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Views and Opinions.

Women in the Pulpit.

On July 21 three hundred delegates to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference solemnly discussed whether women should be admitted to the ministry. The subject has been brought forward several times during the past thirty years, and now 157 out of 300 decide that women should be permitted to occupy the pulpit. It was a narrow majority, and one feels fairly certain that if the whole of the Methodist ministry had been asked to vote there would have been an overwhelming majority against. Up to the present the Wesleyan Church has followed John Wesley in his attitude towards women, and of Jesus Christ, who admitted no woman among his disciples, and of Paul, who bade women keep silence in the Churches, ordered them not to teach, but to obey their husbands; for, he explained, man was not made for woman; it was woman who was made for man. Of course the whole of the Christian Church has never denied women some duties and privileges about the Church. She could visit the sick, or make collections from house to house, or, in various ways, attend to the minister in charge, but the pulpit was closed to her. Preaching required a degree of spiritual illumination, an amount of god-inspired wisdom that no ordinary woman could hope to possess. It is something quite out of the common. If any man doubts this let him study the average sermon, and then see if there is not something almost miraculous about it in the way in which it keeps itself undefiled by ordinary, worldly common-sense. Ordinary life bears witness to this in the distinction between a sermon and a lecture. A lecture instructs. A sermon, well, a sermon sermonises. And when a man is talked at and wishes to express his contempt and disgust for what is being said, he bursts out, "For God's sake, don't preach!"

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Faith and Fact.

There are certain stipulations connected with the admission of women to the Wesleyan pulpit. It is to be restricted to unmarried ones. So soon as she is married her marriage is to be considered as equivalent to resignation. There is something quite sound—from a Christian point of view—in this. Jesus Christ was unmarried, Paul only advised marriage to

save worse from happening, the Christian Church as a whole has always treated celibacy as the ideal state, Jesus said that in the next world there would be neither marriage nor giving in marriage, and in one celebrated vision of heaven narrated in the New Testament the 44,000 seen round the throne were all virgins. One lady, in opposing this qualification, said that they must not be afraid of breaking with tradition, because the early Christians broke with it to such an extent they turned the world upside down. The illustration was not of the happiest kind, although it would pass in a Wesleyan assembly. So far as the early Christians flouting tradition—a thing which they did not do, save so far as they followed one traditional road rather than another—the only tradition they reversed in connection with woman was to take from her the freedom, the independence, and dignity which the laws of the Roman Empire gave her. They also restored the more primitive tradition of the essentially "unclean" nature of woman, which naturally deprived her of the privileges of taking part in religious functions that belonged to men. The lady appears to have taken too readily the modern Christian legend that woman owes her advancement to Christian influences.

* * *

A Reflection on God.

The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury, in opposing the recommendation that married women should not be permitted to occupy the pulpit, said that the qualification indicated the difficulties in the way, and that if women were "called," "a call to the ministry cannot be countermanded even by a thing so important as matrimony." Now I like that word "call." It is a good old-fashioned word where the clergy are concerned, and to those who know the history of religion it means a lot. It carries us right back to the sound Christian belief about the priest. He was one whom God Almighty "called." He did not take to his job as a man might take to the profession of a doctor, a lawyer, a clerk, or a mechanic. He was altogether a specialized individual, selected by God Almighty for that particular work, and therefore set apart from common and everyday folk. Mr. Rattenbury evidently believes in the reality of the call. It is so real to him, that he thinks it impious for anyone to prevent a woman occupying the pulpit if God has "called" her to it. After that I do not think the clergy should object to being called medicine men, or believers in magic. While they use the language of civilization they still move in the mental atmosphere of the savage. And when one looks at the clergy of to-day the belief constitutes a very strong indictment of the wisdom of the Almighty. Just imagine God going out of his way to select from among the millions of the population such men as fill the pulpits to-day! Mind, it is not the Freethinker who charges God with so glaring a lack of common sense and judgment, it is his professional representatives who assert it. God selected the Bishop of London. He selected Mr. Rattenbury. No

wonder these men appear to be conceited. Many members of Parliament are conceited enough on being voted in by ordinary men and women, and explain their being there on the ground of the folly of the electorate. But what are we to say of the wisdom of the deity who can select no better type of men than those who fill the pulpit. When someone writes a volume on the blunders of God we hope they will not overlook the clergy. For they are certainly the biggest blunder of the lot—unless one holds the theory that the selection of a more intelligent type of man might have endangered the whole religious structure.

Behind the Times. * * *

The Rev. Ryder Smith touched on dangerous ground in saying that if apostolic ordinances were to apply to Christendom throughout the ages, then it must be admitted that they had already gone very far wrong with regard to the position of women in their church. That was a very dangerous issue to raise, and, if followed out in all its ramifications, would take one through many curious pages of history. Look at the position! In the great leading Christian Churches of the world there is a clear line of demarcation between men and women. God, when he "calls" someone to do his special work of representing him on earth, always, it is held, selects men. Long after women have been admitted on an equal footing in the world of art, science, letters, and politics, the Church still keeps her in a position of inferiority. Merely to discuss the question is an insult to a woman. To reach the point of removing the ban is an admission of a long standing injustice. And it is important to note, first, that the basis of this injustice is rooted in religious belief, and, second, that in the face of improvements that had been made in the ancient world, particularly in the Roman Empire, the effect of the teaching and outlook of the Church was, as Principal Donaldson, a Christian clergyman and scholar of distinction, was forced to admit, to lower the character of woman and to restrict the range of her activities. Christianity spelt retrogression here as elsewhere.

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Christianity and Woman.

It could not well be otherwise. In the Christian story, woman comes on the scene as an after thought—in both theory and practice a side issue. Invariably in both the Old and the New Testament she occupies a subordinate position. She is the source of evil, the cause of the downfall of the race, as Tertullian explains, so vile by nature that even the Son of God had to die as a consequence of her sin. The sight of a woman to the Christian imagination was a temptation to sin, her touch—here there was a complete reversion to the most savage superstition concerning the nature of woman—enough to make a man "unclean." A period of purification had to be observed by a woman after giving birth to a child, and to emphasize the character of a female the period was twice as long if the child happened to be a girl. The civil and legal rights which a woman possessed under the Roman law were taken from her by the Church. The simple positions that in the very early Church were permitted her she gradually lost. In law, she was the property of her husband, unable to own property in her own right. The Church held with Paul that she was made for man, man was not made for her. "Reformers" like John Knox declared that authority was by the command of God taken from all women whether married or unmarried. Luther's view of woman was that she should breed children, attend to the house, and obey

her husband in all things. And the influence of Protestantism on woman is summed up by Karl Pearson in the opinion that it offered her "domestication or prostitution, subjection or social expulsion." As late as 1916 a memorial signed by a large number of clergy of the diocese of London, and published in the *Times*, declared:—

We believe that to grant permission to women to preach in our churches is contrary to the teaching of Holy Scriptures and to the mind and the general practice of the whole Catholic Church. Still more, we believe that such permission will be an encouragement to those women who publicly claim their right to be appointed to the priesthood and episcopate of the Church, which claim is heretical.

We have neither time nor space to deal with the reaction of these religious views upon the social and legal status of women. That it was a powerful and an evil one is a statement that can be easily established. The more Christian the age the lower the position of woman. And it was not until the Free-thinking ferment of the later eighteenth century began to make its influence felt that the bonds which Christianity had forged were relaxed. During the nineteenth century—thanks almost entirely to the work of Freethinkers—the position of women rapidly improved. After many years' struggle we see the Methodist Church admitting, by a narrow majority, that she may occupy the pulpit. The fact that the question of whether women should be permitted to rank on an equality with man is in itself a condemnation of the body that debates it. It bears witness to a state of mind in relation to the subject that ought never to exist. CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Holiness of God."

FOR many years Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, has been contributing articles to the *Guardian* on the subject of "Difficulties of Life and Belief." Canon Green is a champion of orthodox theology and of necessity a firm foe to Modernism. His loyalty to the Church of England is well known, like that of the *Guardian*, whose sub-title is *The Church Newspaper*. His subject in the issue for July 16 is "The Holiness of God." A correspondent had written to him, saying: "The preacher on Trinity Sunday kept on speaking of 'the holiness of God.' But he never attempted to say what he meant by this. What does the phrase mean?" The Canon characterizes the question as an extremely difficult one. He says:—

We do not call a man righteous because he does what we believe to be the will of God. Suppose we had reason to believe that the character of the Deity were bad, like that of Zeus in *Prometheus Vinculus*, we should judge a man good because he resisted the divine will, as we judge Prometheus to be a nobler character than Zeus. When we say that God is holy, we mean that God, as he is revealed to us in and by Jesus Christ, and as he is known to us in direct religious experience, conforms to our pattern of perfect holiness.

That is certainly a novel way of stating the argument for the goodness of God. To say that God is holy or good because he conforms to our pattern of perfect holiness is equivalent to affirming that he is a creature made in the image and after the likeness of man. The Canon refers to *Prometheus Bound*, by Æschylus, in which Zeus is portrayed as guilty of injustice and cruelty. In the *Chorus* we read:—

I look, Prometheus; and a tearful cloud
My woeful sight bedims,
To see thy goodliest form with insult chained,
In adamantine bonds,

To this bare crag, where pinching airs shall blast thee.
New gods now hold the helm of Heaven; new laws
Mark Jove's unrighteous rule; the giant trace
Of Titan times hath vanished.

Then Prometheus himself exclaims :—

By my Titan soul, I swear it!
Though with harsh chains now he mocks me,
Even now the hour is ripening,
When this haughty lord of Heaven
Shall embrace my knees, beseeching
Me to unveil the new-forged counsels
That shall hurl him from his throne.
But no honey-tongued persuasion,
No smooth words of artful charming,
No stout threats shall loose my tongue,
Till he loose these bonds of insult,
And himself make just atonement
For injustice done to me.

Of course, in the estimation of Canon Green Zeus and Prometheus were purely imaginary beings, created by Greek poetry and art; but on what ground does he regard the Christian God as at once real and holy? What evidence convinces him that the Heavenly Father exists at all? And if he does exist, what traces can he find of his justice and holiness? Again and again do we read in the Bible, "The Lord reigneth"; and we immediately turn our gaze on history, and ask, where has he ever reigned in righteousness and truth? The Canon evades that point altogether, completely ignoring the difficulties of honest belief in the existence of a just and holy Deity who actually reigns on earth. We stoutly hold that the God of Christendom is not one whit more real than was the Supreme Being believed in and worshipped in ancient Greece.

Instead of boldly facing such a problem the Canon branches off to discuss a subject on which all intelligent and well-meaning people are in full agreement, namely, the way to make social life a happy success. All know perfectly well that the practice in society of the virtues called mercy, gentleness, unselfishness, love, and truth, engenders happiness and joy everywhere. The Canon says: "I can, in a bad mood, desire to cause pain to someone else. I cannot in any mood formulate the picture of a world in which the highest good, and the chief duty, of everyone would be to cause pain to others." Surely the reverend gentleman had no need to say that about himself; and we are exceedingly sorry to read the following passage :—

I can, in a good mood, prefer another's happiness to my own; and I can imagine a world in which everyone would seek not his own happiness but that of others, and in so doing would find his own fullness of life. And such a world I recognize as Heaven.

Evidently Canon Green entertains a very poor opinion of the evolutionary capacity of human nature, even with a holy God of infinite power as its guide and inspirer. He believes that God is at once king and father of mankind; and yet he despairs of ever seeing his subjects and offspring redeemed from their vices in this world.

At this point occurs one of the most curious and perplexing passages ever written by a clergyman. We give it in full :—

There is nothing inherently impossible in what one writer has called "the spectre that drives men to madness and despair, illimitable, omnipotent Malice." That is to say, there is nothing in itself impossible in the idea of a god who is utterly bad and cruel, and who creates a world for the purpose of inflicting pain on his creatures. But that is not God as we have him revealed to us in Holy Scripture, nor as we know him in Christ Jesus, nor as we find him in moments of direct apprehension. But if God were like that we should have no hesitation in saying that he was not holy. Did not

Mill say that, if indeed God sentenced little children to endless torments for no other reason than that they had died unbaptized, then he would rather be in hell with the children than in heaven with such a God? When we say that God is holy, we mean what the Psalmist meant when he said: "Thou shalt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand is pleasure for evermore."

We maintain that the existence of an infinitely bad God is quite as inconceivable as that of an infinitely good one. It is fully as impossible to think of the throne of the universe as occupied by illimitable, omnipotent malice as it is to think of it as occupied by illimitable omnipotent love. And yet we read in the Old Testament that Jehovah not only permitted but positively ordered the heartless slaughter of countless myriads of people, including women and children; and even in the New Testament we find that unbelievers in Christ shall be everlastingly damned. The truth is that the very idea of an infinite and omnipotent Being, good or bad, is wholly inconceivable. As Mill says in his essay on Theism, "the notion of a providential government by an omnipotent Being must be entirely dismissed." (*Three Essays on Religion*, p. 243). It must be dismissed because it gets absolutely no support from historical facts. At no single point in the history of the world is there any proof whatever of superhuman interference in human affairs. Our life is entirely in our own hands, to make or to mar. On pages 256-7 of the work just mentioned, Mill says :—

A battle is constantly going on, in which the humblest human creature is not incapable of taking some part, between the powers of good and those of evil, and in which even the smallest help to the right side has its value in promoting the very slow and often almost insensible progress by which good is gradually gaining ground from evil, yet gaining it so visibly at considerable intervals as to promise the very distant but not uncertain final victory of Good. To do something during life, on even the humblest scale, if nothing more is within reach, towards bringing this consummation ever so little nearer, is the most animating and invigorating thought which can inspire a human creature.

That is a noble thought nobly expressed by a great man. Unlike Mill, however, we repudiate Supernaturalism in every shape and form, deeply convinced that Naturalism amply meets all our requirements. We are children of the earth, and our mother, if we treat her properly, will supply all our needs. Life is her gift, and the best use we can make of it is in the love and service of one another.

If that thou hast the gift of strength, then know
Thy path is to uplift the trodden low;
Else in a giant's grasp until the end
A hopeless wrestler shall thy soul contend.

J. T. LLOYD.

I believe that the peoples will one day be united; and I long for that day with a burning love for mankind such as that which was kindled in the days of Epictetus and of Seneca, and which, after being smothered in centuries of European barbarism, has been born again in the most noble minds of modern times. In vain will it be objected that all this is an illusion and a dream of hope. It is hope that creates life: and the future will see to it that the dreams of the philosophers come true.
—Anatole France.

That a personal god has created the world, is as we have abundant evidence for, easily believable but not thinkable.—Schopenhauer.

Gloom and Godliness.

It makes a goblin of the sun.

—Dante Rossetti.

They (the English) take their pleasures sadly.—
Froissart.

Chanting hymns to the cold, fruitless moon.

—Shakespeare.

Creeds are expiring of explanation.—Froude.

THERE are a very large number of religions in the world, but, so far as this country is concerned, variations of the Christian Religion are the only ones that matter. It is true that small buildings and tin-tabernacles devoted to spiritism are scattered over the country; it is also true that Mormons have a few meeting-places, and that there is a Moslem mosque in Surrey; but these do not seriously affect the national life. The organized priests of this country, 50,000 in number, are Christian, and, although they differ in dress and ceremonial, they are as one when their common interests are attacked. Disguise it as you will, these priests, Anglican, Roman, Nonconformist, form a caste apart from their fellow-citizens, whom they exploit for their own ends.

This priestly caste is actually an anachronism in a democratic country. But these priests are largely supported by past endowments, and, as Britons are not inquisitive folk, they are inclined to accept things as they are. The real trouble is that these priests, in order to safeguard their own position, do their utmost to dominate the minds of their fellow-citizens. That they have done this so successfully in the past is more a tribute to the propagandist ability of the priests themselves than a tribute to the intelligence of Britons.

For these priests do real and unmistakable harm. They spread an appalling air of gloom over everything they touch. Indeed, the Christian Religion is itself a dreary creed that thrives on gloom. According to the legends, Christ wept but he never laughed; and the priests have done their utmost to prevent the spread of honest laughter for centuries. Their creed is one vast denunciation against happiness, and the underlying idea is to depress everybody, men, women, and even little children, as much as possible.

The whole scheme of the Christian Religion is one of ordered dullness, and it has, wherever conditions have been favourable, turned existence into a nightmare of boredom. And priests are never tired of minding other people's business. In the United States they have succeeded in dictating what folk shall drink; in Italy they tell women what clothes they shall wear. In England, if they dared, they would fine men and women for not attending a place of worship. Whenever they get a chance they seize it. Many a poor shopkeeper has been fined for Sunday opening merely to gratify this priestly love of domination.

Consider for a moment the methods of priestly propaganda. They do everything in their power to make life a nightmare. Everybody is a "miserable sinner." They alone have the power of absolution. And "sins" vary so much, not only from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter, but they include disobedience of priestly commands. There is something fatiguing about pulpit oratory, and also something contradictory. These men profess to love their enemies, they tell others to love their enemies, yet they invariably devote half of their pulpit utterances to denunciation of their fellows. Even when they flatter their audiences by describing them as sons and daughters of God they discount their compliments by asking for the worshippers' pence at the conclusion of the address. The gloom with which the Christian priest envelops everything, the contempt with which

he speaks of life itself, show clearly enough that the Christian Religion is out of touch with humanity, and that its whole psychology is wrong. For mankind is not entirely composed of neurotic ascetics, and people generally know better than that existence is unbearable.

This is no light matter. Most of the Anglican priests, and all of the Roman priests, get these ghastly ideas from the early Fathers of the Christian Churches. These men were not only fanatics, but freaks, and their only modern prototypes are to be found among the howling Dervishes and the fanatics of the East, who do not hesitate to mutilate themselves with knives in the cause of religion. The teaching of the Catholics and Anglo-Catholics are simply saturated with this Eastern nastiness. There is no other name for it. No other series of books in the literature of the world contain such inverted and perverted ideas relating to human life. It is asceticism run mad, using reason to denounce reason, using life to denounce life. The main object of most of it appears to be to induce people to withdraw from ordinary life to the seclusion of monasteries and nunneries.

This nastiness is pathological; so is a lot of Catholic and Anglo-Catholic ritual and literature. The central figure in Christian theology is a dying man on a cross, and this is exploited to the utmost by Catholics. Salvationists and Methodists may rave about "the blood of the Lamb," Catholics perpetuate it in wax and chalk in their churches and homes, and their priests wear silver figures suspended on their clothing. Indeed, this symbol of death confronts one everywhere in Catholic countries.

This gloating on death, this insistence on sorrow; this denunciation of pleasure, is all part of the ascetic game. There is nothing new in it at all, it is only fresh to each succeeding generation. And the priests see to it that children are taught all these horrible things. Church manuals for young communicants are worth studying, and show quite clearly that, whatever priests may say in the pulpit, whatever liberal ideas they may profess in public, the old methods are carried on in private, and away from the public eye.

Some priests are more narrow-minded than others, but they are all priests. In the last analysis, as Milton acutely pointed out, "Presbyter is but priest writ large." To all of them the ordinary man is a "sinner" and the world but a caravanserai, and a dirty one at that. But if the Christian priest can see nothing but gloom in humanity and the world, the reason is simply that the Christian Religion itself is a dismal, Oriental form of asceticism. Indeed, much of the hypocrisy of Christian believers is only due to the fact that they cannot actually follow such teaching, and are compelled to give lip-service to it if they wish to remain within the fold of the Churches. If priests had their way they would turn the world into a place beside which a cemetery would be an abode of revelry, and the undertakers the merriest of merry Andrews.

Priests seldom have a sense of humour, because they lack a sense of proportion. They are persuaded that they are far superior to all other people, that they are a sacred caste apart, and they are supported in the vanity by the offerings of the faithful. Yet they preach misery and are apostles of melancholia, could people but see the truth. Life is not what priests declare it to be; it has never been anything remotely associated with their weird ideas. Some day people will be sufficiently educated to see this for themselves, and the priestly jeremiads will defeat their own purpose, and hasten the end of a gigantic superstition. An old Mexican priest made a trip to Europe

and saw most of the beauty spots. On his return he smiled indulgently, and said: "All my life I have denounced life without knowing what it is." It is a lesson that other priests might take to heart.

MIMNERMUS.

Agnosticism and Authority.

VERY frequently we are told by religious people that if we are content to accept a scientific theory or a legal statement on the authority of an eminent scientist or a legal expert, it can only be due to the hardness of our hearts that we refuse to accept theological assertions on the authority of distinguished theologians. This may be called the "argument from authority." We let our laundry do our washing for us, our scientists our science, and our lawyers our law—why not our theologians our theology? Even Dean Inge asserts this argument in a modified form when he makes "the evidence of the saints" into "the bedrock of religious faith."

Now, there is a certain plausibility about this argument. It has that *prima facie* reasonableness which is so disarming to the less thoughtful type of human being. Will it bear the light of examination any better than the thousand and one other arguments put forward by the defenders of the faith? In the first place, there is no doubt that every human being is bound to rely on authority to some extent: no man can—or if he could, would—find out everything he required for himself. Consequently, unless we are to renounce everything outside our own personal sphere, we must, to some degree, rely on "authority," even if only as a labour-saving device. But that is not an end of it. Is any man justified in blindly accepting the dictates of an "authority" on any subject without first satisfying himself either as to the *bona fides* of the authority in question, his qualifications to pronounce on that particular subject and the general reasonableness and probability of his statements? Of course, if the "argument from authority" simply resolves itself into a somewhat circumlocutory exhortation to abandon reason and enter the kingdom of heaven (otherwise, some particular sect) "as a little child," then, as Huxley would have put it, "we cannot oblige our exhorters."

So, we have first to enquire whether the authorities at whose bidding we are to embrace Christianity satisfy our reasonable expectations as to what a trustworthy authority ought to be, and whether their pronouncements are of such a character that renders them acceptable to people of ordinary intelligence who have not the time (or perhaps the inclination) to browse in the decidedly green pastures of transcendental theology. By way of preamble, we may remark what are the qualifications usually expected of an authority in other and less exalted spheres of life. We will consider the case of a chemical expert—why do we accept his views, say, as to the formula for benzene, if we have no great knowledge of the matter and no intention of satisfying ourselves to the fullest possible extent as to the validity of his formula? Simply because, in the first place, we know that he has had extensive personal acquaintance with what we know to be real facts concerning the structure of benzene, and, in the second place, what he says seems to us to be generally reasonable, and in accord with our own more or less limited knowledge of the properties and reactions of benzene. Now, suppose that we are convinced that nobody could be in a position to know the facts which would lead up to a formula for benzene, then our authority would *ipso facto* collapse, as far as we are concerned—he would know no more of it than we do. So the

Christian "authority's" pronouncements are valid only in so far as we are convinced that they rest on relevant facts concerning the theological propositions which he enunciates. Now, if we accept the Agnostic postulate—that relevant facts *supporting* the validity of theological ideas are not available—obviously our "authority" is of no value. It may, I suppose, be replied that as the subject of discussion is essentially the correctness of the Agnostic principle, any assumption of it is a *petitio principii*. On the other hand, it is possible to reply that the "argument from authority" clearly involves the unproven negation of Agnosticism, and is, therefore, *also* a question-begging expedient. Again, if we enquire as to the general reasonableness of Christian authoritativeness, what is the result? If an astronomer—however eminent—were to arise and solemnly assure members of the Royal Astronomical Society that the moon was composed of green cheese, we should not believe him—we should rather conclude that he was pulling the leg of that august body or that he was, in more senses than one, a lunatic. So with Christianity. Does what the Christian "authority" tells us to believe constitute a reasonable and probable belief? On the face of it, it does not. The primal doctrine of Christianity—on which almost all Christians are agreed, if on nothing else—is that the effective force behind the universe, impelling and sustaining it, stands to mankind as a wise and benevolent father does to his children. Is that a reasonable belief for a world where war, pestilence, and famine have only so recently desolated the flower of European manhood—where millions of maimed cripples, fatherless children and husbandless wives bear witness to the ineffable benevolence of the cosmos?

Yet again, another requirement we are bound to make of an authority would be that he should profess definitely to base his conclusions on rational deduction from the facts of experience. This holds true for scientists, historians, lawyers, and so on. Does it hold for theologians—or even "the saints" that Dean Inge reveres? Has any eminent Christian even *professed* to hold his religious beliefs through reason *and reason alone*? Again, we only trust secular authorities when we feel them to be impartial—when we are assured that they have no marked emotional tendency towards a particular conclusion. How many theologians even remotely fulfil this condition? Even the "mystics"?

But there are still other things to consider. There are multitudes of distinguished scholars and thinkers who reject Christianity, and their authority is surely worth as much as that of the theologians? Then, also, if we follow Dean Inge in restricting the authority for Christianity to the "mystics," surely every one of the higher religions has its mystics. The very utmost we can reasonably be expected to accept on the basis of mystical testimony would be an incongruous hotch-potch of Spiritism, Theosophy, Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism and Taoism. And even that would be slender and tenuous—a sort of spineless, unenlightened and useless Theism.

All the "mystics" or any others can offer us is an intense belief in certain transcendental propositions. The famous "evangelist," Gipsy Smith, says that "no scientist is as sure of the working of the law, no physician is as sure of a specific, no mathematician is as sure of an axiom as I am that Jesus Christ came into my gipsy tent and converted my rough, swearing, drinking, pilfering gipsy father into a clean, tender, honourable, strong, beautiful Christian man." This is a typical example of

¹ Daily Express Symposium on My Religion, p. 134.

authoritative Christianity. "I know—you just believe what I say." Unfortunately, the mere intensity with which a man holds his beliefs is not a measure of their truth or reasonableness—indeed, sometimes the reverse. A scientist, like Darwin or Pasteur, hits the truth just in proportion as he is content to be "sure" of nothing. A religionist, like General Booth or Gipsy Smith, is no "authority" precisely because he is content to be "sure" of something, without conducting a rational investigation into the grounds of his "sureness." If I said, "No scientist can be more convinced of any fact than I am sure that Christianity is a pure delusion," should I be proving anything except my own incapacity to think clearly and logically on religious subjects?

Let us make no mistake—the "argument from authority" is simply a new way of asking people to cling to the old beliefs on a basis of faith and not of evidence. One can only express astonishment at the ingenious innocence which commends such an argument to men who have shouldered the intellectual responsibilities of Rationalism.

J. STEWART COOK.

The Churchyard.

THE rooks perched high up on slender branches in the leafy tops of the great elms opposite the church, sway gently backwards and forwards in the breeze, as they caw softly at intervals to their young in the nests. The blustering month of March, with its lashing rain, its piercing cold winds, and its quarrelsome courting days, has given place to warm breezes, hot sunshine, and marital contentment. If the world of humanity below is restless, unsettled, and discontented, rookland in this quiet evening hour is at peace.

A hundred years ago the churchyard which is now a green oasis in a maze of streets, was encompassed by meadowlands and cornfields that stretched far away to the foot of the distant blue hills. For many years the ancient burial-ground has fallen into disuse. The last recorded interment took place in mid-Victorian days when Puseyism, evolution, extended franchise reform, and crinolines had already gained some notoriety; and, incidentally, the gentle voice of Spurgeon proclaiming the gospel of "glad tidings" was heard in the land. Modern Utilitarianism—there are certain people who might deem it sacrilege—has been very busy at work of late years in "God's Acre." With the exception of a dozen massive weatherbeaten tombs enclosed by rusty iron railings, the churchyard is just a smooth green lawn, intersected by yellow gravel paths where children, under the gardener's watchful eye, play quiet games as befits the place. The parliament of greybeards sitting daily (weather permitting) in a cosy nook under the trees, is speculating aloud upon the ultimate destination of about four hundred tombstones standing, like soldiers on parade, two deep in close military formation, against the churchyard walls. Acrimonious debates on this vexing problem are usually terminated by a veteran "die-hard," as he styles himself, repeating *ad lib.* until order is restored the famous Asquithian motto, "Wait and see."

A careful survey of every unit in the white army of tombstones provides a mine of information concerning the old-time religion of our forefathers. Here is a memorial close at hand that briefly narrates the fate of Joseph *atal* nine and a half years, who was unfortunately drowned in the month of April when George the Fourth was king. Whatever Joseph may

have been as regards character and disposition before he became a partaker of glory, it is quite apparent from the epitaph inscribed beneath his name that immediate contact with Heaven's "unco' guid" has made him an unnatural child and a moralizing little prig. For this is how he addresses us poor unfortunate mortals in grandiloquent language from the lofty battlements of Heaven:—

Farewell, vain world, I bid adieu
To all your trifling toys,
Death sudden took my life away,
But gave me heavenly joys.

In the days when little Joseph so abruptly finished his earthly career, the appalling heresies and unbeliefs of Dean Inge and other modern divines had not yet found a spiritual home in the Established Church. Consequently our religiously inclined ancestors entertained no doubts whatsoever in their minds about heaven being a real place of substantial rewards and emoluments. Further evidence of this abiding faith of our grandfathers—a faith which the churches of to-day are so anxious to ignore and disown—is portrayed here on stone, in roughly carved scenes and figures, representing many curious and interesting phases of Christian mythology. One scene depicts the resurrection morning. Gabriel, the famous trumpet blower, has just arrived from the celestial regions with two angels bearing gifts, consisting of a five-pointed crown, a harp, and palm branches. He stands in front of an open coffin holding up a heavenly garment for the newly-awakened occupant. Another tombstone decoration features the Lamb and Flag walking out attended by a flying escort of three jolly-looking cherubs piloted by the ubiquitous Gabriel who is blowing a fanfare on his resurrection trumpet.

The sign of the Jolly Roger so often finds a place of honour over the almost undecipherable inscription that were it not for the fact that pirates in days of yore were denied Christian burial, an observer on a first inspection of these quaint memorials, might easily be led to imagine that Captain Kidd and his ocean rovers were laid here to rest. Other symbols wrought in stone such as hour glasses, flaming lamps, heavenly doves, trumpets, cherubins, etc., bear unmistakable witness to a fervent belief in a material resurrection of the body, and mansions in the skies.

As we sit here at eventide reflecting upon the decay of ancient creeds and formulæ, the church clock suddenly reminds us of the passage of time, bringing with it the oncoming of night. There now begins a leisurely movement by the churchyard frequenters towards the entrance gates. And so we take leave of the silent dead, bereft of all their human frailties, their joys and sorrows, hopes, ambitions, fears, and strange beliefs, feeling confident in our mind, in spite of prophet, priest, and soothsayer, that after "life's fitful fever," they sleep well. J. G. PAVN.

If ever I were to do something useful for my country, but harmful to Europe and mankind, I should look upon it as a crime.—*Montesquieu.*

Place no confidence in a man who is scrupulous about ritual in religion, for he is pretty sure to be either a hypocrite or a fool.—*Prof. Churton Collins.*

This is our chief bane, that we live not according to the light of reason, but after the fashion of others—*Seneca.*

Acid Drops.

America is often quoted as the land of tall buildings and tall statements. It has also high mountains, vast plains, great lakes, mighty rivers, sublime cataracts. In a short history it has had its share of great men. It was invaded by the Pilgrim Fathers, who multiplied exceedingly and maintained their faith even unto this day and made Monkeyville possible. When the Fathers of the Roman Church arrived may not be so exactly known, they have yet had, and seem still to be having, a victorious march. In a large newspaper from this great country there is a great two-page picture of the "princes of the Church" in solemn and august procession amid half a million adorers—or it may be reverent admirers, hypnotized by pomp and power—but to the man of mere vulgar common sense only the survival of the Stone Age, or recalling the old lines:—

Give it but size, and the biggest of lies,
Will float round the world for ever.

Like the pomp of war and other savage survivals. Surely such is a menace to real progress, and, like these, the criterion of our civilization. The faces of the marching dignitaries (not to speak of the barbaric habiliments and heraldry) are a study. The few rational observers—or it may be the many—in this is hope—may see the man behind the mask, but most will be imposed upon. And, anyhow, no matter what the man thinks, the priest must keep up the tradition of his trade, its pernicious superstitious mysteries and menaces so well calculated to make and keep the brains of mortals weak and fearful and confused. Otherwise it is but a circus spectacle, a vulgar show, the inanity of "divinity." Still there is the possibility, if Freethought is not alert, of God's own country becoming the Pope's—oh, shade of Thomas Paine!

As a straw to show the way the wind is blowing, a sample from a book review in the *Saturday Review* indicates the difficulties of the pioneer in the past. The things that he fought for are now accepted and understood. In the notice of a book written by Mr. D. H. Lawrence we came across the following remark: "We do not see that anything is gained by violence, crudity of language, and what old-fashioned people would call blasphemy, especially as Mr. Lawrence has a style which can do without such cheap calls to attention." One of the handiest bricks to hurl at an opponent is this specimen "blasphemy"; it has been in continuous use; it is an explosive word, and so long as people do not stop to enquire what it means, it will go down with the crowd. If the reviewer had in mind the Bishop of London when he wrote "old-fashioned people" we agree; the only age in which the reverend gentleman would appear to be up to date would be that time when two pieces of stick were rubbed together to produce fire.

Our contemporary mentioned above, by a passage from the late A. Clutton-Brock's *Essays on Religion*, throws in relief the scepticism of a gifted writer. He wrote much and on many subjects, and the veil is slightly lifted on a mind in a critical mood. He is distressed by the words "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," and states: "They are printed words to me, repeated by men who know no more than I do. I do not see this God anywhere, and though I might wish to believe in Him so that I might have rest in illusion, I cannot." This is the dry light in which the incantations of soothsayers of religion have no meaning; it is where the thinker bids the black magician to pack up their traps and be gone.

How many "true faiths" there are in the world is a difficult task to decide. If there was only one it would have its work cut out in reconciling differences that make it impossible for mankind to wear any particular "straight jacket." On a single page of the *Daily News* we read that a soldier of Mars has left £40,285; a soldier of Christ has left £27,082; a retired

perambulator manufacturer has left £34,870. Miss Maria Eliza Ebbs has left a remainder of a fortune to various cousins on condition that they do not marry, subjects of any ex-enemy country. Mr. Richard Strauss, the famous composer, sends a message to Mr. George Bernard Shaw on his seventieth birthday, "Greetings to the dauntless champion of humanity." It would be easier to harness a cow to a motor-bus than find the particular true faith to fit the above samples from bulk.

In Mexico City, according to Reuter, two Roman Catholic Bishops have been arrested for calling on their followers to bring economic pressure to bear upon the Government with the object of obtaining an amendment of the new Church Laws. If the newspapers are not too busy with their war on loud speakers, Goodwood, and Test Matches, the public will be invited to cross their eyes and look at Russia and Mexico. Religious instruction has been prohibited in the latter place, presumably to strike a balance against Tennessee.

A Scottish reader of a pious contemporary which recently had an article on "The New National Peril," writes: "Truly the enemy is coming in like a flood, and every believer in Christ should earnestly and continually pray that the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him and put him to flight." This enemy of Christ, it appears, is not this time our old friends, blatant Atheism or horrid Materialism, but another Christian sect which is "peacefully penetrating" North Britain. "Central Scotland is being honeycombed with Irish Catholics, who build public schools at the ratepayer's expense, where only Catholic teachers are allowed, who teach the Catholic doctrines." We are glad our Protestant friend has drawn attention to this unscrupulous Catholic conduct. It clearly shows how inferior Catholics' scruples are to those of Protestants. The conscience of Protestants wouldn't give them a moment's peace if they were to take public money collected from Freethinkers, Jews, and the large number of citizens utterly indifferent to religion, and use it to build schools in which during school hours Protestant religious doctrines alone were taught. But apropos of our friend's prayer that the Lord shall put his Catholic enemies to flight. What a lot of human time and energy might be saved if only the Lord would quite unmistakably indicate which sect has the one true interpretation of his world! Possibly though, the sense of humour of his August Majesty is tickled by this Christian squabbling. It may provide a little diversion relieving the tedium of a celestial existence occupied in creating worlds and manipulating the pretty process of Evolution.

There's nothing like looking on the bright side of things. The Rev. A. J. G. Seaton thinks the report on Sunday-schools he presented to the Wesleyan Conference is not altogether discouraging; indeed, the past year has been one of the best experienced for some time. They had lost 9,887 scholars, and there had been a greater decline in the average attendance than the decrease warranted. Nevertheless, the reverend gentleman looks for the silver lining among the dark clouds and finds it in the fact that there was an increase of three hundred teachers. Though of what use are these extra teachers when scholars are getting scarcer and scarcer the Lord alone knows. If the slump in attendance continues each scholar will be able to enjoy a whole teacher all to himself. Just as a parting word of cheer Mr. Seaton told the Conference always to remember that there were six million children outside the Sunday-school. Well, we should say that fact, looked at from one aspect, is "not altogether discouraging." It means that the six million have been given what we should call a good start in life. And no well-wisher of youth could be otherwise than encouraged at knowing that.

The *Morning Post*, in a leaderette, has been discussing literary forgeries, and it lets fall an enlightening re-

mark that could not have been given in a paper like the *Daily Herald* :—

Human nature does not change: in one age the toe-nail of a saint, in another the proof-sheet of a poet is cherished in the reliquaries of the idolatrous. And just as in mediæval times there was an adequate supply of pieces of the true Cross to satisfy the most pious, so in this Twentieth Century authentic manuscripts load the tables of the sales-rooms of Boston and New York.

Credulity is the one thing needed, and acceptance without proof easily follows. In the perpetuation of this there will never be a lack of mental backwoodsmen called priests until the cry for proof from the people is stronger than the cry for faith from the pulpit.

The Book of Jonah, declared the Bishop of Birmingham recently, is an allegory, a literary masterpiece, bold in imagination, humorous in fancy, and contain a wealth of spiritual understanding. Oh, quite! But, really, Dr. Barnes ought not to indulge in this kind of "leg-pulling." He should leave it to one like Father Ronald Knox. Perhaps, however, there is some excuse for the very reverend gentleman; he probably feels the need of a little relaxation after his recent strenuous battle with Anglo-Catholic superstition in his diocese.

There is no accounting for taste, as the old lady said when she kissed the cow. The horrible mess that Europe was landed in through the ex-Kaiser thinking that he was the Lord's appointed has not dismayed him. We learn that he is to contribute a series of articles entitled "Moses and Jesus: Are Judaism and Christianity Reconcilable?" in a New York magazine. We presume this is the last infirmity of the military mind.

According to that which passes for history there were many tricks done with water; the tricks even assumed the proportions of miracles. About eight lines in a newspaper of to-day announces the fact that there has been a new water supply inaugurated in Jerusalem. The water is brought from a spring seven miles from the city, and there is less fuss about this triumph of man over Nature than there has been over the many cock-and-bull stories from Palestine by black magicians.

One evangelist in America has found out a way to fill his Church. A leading Fundamentalist of Fort Worth, the Rev. F. Norris, shot, and killed, a man, and then proceeded to Church and preached an "eloquent" sermon. A congregation that knew all about the shooting, crowded the Church, and many were converted as a result of the shooting. Now, here is a good tip for some of our evangelists who are anxious to fill their churches. It is to be noted that any kind of sensationalism fills a church, and any kind of sensationalism will lead to conversions. A "six gun" appears to be quite as effective as the name of Jesus.

"Death by the Act of God" was the verdict returned by a Leeds Coroner concerning the death of a farmer who was struck by lightning while looking through a window. No warrant has been issued for the arrest of the accused person. He has not even been cautioned not to do it again.

A number of City Churches are likely to be pulled down in the near future, owing to the need of the Church for money and the absence of congregations. There are sixty clergymen who minister to forty-six churches with a combined congregation of two thousand, and combined salary of over £34,000. The congregation often numbers no more than a dozen.

Apropos of the proposal to destroy nineteen City churches, one argument put forward against their removal is that they are used by typists and other City employees to rest in. We do not see in that a reason

for retaining these relics of a decayed superstition. For, out of the £1,695,620 the ecclesiastical authorities are to get for the sites, it should be easy enough to erect rest-rooms that could be infinitely less gloomy and more wholesome than are the churches. And the money thus spent would be usefully employed. A reader of a daily paper writes: "Please let the City Churches stand, if only as milestones to show that England was once a God-fearing and God-loving nation!" As relics, we presume, for future generations to study in order to realize the superstitiously degraded state of mind possessed by their forerunners of a boasted Age of Reason.

The Rev. Amos Parr, a missionary of Qu'-Appelle, told a meeting in Westminster that the population of Canada had grown enormously in recent years, and that 24,000 children in his diocese were receiving no religious instruction of any kind. Hundreds of children on the prairies were practically heathen. We should say the children are to be congratulated. To be able to start life without being contaminated by the grossly indecent Bible stories and superstitious Christian doctrines, is indeed a piece of good fortune.

An optimist, says the Rev. C. D. Barriball, is one who in December can scent the rose of June. Then the Bishop of Salisbury must be that kind of optimist. Though the Churches are experiencing December weather, he can still smell the June rose of a revival.

"You cannot stop war by telling people how many are killed, or by the terrors of taxation, or by stories of plague and pestilence," declared Mr. Fred B. Smith, a New York member of the World's Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. "Someone must teach the world that war is a sin against Almighty God." We, on the other hand, believe the world needs teaching that war is a stupid and criminal folly, an asylum method of settling disputes which human beings claiming war to be rational creatures ought to be heartily ashamed of. War may be a sin against Almighty God, but his chosen representatives on earth egged on the combatants in the last war, blessed their banners and battleships, and prayed for their success. Yet God said nothing, but was content to let his priests indulge in their pretty antics right to the end of the whole sorry chapter.

The Archbishop of Canterbury told the Christian Endeavour Convention :—

When you are as old as I am you will have seen the conflict with unbelief take a form which is growing into shape to-day, and which will perhaps be more difficult to face than any we have known: Earnest, thoughtful, even reverent, unbelief is something which must be treated with respect, though we are perfectly certain it is absolutely wrong. It presents a problem which will grow in intensity, and calls for the output of the power which God will give us to show our love and loyalty to Him.....

What a change has taken place in the way our high ecclesiastical dignitaries regard unbelief! The Archbishop's spiritual forebears regarded it with intense abhorrence, and their favourite remedies for obliterating it were the burning faggot, prison, banishment. But nowadays, seemingly, it has become too strong for these brotherly methods to be employed. It "must be treated with respect." If his Grace is sincere in what he says and is not merely mouthing platitudes suited to the temper of the times, if he is honestly desirous of showing respect to unbelief and the unbeliever, let him use his influence to get his Bishops to vote in favour of the next Bill for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and let him publicly declare his antagonism to those laws. And while he is on the job, he might also discourage as far as lies in his power cunning Christian efforts to boycott Freethought publications. There are other ways by which his Grace can enable respect to be shown to unbelief. But we fancy that those already outlined will be rather more than the very reverend gentleman will care to undertake.

The National Secular Society.

THE FUNDS of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT FUND.—H. T. O., Lt.

G. S.—Thanks, but hardly up to standard.

S. MAKIN.—You appear to overlook the fact that the *Freethinker* exists for a specific purpose. What you call "broadening" the paper would be to destroy the purpose for which it is issued. One may broaden a river until it becomes a swamp.

F. NEWELL.—Your lecture notice arrived too late for last week's issue. We are almost tired of pointing out that the latest time for these to be of any use is the first post on Tuesday morning.

A. M.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. E. POWELL.—Thanks for promise to contribute to the Endowment Fund. There will be opportunities of doing so, as we are only about half way. We intend making another "Rally" later in the year.

H. W. HAYTER.—Your letter is quite good, and ought to make the Rev. J. McNeill "sit up and take notice." But we are afraid that gentlemen of his kidney are not very easily impressed. They know that their dupes will not see your letter, and that is all they have to dread. As to the B.B.C., that is fast making itself ridiculous.

Miss E. J. CACHET (Pretoria).—We are obliged for the cutting. The spuriousness of the Josephus passage is self-evident to anyone who will read it with intelligence. "Scholarship" has little to do with it. There are always to be found "scholars" who will declare in favour of whatever supports established opinion.

G. ALLCORN.—We think that Messrs. Harper Bros. should be able to supply you with the book you need.

L. MARCAN.—We note what you say about the headings "Acid Drops" and "Sugar Plums," and may consider the matter on the opening of a new volume.

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

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

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

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

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We are pleased to announce that Miss Vance is now progressing favourably towards recovery. She had rather a nasty relapse, towards the end of last week, owing to heart weakness, but she appears to have overcome that, and is on the right road, with more peaceful nights. Her friend, Miss Kough, has for some time spent her nights in the hospital with her.

A series of articles on Spiritualism has been appearing in the *Manchester City News*, and Mr. Cohen was asked by the editor to write an article, and has done so. The article is divided into two parts, the first of which appeared in the issue for July 24 and the second for that of July 31. The price of the *Manchester City News* is twopence. Office, 3 Strutt Street, Manchester.

We have received a reply to his critics from "Ephphatha," which we are obliged to hold over till next week. The matter will be none the worse for the slight delay.

Our readers may remember Lord Hawke's prayer, "Pray God that a professional may never captain an English cricket team." We do not know what Lord Hawke will do about it, or whether the Lord has been caught napping, but we note that Hobbs did captain the English team against the Australians. We await with some anxiety Lord Hawke's opinion of the deity.

"In medieval times a child was sometimes sacrificed at the laying of a foundation stone." This was a statement made by Prof. Peet in a recent broadcast talk. A reader of the *Radio Times* writes: "That such a thing ever took place in Medieval Christendom I, for one, entirely disbelieve." He asks the Professor to say where the horrible deed happened and to give his authority for the statement. The Professor replies:—

Lieut.-Commander Shove will find the evidence regarding human sacrifices at the laying of foundation stones collected and reviewed in the article on "Foundation" in the *Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. The evidence given in this article and in the books referred to by its author, is not all equally clear, but some of it at least is quite incontrovertible. So strongly is the tradition of such human sacrifices ingrained in the human mind, that there are people who seriously believe that a man was sacrificed and buried under one of the towers of Brooklyn Bridge.

In connection with the note on the Turk, we see that Mr. Arnold J. Toynbee and Mr. Kenneth J. Kirkwood have written a book entitled *Turkey*. The understood policy of public writers is to say nothing good of the Turk; in this book, however, the authors have ventured to say something in his favour, and here followeth the reviewer's remarks in the *Times Literary Supplement*: "But a book in which stress is persistently laid on everything that can be said in his defence while so much that tells against him is ignored or glossed over can hardly be called history." Damned with faint praise because the other side uses the methods of those with marching orders.

"You cannot erect a frontier against ideas," declares Dr. John A. Hutton. Freethinkers have been saying as much for a good many years now. It is only because the people are Christian-doped that the warning needs reiterating so often.

Menai Bridge Urban Council have removed a twenty-year old ban on Sunday concerts. Evidently the back-stair parsonic influence is less operative in this district than it used to be.

The Soul of a Secularist.

(A Paper read at the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society.)

We dismiss religion with an epigram nowadays. The ferocity of religion has developed into nebulosity. But its terminology persists. Its definitions vary. No two Bishops agree. The Devil has lost his head. "Behead the Devil" (as the cross-word puzzlers say), and it is just anything evil. To-morrow God will be beheaded and mean anything odd. "Hell," says Mr. R. W. Trine, simply means "held," as one might say, "Well, I'm held," instead of "Well, I'm damned." And as to divine, let us hear the exquisite heroine of the latest big-seller, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the romance of the sordid semi-salacious strumpet, who writes:—

Paris is devine—the French are devine because when a girl can sit in a bar and have delicious champagne cocktails and look at all the important French people in Paris, I think it is devine. I mean when a girl can sit there and look at the Dolly Sisters and Pearl White and Mrs. Nash it is beyond worlds. It is devine.

I hope I am not indelicate in alluding to the soul. I know we ought not to mention our "innards." It was centuries ago decided that women have no soul. What about the soul of a secularist? If "soul" is indecent—the naked soul, I have heard it called—let us say "the unmentionable".....no, you would think I meant half of Mr. Grundy's trousers.

If you dislike "soul," call it something else every time I mention it, like we transpose music. Only remember the story of the broad church parson who listened to a rival's sermon about God's vengeance. "Your sermon was interesting," he said, "but your God is my Devil."

The soul of a Secularist! "Of course you mean his psychology?" I don't mind! But I warn you that you are not escaping mythology by harking back to Psyche. Psyche always means the soul anyhow. Psyche, you know, was the nymph Venus murdered and Jupiter immortalized. Psyche has wings to intimate the airy lightness of the soul. The dead were often represented as having a butterfly escaping from the mouth: of course, the flight of the soul. Physiology is not a synonym for the body; geology is not a word meaning the earth. Psychology doesn't take away the necessity for coining a new or using an old word. I don't want to say every time, "the psychological functioning organ."

But let us get on with our soul!

I heard a great musician, an Atheist, describing a well-known pianist: "Tremendous power, perfect technique, but no soul."

A word justifies itself by conveying instantaneous and definite meaning.

Fielding Hall's *Soul of a People* is not likely to be misunderstood:—

"There is a soul of good in things evil."

"These are the times that try men's souls."

"Brevity is the soul of wit."

First of all note in all these illustrations that there is an admirable absence of any idea of the *immortal* soul.

Apparently the soul in these cases is a figure of speech for that aspect of thought and emotion which cannot be called their "material" side.

The soul has a material basis of course. It is something human. I am a determinist no less than a materialist. I accept, to some extent, Mr. Hornbrook's theory about the effect of constipation. The state of one's soul may depend on the condition of the duodenum. A famous essayist traces the soul's

afflatus to the more respectable blood-stream. But this cuts precious little ice. It is as luminous as Shaw's defence of Inquisitors. It might lead somewhere if men of a given state of health, age, and date were torturers, or if every physically fit man to-day were a Secularist. In that case Mr. Mencken would be justified in arguing that "the elder Beecham saved poetry in England as the younger Beecham saved music." But the soul is more elusive. It evades easy analysis. Only the "Higher Thought" triflers could be taken in by the nonsense suggested by *In Tune with the Infinite*. It says:—

There is a chemical difference between ordinary perspiration and the exudation of a person under a deep sense of guilt. The state of a criminal mind can be determined by a chemical analysis of his perspiration, which, when brought into contact with selenic acid, produces a distinctive pink colour.

Nor are the good, the just, and the generous to be discovered by enquiries about intestinal activity. The happy, perhaps, but not always the just. There is force in the child's prayer for the bad people to be made good and for the good people to be made nice.

Perhaps it all comes to the same thing in the end. There is some physical explanation somewhere. But I have no use for an explanation of the soul that omits the factor of heredity. The Bishop of London is not going to become a Secularist through using aperients. The Christian Evidence Society lecturers won't develop decency in debate or exhibit pink perspiration simply according to whether they drink Apenta Water or beer.

Richard Jefferies, who lived and died a materialist, called his auto-biography, *The Story of My Heart*. Evidently *soul* was in his mind. "This book," he says, "might have been called an autobiography "of a soul"; but, like the rest of us, he flounders over the *word*, the soul is the man, the soul, or thought, or mind, the cosmos of life, beauty, memory, the inner consciousness, existence. "I believe in the human being," he said, "form and soul," and in despair because soul is so ill-used a word he fell back on the "*heart*"! the most overworked metaphor in the conventional world! At least we don't talk of "broken souls." On the whole I am sorry Jefferies adopted the wrong title.

Life to the Atheist, as much as to the transcendentalist, is something more than the satisfaction of our eyes, our mouth, and our pocket. Everything in our common nature proceeds from the material. Out of the dust man is made. Without dirt and manure the fairest flowers refuse to grow. The immaculate lily has its roots in the soil. A "soiled" lily! All lilies begin that way. Soil and soul: the likeness of words must not deceive us, but it often leads us to unsuspected origins.

The best things in our nature, our love of beauty, our joy in music, our devotion to art, our kindness to our fellows, friendship, love and care for our fellows may all have had their origin in our sexual characteristics; in the primitive determination to eat and sleep and copulate without interference; in appetite, in the craving for, and the satisfaction of every kind of selfish desire. We reached our highest through the lowest part of our nature. We sought to express self—and we found that "expression" meant two things: vanity, ambition, lust.....everything we did to gratify ourselves had to find a victim, an audience, a comrade.

Somewhere in prehistoric days the soul was evolved. It was a dim indefinite emergence from mere groping after an impossible individual self-satisfying into a semi-conscious realization of society. Man, or pre-man, began to live the larger life of some rude sort of social fellowship.

Perhaps the first recognition of the soul was the sense of loneliness; the emotional need of a purely material help—a mate for more than the rutting season.

To derive soul from soil was empirical. I claim no kind of authority for deriving soul from social.

Yet the whole keynote of what we call the soul is the social emotions, the social instincts, the social ethics. Wordsworth may say of Milton, "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart," but this only means that Milton was so superior to his contemporaries that he stood high above them all, even as high as the stars.

Without society the soul is unimaginable. Morals for one never existed, never can exist. We can suffer alone, happiness requires company. Only our own consciousness is aware of our worst. Our natural tendency is to exhibit our best to others. We are constantly wooing. There is probably not a single charm of manner, character, or accomplishment which we do not aim to display. Even modesty is exhibited. The soul exults in seeking praise and appreciation. How like it all is to the purely sexual life of human beings, and yet how varied its results. It began as a simple desire. The simple desire remains, but its branches have developed. The soul forgets its origin. It is not what it was. It really has become the great, fine noble thing it believes itself to be. It rules a new world. It enjoys unanticipated happiness. It suffers undreamt of agonies. It revels in the stirring waves of every kind of emotion. It is man's best. It is his organ of social work as well as his inspiration and stimulus.

Long ago men worshipped the Phallus, as the best thing man then knew. To early man it represented the source of life and the organ of happiness. Man's development has complicated earlier ideas. The soul stands now for far more than the Phallus could ever symbolize. It means all our emotions and aspirations. Simplicity and unity of function characterized phallic worship. There is no limit to the growth and offshoots of the soul.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

(To be Concluded.)

A Poet's Love Story.

DANTE, who was born at Florence in 1265, and died at Ravenna in 1321, wrote in 1293, or thereabouts, a remarkable little book, entitled *Vita Nuova*, or *New Life*. This describes partly in prose and partly in verse the commencement and the course of a love which he had cherished for sixteen years before the beloved one found an untimely grave; and which he continued to cherish for the rest of his life.

It was, says the poet, towards the beginning of her ninth year, and towards the end of his own, that he first saw the one "who by many, who did not know how to name her, was named Beatrice." Her "garment" was of "the noblest colour, blood-red." She had a "modest" and "honourable" mien; and she was "girded and adorned after the manner becoming her very youthful age." He adds, "The image never left me"; and declares, "thenceforth love ruled my heart."

Nine years later, Dante had another view of his beloved, which he never forgot. She was clad in a robe of the purest whiteness, and she walked in the midst of two women of noble appearance and ripe years.

As she passed along the street she turned her eyes to the spot where I was standing, timid and shy, and in her unspeakable gentleness, which has now already received its reward in the kingdom of eter-

nity, she saluted me so virtuously that I seemed to behold the goal of all blessedness. The hour in which her sweet salutation reached me was precisely the ninth of that day, and, as this was the first time that her words sought to reach my ear, I felt such a joy that I sped away, as if drunken, from the crowd.

On the night of that day, during the first of the nine remaining hours, Love appeared to the poet. In his arms, he held Beatrice, sleeping beneath the folds of a blood-red cloth, and in one of his hands he had the poet's heart, glowing like a red-hot coal. He awoke the sleeper, and persuaded her to eat the heart, which she did with a certain hesitation. Then, weeping bitterly, he carried her up into heaven. Violent anguish and oppression seized the poet, who then awoke. Thus, after nine years' adoration, a salute in the street was the only favour which Dante had as yet succeeded in obtaining from his beloved. Time, however, was about to grant him a further opportunity of no less than seven years; and many flowers may be culled in such a spell even by those who have but a modest knowledge of how to do it. Alas! for Dante, he still continued to treat his beloved with that respect which most women find so singularly disrespectful. He sought vigilantly to conceal his affection from the eye of the world, and, if we may believe him, he was long successful in this concealment. A felicitous incident, judiciously exploited, assisted his escape from detection; for, one day, as he was feasting his eyes on Beatrice at a musical entertainment, a noble lady of agreeable appearance, accidentally interrupted his line of vision by seating herself within it. As he still persisted to gaze wistfully in the same direction, some ladies then present, who had noticed that he looked pale and emaciated, drew the natural inference that the newcomer was the root of the mischief. He observed their delusion, and immediately resolved to profit by it. For this purpose he acted towards the lady in a way that soon caused most people to regard her as the idol of his heart. He even made verses in her honour; but he filled them with concealed references to his truly beloved. This, he says, went on for months and years. Finally, his screen departed to reside in a distant city, an event which he made the subject of a mournful poem. It would seem that she had taken his attentions seriously, for some time later, whilst he was on a journey, love brought him a message from her to the effect that she returned him his heart, and bid him take it to a certain lady who would serve him as she herself had served him. This kindly advice he followed without delay, and with great success. Indeed, the success was too great, for he and his screen played the parts of lover and mistress so effectively that they became the talk of the town. Gossip carried their doings to the ears of the virtuous Beatrice, and when she chanced to pass the ingenious, if not ingenuous, poet in any of her walks abroad, she would refuse him "the sweet salute" of earlier days, "wherein," says he, "all my joy consisted." As the poet lamented with great bitterness over this frigidity, Love appeared to him at the ninth hour of day, and explained why the sun had ceased to shine. He also said that as he was the only mediator between modest lovers, the poet must communicate with the offended lady through him alone, and on no account address her a word in his own person. Shortly after this, a friend took the poet into a company of fair ladies who were attending another on her marriage day. Among those he unexpectedly saw his beloved, and the sight moved him so strongly that he became quite strange in his looks and manner. This alteration greatly amused the ladies, who, being unaware how matters stood, made merry over his confusion with the very one

whose presence had occasioned it. The poet fled to his chamber and wept bitterly. Then it seemed good to him to open her eyes with a sonnet describing the cause of his deplorable behaviour. In another poem, excusing the same thing, he tells her that when her image occurs to him, he becomes so wretched that he feels as if only the actual sight of her would make him better; and then, driven forth to seek her, he is far worse on finding her. Meanwhile, as may well be imagined, various ladies had guessed his secret; and once, as he passed a group of beauties, one of them called him to her side. Observing that his beloved was not in the party, he approached. Some of the ladies laughed quietly with one another, some wondered what he would say, some pretended to be engrossed in conversation. Suddenly one asked him how it came to pass that he loved a woman whose presence he could not bear? "Tell me," she added, "for the purpose of such a love must be quite new."

His answer so affected the ladies that they all began to speak at the same time; and "as rain is often mingled with beautiful snowflakes, so their words were mingled with sighs." Other scenes no less pathetic occur in the book. Then it describes how the poet, having been faced with death in a severe illness, became haunted on his sick bed by the thought that his beloved, being herself mortal, might be snatched from his sight by the king of terrors. Thereupon he had a dream in which he saw her lying dead with an expression of ineffable peace upon her countenance, and beheld her maidens spreading a white veil over her lovely form. In time this dream had its fulfilment; and Beatrice passed away without, as it would appear, having ever known the joy of receiving her lover's kiss. Using the quaint language of a science which Time has long ago consigned to oblivion, Dante furnishes intimations which prove that his beloved departed this life on the ninth day of June in the year twelve hundred and ninety. Explaining the frequent recurrence of the number nine in connection with her brief existence, he says:—

The figure three is the root of nine, because multiplied by itself and without the help of any other figure it yields nine, as we see quite plainly, for three times three is nine. As therefore three is of itself the factor or creator of nine, and as also the creator of wonders is three in Himself, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which three are one, this woman's life was connected with the number nine to show that she was a nine; that is, a wonder whose root can be no other than the wonder-working Trinity. Perhaps a more profound person could find a still deeper reason; but this is the one that I find, and that pleases me the best.

At the end of his book, Dante adds that he will say no more at present of that Blessed One, but that, if his life be spared, he hopes to speak of her in a way in which no one has ever been spoken of before. How faithfully he kept this promise is known to all readers of his great religious poem, the "Divina Commedia." There, among other honours, he places Beatrice after Mary, Eve, and Rachel, as one of the four holy women who sit in the circle facing the throne of the divine majesty; and he also perches her at the top of a great car which represents the Holy Church, and is drawn by Christ under the figure of a winged animal. The truthful historian, however, is obliged to mention another aspect of Dante's conduct. More than two years after the death of his beloved, as the poet was standing in the street, sunk in deep and painful thought, and wearing an expression of utter despair, he chanced to look up, and saw a young and lovely woman regarding him with much compassion from a neighbouring window. This touched him sensibly, and he formed

a habit of visiting the spot to enjoy the comfort of the fair one's sympathy. Then he began to fear that his eyes took too great a pleasure in beholding her loveliness. At first he made himself bitter reproaches, but gradually he came to the conclusion that Love had provided him with the lady to give his heart renewed rest. Shortly afterwards, however, he saw Beatrice in a dream with the blood-red garment that she had worn when he had first seen her, and with the youthful appearance that she had then presented. This for a time completely extinguished his new flame, but that it was soon rekindled seems to be implied in the conclusion of his present work, and is affirmed in one of his later writings. The truth is, that Dante was thrice married, and that the number of the ladies who accorded him their highest favours, without approaching the altar in his company is not to be counted. This may appear to some a melancholy anti-climax. Certainly it would have been more dramatic had Dante put an end to his life when Beatrice died. For this would have shown either that he expected to see her again and was impatient to realize his expectation, or that he could not bear to exist because his beloved no longer existed. In each case he would, like Judas Iscariot, have given an irrefragable proof of his sincerity. I am inclined to think that it was his faith as a Catholic, and not his fear as a coward, that he stayed his hand. Having resolved to survive, he was compelled to accept the consequences of his decision. The loss which he had sustained left his faculties unimpaired. Hence, it was inevitable that he should experience amorous desires and even amorous sentiments. Add to this, that besides the disposition of the ordinary man, he had the susceptibilities of an artist, and that he lived in a clime where female beauty, passion, and tenderness reach the highest perfection. Hence the wonder is, not that he fell in love over and over again after the death of Beatrice, but that his devotion to her persisted triumphantly throughout all those tumultuous incidents. If, as he doubtless supposed, she were able to follow his earthly fortunes with a sympathetic eye from her abode in the ineffable light, it must have increased her felicity to know that even when she observed him in the embraces of other women, he was secretly revelling in her charms.¹

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Correspondence.

PERSONAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me just to thank "Javali" for his very kind reference to myself—especially as I was once rather rude to him. I apologised at the time, but I have felt a little unhappy about it ever since. As to his occasional disagreement with my views as expressed in the *Freethinker*—I don't always agree with them myself!

I ought also to apologise to Mr. Repton for failing to see that the title of his book, *The Fourth Age*, has reference to the soldiers in Shakespeare's *Seven Ages of Man*—the quotation is, in fact, printed on the title page.

In conclusion, I regret to say that I have to enter a sanatorium for six months' treatment, and what my opportunities will be for contributing to the *Freethinker* during this period, or whether my medical advisers will permit such activity, I cannot say. At any rate, I shall get plenty of time for reflecting on the human comedy!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

¹ The facts in the above article are derived from Dr. Karl Federn's German translation of Dante's "*Vita Nuova*," in Hendel's *Bibliothek*. This is written with an elegance seldom to be found in German literature; and it is preceded by a fine study on Beatrice.

Drama and Dramatists.

IRELAND, if viewed with eyes before they have been washed with the tears of pity, would convert even a brass image to the beastly theory of "original sin." Its salvation must come from within, but, the paradox exists that those who see it from within are in the unfortunate position of being unable to help in the solution. We shall have to wear the Irish boots of "for and against" before we can put them on, and Mr. Sean O'Casey's play, "The Plough and the Stars," with the strength and firmness of a Blake outline, emphasizes the real snakes that are in the country of St. Patrick. The author leaves very little to the imagination, and, with coarse realism, tells many of us what we already know. The story centres round Dublin tenement life with the incidentals of a war and a rebellion, but Mr. O'Casey is too near his figures to abandon them ("the glory and off-scouring of the universe,") and, for the touches of nobility that he uses in his characters, it would appear that he has exchanged hope for insight. He is not in doubt that all his characters may be the tadpoles of angels and for that we could sit with patience through four acts of sombre movement.

Jack Clitheroe is a Commandant in the Irish Citizen Army, and lives with his wife Nora in a tenement. With them there is her uncle, Peter Flynn, and Clitheroe's cousin, "the Young Covey." From the casual coming and going of neighbours to this place it would appear that privacy was the last thing that anyone insisted on. Jack and his wife could not indulge together in a little song without being interrupted, and Irish life is a continuous story of a multitude all shouting something different. At tea there was a promise of a fight over the question of sugar; one could feel the strings pulled taut between imbecile old age and the Young Covey. The same lack of space was exhibited in the second act; the best place for a public meeting appeared to be outside a public-house. The orator outside with his speech well charged with the sanguinary elements of primitive passion and religion was exhorting his listeners to do something or other—whatever it was it meant fighting, and the interest inside was well sustained with the thirsty characters. The prostitute complained that all the men's thoughts were in a holy mood that night, and in exasperation she cried, "For the love of Jesus, we ought to be in a monastery." We take Mr. O'Casey's word that they talk like that; the natives are as free with their use of language as they are with their money and their lives, but the former only seems to mean anything by accident. Bessie Burgess's jingle to the charwoman, Mrs. Gogan, was a case in point. She advised her victim to go and stupefy her own foolishness by getting drunk. With the temperature at seventy there were one and a half fights in the second act, and among the audience there was enough raw material for another six. Mesmerism by words and colours is a subtle affair; personally we find the colours of orange and green very soothing and restful and the Doric of Dublin would cure deafness.

The third act is full of fighting, and also it is where the author's characters begin to find that adversity proves their common ancestry at the time when Adam's skull had no place in it for catch-words, incantations or coloured rag on a stick. Bessie Burgess, the abusive woman, fetches a doctor for Nora who is prematurely confined; Fluther Good, the dissolute carpenter, carries Nora from the barricades, and the ironic note was struck with a clang when Bessie appears on the stage loaded with costly

clothes, and says, "They're looting the shops." The last act reveals the room of Bessie Burgess. There are two candles burning on a coffin; and Peter Flynn, Good, and the Young Covey are sitting on the floor playing cards. Nora is very ill; Bessie has worn herself out with nursing her, and a young messenger arrives to break the news that Nora's husband has been killed. Nora, reminiscent of Ophelia, comes in the room clad in her night gown, and is lead away by Bessie, who sings "Lead, Kindly Light." Two khaki-clad soldiers come in to round up the men, and the temperature in our neighbourhood rose six degrees when Fluther Good wanted to fight both of them. The play concludes on a minor note, with nothing concluded. Catholicism, Nationalism, economics have all been put in the shilling bag wash and they have all come back untouched—which may be the author's purpose. The redeeming feature is the heroism, the willingness to *act* when the foolish babble of talk will do nothing. And the dialectic enemies are closer than brothers in a time of need. The irascible Peter Flynn gives religion a back-handed blow with his boot when he advises his friends to lead their enemies to God, and he will play the devil with them. The whole of the characters in the hands of the dramatist are little boys and girls laughing and brawling over words, and, at the New Theatre he hands the Irish baby over to John Bull. That nebulous old gentleman might, with truth, reply in the language of Bernard Shaw:—

Och, I'm tired o' yer sufferin's. We've been hearin' nothin' else ever since we was chidder but sufferin's. Hwen it was nobody else's it was ole Irelan's. How the divil are we to live on wan another's sufferin's?

There is no bias in the play; Ireland is a concrete example of the tragedy wrought by theological interests. The authors of it are incapable of settling the matter, which is tossed from hand to hand. Perhaps Ireland's grief may be caused by trying to master a sixth sense before learning the use of five. In stating the subject matter simply, Mr. Sean O'Casey has demonstrated the fallacy of the "dead horse" theory with which our learned Labour leaders wish to impress us. He has also given us a very lurid picture of the perfect love and peace that follows in the wake of religion, high or low heels. He may be the means of helping Ireland to put speculative matters on one side for God can bide our time. In the period of waiting the snakes of Ireland may grow into serpents of wisdom, and the real reason of the "Plough and the Stars" would emerge, which might not be exactly pleasing to those financially interested parties who are content to see Ireland a beast of burden ploughing the sands of theology.

Mr. J. A. O'Rourke as Peter Flynn was a joy to behold; Mr. Arthur Sinclair as Fluther Good was excellent and recalled pleasant memories of his part in "The Playboy of the Western World," which play bears a relation to the one under notice. Miss Sara Allgood made the part of Bessie Burgess an interesting study in the contrariness of woman, and an Irish woman at that. Miss Kathleen O'Regan as Nora, with a striving to get out of a horrible circle, was the capable mouthpiece of truths concerning fear. Mr. O'Casey has a good company for the exposition of his thesis now that he has climbed out of a barrel of treacle, and we wish his play success. On emerging from the theatre the newspaper placards had the announcement, "M.P.'s come to blows." It must be the heat or that fighting is easier than thinking.

WILLIAM REPTON.

God created man in His image—and man made haste to return the compliment.—Heine.

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

In spite of changes in the weather, the second week in Swansea was as good as the first. Crowds awaited my arrival on the pitch each evening and listened with respectful attention for a couple of hours. The local religious cranks were stimulated to activity, and most evenings saw the Sands turned into a miniature Hyde Park with ranting, singing of hymns, and banners displayed, all intended to confound the "Infidel." The conspicuous feature, however, was the lack of attention given to these fanatics by our audiences, who, moreover, showed their resentment when, as frequently happened, the gospel platform was pitched on the edge of the crowd, when the whole Sands were available. One or two opponents ventured on our platform and made the usual exhibition of incompetency. The climax was reached on the last evening (Sunday) when an enormous crowd assembled round our platform and worked itself up to a high state of enthusiasm which almost persuaded me that I had just been elected for a seat in Parliament. Fortunately that was an illusion. We finished the campaign by a distribution of a large supply of leaflets, which were struggled for as if they had been banknotes. Swansea piety has apparently been somewhat punctured! I very cordially thank Messrs. Moore, Crew, Nicholas, Harris, and others for their enthusiastic assistance. For a week I shall be on holiday at Barmouth. I recommence work at Nelson on August 2.

G. WHITEHEAD.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Mr. John Capon, of Morning Lane, Hackney. Mr. Capon has been a very ardent Freethinker of many years' standing, and his devotion to the "Best of Causes" continued to the end. He bore the pains incident to a long illness with unvarying fortitude, and leaves behind him the memory of a good husband, parent, and friend. The cremation took place at Golders Green Crematorium on July 26. At the request of the deceased there was no ceremony. We offer his wife and children our sympathy in their bereavement.

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. OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, a Lecture.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Every Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30; Sunday at 11, 3.30, and 6.30; Lecturers—Messrs. Hart, Howell Smith, B.A., Hyatt, Le Maine, and Saphin.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3 and 6, Mr. H. Constable will lecture.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—Ramble to Stoke Common and District. Conducted by Mr. N. Lidstone. Train, Marylebone, 10.20 a.m. Cheap return Gerrard's Cross, 2s. 2d.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. A. D. McLaren, a Lecture.

COUNTRY. OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Branch of the N.S.S.).—Ramble to Cathkin Loch. Meet at Burnside Terminus at 2.30. (Via white car "29 A" to Burnside. Join car at Jamaica Street, Glasgow Cross, or Bridgeton Cross.)

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