been deprived of it. "The claims of the insurgents, when analysed, will always be found essentially reasonable in the main." Says Dr. Coulton, "The tithes, they pleaded, should really go to support of the needy and other parochial purposes" (p. 355), which clearly shows that sometimes, at any rate, the poor received nothing from the wealth they had been forced to contribute; "but even here," as Dr. Coulton points out, "their (the clergy) influence is very commonly exaggerated by modern authors, as I hope to show in the second volume of my *Five Centuries of Religion* (p. 357). In the uprising of the Flemish peasant in 1323, says Dr. Coulton, "The peasants opposed tithe-paying

and claimed to compel the abbeys to give up 'the corn accruing from these said tithes, which has been gathered and stored in the monks' barns,' and to distribute it in the form of 'bread among the poor folk that dwell on their land'" (p. 127).

In comparing the lot of the present-day worker with that of the worker in the Middle Ages, we should remember that even so late as the time of Chaucer half the peasants of these islands were serfs. As Dr. Coulton observes:—

In Chaucer's day, probably at least seventy-five per cent. of the population of these islands were peasants, and out of every hundred men we might have met, more than fifty were unfree. Therefore the analogues of Chaucer's peasants constitute three-quarters of modern society—not only our present country labourers, but a large proportion of our own wage-earning population, and even some of our professional classes, from the unskilled worker to the skilled mechanic, the clerk, the struggling tradesman, doctor, or lawyer. The writer and the reader of this present volume might easily have been born in actual serfdom five hundred years ago; the chances are more than even on that side; and which of us will feel confident that he would have fought his way upward from that serfdom into liberty were it only the liberty of the farmer's hind or the tailor's journeyman? (*The Medieval Village*, p. 5).

Catholic apologists claim that the Church emancipated the serfs. The truth is that the Church was the largest holder of serfs in the Middle Ages, and were last to emancipate them. Dr. Coulton says: "It would, I believe, be quite impossible to produce any instance of the gratuitous emancipation of even half a dozen serfs by any ecclesiastical corporation, except in very early times; for, indeed, the thing was strictly forbidden in canon law. Nobody denies that serfdom lingered longest on ecclesiastical, and especially on monastic estates. In 1789, the French Church still possessed very large numbers of bondmen; 300,000 seems a moderate computation" (p. 162). The Abbey of St. Claude, in the Jura, alone possessed 20,000. The great jurist, Heineccius, says Dr. Coulton, summed up his researches with this pessimistic conclusion: "We see, therefore, that only layfolk freed serfs gratis and for the health of their souls; the clergy, who felt sufficiently secure of their own eternal reward, granted liberty only for hard cash." As he further points out, the civil, or secular law, was more favourable to the slave than the Canon law—which is Church, or ecclesiastical law—for the Canon law positively forbade the emancipation of serfs belonging to the Church, except for money, or its equivalent.

Catholics lay great stress upon the fact that Pope Gregory freed two slaves; Montalembert even goes so far as to declare that Gregory by this deed "signed the death-warrant of slavery in advance." Upon which Dr. Coulton remarks: "Not only were there multitudes of unfree serfs in the possession of ecclesiastics even a thousand years after Gregory had published this 'death-warrant' to servitude, but Gregory in person possessed at least hundreds, and probably thousands, of slaves whom he did not free. Again, as Pope, he was trustee for the possession of thousands more, chattels of the Roman Church; yet he initiated no general papal movement for the liberation of Church serfs. On the contrary, ecclesiastical laws constantly opposed such a policy" (p. 152).

To those unacquainted with the methods of Catholic apologists, the Appendix, consisting of eighteen pages, entitled *Interested Misstatements*, will prove an eye-opener. Even the great Janssen and Pastor are shown to be misleading and untrustworthy. Pro-

<sup>1</sup>G. G. Coulton, *The Medieval Village*, p. 197.



fessor Emil Michael, the Jesuit, is convicted of absolute dishonesty. Dr. George O'Brien is described as "wildly inaccurate." Montalembert commits himself "to the most reckless generalizations." As Dr. Coulton remarks: "Thus, under the strict system of Roman censorship, really great Church historians like Dollinger and Monsignor Duchesne are actually put upon the Index, while the hierarchy exerts itself to puff and disseminate the clumsy fictions of Farmer Cobbett" (p. 431).

We hope the Cambridge University Press will be able to publish a cheaper edition of this sterling historical work, which should find a place on every Freethinker's bookshelf.

W. MANN.

### Science and Religion.

We hear and read a great deal about the so-called conflict between religion and science. Draper's masterly work on the subject is rather an historical exposition than a speculative treatise, and the religion therein represented as antagonistic to science and its methods is the actual combination of morality and mysticism prevailing in the world, in varied forms, in all lands and in all ages, rough-hewn in the cult of the savage, and refined in the spiritual conceptions of his civilized brother. With such conceptions, replete with the images of an unfettered imagination, full of self-evident absurdities, the matter-of-fact lessons of science can never agree. But divested of the fanciful adjuncts inseparable from human creeds, the solid substratum of moral precept, the practically useful part of the religious idea, the reliable staff on which many may lean on the journey of life, is in perfect accord with science. The conclusions and theories of science outrage no virtuous sentiment, impeach no sound ethical principle, nor condemn anything good, just or merciful, and while they impugn and invalidate the delusive unrealities of theology, they are in strict accord with the spirit and the dictates of true morality and justice. When I am taught that honesty is the best policy; that I should not covet my neighbour's belongings; cohabit with his wife, or bear false witness against him; that I should give everyone his due, and lead a clean and industrious life, science in no way, direct or indirect frustrates these righteous injunctions. But when I am at the same time gravely informed that a winged mammal in human form, called the "Angel of the Lord," with angelic hands, materialized for the nonce, transmitted to a certain patriarchal personage tablets of stone of celestial manufacture and inscribed by a heavenly engraver with the said "commandments," science denounces so barefaced an attempt at imposture. And the same may be said of all the other grotesque imaginings and pious frauds which so-called religion foists upon the too credulous believer. Such, for instance, as the story of a man treading the troubled sea waves as if they were *terra firma*; of his converting water into wine; of his feeding a hungry crowd by multiplying a handful of fish into thousands of that marine edible; of his restoration of the dead to life; of his resuming his own life after his own demise; and last, though not least, of his incorporation of his own flesh and blood into the solid of wheaten bread and the liquid of modern wine, and of his actual entry through those mediums into the alimentary canal of the devout Christian, in the mystic ceremony of the "Communion," one of the most solemn rites of Christianity. The extent to which this particular survival of barbarism has maintained its hold in the most enlightened communities of this age may be realized by the following

fact, the subject of a letter to the *British Weekly*, on August 29, 1895, referring to the sacrament in question, then performed at Hawarden Church, in Wales, where the great statesman, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, often read the "lessons," and of which his son was then Rector. The communication to the above paper states that during the ceremony a hymn was sung, and its words varied so as to be in accordance with the deglutition or non-deglutition of the sacred pabulum provided for the worshippers at Hawarden, those partaking of the flesh and blood from the baker and the wine merchant singing "Jesu, mighty saviour, thou art *in us now*," and those who had not, singing "Thou art *with us now*." As the terms of the first formula clearly indicate "the real presence," I need hardly add that, by the natural process of digestion, portions of the "Mighty Saviour" absorbed by the faithful would be eventually ejected from the bodies of the pious consumers through the usual channels and in the usual solid and liquid forms. Imperial Cæsar dead and turned to clay is but a tame figure in comparison with this up-to-date God-eating. The poetical image falls far short of the religious transmutation. But in spite of orthodox authority and the influence of immemorial custom, all these manifestations of obscurantism in holy places, all this sanctified hocus pocus before the Christian altars, all is now regarded, by even that typical character, the Man-in-the-Street, as so much transparent humbug.

The supernatural, exploited by priests, and eagerly accepted by man, to satisfy the needs of his innate sentiment of wonder, is no real factor in the elevation of mankind, morally, physically or intellectually. Every genuine advance in civilization, every benefit conferred upon the human race, has come to us through potent and beneficial agencies other than the so-called supernatural. An impartial review of history, ancient and modern, proves this all along the line. No supernatural authority, fictitious and inoperative, has ever brought about any tangible good to man, while the doctrines of deism, from the rude fetish of the savage to the spectacular cult of Christianity, have done nothing but harm in the world. Following the *ignis fatuus* of mysticism, the human race has been long subjected to a deadening of the intellectual faculties which has banefully retarded the improvement of man all over the habitable globe, while science, a beneficent agent, has been patiently and laboriously plodding on, in the noble work of revealing nature's truths to man and dispelling the pernicious mists of supernaturalism. Buddhism, an ethical system based on Atheism, bore moral and social fruit such as Christianity has hitherto failed to produce, after nineteen centuries of spiritual domination, widespread persecution, cruel bloodshed, bitter disunion and persistent propaganda.

True religion, pure and simple, based on man's relations and duties to his fellow creatures, is a salutary guide of life, and so is science, and if the latter be wisely directed, it leads the way to the practice of the former, and immensely promotes the welfare of mankind. Undisguised by the dark mysteries of priestcraft, science offers to man a true and practical prospect of life calculated to make the best of earthly conditions, and in nowise jeopardising the baseless anticipations of an imaginary hereafter.

I humbly opine that if this plain and intelligible view of the matter be taken, the idea, so long prevalent and so much encouraged by speakers and writers, of the supposed incompatibility of science and religion, appears to be really groundless, and an erroneous misconception of the essence of true religion and the attitude of science towards it.

F. STERNS FADELLE.



### Books and Life.

IN a brief essay in *The New Criterion*, Mr. T. S. Eliot packs some good ideas, and it is a pleasure to encounter even the vestige of an idea in current thought in weeklies, monthlies, or quarterlies. Under the heading of "The Idea of a Literary Review," he indicates what he is pleased to call a tendency, and, for those who sweep the skies or look around their feet, or even look within themselves, he holds out a microscopic fragment of hope in the following passage: "Yet there is a tendency—discernible even in art—toward a higher and clearer conception of Reason, and a more severe and serene control of the emotions by Reason." To substantiate his thesis of tendencies he cites such moderns as Georges Sorel, the late T. E. Hulme, and Irving Babbit. Against these authors and their books he places a group of books which, in his opinion, represent that part of the present which is already dead. Will you, my readers, prepare to receive cavalry? Here they come: *Christina Alberta's Father*, by H. G. Wells; *St. Joan*, by Bernard Shaw; and, *What I Believe*, by Bertrand Russell. He states that all the authors hold curious amateur religions, and, for a plum out of the pie, his conclusion, that "they all exhibit intelligence at the mercy of emotion." How many goodly galleons of emotion have been shivered to bits on the rock of reality—even reality as far as finite intelligence can warn us?

The remaining essays and stories do not, however, altogether justify this grave and hopeful introduction. It would be difficult to include under the aegis of the editor the contribution by Gertrude Stein of a silly and stupid article spoiling good paper. It is entitled "The Fifteenth of November," and is a fungus growth in soil that could not produce anything useful. Probably the article is intended to be smart, and the secret of its meaning must join hands with the esoteric knowledge about flies in summertime, and it does not bear as much relation to literature as the films do to the drama. Here is a sample from bulk; it is small, but sprawling is not permissible in a weekly: "Simply and simply and simply, simply, simply there. Simply so that in that way, simply in that way simply so that simply so that simply so that in that way." We suggest that there is the making of a new religion in this, and that the writer should drop the pen and take up the triangle or read Schopenhauer for instruction on the debt due by the writer to the reader. Mr. D. H. Lawrence appears to enjoy writing his *Woman Who Rode Away*—a tale of the sacrifice of a white woman by Indians. The *Golden Bough* will stand a lot of picking. Aristotle is resurrected by Mr. H. G. Dalway Turnbull in a sound contribution, "Aristotle on Democracy and Socialism," and in free verse Mr. L. St. Senan is disturbed about that part of the United Kingdom known as Ireland:—

That the gold years  
Of Limerick life  
Might be but consecrated  
Lie,  
Heroic lives  
So often merely meant  
The brave stupidity of soldiers  
The proud stupidity of soldier's wives.

From which it will be gathered that at least two contributors are at one in the idea of covering paper, but we prefer the method of the poet apart from him being the darling of the printers.

Whilst travelling abroad we had as a companion a venerable Jew who was on his way to Bagdad. In conversation we ventured to suggest that the Greeks had generously given a contribution to civilization, but this was promptly discounted by the reply that the Hebrews were an older nation than the Greeks. There was a conflict in his mind between Judaism and Paganism, and antiquity was the first soldier to come out to defend the castle of his faith. This conflict is now cast in another form. In a paper before us, "The Review of Religions," mainly devoted to Islam, we gather that Christianity has now a powerful missionary on its door-

step. Islam is out for converts, and Islam has no respect for the Bible copyright of Christians. A letter in the above review asserts that: "Christian missionaries are better unpopular with the Foreign Office, at least so far as the major portion of the Empire is concerned." Most travellers abroad find them worse favourites, we might add, but it would seem in the nature of black justice that Islam and Buddhism are heaping coals of fire on the head of a big bully with results that are not yet discernible. A Moslem mosque is to be built at Dulwich, for, what we are told, the ever increasing colony of Mohammedans in Dulwich, Peckham, and Camberwell. It sounds like a story from the *Arabian Nights*, but the Christians began it. The pages of the *Review of Religions* are open to the advocates of all creeds, and it would be interesting to know the fate of an article on the lines of the series on Materialism appearing in the *Freethinker*. There is boundless optimism in the editorial note which will not be shared by careful thinkers and observers. One swallow does not make a summer, neither do carefully edited articles to the *Daily Express* make us share Mr. A. R. Dard's conclusions that "the open and most unreserved avowal of the greatest writers of England against Christianity has been fitly called a very striking sign of the times." His zeal clouds his vision. That the novelists were not England's greatest writers, and that the articles were not against Christianity are facts that are overlooked; otherwise his statement is correct.

The January issue of *Colour* contains many cheerful and delightful reproductions in colour of the modern artist's work. Mr. Frank Rutter, in an article on "Art Without Tears," deserves the thanks of ordinary people for pricking the nonsense bubble of art and bringing the subject in the circle of commonsense and comprehension. Financiers, theologians, transcendental philosophers, "arty" people, each and all have a jargon of their own. Was it not Fielding who, in *Tom Jones*, wrote of Parson Adams. "He concluded with a chapter out of *Theocritus*, which signifies no more than that sometimes it rains, and sometimes the sun shines." One good phrase from Mr. Rutter's contribution will prove our case, "The artists are merely those who make us share their experience, and, in sharing it, realize how much of it is our own. For we are all pilgrims of eternity." Shades of Dan Chaucer and his rollicking son, William Blake, be with you, Mr. Rutter, nudge your elbow, make you provoke your readers and provoke them to buy good pictures by modern artists, so that the tenuous chatter of Pater is forgotten and hungry mouths are fed. *Masterpieces of Modern Art* (price two shillings), the aristocratic brother of *Colour*, presents eight coloured plates. They are all very beautiful, and bring indoors colour and line and story. A useful device is to have picture frames with detachable backs and change as required these coloured reproductions, which are a credit to the printers and a delight to the eye. We sing our hallelujah to this serious effort for a brighter London and England, and cannot imagine any better place to begin it—in the home, but that is not exactly what the newspapers mean who can only make intelligent suggestions by accident.

Even Autolyceus, snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, must have become burdened with his mixed cargo. A winnowing of notes—which shall we keep? Why did I copy that out? A re-reading of some confirms our taste or marks an advance—or retreat, we hear some say. In 1913 we copied out the following three verses:—

#### FATE.

The sky is clouded, the rocks are bare!  
The spray of the tempest is white in air;  
The winds are out with the waves at play  
And I shall not tempt the sea to-day.

The trail is narrow, the wood is dim,  
The panther clings to the arching limb;  
And the lion's whelps are abroad at play  
And I shall not join in the chase to-day.



But the ship sailed safely over the sea,  
And the hunters came from the chase in glee,  
And the town that was builded upon a rock  
Was swallowed up in the earthquake shock.

—Bret Harte.

It was the Lisbon earthquake that influenced a part of Goethe's life and thought, and it is not for philosophy to overlook these convulsions of the flying globe that are conveniently forgotten by those who reason with their hearts.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## Correspondence.

### MATERIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of the 28th ult, "Medicus" raises the question of identity. That two things cannot be identical, otherwise they would not be two things is self evident. I have never said or implied otherwise. Those who assert so confidently that the point of view put forward makes such a statement necessary, only reveal an inability to grasp that point of view. This I have clearly demonstrated, and, strange to say, is not questioned. Through the medium of the spectroscope we are able to discover what the minerals are in other planets by comparison with the minerals of this earth. This shows a *similarity* in the results of two experiments. Whether my gramophone is in danger of becoming as famous as Paley's watch depends upon the type of mind that makes it so. It is amusing to note that identity of "inner and outer" is "unthinkable" in one instance, and in another is graciously "granted to me." I am thankful for small mercies, although I expect none. The physiological inspiration "is not so astounding when it is realized that energy always takes the line of least resistance in expenditure, determined by the contending energies. When sound waves impinge upon the ego, similar impressions are aroused, and residue of the new registered. The energy released taking the line of least resistance, the motor and nervous apparatus expends itself in speech. The sound waves together with the lines of reaction registered in the brain, are the contending energies: the dynamic energy of nature. The energy expended is the energy constituting our bodies—the gravitant energy of nature. The gravitant form of energy is matter—the dynamic form of matter is energy. I would point out to "Medicus" that because we are able to move about in space and time, it does not follow that externality and our impression of it are two different things. We are the medium through which externality reveals itself to itself; brought about by the particular form of matter that is able to register external vibrations. This results in the control of nature through man, by the return of nature upon itself; the control being the most economical expenditure of the energies of nature, which are wasting through the blind opposition of the gravitant and radiant energies of nature. This ceaseless opposition is manifested from nebula to society, a rough sketch of which I have already given.

The most universal phenomenon is change. The negation of the negation is the means to the undertaking of that change, which to many is either inexplicable, of the action of God, or "a jack-in-the-box." By their fruits ye shall know them. The negation of the negation is so simple, I almost refrained from attempting to reveal it; however, the necessity is evident. Once the principle is grasped, it is not difficult to see the working of this universal law. In industry there were the terrible struggles and sabotage accompanying the change from hand labour to that of machinery. Machines of that time have generated their negation, with repetition to the present time, and still going on; hence, from one aspect, severe unemployment.

Stephenson's "Rocket" becomes "The Flying Scotsman." Electricity *versus* steam. Motor-bus *versus* tram and railway. In the political world a progressing capitalist nation demands "Free Trade"; in its decline it demands "Protection," which, in turn, generates the negation of the form of society of which it is the ex-

pression. Materialism *versus* Church, expressed by Mr. Cohen. Morality as the voice of God *versus* morality as the expression of social man. In psychology, Mr. Barnard and his pet lamb, the priest; an example of two negatives. In the economic world—ruler and ruled. In animal life, the animal man negated by human man with him invention of the tool. With the solar systems, the annihilation of one and the birth of another. In sociology the social sense negating individual motivation. Supernaturalism in the churches, negated by morality to coincide with the changing mental outlook, resulting from the changing material conditions. Hence the cant on the wireless on Sundays. I could go on quoting *ad lib*, but then brains will be tired of repetition for the sake of questionable ones. All this, however, no matter where the example is taken from, is explicable in terms of the gravitant and radiant energies of nature. You, patient readers, and I are organizations of this, unbefriended by the infinite, but with a mighty destiny.

I have read with much pleasure the article by "Keridon" in the issue of the 14th inst., and with a sense of envy of ability of statement. I can endorse all he says with only one query, "Ultimate substance, etc." If by this he means that the energies constituting the universe in their ceaseless blind opposition and repetition of negations, result in a thinking being, I agree. Perhaps now, "Keridon" will be good enough to examine carefully, "Mind is the reaction of the environment upon a sensitive form of matter, competent to receive it."

A. S. E. PANTON.

### FREEDOM AND FALLACY.

SIR,—In sending me the copy of January 3, (which you made me pay 2d. extra for) I presume you wanted me to read Mr. J. T. Lloyd's article attacking me.

I only make two remarks:—

(1) He takes only the paragraph of my letter, totally omitting all I said about my desire for reunion. We think that reunion is not best served by interchange of pulpits, exactly as I think that it wouldn't serve truth for you to be perpetually preaching in St. Paul's or for Dean Inge to be always writing in your paper.

But (2) even if I am wrong, why am I to be denied the free right to think as I do? My "free thought" is that the reunion I long for, is not best served by interchange of pulpits. Why am I not allowed to think so?

Your "Freethought" is like the much boasted "broadmindedness" of others who made broadmindedness equal agreeing with themselves.

Freethought for you equals thinking as you think.

I would like you to publish this, but I don't expect you will. No doubt I am wicked in thinking I am as free to think my thoughts as you are to think yours.

BISHOP OF BLOEMFONTEIN.

[We were not responsible for the Bishop of Bloemfontein receiving the copy of the *Freethinker*, and regret it was inadequately stamped. The conclusion of the Bishop's letter was quite unnecessary, but it is illuminating and instructive, without its being meant to be so.—ED.]

### A MATTER OF ACCURACY.

SIR,—Apparently some time ago you published some notes of mine on herpes and herpetic dermatis. Under the heading, "Post-mortem," one V. Dent writes a letter which is enough to make one despair of English people, not but what the crusade the Freethinkers has to wage against what must almost be called their insane incapacity for thinking at all or believing anything but medieval superstition, prepares one for almost anything. English people have a remarkable aptitude for rubbing their hands at their own smart scepticism, if it is something that is as plain as daylight or as certain as that the world is nearly a perfect globe, and then going and grovelling before the Trinity or the immaculate conception or any other of the innumerable idols English people believe in from self-conceit and to pander to their own vanity.

In order to discredit my notes, V. Dent writes, "The railings at medical men are not wholly justifiable." I do not remember to have railed at them. I said, if I



remember rightly, but the notes were put down some time ago, that it was a pity my medical friends at Lestri Levante had not taken the matter up, as a practical and perhaps useful study that might have led to some new methods of treatment of this and perhaps other diseases. He then says that he has treated herpes and boils with electricity. He seems to think that herpes and boils are more or less the same thing. As a matter of fact, I am only liable to herpetic attacks, but except hard boils in Ceylon and the tropics, which are caused by the spores of a microscopic fungus, they have nothing whatever to do with herpes. I have not suffered from boils for forty or fifty years, nor are they usually set down as symptoms of herpes in any reliable medical notices about herpes, so far as I am aware. Such medical works as I have consulted agree altogether with my practical experiences. But, as a matter of fact, the malady is not generally treated at great length in such works. What I justly take extreme exception to is Mr. V. Dent's what I must call impertinent scepticism. He writes: "The small machine..... would possibly (*sic*) cure your correspondent's ailment, without introducing such rare and very hypothetical factors (! *sic*) as "eruptive tertiary regions." Now this disease is inherited, and I have had the privilege of enjoying it for a rather long life time, add to which I am a good and accurate observer, which Mr. V. Dent, to judge by the way he expresses himself, certainly is not. The three ordinary forms of herpes (omitting genital and preputial forms) are (1) vitreous points and swelling generally of the fingers and between them, with intense itching; (2) serious effusion generally of the scalp or facial, a form sometimes confounded with eczema, and (3) small ulcers scattered over the trunk or arms.

Now my personal observations, extending over a period of about thirty-six years (1890-1925) demonstrate that in my case the second form is produced *exclusively* in closed valleys (in one case at a spot not far from the coast and fairly exposed to the sea air), in tertiary regions nearly always the eruptive rocks of the miocene by reflection from these rocks in warm and more or less sunny weather. The fact is as absolutely certain as that I am alive just now who write this. The theory that the cause is due to rays like X-rays liberated by the sun's light beating against these rocks is open to argument.

W. W. STRICKLAND.

14 Rue de la Plage, Marseilles.

### Society News.

#### NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

We had hoped for a larger audience for Mr. Ratcliffe last Sunday, but what was lacking in quantity was made up for in quality, and the discussion reached a very high level. To-night, Mr. H. G. Everett, one of our Christian opponents, will speak on "Humanizing the Poor Law." This discussion, though not listed in the syllabus as a "debate," is bound to be of a highly controversial character, and we hope North Londoners will try to make a good muster, in spite of counter attractions in other parts of London.—K. B. K.

#### MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.

We concluded our lecture season on Sunday last, when Mr. and Mrs. Hornibrook delivered two very interesting lectures. In the afternoon Mrs. Hornibrook (Miss Ettie A. Rout) spoke on "The Physiological Bases of Puritanism." Her lectures are always helpful and interesting, and on this occasion she maintained her reputation by the very able manner in which she dealt with her subject. In the evening Mr. Hornibrook spoke on "The Health Value of Native Dances." From start to finish the lecture was of absorbing interest and was closely followed by an audience which made up in interest what it lacked in numbers. Mr. Monks occupied the chair on both occasions.—H. COLLINS.

### 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.

CENTURY THEATRE (Archer Street, Westbourne Grove): 7. Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Way to Study Religion."

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. Howell Smith, B.A., "Is Christianity a Supernatural Revelation?" A Social will be held at 101 Tottenham Court Road, on Thursday, March 25, at 7.30. Tickets, 1s. each, to be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs. Arthur Jones, 62 Bryanston Street, London, W.1.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. H. G. Everett, "Christianizing the Poor Law."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, "Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker, "Thomas Hardy: His Poetry."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2.): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "The Shakespearean Drama."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E.): 7, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "The Solar Origin of Christianity." Illustrated with Lantern Slides.

#### COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Fred Mann, "Pioneer Materialists." Questions and discussion. (Silver Collection). A Special Business Meeting will be held in No. 2 Room at 12 noon to discuss the New Constitution. All members are requested to attend.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, Mr. Ben Goldberg, "Realism and Poetry." Questions and discussion invited.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. E. F. Lowe, "The Tide of Life." Lantern Illustrations.

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## SALE AND EXCHANGE.

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## FOR SALE.

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