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Fooling the Public.

If one were to judge the state of public opinion by the articles and letters which are appearing in the *Morning Post*—newspapers pride themselves on reflecting public opinion—it would seem that there exists no real doubt as to the fundamental truths of religion, but only a difference of opinion concerning the relative values of particular doctrines or of particular churches. That is, of course, the impression the churches who are utilising the papers wish to produce. Accordingly every kind of crank, every kind of amiable imbecility is admitted to its columns, so long as he or she or it professes belief in some kind of a God, and refrains from saying a deprecatory word about that popular fetish, Jesus Christ. For example, Mr. Hamilton Fyfe airs a couple of columns of verbal nonsense about the universe proving that love is God, even though it disproves the statement that God is love. Only a muddle-headed person like Mr. Fyfe would project a proposition which, while asserting that the character of natural processes ruled out the belief that they were controlled by a loving deity, yet quite warranted us in believing that love was the supreme ruler. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle turns up quite cheerfully with his usual slogan that Spiritualism is the new revelation that is going to swallow up all the others; which leaves one wondering when he will sufficiently understand Spiritualism to realize that it is part of its claim that it is a very old thing, which, if it is true, and seeing that human existence and death is not a new thing, it must be. Even that cheerful absurdity, "the reverent Agnostic," makes his appearance. He writes that the educated Agnostic cannot accept orthodox Christianity because he "feels it difficult or impossible to believe that the great Architect of the Universe has condescended to the triviality (by comparison) of our puny lives and affairs." No wonder so many find Agnosticism such

a comfortable term, when it identifies them with all sorts of crude deistic beliefs, and so shields them from the attacks levelled against thinkers of a more robust type.

* * *

Advice to the Clergy.

Many of the contributors fall back upon the war as the main cause of the present position of the churches. The Rev. T. Nightingale, Secretary to the Free Church Council, says that the theological education of their students was interrupted by the war, and when they returned after the war many of them did not feel inclined to pursue that path. They felt the "more imperative" call to be that of filling a place in the general activities of the country. That is a rather amusing commentary upon the tales told of the deepening sense of religion created among the soldiers by the war, and of the stories noted last week of some of the parsons who went out to France during the war. The Bishop of Europe, it will be remembered, declared that the soldiers found sermons more attractive than the efforts of the best entertainers, and that the men delighted to have chapters of the Bible read them. Rev. Nightingale explains that these same men were not inclined to take interest in religion when they returned, but found it more important to take up with some business career, as they considered it more necessary than preaching. Perhaps we had better leave these two representative Christians to settle the matter between them. And for guidance we would call their attention to a remark attributed to Lord Palmerston when addressing the members of his cabinet. "Gentleman," he is reported to have said, "it doesn't matter what damned lie we tell the public, so long as we all tell the same lie." And we can assure these fathers in God, that it is not lying that the public object to, so much as contradictory lying.

* * *

The God of Slaughter.

The unsettlement of belief is attributed to the war because the sight of so much carnage was believed by the men to be in conflict with the idea of a good God. People asked: "Why did God permit the war?" or "Why did not God stop the war?" That is the kind of childish prattle which one expects when dealing with theologians, and it does not come within a thousand miles of the essential facts. One would imagine that the world had never witnessed a war before the last one. It is true that the war was larger than other wars, but increase in quantity made no difference in quality. A war between fifty-thousand men is not of necessity different from a war between fifty millions. There were more killed during the last war, there were more fortunes made, there were more lies told; but these are only variations on the stock accompaniments of war. And if previous wars did not disturb men's religious beliefs,

why should this one have done so? Besides, wars have always been declared God's method of educating and punishing the world. The God of the Bible leads his followers to war; he holds up natural processes to help them in war; the church has always blessed the banners of war and the instruments of war; and the pulpits of all denominations, with hardly a single dissentient, declared from 1914 to 1918 that we were engaged in a holy war, and that God would bless our arms. And beyond the fact of war there is the endless experience of life. After all, war, even the last war, could not be worse than the brutality and cruelty of nature. Nature exterminates with explosives and upheavals upon a far greater scale than even the Christian nations of the world can ever hope to do. She maims and mangles, she crushes and destroys, she spreads her poison gases, she leaves her victims to a slow death by disease, she blinds them, cripples them, and creates minute organisms which make their existence a living hell. And if men could see this, generation after generation, if they could see war after war, without weakening their faith in religion, are we to believe that because a war broke out in 1914 there was something about the date or the situation that made them suddenly sit up and declare that war was not to be reconciled with the existence of God? So far as the belief in God is concerned the war, a thousand wars, must leave the reasonableness of belief in a God exactly where it was.

* * *

The Pressure of Fact.

I have a fairly lively conception of the strength of human stupidity, but I confess it is not equal to believing that even the average parson of to-day is so stupid as to believe what he says in this connection. They are only carrying a step further the popular pulpit myth of the man who, when his child dies, or his wife is killed, or his money is lost, suddenly cries out, "I do not believe there is a God!" They might just as truthfully make a man announce disbelief in God because he has backed the wrong horse in the Derby. Trouble and disaster does not rid a superstitious mind of its superstition; it only encourages it. There is evidence that men and women have been driven to disbelieve in religion because of disaster, but none of the other way about. The war only caused men to put the question of the existence of God more clearly before their minds, because other things had already weakened or destroyed the belief. We see in social life that people will for long enough submit to an institution that is outworn until something occurs that calls their attention to the glaring anomaly of its existence. And then it is not long before it is swept away. So it is with the mental life. Inherited beliefs are accepted by the mass so long as nothing occurs to call attention to their falsity. When that occurs rejection follows. It does not follow in all cases because all do not see the contradiction. But the contradiction grows, and so becomes apparent to an increasing number. The war, thus, served as the occasion to call attention to facts that were already well known, but of which the significance had not been perceived. Had men gone into the war genuine believers, they would have come out of it in the same frame of mind. But their faith had already been undermined. The war was no more than the firing of a spark that precipitated—for the churches—the disaster.

* * *

Catchpenny Pleading.

It would never do, of course, for the clergy to admit this. It pays them better to refer to the war as a temporary set back, from which religion will

recover. They will not face the fact, they never have faced the fact, that the whole structure of religious belief has no greater claim to genuineness than has the most fantastic of fairy tales. The headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School evades it by talking of the cause of the weakening of religious belief as due to the industrial changes which set in in the early part of the nineteenth century, when the church forgot its spiritual functions and began to take an interest in "social work." Well, if one compares the clergy of the eighteenth century as depicted in the pages of Green or Lecky, when they were presumably more alive to the "spiritual" nature of their functions, he will soon see the hollowness of the excuse. The clergy began to take an interest in social matters only when the Freethinking of Paine and the influence of the French Revolution undermined the prestige of the Christian Churches all over Europe. Dr. Nairn adds that in the race for wealth the realities of religion were forgotten, and "Materialism" ruled men's minds. The truth is that, so far as the term Materialism is used in an ethical sense, there is no more materialistic creed than Christianity, and in the scientific sense "Materialism," standing for the scientific method, can hardly be said to have dominated the average Christian mind. A still more curious explanation is proffered by Canon Goudge, who tells us that a weakening of religion is due to the fact that, with the Englishman, the moral sense is stronger than the religious one; and he tends to regard religion as only an adjunct to religion, and values it only so far as it helps morality. So that, while on the one hand, Dr. Nairn explains the position by the dominating of religion by "Materialism," Canon Goudge says it is because the Englishman has a keen, moral sense and dismisses religion because he thinks it is of little help morally.

A Hopeless Fight. * * *

In any case the fact which does emerge from the columns of the *Morning Post*, is that Christianity has not been able to hold its own and is not likely to regain its lost strength; which emphasizes a truth we have often insisted on, namely, that the real and ultimate enemy of all religion is Life. It is the growth of knowledge, of culture, of civilization that is the ultimate and unbeatable enemy of religion. If Christianity cannot hold its own against this growth it is doomed, even though its doom comes upon it almost imperceptibly. And a second thing that emerges from the symposium is the utterly hopeless manner in which religious believers flounder about. Here is a system of beliefs upon which, we are told, the ultimate welfare of the world depends. And yet, apart from the abnegation of sense and individuality, and the acceptance without question of a set of dogmas as laid down by the Roman Catholic Church, no two are agreed as to what these beliefs are. The Christian Scientist is at liberty to give his fantastic and nonsensical Eddyian interpretation, the Romanist comes along with his, scores of others come along with his or her theory, ranging from the "reverent Agnostic" to the juggler with prophecies and pyramid mysteries. And the longer they wrangle the less the agreement. So evident is this that the churches have always barred discussion as fatal to their unity and their efficiency. In all other directions the longer men discuss the greater the body of accepted truths they leave behind them. In religion the more they discuss the less certain they are. There is no wonder the churches do not like discussion. Discussion makes for clarity of mind, for truth; and these are qualities the Christian Church has always dreaded.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"A World Gone Wrong."

THE Rev. A. Herbert Gray, M.A., D.D., Minister of Crouch Hill Presbyterian Church, London, is generally regarded as a preacher of eminent ability and eloquence. It will, therefore, be highly interesting to learn what such a man thinks of the history and present condition of the human race, and the opportunity of doing so is afforded us by a remarkable sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* of January 6, entitled "The Restlessness of Life To-day." Being a Presbyterian, Dr. Gray is of necessity more or less orthodox, and his essential orthodoxy is adequately conspicuous in the discourse before us; but he has an original method of presenting it. In the first place, he firmly believes in the fall of man. He says:—

I suppose at one time a sermon on this topic would have resolved itself into an exposition of the simple theme, "Be good and you will be happy." It would have been declared that, in spite of these sad facts, the man or woman who will simply follow duty hour by hour will become truly satisfied, and in the end happy. I cannot offer you a sermon on any such lines, because I believe that something has gone wrong with the world—very far wrong—and that the wrong that is in it can only be overcome by a great deal of heroic endeavour and a great deal of suffering. That really is the Christian view.....Christianity says that this is a world in which sin has wrought very terrible and very tragic results, and that its salvation can only come to pass through the efforts and endurances of men and women who in the sight of God will carry a cross and undo by patient love the evil wrought by sin.

It is a noteworthy fact that the Gospel Jesus never mentions the fall, and Dr. Gray's statement of it is greatly different from that in the Epistle to the Romans. Dr. Gray speaks of sin as if it were an independent entity which somehow got into the world to do all the mischief within its power. We positively deny the existence of such a wicked entity on the same ground that we disbelieve in a personal God.

Curiously enough the first part of the sermon has no bearing whatever on religion, and more curiously still, Dr. Gray treats our need of work and love as the outcome of the fall. He says: "When I meet a man who cannot get a job then I feel I am confronted with one of the saddest proofs that all human affairs have gone far wrong." Surely, to say the very least, that is a gross exaggeration. Then he adds:—

You would think that there ought to be work in plenty for every human being. God knows we want lots of things which mean labour. We want finer cities and many more houses. We want commodities of all sorts, and beautiful things in great abundance. And Nature is not niggardly. The raw materials are abundant and the supply of labour would seem to be superabundant. And yet millions remain in poverty, and capable men in great crowds can find no work worthy of a man.

However true that may be, what on earth has it to do with the doctrine of the fall? The same question applies equally to the second need, the need of a mate. All know that without the mating of male and female humanity would soon cease to be. At the close of this portion of the address the Dr. says that these two needs "are of the very essence of life; without them both the race cannot continue," but he omits to inform us in what way they prove or illustrate the doctrine of the fall; and yet having himself affirmed that damnable dogma in most emphatic terms, he says: "Let me try and look into this matter in detail." So much for his graphic description of those two needs of human life. Now

he moves on to an alleged third need of mankind, saying:—

I believe there is a third thing we want. And though our want of it may not be so obvious, in the end of the day it is an even deeper want: we want God. We do not all want him consciously all the time. That is obvious. I see men and women so oppressed with anxious cares that they have no margin of energy wherewith even to think of him. I see others who are so taken up for a time with a whirl of pleasure and excitement that they do not know what are the deeper needs of their natures. But I believe the want is there in us all, trying all the time to make itself felt.

Dr. Gray is fully justified in stating that we came into being with the instinct for work and with the instinct for love; but we are absolutely convinced that he is wrong in claiming that we were also made with the instinct for God. Well do we remember that about twenty years ago Canon Peter Green preached a most remarkable sermon in the Manchester Cathedral, in which he sadly maintained that organized religion in this country had proved a dismal failure. He emphasized the fact that a large number of the teachers in our schools and colleges were unbelievers, and that the young people under them were rapidly becoming Atheists. The inescapable inference from what he said on this point was that unless children are definitely taught to believe in God they inevitably grow up into Atheists. That is the chief argument for the retention of religious education in the day schools of the country, but that argument loses its force altogether if Dr. Gray's teaching is true. Without a doubt, however, Canon Green was right when he claimed that in the absence of religious instruction in schools and colleges religion would certainly and quickly die out. This is proved by the fact that, in spite of all the religious teaching given in all Sunday and week-day schools, not a few children pass through without the slightest taint of faith within them, and they delight in characterizing themselves as natural Atheists. Dr. Gray does not seem to realize that God is an object of belief, and not of knowledge, and that, therefore, it is utterly absurd to declare that we come into the world with an instinct for him. The reverend gentleman cannot even be just to people who profess to be unbelievers. Speaking of the alleged instinct for God, he says:—

It becomes at times a positive hunger with some, so that they cry out with Job, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" It has driven men and women through long years of eager search. It has become the conscious ruling passion of many lives. But I believe in some degree it is there in us all. People often deny that they have any such need within them. And then their unsatisfied faces give the lie to their words. They try feverishly to make up a complete life for themselves out of other things, and have to confess at the end that they have failed.

In those closing sentences Dr. Gray deliberately and wickedly misrepresents people about whom he clearly possesses no direct, first-hand knowledge whatever, and yet about whom he does not hesitate to tell lies. Atheists, as a class, are the happiest people in the world. When they gave up their belief in God fear completely vanished from their hearts and lives, and love of humanity for its own sake began to shine within them like a glorious sun.

J. T. LLOYD.

But as to honour, justice, wisdom, learning, they should not be taxed at all, because they are qualifications of so singular a kind that no man will allow them in his neighbour, or value them in himself.

Dean Swift.

Penny-in-the-Slot Prophecy.

Hotspur:

At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets; and at my birth,
The frame and huge foundations of the earth
Shaked like a coward.

Glendower:

Why, so it would have done
At the same season, if your mother's cat had
But kittened, though yourself had ne'er been born.
—*Shakespeare, Henry IV.*

PROPHECY, it used to be said, found a man mad, or left him so; but an exception must be made in the case of "Old Moore," the most genial and kindly of prophets, whose almanac is known to everybody. Not long ago, there rose up, in an idle week, the old newspaper dispute over the names of the twenty greatest men now alive and famous. Reputations tossed and rose and fell. There were odd folk who were not quite sure of Mr. Cook. Over the merits of the Bishop of London and "Woodbine Willie" there were unkind comparisons; but none of the correspondents ever questioned the right of "Old Moore" to be considered a great man.

His is a fame that flourishes wherever the English language is spoken. He has shown to hundreds of thousands the annual vision of the future, and he has carefully observed the secret of anonymity. As for the public, the prophet is never at a loss. His manly utterances set us right at the moment when a new bacillus swims into our ken; when we are anxious over the tax-collector's demands; or the press-gang screams over the adulteration of our food, and the distressing tricks of tradesmen.

"Old Moore" should know something of the stars, for he has been in active communication with them for over two hundred years. At least one of the editions of his famous almanac claims to be in its 231st year, whilst another is said to have a circulation of over a million copies annually. It is true that the name of "Francis Moore, Physician," is not in the Medical Directories, but, probably, on account of his patriarchal age, he is on the retired list. He must have seen many ups and downs during his interesting career, having started in business as a prophet prior to the reign of Queen Anne, and the spacious days of Marlborough.

"Old Moore's" Almanac for the present year suggests that "the voices of the stars" are very clamorous, although, like the clerical prophets, regarding the end of the world, the seer's guesses are delightfully vague on matters of real consequence. The prophet suggests that during the coming year religious matters will endure rough usage, and a great prelate will be removed, whether by force or disease deponent sayeth not. More saddening still, a duke and a labour leader will shuffle off this mortal coil in January. May we hope that they enter heaven arm-in-arm. Of more interest to general readers is the August forecast that dysentery will be prevalent, and places of amusement suffer hurt. In September comes the unkindest cut of all, for money will be scarce, and Communists will attack religious communities. December is to be the most remarkable month of the year, and events in the political world denote a crash. Readers are asked to wait till the following month for further details, and, incidentally, to save their pennies for the new issue for 1928.

That is how a twentieth century "prophet" looks out on the unknown year that stretches before us. This is done by relying on "Holy Writ," and listening to the "voices of the stars." It cannot be said to be an inspiring message in the unprecedented days in which we live, when the world seems to be plung-

ing into "chaos and old night," and the preaching of hatred between men is the tender gospel of politicians who pretend to the title of statesmen, "looking before and after." But "Old Moore's" pathetic commonplaces are no worse than the imbecilities of the so-called spiritual leaders of the Christian world, which have varied between the baby-talk of the Bishops, and the determination of the Archbishop of Canterbury to avoid hurting anyone's feelings.

It is being seen that the clergy are a caste apart, not only from their fellow citizens, but from the industrial struggle. The plain truth is that the Churches are organized on a national basis in every country, and they invariably act the same as other official Government bodies. Hence the edifying spectacle in all Christian countries of the paraphernalia of religion being subverted to entirely political ends, and the clergy of each country appealing to "god" for support for the machinations of politicians, and subordinating the Christian religion to the secular necessities of the State. It can have but one result, and that is to reduce to the lowest ebb the prestige and influence of the Christian Churches, which only continue to flourish in those half-educated strata of the community, which have neither the leisure nor the knowledge to question the priestly activities.

There are so many people out walking in the streets who are celebrated, or notoriety, that it is a pleasure to find even a prophet whose features are veiled, who moves quietly, and whose private life is not illustrated or reported in the daily newspapers. In these noisy days, in this Bagdad of ours, no Haroun al Raschid can hope to venture abroad undistinguished and escape the industrious snapshotters of the many illustrated journals. But "Old Moore's" fame will hold good whilst he adds to the gaiety of a nation fallen on evil days. His immense reputation is quite safe without his portrait being reproduced alongside those of the Bishop of London and the star artists of the music halls and cinemas. Let the gloomy deans, and the still more solemn priests, give us as jolly and as comforting anticipations concerning the coming years, and there will be an end of the slump in theological prophecy, which, so far, has not been a thing of beauty, or a joy for ever.

MIMNERMUS.

THINKING AND ANALOGY.

The fact is, analogy is a necessary mode of all our thinking, and genius is often another name for the power to see similarities in phenomena, natural or mental, that have hitherto been undetected. Mr. Havelock Ellis has brought this out clearly in his *Impressions and Comments*. "It was a fine and deep saying of Aristotle," he says, "that the greatest thing by far is to be master of metaphor. This is the mark of genius, for, said he, it implies an intuitive perception of similarity in dissimilars. All the great thinkers have been masters of metaphor because all vivid thinking must be in images, and the philosopher whose metaphors are blurred and diluted is one whose thinking is blurred and diluted. Thus it comes about that the thinkers who survive are the thinkers who wrote well and are most nearly poets. All great thinkers are great masters of metaphor because all thinking of any kind must be by analogy." A host of illustrations springs to the mind immediately. Boyle traced the analogy between logic and algebra, just as Descartes had previously shown the likeness between algebra and geometry. So soon as light and radiant heat are found to have similarities newer discoveries immediately follow. Faraday found the rotation of the plane of a beam of polarized light by a magnet, and at once Wartmann found that a beam of polarized heat rays was similarly affected.—*T. Sharper Knowlson, "Originality."*

The Pagan Roots of the Christian Creed.

INTRODUCTION.

The human mind, in its eagerness to account for things and events, irresistibly ascribes a mythical origin to everything which it cannot trace to its natural source or birth. Hence all the fundamental arts and crafts of civilized man (those upon which civilization itself is founded, and, indeed, any hoary institution or ancient practice whose beginnings were lost in the mist of antiquity) were, one and all, ascribed to the revelation, the gift, or the teachings of some divinity.

For example, fire was said to have been brought to earth from heaven by Prometheus. In like manner Vulcan was credited with having taught men how to use it to extract metals from ores, and how to shape them into useful implements in the arts of peace and war. The pursuit of husbandry or the art of corn-growing was everywhere assigned to a god or a goddess. In Hindustan, a knowledge of the art was credited to Brahma; in Egypt, to Isis; in Greece, to Demeter; and in Italy, to Ceres. Similarly, the fine arts of medicine, music, poetry, and eloquence were regarded as the divine gifts of Apollo. The culture of the vine was taught to mankind by Dionysus or Bacchus; and the austere and rugged art of war was taught to it by Mars and by Minerva. Not only did man account for civilized arts and crafts and social institutions in that way, but also for the gift of speech and the art of writing. Just as the individual has no memory of his cradle and his infant days, so the race has no recollection of its civilized beginnings; all are lost in the dim twilight of dawn.

It was also equally true of all phenomena around him. The sun, the moon, the stars, the earth and all its inhabitants, were likewise universally regarded as the work of divine magic under the name of creation.

To the savage or semi-civilized mind, such conceptions were perfectly normal. It was primitive man's usual way of reasoning upon matters of causation; he lived, moved, and had his being in the realms of magic. In his thoughts and theories natural causation held only a very subordinate place, if one at all. To him, the great source of causal energy was divine and human magic.

In like manner, because the birth and rise of Christianity are wrapped in much obscurity, it has been the vogue for nearly two thousand years to ascribe the religion to a supernatural origin. This historical darkness, however, is entirely artificial, and is due solely to the assiduity and zeal, born of arrogant hatred, with which the Christian fathers destroyed all contemporary literature.

Now, what astronomy did for the solar system, and what Darwinism did for the world of living forms, is exactly what is being done to-day by anthropology for the Christian religion. In each case it is the replacement of myth and magic by natural causation as the explanation and source of all phenomena. Anthropology traces the Christian cult to its origin, and shows that it contains nothing unique, peculiar, or new; but, on the contrary, that there is a community of ideas, of myths, and of rites between them all.

No one who, in the light of modern anthropology, gives the subject the least serious attention, and is free from the bias of preconceptions, can fail to see that to regard Christianity as a new type of religion, entirely out of relation with contemporary cults, is as grotesquely ludicrous as the notion that the

physical universe leaped into existence at the sound of a magical phrase, or that the human race was brought into being through the manipulations of a god-magician upon a lump of clay.

How purblind we are to the palpably obvious till the mind's eye is opened to see it! Fossils, for example, have been dug up from the earth from times immemorial; but they had no significance for those who beheld them; or, perchance if noticed, they would be fantastically accounted for. Such exactly is the case with the New Testament to-day. It is in reality a highly fossiliferous literature; but, owing to the religious indoctrination we receive in childhood, most of us are blinded to the fact. To anyone whose mind is illumined by a comparative study of religions. The New Testament is a quarry so rich in religious fossils that it is not easy to find a chapter, a paragraph, or even a verse wholly devoid of fossil remains.

Our object in this essay, therefore, is to draw attention to this highly instructive and important fact—viz., that the Christian religion was a natural product of its age in respect to—

1. Its God.
2. Its rites and myths.
3. Its theosophy.

That is to say, it resembles the religions amidst which it arose, as closely as any two animals belonging to the same family resemble one another; and in many respects the resemblance approximates to that existing between specimens of the same genus or species. As the horse, the ass, or the zebra resembles, in all essential features, any member of the family of the Equidæ, so does Christianity resemble its contemporary religions in all its essentials. It does not possess a single characteristic which did not already exist in one form or another in some contemporary cult or current thought.

For our discussion we shall take these three points in order.

1. We observe, in the first place, that its object of worship belongs to that particular type of gods then in vogue. Its characteristic deity, as we all know, is a suffering and a dying God—a crucified Christ. The notion that a dying and a re-ascending God was something *sui generis* (something of its own kind, totally new and distinct from anything known before) is as historically false as the myths of Genesis or the legends of classical lore. The dominant and living cults of the age were those of dying gods. The worship of the older gods, like that of Jupiter, had become formal and moribund; but the cults of dying gods throbbed everywhere with the instinct and the pulse of life. These deities are usually referred to as redeemer gods or saviour gods, of which indeed, there were two kinds—viz., vegetation gods and solar gods. These are often grouped together under the title of "Nature Worship." In a sense, both orders were vegetation and solar, only that in the first kind their vegetation character was placed in the foreground, while their solar aspect was implied rather than expressed; whereas the strictly solar deities were primarily sun gods and came to wear an aspect of the former more or less through adoption and assimilation of their rites and myths.

Of the first order were the celebrated cults of Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and Dionysus. These were at first local cults, but later their worship had spread throughout the Roman world, and they were worshipped everywhere. Of the second order, the most celebrated were those of Heracles and Mithras.

What, then, were the main characteristics of these nature and saviour gods?

1. They were all of a secondary order and newer divinities. They were the "rising generation" of

deities; for gods, be it observed, are born, flourish, decline, and die. It is, as Mr. J. M. Robertson points out, the law of divine as well as of human superannuation. The younger gods supplant the supreme deities and usurp their thrones or otherwise supersede them. Such is the history of Uranus, of Saturn, and of Jupiter. And such would have been the fate of Jahveh but for the compromising policy of Pauline Christianity.

The legends and myths which surround their respective births and infancies reveal a semblance which betrays a kinship of origin and descent. They were all at birth either human or semi-human, and all had an earthly career of some duration. They were thus divinities "near at hand," in close touch and sympathy with mankind. In all cases, save, perhaps, that of Attis, they had a god for a father and a human for a mother. In birth, as in conception, they were the objects of divine solicitude and care. Their birth was beset with obstructions and perils, and survived in each case only through some miraculous intervention.

A more noted characteristic is the fact that they all met a violent death in their efforts to benefit mankind. Osiris, as king of Egypt, devoted his life to civilizing his subjects, polishing their morals, giving them beneficent and salutary laws, and teaching them agriculture. When he had completed his reforms at home he travelled through Asia for the purpose of effecting the same reforms in those parts. Alas! on his return, he was secretly murdered by his brother Typhon, who, during his absence, had wickedly sown the seed of sedition to rob him of power and to undo his reforms. He, moreover, cut up his body in fragments, put them in a chest, and cast them into the Nile.

The fate of Dionysus was similar. He was called Zagreus, which means "torn in pieces," because his body suffered that fate as a child by the order of Juno.

Attis was mutilated and died; while Adonis, as everybody knows, was slain by a boar. In each case the god-man or god-child was brought to life again, and in some form or other was raised to heaven by the supreme Deity and installed as a God, henceforth to receive divine honours from those whom he had benefited and blessed.

In all these essentials the Christian Deity is paralleled in one or other of these cults. He was semi-human, having God as a father and a woman as a mother. The circumstances which marked his birth were as abnormal and as bizarre as were those that marked his conception. The former was attested by supernatural signs and wonders, and was witnessed only by shepherds, as was the case with the birth of Mithras. His birthplace was a stable, and his cradle a manger; his infant life was beset with obstacles and perils; Herod sought to slay him. His youth is a blank, and practically every alleged event which goes to make up the year or so, facetiously called his "life" or "career," can be paralleled from the cults which gave this one being. In the main, these events consist of encounters with the Devil, with demons, and with people who opposed his divine mission; of supernatural phenomena in attestation of his divinity; of miracles displaying his magic power over disease and demons; and of events connected with his tragic death, his triumphant resurrection, and his glorious ascension to the heaven of the supreme Deity, where he is installed for evermore as a God himself. That, in outline, is the "life" or "career" of every dying and re-aring God.

KERIDON.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

Lord Inchcape is coming in for a good deal of Christian abuse for having had the courage to let out a little of the truth about the missionaries. And if the abuse does not deter him from hitting back, it may serve the purpose of letting other public men know that to tell the truth about anything connected with the Christian religion will involve unpleasantness and loss. It is in this way that the Churches manage to induce newspaper editors to shut out anti-Christian opinions, teach candidates for parliament and public bodies to play the hypocrite concerning their own opinions on religion, and generally to cast a cover of sheer humbug and moral cowardice over the whole of public life.

One "answer" to Lord Inchcape appears in the *Hull Daily Mail*, and it is typical of many. A preacher—name not given—is cited as saying that he was for ten years in China, and has seen hundreds of thousands of gallons of whisky, brandy, beer and wine unloaded, which cargoes were carried by the P. & O. He suggests that Lord Inchcape's criticism of missionaries is motivated by the fear that they may gain control in China, in which case all this trade would be lost by the Company. The present position of Christianity in China is hardly such to make even the wildest believe that missionaries will be in a position to dictate terms within the next thousand years or so, and the idea that the P. & O. is seriously concerned for its carrying of a particular article to China is too ridiculous for words. Besides, if it is true—and we believe it is—that thousands of gallons of Christian-made intoxicants are carried to China, how comes it that the missionaries are so silent about the iniquity of the traffic? We do not find them vocal about it when they return home on furlough. The Churches when appealing for funds for the missionaries do not denounce it. It is only when someone lets out a little of the truth about missionaries that the Christian preacher retorts with "You're another!" Which may be right or wrong, but it certainly puts these Christian teachers in a very unfavourable light.

The dead hand is in evidence in the will of the late Sir Adolph Tuck, chairman and managing director of Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons, Ltd., Christmas card makers. Any child marrying a person not of the Jewish faith will forfeit all interest under his will. It is rather ironical when we remember the veneration, real or assumed, of Christians for Christians, and the source of the substantial fortune of £321,638 largely made out of the demand from Christians for Christmas cards. It is one of life's little ironies.

If the churches continue at the rate they are progressing they will, to judge from what they display, be almost human in the near future. Like the late Alfred Lester, in "The Arcadians," they have taken to having mottoes, and one could be seen up Charing Cross Road, "It is always worth while to be 'just somebody's friend.'" There is hope for them if they proceed on these lines, but we imagine that where they once could threaten they now have to wheedle.

Mr. Ivor Novello, the popular film actor has, according to a daily paper, been very busy "altering heaven" in "Lilliom." It is very possible that he would have had a hell of a time in a matter of this description at one time when the Jeremiahs were in full song. The alteration eventually developed into cutting the scene out altogether, and this was explained by one of "God's policemen."

"Gadfly," of the *Daily Herald*, in replying to a Scottish minister, "ventures to suggest" that in his view "the Christian ethic, if it were genuinely and generally acted upon, does not pre-suppose honest poverty or nice, rich men to act kindly towards honest paupers." "Gadfly" has a way of his own of reading Holy Writ. It evidently consists in ignoring the

Christly injunction to the rich man to "sell all thou hast and give to the poor," a piece of advice that quite obviously pre-supposed plenty of honest paupers willing to accept the rich man's charity, and thus enable him to win a seat in heaven.

Miss Barbara Low, of the British Psychological Society, recently lectured on "The Cinema and the Child Mind." A critic of the cinema, she said, had described it as being a drug or a sedative; certainly it was an instrument that made the least possible demand on the human mind. There was the minimum of mental activity compared with a vast amount of gratification. These statements ought to suggest to the parsons how useful the cinema would be for religious propaganda. The dope, the medium, and the type of mind are all of a piece. If the parsons can manage to bring the three together we shall be inclined to regard the result as the working of Providence.

A recorder of a daily paper takes exception to the Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux's attack on women's dress. He thinks Church dignitaries would be better employed arousing the public conscience against the manufacture of death-dealing instruments as preparation for future war. He must be remarkably innocent if he imagines the public conscience is likely to be aroused by clerics. There is no record of their having protested, as spokesmen for their Churches, against any of the social evils that have so far been eliminated. And only a half-wit would expect them to become suddenly active concerning the suppression of war. In this connection it is interesting to read Dr. F. W. Norwood's recent statement:—"It seems to me that the Church of to-day is condemned because of its lack of anger concerning war." He adds that only anger will bring us peace. It will be done in the white heat of a great moral indignation. True; but in saying all this, what an indictment of the Church and its creed Mr. Norwood is presenting to the world! The Church pretends to specialise in moral indignation. Yet during the hundreds of years it has existed, it has failed to find in its God-inspired creed that which could kindle a great moral indignation against war. We leave to Mr. Norwood the job of explaining that awkward fact away. Thomas Paine gave the world a practical plan for eliminating war. But the peoples of the nations would have none of it. The Churches had filled them with too much moral indignation against the heretic for them to listen.

The *Church Times* solemnly calls attention to the growing anti-Christianity of the Labour movement in this country. This will be very painful to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and those others who have tried so hard to persuade the Churches that they were real Christians. We sincerely trust that the *Church Times* is justified in its warning and its dread.

Our noble Press, the ecclesiastics' lackey, has a wonderful sense of value. It gives the League of Nations a minimum of publicity, but it is willing to devote columns of clerical advertisement to boosting the Churches and their patent nostrum. Mr. J. Murray Allinson, in the *Spectator*, complains that the Press is doing practically nothing to arouse public interest in the League. He has been making an analysis of the newspaper references to the League during the past year. He finds that publicity depends mainly upon the connection of the League with some incident or person which attracts world notice; in the intervals the League is virtually ignored. There is nothing very astonishing in that. The Churches are merely a megaphone that emits sloppy phrases about Peace in the abstract. The League is a piece of practical machinery for ensuring Peace. The one talks about it, the other works towards it. And naturally the Press, with the quaint sense of values it has, prefers to help the talker rather than the doer. Maybe the wealthy proprietors have an uneasy recollection of how difficult it is for the camel to get through the eye of the needle.

The beautiful Middle Ages must have been beautiful as Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. Hilaire Belloc frequently remind us. From a book *The Magic of Herbs*, by Mrs. C. F. Leyel, a cure for leprosy is given. After reading it one wonders if God's help was needed, as the concoction would appear to cure anything.

Get the roots of the red dock, the roots of the clacampane, honeysuckle leaves, wild hyacinth, broom sprigs, bugle, violet heath, shieldfern and avens; pound them well together in a mortar with unsalted butter, boiling them well, removing from the fire and straining through new linen; add thereto a portion of flour of brimstone and verdigris. Anoint the diseased part frequently with this ointment, and by God's help it will cure it.

The Rev. James V. Wilson, Sneyd Vicarage, Burslem, Staffs, through a letter to the *Church Times*, has incurred the displeasure of that paper. He sees plainly and writes so, that the paper sides with the "no more war" idea when it is popular, and sees nothing illogical in sympathising with Italian Imperialistic schemes. It is ancient history that the Church, Catholic and Protestant, has used, and does use, the sword and the lily, both in the wrong place—probably by instinct. If the Church is not big enough for the Rev. James V. Wilson, perhaps the world would not come to an end, if he left it.

It may sometimes happen, especially with those who accuse Freethinkers of flogging a dead horse, that we do not represent the Christian case fairly and squarely. We are living, according to the calendar, in the twentieth century, and we give herewith in full a paragraph taken from the *Church Times*, January 7, 1927:—

We have no sort of sympathy with Mr. Sheppard's suggestion that the priest should dress as other men, because the priest is not as other men. He is set apart for a work of immense responsibility, which demands from him sacrifices that are not asked of the laity. *He has been dowered with ghostly powers* (our italics), which carry with them awful responsibility. His high calling secures for him a peculiar respect, and it is right and proper that this calling should be made obvious by his dress, as well as in his behaviour. It is unseemly and unfair to the laity for a priest to go about the world disguised.

The only comment we have to make on this, although we could make a hundred, is, that the readers of the *Church Times* must be mesmerised if they can take that seriously.

In a book review in the *Outlook*, we learn that water-power is more discussed in modern Spain than is the "Immaculate Conception." It is never too late to make a start on the road of commonsense, but Spain has a lot of lee-way to make up.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell thinks a lot of Lord Beaverbrook's advertising stunt, community singing. He regards it as a cure-all for economic ills. "People," says he, "like to sing: it cheers them up, makes them happy. Unemployment and bad temper can both be cured by the spirit of song. 'Let us sing our way into prosperity in the coming year.'" This is the kind of useful advice parsons have always on tap. It is never very helpful, but it sounds well. Mr. Campbell appears to believe that making a more or less tuneful noise will fill empty stomachs and find jobs. We hope the leaders of the nation have something other than such empty optimism as this to guide their efforts in solving national difficulties.

A firm of removers informs its would-be patrons that it has removed 40 clergymen from South London to the entire satisfaction of everybody. We are not surprised. If the firm wishes to have a list of clergymen who could be removed with a similar result, they should apply at the office. The people in the place to which they are removed must take their luck. Perhaps they may be fortunate enough to pass them on.

The Rev. Canon Smith, Principal of Ely Theological College, mournfully admits that "the old gospel of salvation seems to have lost its grip." Worse than that, "men do not feel the need of Christ, because they have so largely lost the sense of sin." What Canon Smith says is perfectly true, and becoming truer every year; but the reverend gentleman is blind to the fact that men are giving up religion because they have outgrown it, and realized how fundamentally false its teachings are. It is very easy to assert in the pulpit that Christ is the light of the world, but even the Canon unwittingly concedes that the claim of the Church is an empty tale, because "the great unbelieving world is still with us," after nineteen hundred years of Christianity.

In his "New Year's Message" the Archbishop of Canterbury tells us that we have entered this new year "in the mood of disappointment." Then he significantly adds: "We do not feel that we are standing upon a height, but in a valley. We are disappointed—even humiliated." We utterly fail to see how Christians can possibly feel otherwise. There is not a single sign anywhere that Christ can win and save the world. Everywhere the Christian cause is distinctly on the ebb. Whatever power the Church ever possessed is now conspicuous only by its entire absence. In theatres and music-halls the clergy, when mentioned, are usually only laughed at.

What do the young men and women really think of our Churches and Sunday Schools—when they think of them at all? asks Mr. Henry B. Saint in the *Sunday School Chronicle*. This gentleman can find the answer in the fact that the majority of young men and women stay outside these organizations.

A daily paper reader wants Judas Iscariot included in the Bible's great men. Speaking personally, we have always regarded Judas as the one Bible worthy most deserving of pity. He was fore-ordained to do the Betrayal act. He was made to suffer agonies of remorse for having done what he couldn't help doing. And what is worse, he was urged to put an end to his miserable existence before he had had time to get decently drunk with the blood-money he had been compelled to earn. Poor Judas! He carried out his part of the divine scheme, and all he got for it was, 2,000 years of Christian execration.

Signor Mussolini has been presented with a piece of wood of the Cross on which it is believed Jesus was crucified. Some relatives of Pope Benedict XV. have made the gift. Accompanying it is a certificate vouching for the authenticity of the relic. It is to be hoped that all the other owners of these authentic relics will not follow suit. If they do, Mussolini will need a house as big as the British Museum to store his treasures in.

The Christian era has a character of its own, says a *Times* writer. Still, if it is truly repentant, it will no doubt be able to live it down in the course of time.

It is a common assertion of parsons that the Christian religion has been the chief means in stamping out cruelty to animals. How true is the claim can be judged by an incident recorded as happening in Portugal some time ago. The Lisbon police arrested a number of men found selling blind singing-birds. The poor birds had had their eyes put out to make them sing better. In due course the men appeared before the bar. The judges were ready to condemn them, but they found that there was no law under which the bird-torturers could be punished. The Portuguese Christians were so insensitive to animal suffering that they had never given the prevention of cruelty a thought. Yet the Christian religion had dominated the people for centuries!

The Rev. Professor E. Waterhouse believes that the intellectual outlook is at present more favourable to religion than it has ever been before. "Materialism is

dead, and dogmatic unbelief is stricken to death." This is his New Year's word of cheer to Sunday School teachers. Other eminent pious gentlemen who also send a message don't seem to share his optimism. Sir Albert Spicer thinks the teachers' work is to-day more difficult, and bids them take fresh courage, stronger faith and more earnest prayer. Sir Edward Sharp says their task is far harder than it has ever been. "The enemies of the Christian faith have now taken the offensive." (They seem to have some kick in them, though they are "stricken to death"!) Dr. R. F. Horton urges the teachers to go on faithfully—brighter days will come. And Dr. A. E. Garvie dolefully tells them: "The bright hopes that were cherished in 1919 have not been realized." From all this we gather that Professor Waterhouse's diagnosis is a misfit; and that unbelief is still alive enough to need the Blasphemy Laws to be kept on the Statute Books, and Christian Evidence lecturers to continue infidel-slaying.

Dr. Garvie, speaking recently at Leicester, the capital of a fox-hunting county, reminded the hunting gentry that hunting was the earliest and very lowest stage in man's development, and had no hesitation in saying that the county fox-hunters were getting back to that stage. We agree. But we will add that, what Dr. Garvie says about hunting applies equally well to the pastime of worshipping the supernatural, to which he is an earnest devotee.

At an English Church Union meeting to be held on January 13, a resolution will be moved by Prebendary Leary, and seconded by Sir Henry Slesser, protesting against the admission of Nonconformist and other unlicensed preachers to Church of England pulpits. The object of the resolution, we understand, is to demonstrate to the world that Christian sectarian differences are now things of the past, and that Christian union will soon be a fact.

Dr. Dimsdale Young tells the readers of the *Sunday News*, "You can afford to pay little attention to us parsons and to churches." But the majority of readers don't need this advice—they already practise it. That is why Dr. Young, and all the rest of the parsonic scribes, are so busy trying to arouse public interest in the creed that supplies them with a comfortable living. The reverend gentleman also assures us that "Christ is no kill-joy." We'll take his word for it. But we wish he would explain where all the rabid kill-joys got their notions from.

The Prime Minister is having great difficulty in filling the vacancy in succession to Dr. Bardsley, who left the diocese of Peterborough. The nominal salary is £4,500, and there is the usual talk about the heavy expense of the upkeep of the palace. This, *mes amis*, is a sample of religion without money and without price, and also an example of following one born in a stable, as you were told yesterday, but we expect you have forgotten by now.

Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, Educational Director of the Phelps Stokes Fund, New York, classifies religion in his latest book, under the heading of "recreation." This seems a good shot, and we feel sure that many congregations, out of respect for the parsons' feelings, keep up the game of pretence. After all, it is a nuisance to be all dressed up and nowhere to go.

Owing to a violent snowstorm, the Archbishop of Toledo was held up on the railway. All that his Eminence and his fellow-passengers had to eat for 36 hours were a morsel of dry bread and half a sardine. Here was a good chance missed for a miracle, and from all signs at home, our churches have realized the truth of the old tag: "If you would live and thrive, you must learn to advertise." And now the great question is, will the Churches swallow the Press or will the Press swallow the Churches?

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

THIS Fund has taken a jump forward this week, but we still have a long way to go. Still, we can get to the journey's end in good time if we will, and there will be some weeks yet before this special appeal closes. Mr. J. Petersen, who heads the list this week with £50, repeating his donation of last year, writes from far-off Noumea, complaining:—

You do not appear to have taken seriously my suggestion to assess all previous subscribers to the Endowment Fund. But to prove that I meant what I said I have instructed (my agents) to forward £50 as before. If you put the proposition to all previous subscribers you will find that most of them will be able to repeat. The *Freethinker* must and shall be put on a genuine footing. See what is happening in the U.S.! When I lived in California no one would have thought such a thing possible.

We do not plead guilty to the charge. We have invited all and sundry to repeat their gifts, in order to close this Fund permanently, but we cannot make them do so. And the past year has been a bad one for most people. Anyway, there is Mr. Petersen's suggestion, and he has backed it up well himself.

We have to add to the list of promises that of Mr. and Mrs. Kerslake, who promise 13s. quarterly till the Fund is complete. Mr. Walton writes from South Africa and fines himself two guineas per month till the Fund is completed, and Mr. R. C. Proctor promises to double his present subscription before the year is out. So it is quite evident that some of our readers are getting quite "warm" on the matter. We hope it will incite others to outdo them. Mr. J. W. Wood makes the suggestion that Freethinkers should start a Home Endowment Bank, in which they could place contributions, sending the total on at regular intervals. Mr. J. Wearing, who promises 1s. per week to the Trust, finds himself ordered to China and sends on 10s., so that he shall not fall into arrears. That is a real sense of duty; and we appreciate very highly the spirit that lies behind it. If all were animated by the same feeling our job would be tolerably easy.

Previously acknowledged, £791 4s. 2d. J. Petersen, £50; J. Wearing, 10s.; D. Winterton, £1; H. E. Anderson, 5s.; J. Fergusson, 2s. 6d.; J. Dow, 2s. 6d.; W. J. Lamb, £1 10s.; C. S. Knight, £3; E. W. Uel, £1; E. A. McDonald, £1; S. R. Blake, 5s.; W. and Annie Kerslake, 10s.; T. Saunders, 10s.; H. Silvester, 10s.; J. W. Hayward, 5s.; S. R. A. Ready, 4s.; Postman, 2s. 6d.; Major C. Watson Smyth, 5s.; H. Topp (Senr.), 2s. 6d.; A. W. Coleman (2nd sub.), £5; Platypus, 3s.; V. Wilson, 5s.; V. H. Smith (3rd sub.), 5s.; In Memory of F. W. Mathie, 10s. 6d.; A. E. Dee, 4s.; G. G., £1; W. Blake, 2s.; G. Robertson, £1; W. Napier, 7s.; E. Whitehorn, £2 2s.; T. Taylor, £1; E. Williams, 1s. 6d.; D. Walton (S.A.), £2 2s. 6d.; R. C. Proctor, 15s.; W. Collins (2nd sub.), 5s. Total, £867 10s. 8d.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and addressed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Every contribution will be acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A contemporary relates a story told of Mr. Gladstone. He whispered to his wife one morning in Church during the sermon, "I can't hear what that preacher is saying." "Well, never mind, dear," answered Mrs. Gladstone, "just go to sleep. It will do you more good."

Special.

WE are at present engaged in revising the list of our postal subscribers. Many of these, both at home and abroad to note, are in arrears, and we are in doubt as to whether they wish to have the paper continued. Naturally, we are loath to stop sending, as whether paid for or not, the *Freethinker* continues to do the work for which it is intended. But that is not enough to pay our weekly expenses, and we cannot continue sending the paper indefinitely on these terms. Every subscriber, so soon as his subscription has expired, receives a gentle hint in the shape of a green wrapper, but that does not always do the trick. We are therefore asking all subscribers who are in arrears to be good enough to remit, as early as is convenient, or if they do not wish us to continue sending the paper kindly to drop us a card to that effect. We have, no doubt, that carelessness will account for very many of those whose subscriptions are overdue, but that does not make it easier at this end. Paper-makers, printers, compositors, etc., insist upon being paid regularly no matter what difficulty we have in meeting their claims.

To Correspondents.

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

REV. DESMOND MORSE-BOYCOTT.—Sorry your letter did not arrive in time for this week's issue. Will appear next week.

E. A. P.—Discussing the question of whether the Pyramids were built to foretell the history of the world is like discussing prophecy. It either finds a man mad or leaves him so. We do not think we are mad at present, and have no desire to reach that stage, so take reasonable precautions. Whatever more perfect state man is developing towards must be here. He would not fit any other.

J. G. GARRICKSON.—We are pleased you appreciate our policy in not permitting discussions on economic and political questions in these columns. We have forwarded your letter to Mr. Bryce, and he will probably write you.

J. ROBERTSON.—Thanks for New Year's wishes. Hope the weather will be good tempered enough to permit your coming to Glasgow at the end of February.

A. W. COLEMAN.—Sorry to hear of your sister's illness. Our best wishes for her speedy recovery, but there is a terrible amount of sickness about just now. The Lord is also paying his children special attention.

E. A. McDONALD.—You are not far out in considering the application of reason to all departments of life as constituting the essence of civilization. The main difference between the savage and the genuinely civilized person is mainly one of mental outlook. Cynicism is a very cheap attitude. There is so much in life at which one can sneer, but there is also much to admire, and on the whole it grows better.

A. MILLAR.—We agree with what you say as to the amiability and general worthiness of our late shop-manager, Mr. Vaughan. We had every expectation of having his services for many years to come.

I. WILLIAMS.—N.S.S. membership form sent. Persistency is the one thing that tells with propaganda.

D. D.—There is plenty of Atheists in the Army, and many of them regular readers of the *Freethinker*. During the war instructions were sent out that a man's statement concerning his religious position, whether Atheist or theist, was to be entered as stated. Could you supply us

with details of a case where a man wishing to join the Army has been refused because he declined to have himself written down as a member of one of the religious bodies. It is astonishing that Christians do not mind what kind of a lie a man tells so long as it favours their creed. Thanks for getting new subscriber. That is your New Year's gift to Freethought.

D. C. E55)7.—Cuttings are always welcome. Thanks.

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.

Mr. Cohen was unable to fulfil his engagement at Leicester on Sunday last. For more than thirty years he has gone down to Leicester by a Sunday train, which left round about 3 o'clock. This train was such a regular feature that he never dreamed of consulting the time-table. But since his last visit to Leicester, in October, some time in December, we believe, the Company decided to run a train at 1.20, and then nothing till 6.30. So when Mr. Cohen arrived at the station he found a crowd of people as fellow sufferers—ready to travel but no means of transport. This is the second time in 36 years that Mr. Cohen has failed to keep an engagement. It is not a bad record, but he regrets the second one.

Next Sunday (January 23), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester, afternoon and evening. Manchester friends will please note.

We have received several letters from friends announcing that they have managed to secure their New Year's subscriber to the *Freethinker*. But we want to hear from a great many more. It can be done if all make up their minds that it shall be done.

We are asked to announce that the Birmingham Branch will hold a Social and Tea, on Sunday evening, January 23, at the Enfield Café, Great Charles Street (opposite the White Horse Hotel). The tickets are 2s. each, and may be obtained of the Secretary, Miss S. Dobson, 6 Daniel's Road, Little Bromwich. We trust there will be a good gathering, and few absences from the 'Flu.

Nature, however simply observed, or imperfectly known, is in the degree of affection felt for it, protective and helpful to all that is noblest in humanity.—*Ruskin*.

Havelock Ellis.

Havelock Ellis: A Biographical and Critical Survey, by Isaac Goldberg, with a Supplementary Chapter on Mrs. Edith Ellis. London: Constable.

If the judicious reader thinks there is a tendency at present to overdo the biography, and to immortalise the ephemeral, he will find nothing to grieve over here. Mr. Isaac Goldberg, an American who wrote a particularly interesting account of H. L. Mencken, has here shown himself a capable handler of wonderfully varied material, the output of a rare genius covering about half a century of years.

Henry Havelock Ellis was born at Croydon in 1859. He wrote his first book when he was twelve. Neither pious, precocious nor priggish, the early days of young Ellis were about the same as those of the average Suburban boy of the period. School-life fortunately was interrupted in his case by a voyage round the world, and at the age of 16 he made his second long voyage, this time to settle down in Australia.

Ellis's biographer finds a great deal of the autobiography of part of Ellis's life, in a lately published book, *Kanga Creek*, one of Ellis's few ventures into the realm of story-writing.

He matriculated at Sydney University, became Assistant-master at Burwood, and in 1877 had a private school of his own at Grafton. From Grafton he went to take charge of a Government school at Sparkes Creek (presumably the original of *Kanga Creek*).

Shelley was his "idol" from his fifteenth year. Mr. Goldberg properly does justice to this predilection of young Ellis for one of the greatest of poets. But to the ordinary Freethinker, Goldberg's description of Shelley sounds particularly artificial and bordering on the absurd, "not only a great poet but a religion, a sort of Saviour of the World. The boy has something of the same sort of personal feeling (for Shelley) that genuine Christians have for Jesus." Still one must make allowance for youthful hero-worship, and there never was a poet who appealed more to receptive-minded youth than Shelley.

Havelock Ellis's translations from Heine and his numerous references to that fine soul "more than a poet, a man striving for freedom, a thinker striving for free thought," indicate very clearly the firm rock on which Ellis's intellectual temple is built. I use the word "intellectual" in the sense in which good materialists use it, the sense which made Blake say:

For a tear is an intellectual thing.

There never was a more inclusive definition than Havelock Ellis's striking phrase: "The fruits of this scientific spirit are sincerity, patience, humility, the love of nature, and the love of man."

What years ago it seems since I first read *The New Spirit*, in Walter Scott's edition, and all my interest in life and literature seemed to rise and greet the author in gratitude, sympathy and affection for introducing the reader to the pioneers whose names glorify the chapter headings, and to the author of the introductions.

I had a little shock of surprised delight to see *The New Spirit* on a bookstall at a French railway station a few days ago. It is a far better preface to Ibsen than Shaw's *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, which must have frightened away many a potential Ibsenite. And Ibsen is only one of the giants of thought herein expounded.

Mr. Goldberg does not give much space to Ellis's early connection with the Mermaid Series—unexpurgated editions of Elizabethan plays, which could not have been issued in such a form at that date without publisher and editor possessing considerable courage.

Ellis's editing the *Contemporary Science Series* led the way to his great *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*.

I notice that a weak-minded critic has only recently accused Ellis of "a tendency to dwell upon excrement," a foul blow which is as ignorant as it is malicious.

Havelock Ellis was fully qualified by education, diplomas and temperament to undertake one of the most important of all human studies. For purity of language, reticence where desirable, and for accuracy of observation these books at the present time command and receive the respect of every psychologist. Some of them are still the only handbooks of their subject. All of them have been confirmed by competent investigators, and are quoted as authorities by all the acknowledged specialists. If one could say all this about any other six monumental works of reference the author of such a set would be acclaimed as a master indeed. At least he would be beyond the reach of the petty insult quoted from the most pretentious of literary organs of to-day. But Havelock Ellis wrote of *Sex*, perhaps worse still, of its psychology, in pioneer days, before Freud's school (or schools) made psycho-analysis an irresistible fragment of speculative theorisation. Ellis suffers the fate of the pioneer: he is still insulted, and his scientific presentation of essential facts must continue to be produced and published abroad.

It is difficult to understand why England should boycott such treatises as Ellis's. France and Germany naturally look up to Ellis with sincere admiration. But America, where we imagine Puritanism to sit enthroned, has never boycotted Ellis. I was prosecuted in 1898 for selling *Sexual Inversion*. In 1903 I bought a copy of the same book at the Baptist Church Book Store in Chicago. While you find to-day the *Strand Magazine* publishing Conan Doyle's latest Ghost nonsense, you can read the American *Red Book* giving its readers monthly instalments of Judge Lindsey's outspoken candour about marriage, adultery, and so on.

It is only that abominable critic, already referred to, who makes me emphasize the value of this wonderful side of Havelock Ellis. The more I study Ellis the more I am convinced that he is the sanest and most keenly alive all-round thinker in contemporary life. Compared with him many of the "great" names of to-day are as bottles of soda-water compared with Niagara. Ellis is as fearless in reckoning literary reputations as he is in his pioneer sex-studies, and if he shocks you by preferring Heine, Burns, Byron, and Shelley, to the great Goethe, he gives you convincing reasons which leave you satisfied with a new angle of thought. During the war, too, Ellis was one of the few who kept their heads and endeavoured to draw men's minds away from the fleeting passions of the moment to the abiding principles by which mankind lives.

"Patriotism and war," he said in 1915, "are not human facts. They are merely abstractions, much as those ancient theological conceptions of Godhead and Trinity, for the sake of which once Catholics and Arians so gladly slew and tortured each other. But as soon as the sunshine of real humanity makes itself felt, the metaphysics of Patriotism and War are dissipated as surely as those of theology."

There speak the poet, the scientist, the humanist and the pioneer. These are exactly what Havelock Ellis is.

Mr. Isaac Goldberg is a pioneer too, and I heartily congratulate him on his successful appreciation of a very great man.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

More Reminiscences.

ON the appearance of my previous "Reminiscences," in the issue of December 19, I received a note from my fellow-contributor, Mr. H. B. Dodds, saying that these were "altogether delightful," and asking: "Why not write some more?" Mr. Dodds, I might mention, is an intimate, personal friend of mine; we live in the same town, and manage to run across each other about once in every five years. (After all, there is something to be said for the Church, as its members can see each other at least once a week, and even twice, if they attend the week-night prayer-meeting.) I am noticing this laudatory effusion of our friend, because he must have forgotten for the moment that he was a Freethinker, and imagined himself—and me—to be just common, ordinary mortals. To the ordinary mortal, such flattering recognition of his efforts would be like a draught of new wine, and repeated doses of it would have a tendency to give him swelled-head. What is called the approbative desires—the love of praise, esteem, and distinction—are perhaps the strongest of all the human weaknesses. But the Freethinker is like the Pharisee of old, he is "not as other men," and neither expects, nor receives (except rarely), any praise for his efforts. As far as my memory serves, this is only the second time in twenty years that any Freethinker has so far forgotten himself as to notice my humble productions. And I have been estimating that by the time any *Freethinker* contributor received sufficient such notices to induce any symptoms of swelled-head, he would just about have reached the age of Methuselah. But, after all, it is perhaps the writer himself who derives the greater pleasure from his own creations.

My friend's note, however, reminded me that I, too, had once been guilty of a like indiscretion. It, also, was an impulsive act on my part, and I did not stop to consider the effect it might have on the writer's vanity and conceit. Fortunately, it turned out all right, and the result was as happy as it was unexpected. A year or two ago, I read an interesting article from the pen of our good friend Mr. Vincent J. Hands, and happening to see his address in the same number of the *Freethinker*, I wrote him expressing the pleasure I had derived from its perusal, and suggesting that, if ever he was in Newcastle, he should give me a call. Mr. Hands replied, thanking me, but saying there was no possible likelihood of his ever carrying coals, or anything else, to Tyneside. But the fates ruled otherwise. In a few weeks I had a further letter from him, asking me to get him some "diggings" here, as he was coming North in the interests of his firm, for about a month. This was my introduction to Mr. Hands. And those readers who have had experience of his genial personality, his conversational abilities, and his broad and sympathetic outlook on all matters of human interest, will understand how well I was repaid for a simple note of appreciation. And the fact that our relationship was further cemented by business interests added doubly to the pleasure.

One of the Sundays during Mr. Hand's visit, I suggested that we should go and hear Annie S. Swan, who was billed to speak at St. James' "Forum," on the sex question. The title of the address was: "Facing the Facts." For Joe thought it would be rather interesting to hear how Annie faced the facts. (Why any gentleman with the imposing name of Vincent should elect to be called "Joe," is one of those little idiosyncrasies which pass my comprehension. Of course, we all know, as a gentleman of the name of Shakespeare once remarked, that a rose by any

Nature has given us no knowledge of the end of things.
—Cicero.

other name would smell as sweet. Still, I recollect Mr. Foote once giving it as his opinion that the unfortunate name of Jacob had been a serious handicap to Holyoake all his life.) So we set off in good time to the meeting in order to obtain a front seat. But, lor', bless you! we couldn't get within a quarter of a mile of the building. Along the line the signal ran that the church was full; every seat was occupied, the aisles were packed, and they were hanging on to the pulpit rails. Not only was the church crowded, but the street approaching, for about a quarter of a mile, was filled with females of all ages: old women, middle-aged matrons, and young mothers, spinsters in the December of life, demure young women, who looked as if they had never been kissed, and young girls in their teens. Their dejected look of disappointment was pitiful to behold; but I am afraid it was the humorous aspect of the situation that appealed to Hands and myself. Scanning the vast concourse of disappointed hearers, and thinking of the crowded church, I said to Hands: "Joe, the long-expected revival in religion has at last begun." But his knowledge of female nature was evidently more profound than mine. He was certain that it was the appeal to the curiosity of the sex instinct alone that had aroused such female interest. He even doubted whether an address on the Virgin Birth would have had the same result. Perhaps he was right. Having failed in our attempt to hear Annie "Facing the Facts," we went into the park and smoked a few Woodbines.

A few days after this, a parson friend of mine called at my place. He had not come to discuss theology, as he knew me to be one of the incorrigibles. You see, I had known him when he travelled in the lard and bacon line, before he became an expounder of the esoteric meaning of fables. Besides his ministerial duties, he acted as the editor of a combined Presbyterian Magazine, and regarded me as a possible victim for an advertisement. I said: "I believe business is rather bad in your line, Ambrose." He replied that it was, that there was nothing like the demand for their goods there used to be. "Well," I said, "I want to give you a tip that will buck the business up considerably." His eyes lightened up, as if he saw a coming boom. "If you will give Annie Swan an invitation to speak on the sex question, I think I can guarantee that your church will be filled to overflowing." But he only greeted the suggestion with a wry kind of smile. I make any other preacher, with an eye to business, a present of this suggestion.

We have all read in the story-books of a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Timbuctoo, and fell among savages. I once made a similar journey, and fell unexpectedly among some stalwarts in the Freethought cause. The war was responsible for a good deal of shuffling of the cards in the game of life; and many of us found ourselves in strange places, which we only knew on the map. And it so happened that I found myself in a little Midland town, of which I knew nothing, except the fact that they had a first-class football team. I was temporarily domiciled with some very kind people, of the Methodist persuasion, with whom, out of deference, I went to chapel on the Sunday morning. In the afternoon, I was sitting enjoying the sunshine in the back garden, and thinking over the vile and ignorant attack of the morning preacher on the gentle faith of Buddhism. The next-door neighbour was also in his garden, which was only separated by an open pathway. We got into conversation. "I've been to church this morning," I said. "Ah," he replied, "and so you've been to the Pork-Chops Cathedral." In reply to my look of enquiry, he said that it was called so as most of its members were

butchers or in the allied trades. It did not take us long to find out where we both stood. "Look," he said, "you come out with me to-night, I want to introduce you to some friends." He took me to the house of a most charming couple: "Here's a *Freethinker* man come to see you," he said. And there was no mistaking the genuineness of the welcome I received, which was the prelude to a happy, social evening, which lasted till nearly midnight. I found that, like my friend, they were both fervent admirers of Mr. Cohen and the *Freethinker*. Our host's conversation was an intellectual treat, while the hospitality of his good lady was generous and free. I had arrived in the town feeling like a stranger in a strange land, and quite unaware that I possessed a passport which would admit me to such a charmed circle. I had never thought of myself as "a *Freethinker* man," and had no idea that the phrase possessed such magical properties. Their kindness will always remain a pleasant memory. The next day my friend took me to another Midland town, and arriving at a certain house, he again repeated the magic formula: "Here's a *Freethinker* man." And here, I want to put on record something which I have never been able to explain to my own satisfaction. When we entered this house, the huge table was bare, except for the cover. But almost before the word *Freethinker* was out of my friend's mouth, the good lady had the table filled with a choice selection of the most tempting viands that ever graced a dinner-table. And the peculiarity of the feat was this: there was no fuss or noise, no running back and forward to the kitchen or larder, no rattling of dishes or jingling of cutlery, no sudden making of mustard or filling of the pepper-box—it was just as if my friend had said, "Here's a *Freethinker* man," and she had replied, "Dinner is served." I have been to seances where flowers materialized in mid-air, and where roast turkeys were produced out of the necks of whiskey-bottles, and other similar feats; but I have never seen anything that equalled the dexterity of this Freethinking lady conjuror. I have sometimes wondered whether my observant faculties were not for the moment in abeyance, or some spell of unconsciousness possessed me; but I can assure the reader that I am honestly recording my impression at the time. My friend was a great favourite here, and we spent a most enjoyable afternoon. These good people's kindness, of which I cannot speak too highly, I nevertheless regarded not so much as a personal compliment to myself, but as a genuine tribute to the power of the *Freethinker*, and the esteem in which they held its able and illustrious editor.

Not the least part of the pleasure of that day's excursion was the journey home. Where my friend had collected all the curious Yorkshire yarns which he spun for my entertainment during the long railway ride, I can only conjecture; but I have often retailed some of them since to the delight of many a larger audience. There is only one other railway journey that stands out in my memory with anything like the same distinctness. It was in the days of romantic boyhood, in a journey from Edinburgh, when a dainty, little unknown slip of a girl laid her tired head on my youthful shoulder, and, like little Bo-Peep, fell fast asleep, pinning me a prisoner until such time as her little ladyship should chose to awake. That was a long, long time ago; but I can still smell the intoxicating odour of her curly locks. This, however, is leaving the prosaic subject of Freethought experiences, and entering the enchanting realms of romance.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Irrationally held truths may be more harmful than reasoned errors.—*Professor Huxley.*

The Dead Horse.

Why do we continue the flogging?

The news vendor's boy mistook a three for a two, with the result that two periodicals, intended for a neighbour, were delivered to me. I had no use for one, which dealt with the cinema. A taste for the "movies" has to be acquired and I have never been able to bring myself to sacrifice time, that might be spent at the theatre, in order to attain an appreciation of an art limited in its appeal to the sense of sight.

But the other periodical, the *Christian Herald*, was of sufficient interest to cause me to purchase a copy. I was surprised. It was my own fault, of course; for years I had failed to keep in touch with the religious press, and I had imagined that that press had moved with the times. Yet here was a paper maintaining a position calculated to have been abandoned by all but abject idiots years ago.

Under the heading "Good Stories," there was held what appeared to be a "tall" story competition. The best one contained in the issue of December 30 was, I should judge, the following:—

VISION DURING AN OPERATION.

Dr. F. B. Meyer, preaching at Mansfield, said he had lately met a case of a man at Bristol who had to undergo a very serious operation. The doctor wished to administer an anæsthetic, but could not guarantee that the patient would not die while under it. The man said: "I want to meet Jesus with a clear brain, so I will bear the pain without the chloroform." He was laid on the operating-table face downwards, and was just able to see over the edge of the table. Just as the operation began, the patient saw a vision of two pierced feet, and he knew there was a Figure standing there who owned the feet—Jesus Himself. During the whole of the operation the man was oblivious to the pain of the operation, and, in fact, could not believe that it was done. In three weeks he was completely restored.

This, after eighty years' usage of chloroform as an anæsthetic.

The issue would not of course have been complete without a "converted Atheist" story. It appears that a "number of years ago," in Dublin, a certain unnamed but well-educated gentleman, who was neither a drunkard nor one who lived an openly wicked life, became known as a speaker at Secularist and Infidel meetings; he gave lectures and engaged in debates all tending to show that religion was a myth. Startled one day by the words, "Are you living for eternity?" uttered by a Salvation Army officer, he found "the peace which passeth all understanding" in a week. It is unfortunate that Freethinkers should be so careless of their lecturers that this one should disappear without their noticing the loss.

So the *Christian Herald* goes on. Luke, we are told by the Rev. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, is now recognised as amongst the most careful and exact historians that the world has ever known. Somebody's "Garmments of Health" will cure everything from Anæmia to Varicose Veins. A lady reader appropriately named Jay, writes, "if only everyone knew what can be had for twopence."

Perhaps the horse is not quite dead yet.

G. J. F.

Glasgow Secular Society.

Mr. James W. MacLean lectured to the Glasgow Branch on Sunday, January 9. His lecture, "From Plymouth Brethrenism to Rationalism," was the story of his own life. Mr. MacLean has been a Secularist and a worker in the Socialist movement for over 40 years, and members listened with close attention to his interesting and inspiring reminiscences. To young people an ounce of Mr. MacLean's example is worth a ton of parsonical precept. Next Sunday (January 16), will be an open discussion night on the subject, "Secularism and Politics."—F. M.

Correspondence.

JESUS AND MARX.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The issues raised by the Bryce-Garrickson correspondence give me the opportunity of pointing to two novel features in the evolution of Marxian philosophy and the Communist experiment.

Among the most recent works of historical criticism, such as *The Economic Background of the Gospels* (Grant) and *The First Age of Christianity* (E. F. Scott), the rise of Hebrew propheticized with its Messianic trend, culminating in the missions of The Baptist and The Galilean is treated in quite Marxian fashion. Renan has styled the prophets of Israel "open-air Socialists." These scholarly churchmen regard them as the product of Israel's political and economic depression, voices of the theocratic nations longing after a deliverer who should re-instate the ancient glory of Jahveh's elect people. The same writers marshal careful evidence of the economic misery of the Jewish people in the time of Jesus, the heavy Roman tribute, the still heavier burden of their own religious contribution—about 40 per cent. of the national income—the very restricted scope of their industrial and trading operations, all tending to breed impatience, restlessness, even a revolutionary temper. Without this economic background, these clerical writers seem to furnish proof, there would have been no suffering Messiah, no tender preacher of a kingdom beatific, no cross, no Jesus myth, no Christology. Marxians will be pleased and not a little amused at this confirmation of historical materialism from such an unlikely quarter.

Without seeking to discuss any of Mr. Bryce's numerous assertions as to working-class policy, it should be sufficiently obvious that no more adequate materialization of Marx's advocacy of "the political unity of the working class" could well be conceived than the General Strike, 1926. The failure and the breakdown of that mobilization of Labour forces was due to the absurdity of the anti-Marxians who initiated and then cancelled the strike.

As regards Communism the work of Lenin was essentially that of a realist, and was based upon the Marxian conception of economic force. Russian Communism, moreover, owes much of its persistence to the fact that the Slav peoples are by instinct less individualistic than the Westerns.

A Freethinker like Mr. Bryce should surely be grateful for the testimony the Bolsheviks have given to the Atheist attitude, since they were animated throughout by the reasoned conviction that no saviour of social millennium was "in the nature of things," but that upon their own energy and will power in intelligent, critical co-operation with their fellow Serfs was any new social order capable of being brought into being.

E. T. KERR.

MEDIAEVAL SUPERSTITION.

SIR,—William Cornelius Jones has just been hanged for the brutal murder of his young wife; but he is presumed to have died in the odour of sanctity with his soul washed perfectly white and prepared for Jesus, while his innocent victim, being "unprepared" at the moment of death, is, of course, doomed to eternal damnation. The good Bishop of Ripon administered the rites of confirmation to the murderer a week before the latter's execution, thereby humbugging him and others into the absurd belief that his crime was condoned by God—at the instance of the Bishop. It is surely time for the law to dissociate itself from such degrading and mischievous superstition.

E. G. ELLIOT.

Cover thine eyes and weep, O child of hell,
Grey spouse of Satan, Church of name abhorred.

—(The Monument of Giordano Bruno).

—Swinburne.

The Christian's Comfort.

WHEN the people will not listen to the Word,
And collections are an unimposing sum,
When the multitudes ignore us
There is comfort in the chorus
That shall tell them of the Wrath to come:—

Then it's hey! for the life that isn't long!
And it's ho! for the body that must rot!
And it's hey! nonny, nonny for the furnace
burning bonny,
And the Devil getting hell red hot!

There's a Day when retribution is assured,
When the sinner learns at last that he must die,
And we dash his hopes of glory
By reciting him the story
Of the camel and the needle's eye:—

Then it's hey! for the undertaker's hearse!
And it's ho! for the ashes in the urn!
And it's hey! diddle, diddle, hands across and
down the middle!
As the devils watch the damned souls burn!

There is sweetness in the sense of being saved,
There is blessedness in being born again,
But our greatest consolation
Is in calm consideration
Of the sinners in eternal pain:—

Then it's hey! for the brimstone and the pitch!
And it's ho! for a shovelful of coals!
And it's hey! derry, derry, for the devils making
merry
At the torments of the poor, lost souls!

Obituary.

It is with the very deepest regret that we announce the death of Councillor Frederick William Wood, of 68 Jeffries Road, Clapham. He had not enjoyed the best of health for some considerable time, and death relieved him of his suffering on Tuesday, December 29. Being a son of the late Fred Wood—well known to an earlier generation of Freethinkers as Bradlaugh's cabman—it was only to be expected that his association with the Freethought Movement should date from his earliest years. To a vast circle of friends in South London he was noted for his genial nature and sterling qualities. Our friend was first elected to the Lambeth Borough Council in 1919, and remained on it to the time of his death. During his period of office his conduct was conspicuous for its independence; he never disguised his opinions whether political or theological, and never lost an opportunity of forwarding the cause he had at heart. To meet his wishes a Secular funeral service was held, when his remains were cremated at the West Norwood Cemetery. This final ceremony was attended by a large and representative gathering of South Londoners.—F. P. C.

Four Great Freethinkers.

- GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, by JOSEPH McCABE. The Life and Work of one of the Pioneers of the Secular and Co-operative movements in Great Britain. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).
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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON. INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road and three minutes from Camden Town Tube Station): 7.30, Debate: "Is the Marxian Theory Sound?" Affirmative, Mr. William Nicholls; Negative, Mr. G. Whitehead.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Miss Alison Neilans, "The Outcast Woman and the Law."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Pirandello's Plays."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. Robert Harding, "The Meaning of Religion." Thursday, January 20, at the same hall, at 7.30, a Social and Dance.

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, a Lecture.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3. Speakers—Messrs. Botting, Hart, and Piper.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Does God Exist?" Questions and discussion cordially invited.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Open Discussion—Subject: "Secularism and Politics." Silver Collection.

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Why Not Join the N.S.S.?

There are thousands of *Freethinker* readers who are not members of the National Secular Society. Why is this so?

Naturally all who read the *Freethinker* are not convinced Secularists. With all who are, and are not members of the N.S.S., there appear only two reasons for non-membership. (1) They have not been asked to join. (2) They have not thought about it.

Well, the Society now asks all non-attached Freethinkers to consider this advertisement as a personal and cordial invitation to join, and those who have not thought about it to give the matter their earnest and serious consideration.

For more than sixty years the National Secular Society has been fighting the cause of every Freethinker in the country. Its first two Presidents, Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote, were the most brilliant Freethinkers of their time, and they gave themselves unstintingly to the Cause they loved. It is not claiming too much to say that public opinion on matters of religion to-day would not be what it is but for the work of these men and of the Society of which they were the successive heads.

Many of the things for which the Society fought in its early years are now well on their way to becoming accomplished facts, and are being advocated by men and women who do not know how much they have to thank the Freethought Movement for the opinions they hold. The movement for the secularization of the Sunday has grown apace, and may now be advocated with but little risk of the abuse it once incurred. The plea for the more humane and the more scientific treatment of the criminal has now become part of the programme of many reformers who take no part in the actual work of Freethought. The same holds good of the agitation for the equality of the sexes before the law. Other reforms that have now become part and parcel of the general reform movement found in the National Secular Society their best friend when friends were sadly needed.

To-day Freethinkers have won the right to at least standing room. They can appear as Freethinkers in a court of justice without being subjected to the degradation of the religious oath. The abolition of the Blasphemy Laws has not yet been achieved, but it has been made increasingly difficult to enforce them. Thousands of pounds have been spent by the Society in fighting Blasphemy prosecutions, and thanks to the agitation that has been kept alive, the sister organization, the Secular Society, Limited, was able to secure from the House of Lords a decision which stands as the financial charter of the Freethought Movement. It is no longer possible legally to rob Freethought organizations, as was once the case. For that we have to thank the genius of the Society's late President, G. W. Foote.

The National Secular Society stands for the complete rationalization of life, for the destruction of theological superstition in all its forms, for the complete secularization of all State-supported schools, for the abolition of all religious tests, and for the scientific ordering of life with one end in view—the greater happiness of every member of the community.

There is no reason why every Freethinker should not join the National Secular Society. There should be members and correspondents in every town and village in the kingdom. The Society needs the help of all, and the help of all should be freely given.

This is intended as a personal message to unattached Freethinkers. If you have not been asked to join, consider that you are being asked now. If you have not thought about it before, think about it now. The membership fee is nominal. The amount you give is left to your interest and ability. The great thing is to associate yourself with those who are carrying on the work of Freethought in this country. To no better Cause could any man or woman devote himself or herself.

Below will be found a form of membership. Fill it up and forward to the Secretary at once

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President: CHAPMAN COHEN.

General Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

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