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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

Science and God.

The other day I had occasion to look up some illustrations of what I considered faulty reasoning by scientific men when dealing with subjects on which they were usually regarded as speaking with authority. These instances are fairly numerous, ranking from the medical man who, on the strength of one or two observations, and entirely neglecting the possible operation of unconsidered factors, issues a hasty generalization, which a few years sees decisively disproved, to the scientist, who when dealing with a religious topic entirely forgets the customary rules of scientific procedure. During my search I came across a pencil-marked passage in Professor Julian Huxley's *Essays of a Biologist*, published in 1923. The passage is in the closing essay, which bears the title *Religion and Science*. For some reason or other, Professor Huxley is anxious to make room for some sort of an idea of God, and for a use of the word *Religion*. His criticism of the idea of God, and of the origin of both that and *Religion*, is quite satisfactory, so far as it goes, but he is loath—as loath was the great Professor Huxley; to adopt the name of *Atheist*—to admit what all researches prove, namely, that "God" is based upon sheer misunderstanding of natural phenomena, and that, at least so far as its operations are concerned, Reinach was correct in speaking of religion as, "a sum of scruples impeding the free use of human faculty." So in the end, he tries to identify "God," with our conception of the sum total of our ideas of the forces of the universe, for which the only recommendation is that it keeps alive the name of God, and so saves a man from being ranked with those quite unfashionable people who have no kind of a God whatever. Although against that very doubtful benefit, there is the positive evil that the continued use of the name

does serve to keep alive all the harmful frames of mind that have by long association come to be identified with it.

* * *

A Plea for Irrationalism.

But if the words "God" and "Religion" are to be saved, it seems necessary to find some distinct place in the world for "Mind," in such a way that mental phenomena shall not be considered as arising out of non-mental in the same manner that Professor Huxley believes living matter to have originated from non-living matter, that is, by the mere transformation of pre-existing forces. So we have this passage, which I find I had marked when the book first appeared, as a sample of quite unscientific reasoning:—

With mind we find a gradual evolution from a state in which it is impossible to distinguish mental response from physiological reaction, up to the intensity and complexity of our own emotions and intellect. Since all material developments in evolution can be traced back step by step and shown to be specializations of one or more of the primitive properties of living matter, it is not only an economy of hypothesis, but also in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the proper conclusion, that mental properties also are to be traced back to the simplest and most original forms of life (*) What exact significance is to be attached to the term "mental properties" in such organisms, it is hard to say; we mean, however, that something of the same general nature as mind in ourselves is inherent in all life, something standing in the same relation to living matter in general, as do our minds to the particular living matter of our brains. But there can be no reasonable doubt that living matter, in due process of time, originated from non-living; and if that be so, we must push our conclusions further, and believe that not only living matter, but all matter, is associated with something of the same general description as mind in higher animals. We come, that is, to a monistic conclusion, in that we believe that there is only one fundamental substance, and that this possesses not only material properties, but also properties for which the word *mental* is the nearest approach.

Up to the words which I have marked with a star, the only thing to which exception may be taken is the implications of such words as "mind" and "mental properties." Colloquially the terms are quite permissible, but they are not so when there is the implication that in dealing with mind we are dealing with a *thing*, and that mental properties are the properties of this thing. If that be so, there is no need to argue further. The dualist, if not the supernaturalist, has established his case. But if we can trace mental properties back to a point at which it is impossible to distinguish them from physiological reactions, the question surely arises, why may not the

one be a further development of the other? In that case we should not be dealing with mental properties as properties of "mind," but as one aspect of complex physiological reactions. Professor Huxley's way of introducing the subject suggests that he is not quite clear on the subject himself, and his method of handling it will certainly not make it clear to others. For my own part I think that I could, on his presentation of the case, build up a fairly strong case for an up-to-date supernaturalism.

Life and Mind.

Life, Professor Huxley agrees, arises from non-living matter. That is, "life" is, scientifically, a function of matter at a particular stage of development. So, if "mental properties" stand in the same relation to the "particular living matter of our brains," as life does to matter, that is, in the relation of function of organ, then it is obviously wrong to speak of mental properties as properties of "mind." Mind becomes a general term covering a set of functions peculiar to an organism. Yet, once more, if it is to be taken for granted that living matter originates from non-living matter—a statement from which hardly any prominent living biologist would dissent, then surely the logical conclusion is that thought originates in living matter, just as non-living matter gives rise to living matter. But instead of this logical reading of the analogy, we are suddenly presented with the startling conclusion, that if we believe the living to have originated from the non-living, then we must conclude that all matter has associated with it something akin to what we know as mind in the higher animals. But if that is justifiable, why must we not also say that all matter has something associated with it which resembles what we know as life in animal existence? The one conclusion is certainly as sound as the other. The truth is, that Professor Huxley's conclusion has no relation whatever to his premiss. The premiss is that one thing develops from another, the development involving the appearance of new properties. The conclusion is that because there are new properties (*i.e.* mental as opposed to biological), therefore the mental properties must have been there from the beginning. That, I repeat, is an extraordinary conclusion for a man in the position of Professor Huxley to state. It is not warranted by the facts as he states them, nor is it warranted from any other reasonable point of view.

Keep to the Facts.

The conclusion is the more remarkable since a few pages further on it is correctly pointed out that man has to deal with three great categories of existence—the inorganic, the organic, and the psychic. (I do not like this word "Psychic," it is the stock-in-trade of men of the stamp of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and other disciples of unlimited credulity. Psychological is a better term inasmuch as it is free from the atmosphere of ghost hunting). Surely the fact that categories have been established is enough to clear the whole situation. Let it be clearly understood that a scientific category has nothing whatever to do with "ultimate existence." It does not say whether there is one form of existence or a dozen. It classifies phenomena and frames laws that correctly describe particular groups—which means arranging them in certain categories. It does this, first of all, by distinguishing two great groups, the inorganic and the organic. It finds that certain movements may be correctly described under what are known as laws of

physics. But at a certain point these laws of physics are no longer exhaustive. The interplay of forces have given rise to new phenomena. So certain other laws, laws of biology, are framed. But even these are not enough. Other changes take place, and other laws, mental or psychological, are framed. This principle applies to all scientific laws, and the need for a new law means that at that point something new has arisen, something not given in the formerly existing group of phenomena. And the new thing that emerges is not to be gained by any knowledge we have of the properties of the things from which it arose. This is the case with oxygen and hydrogen, which combined, form water. No knowledge we have of the properties of the two gases would enable us to deduce the properties of the combination. No observation of the behaviour of water would enable us to say how the separate factors would behave. Some philosophers, with an itch for spiritualistic terms, have called this kind of thing "creative evolution." I agree with Professor Huxley that a far better term is "emergent," although even that is not quite all that one would wish.

The Ghost of God.

Now, no one would be foolish enough to say that because we cannot predict the quality, say of wetness, from the known properties of oxygen and hydrogen, or Boyle's law from the known properties of water, therefore, we must assume that something in the nature of wetness must have been present from the beginning. And if not so in this case, or in countless others that might be named, why must we say that there is associated with matter from the beginning, something of what we call mind? Why not say that no matter what we are dealing with—physics, chemistry, biology, or psychology, we are warranted in assuming that we are dealing with a redistribution of existing forces? If we say that, we shall be in line with all scientific development. But it is not scientific to argue, on no evidence whatever, that there must have always been in existence something having both material and mental properties. That is certainly not Monism, although Professor Huxley appears to think it is. Monism asserts one substance of which mind and matter are both expressions, it decidedly does not assert a two-sided substance. All I can see in the passage selected for examination is that Professor Huxley has given way to influences he believes himself to have outgrown. Madame de Stael is not the only person who, while not believing in ghosts still remains afraid of them. There are plenty of similar cases, found in connexion with all sorts of subjects. But it is well to realize that, while one may deal as sympathetically as one pleases with the mistakes and blunders of mankind in its endeavours to reach the truth, it is serving mankind but indifferently well to consecrate its blunders by finding elements of truth that are not there, and never were there. The ghosts of men, in all probability, gave rise to the being of gods, and now the ghosts of gods dog and hamper the feet of men.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Unless we can eliminate war it will be the death of civilization and of all that makes life—individual life, communal life, international life—worth living.—Lord Oxford.

Let me have the child and I will answer for international peace.—Sir James Parr.

"Elmer Gantry."

(Concluded from page 259.)

LAST week's article on this subject closed with a bare reference to the fact that at one time Dr. Gantry had been engaged in several evangelistic campaigns as assistant to Miss Sharon Falconer, the famous woman revivalist. It will be remembered that on being dismissed from Mizpah Theological Seminary for drunkenness and immorality, he obtained an appointment as travelling salesman for the Pequot Farm Implement Company, a position he held for two years. During this period his interest in religion never waned, and whenever he reached Denver, his headquarters, he enjoyed "a drunk, a theatre, and service in a big church." At Sautersville, Nebraska, a town with a population of 20,000, he was informed that Miss Falconer, a woman evangelist, was holding meetings in a tent. The hotel clerk sang her praises with enthusiasm, claiming that she compared favourably with Moody, Gipsy Smith, Sam Jones, J. Wilbur Chapman, and "this new baseball evangelist, Billy Sunday." Elmer's observation was emphatic: "That's nonsense. No woman can preach the gospel." He scoffed at the whole affair, saying "Great snakes! Regular circus lay-out! Just what you'd expect from a fool woman evangelist." In spite of his bitter scorn he went to hear her, with the result that he fell desperately in love with her. At the close of the sermon, Sharon Falconer appealed to the new converts to repair to the penitent bench, and one of those who did so was Elmer Gantry. It was the evangelist's custom to lay her hands on the head of each convert, and when she came to Elmer, she said to him in a voice that thrilled him, "Brother, won't you find happiness in Jesus?" Instead of lowering his head and sobbing, like the others, he "looked straight up at her jauntily, seeking to hold her eyes, while he crowed, 'It's happiness just to have had your wondrous message, Sister Falconer.'" She scarcely noticed him, but turned white and passed on without saying a word to him. He was disappointed, but not discouraged. He said, "I'll show her yet." She had an assistant, an Anglican clergyman, with an ugly past, called Cecil Aylston, to whom Elmer did not take kindly at all, saying, "To hell with him. There's a fellow we'll get rid of." At last he managed to waylay the evangelist herself, whom he addressed thus:—

"Sister Falconer, I want to congratulate you on your wonderful meetings. I'm a Baptist preacher—the Reverend Gantry." "Yes? Where is your church!" "Why, uh, just at present I haven't exactly got a church." She inspected his ruddiness, his glossiness, the odour of tobacco; her brilliant eyes had played all over him, and she demanded: "What's the trouble this time? Booze or women?" Why, that's absolutely untrue! I'm surprised you should speak like that, Sister Falconer. I'm in perfectly good standing. It's just—I'm taking a little time off to engage in business, in order to understand the workings of the lay mind, before going on with my ministry."

What a barefaced yet plausible lie, but Miss Falconer believed his statement and gave him her blessing. Then she went to meet her committee, tossing him an "unsmiling smile" as she raced away. The man of God felt hurt and swore, "Damn you, I'll catch you when you aren't all wrapped up in business and your own darn-fool self-importance, and then I'll make you wake up, my girl." On another occasion, when he thought she had forgotten who he was, he reminded her that he was the Reverend Gantry. "Oh—yes, you're the Presbyterian preacher who was fired for drinking." That afforded him a magnificent chance to exercise his

amazing gift for lying, and he said, "I'm the Christian Scientist that was fired for kissing the choir-leader on Saturday." In the end they became bosom friends, and he made arrangements for all her evangelistic missions.

Nominally the supreme aim of these evangelists was to bring lost sinners to Christ to be saved for eternity, but really they were out to feather their own nests, which they succeeded in doing extremely well. They were both notorious liars. Elmer's lies are well known. Truth-speaking was a miracle he seemed incapable of performing. And we have the following confession by Sharon Falconer:—

I am also a good liar. You see I'm not a Falconer. There ain't any. My name is Katie Jonas. I was born in Utica. My dad worked in a brick-yard. I picked out the name Sharon Falconer while I was a stenographer. I never saw this house (her home in Virginia) till two years ago. I never saw these old family servants till then—they worked for the folks that owned the place, and even they weren't Falconers—they had the aristocratic name of Sprugg. Incidentally, this place isn't a quarter paid for. And yet I'm not a liar. I'm not. I am Sharon Falconer now. I've made her—by prayer and by having a right to be her. And you're going to stop being poor Elmer Gantry, of Paris, Kansas. You're going to be the Reverend Dr. Gantry, the great captain of souls.

All evangelists are not liars in the same sense as Sharon Falconer and Elmer Gantry were, but there is a sense in which they are all liars. They are guilty of delivering false messages about God, whom they do not and cannot know, and about the character and destiny of those to whom they dogmatically address themselves.

Sharon Falconer perished in a disastrous fire, but Elmer rescued himself from that fire, and lived to become eventually the pastor of the large Well-Spring Methodist Church, in the well known city of Zenith. Let us look at him for a moment. Brilliant gifts were his in great abundance, but the virtues and he were total strangers. His love intrigues with women formed a prominent feature of his career. During his first ministry at Schoenheim, he made furious love to Deacon Bains' daughter Lulu, whose heart he completely won. They were engaged to be married; but he soon got tired of true-hearted Lulu, and wickedly deserted her. She married a cousin, whom she did not love, her whole heart being Gantry's. Years later, when he was at the height of his popularity in the city of Zenith, Lulu and her husband lived in the suburbs, and one Sunday attended his church, and had an interview with him at the close of the service. He asked for and obtained permission to visit them at their home. He called when the husband was out, and this is what we read:—

They stood recalling each other in the living room. He muttered huskily, "Dear, it wouldn't be wrong for you to kiss me just once? Would it? To let me know you really do forgive me? You see, now we're like brother and sister." She kissed him, shyly, fearfully, and she cried, "Oh, my darling, it's been so long." Her arms clung about his neck, invincible, unrestrained.

The two played the lovers once more, meeting regularly at the church. The liaison lasted until Lulu was superseded by another woman, for the time more attractive than she. And so the reverend gentleman went on from one love intrigue to another to the very end of the story. He was a married man and the father of two children, and his treatment of wife and children was marked by the utmost neglect and cruelty.

And yet, this hypocrite, secret drunkard, liar, lecher, and thief, was a tremendous success as a preacher of the Gospel, who availed himself of every

means, legitimate or illegitimate, to increase his popularity. Some of his methods were openly unscrupulous and unfair. For example, he alleged from the pulpit that the city was on the eve of moral bankruptcy, that immorality was so rampant among all classes of citizens, that the clergy must do more than denounce and warn evil doers. He communicated with the most important clergymen in the town, inviting them to meet with him to form a Committee on Public Morals. Ultimately the idea of appointing such a committee fell to the ground, which pleased Dr. Gantry immensely. He said: "I am tickled to death. First I've scared 'em off the subject of vice. Before they get back to preaching about it, I'll have the whole subject absolutely patented for our church. And now they won't have the nerve to imitate me if I do this personal "crusading stunt." In that hatefully selfish spirit he did undertake to carry out the "crusading stunt" to cleanse the city from the forces of iniquity. He was allowed to act as chief of police and employ detectives, with the result that he succeeded in getting several houses of ill fame closed. On Sunday evenings the church was not half big enough to hold the crowds who were eager to hear detailed accounts of the wonderful work for God accomplished by the Rev. Elmer Gantry, D.D. Here we have a moral reformer who was himself in private life an egregiously immoral man. In reality his one object in life was self-advertisement, self-eulogy, possible only to a man wholly without a conscience.

We are now confronted by a most important question, namely, is it possible for a thoroughly wicked person sincerely to believe in Christ and act as his minister? The answer is distinctly in the affirmative. Many instances of its actuality have frequently occurred. As a matter of fact, religion and morality are two entirely different things, and the apparent connexion between them in Christendom is purely artificial. Here is an office-bearer in a church, who is looked up to as a man of special integrity and superior piety, whose gift in prayer is fascinating, but who at the same time is secretly engaged in swindling his fellow-members and others out of large sums of money, and then, fearing public exposure, flees to foreign parts. Benvenuto Celeny was at once a saint and a murderer. But neither Elmer Gantry nor Sharon Falconer was even a believer. On one occasion the latter said to the former: "I like you! You're so completely brazen, so completely unscrupulous, and so beautifully ignorant! I've been with sanctimonious folks too much lately." Both were perfect hypocrites except to each other. And yet the United States contained no more successful workers for God.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity's Greatest Shrine.

The freethinking of one age is the common sense of the next.—*Matthew Arnold.*

Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely.—*Macaulay.*

THE Church of the Holy Sepulchre, at Jerusalem, is the greatest shrine associated with the Christian Religion. It is before the alleged sepulchre of Christ that the Greek Church ceremony of the holy fire takes place, the most exciting and suspicious scene, perhaps, that can be witnessed in any place of worship in the world. It falls, annually, on the Saturday preceding the Greek Church Easter. The rotunda and galleries are packed with an excitable mob composed of many sects of Christians, and including Greeks, Latins, Armenians, Copts, Abyssinians, and others.

These large numbers of Eastern Christians swarm to Jerusalem from all parts of the near Orient, and try to fight their way into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to attend this weird religious rite. Under Turkish rule, a strong force of Mohammedan soldiers, with fixed bayonets, try to keep peace, but in spite of the efforts of these armed men, many thousands of worshippers have at different times lost their lives in the frenzied scramble to light torches, tapers, and candles from what is called the "Holy Fire."

The common belief, fostered for many centuries by the priests, is that at a certain moment at Easter fire descends from "heaven" to the "holy sepulchre," where it is received by the Greek Patriarch, and this "holy fire" is handed from candle to candle, torch to torch, lamp to lamp, so that lights from the original fire can be taken home by worshippers and burnt before their favourite saint's image, or ikon.

In keeping with the annual faking of the fire, is the shrine of the "Holy Sepulchre" itself. Instead of the simplicity and dignity of a tomb, there is a purely ecclesiastical setting and barbaric gilding and embellishment. A combination of the Albert Memorial and a toy-shop at Christmas, it is probably the most sensational and striking religious spectacle to be witnessed. It is not the least of the many ironies associated with this greatest of Christian shrines, that the keys of the church itself are held by a Mohammedan family, who lock the building up every night and open it in the morning.

The faking of the holy fire is the work of the priests of the Greek Church, the most venerable of the Christian Churches. The priests of the Roman Church are no more honest than their rivals. The annual liquification of the blood of Saint Januarius at Naples, and the shrine at Loretto, Italy, are cases in point. The riddle of Loretto is easily read by all but Roman Catholics. The faithful are actually invited to believe that the house in which the Virgin Mary brought up her family at Nazareth remained there for thirteen hundred years. This, remembering the customary perishable qualities of dwelling houses, is an astounding story, but religious faith is capable of an even greater strain. The story continues, that the angels became alarmed for the safety of the old homestead, and, failing an appeal to the magistrates, they intervened on their own sacred account. One day the house vanished, leaving not a brick behind. The kind-hearted angels had carried it across the Mediterranean Sea to the Coast of Dalmatia, where it remained three years, whilst the angels recuperated at a celestial nursing-home. Then the angels again pulled together and took the house across the gulf of Adriatic to Loretto, which story is as true as the "gospels."

Loretto was especially favoured by the celestial powers. It possessed not only the Virgin's house, but an image of the august lady herself, which was nearly as old as the building. The story goes that the image was carved by an old friend of the family, better known as "Saint Luke," and as one of the authors of the gospels. Its shrine was one of the religious show-places of the world. Among other adornments the image had a gold crown, set with diamonds and rubies, the gift of the pious Queen Christina of Sweden. During the Napoleonic wars the shrine was looted, and the image stolen. This time there was no angelic intervention, probably on account of extreme age. The image was restored later, when Napoleon made terms with the Pope.

If a sceptic asks whether this foolery is justified, one can only point out that the revenues of this shrine were estimated at £12,000 yearly. The Loretto image has been credited with similar "miracles" to those of Lourdes and other popular shrines, which

miracles can be explained by those who have made a study of faith-healing and nervous disorders. All miracle-workers, however, it will be noted, whether Roman Catholic, Christian Scientist, or otherwise, stop short at the restoration of an amputated limb.

This child-like credulity is passing wonderful in grown men and women. To study it is to essay an inquiry into the psychology of a crowd, and a very ignorant one at that. Let there be no mistake on this point. Roman Catholics are mainly ignorant folk. They are not allowed to read any books and publications criticising their religion. They are told that by doing so they are in danger of eternal damnation. Even colporteurs of Protestant Bible Societies are ill-treated in Roman Catholic countries, for a zealous Papist will no more read a Protestant version of the Bible than he would read the dreadful pages of the *Freethinker*. No Roman Catholic may even become a Freemason, because priests object to all secret societies other than their own. If a Catholic young man attends a Freethought or Socialist lecture, he sins more grievously than if he stole his employer's money. As for the priests themselves, they are only educated in the patter of their profession, and few, indeed, have any real knowledge of modern thought and culture. In the whole sad procession and pageant of human folly, there is no more contemptible figure than that of the petticoated priest who cheats, lies, and grabs, and retards the progress of civilization in order to exploit mankind the more effectively. If only we could sweep them all away, and allow men to work out their own salvation without reference to superstitions which hinder and retard the dawn of a new era!

MIMNERMUS.

"Sour John Knox."

In the back end of last year I listened to a course of lectures on the French Revolution, delivered by a Methodist parson. That subject should have given a parson of any persuasion an opportunity of harrowing the minds of his hearers with grisly details of Atheism in action, but our parson is a *rara avis* among preachers. His idea of a "revival" in the Church was, he said, with the development of intelligence, with clear thinking among his flock, and the lectures were spoken with that in view. He had to deal with Freethinking ideas and with Freethinkers, and did justice to both. His estimate of Voltaire was sane and tolerant. He painted in glowing terms his fight against the "Infamous," and paid a full measure of justice to the spirit of enquiry that prepared the way for the Revolution. Neither did he hesitate to defend the shedding of blood when a people are struggling to be free from either political or ecclesiastical tyranny. One of his chairmen sought to discredit the bogey of respectable Britons by seeing a parallel between the excesses of the French Revolution and Bolshevism, and piously held up his hands in horror at the thought of bloodshed. The back-handed slap the parson dealt out to him should have kept him busy thinking for the rest of the evening. "Time," said the speaker, "has never vindicated tyranny, it has over and over again vindicated revolution, and bloody revolution at that." And to hear Thomas Paine extolled from a Methodist pulpit is a good omen, and I put the Reverend Cheyne-Chaddock on a nice little pedestal. He even got the congregation to sing the Marseillaise at the end of the course, but they made a sad mess of it. It could hardly be otherwise; the English version lacks the revolutionary spirit.

Then with the "revival" still in mind, he is delivering a series of lectures on some of the more famous of English writers and others. Here is where he seems to have left his freethinking tendency at home. "Francis of Assisi," who abandoned everything in order to indulge in moony-eyed sentimentalism, was raised aloft as a truly religious reformer. That on "Charlotte Bronte" was marred by an access of generosity. The author of *Jane Eyre* excelled in every virtue, but, in passing, the freethinking Emily was noted as writing what was perhaps the greatest work ever achieved by a woman. Emily Bronte hadn't the fame that fell to her sister, but she soared to heights never glimpsed by Charlotte, and plumbed depths seldom reached by man. "Browning" was another of the lecturer's subjects, and "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world" seemed to sum up the philosophy of the poet. I've never read a line of Browning, but I'd damn him at a venture if his views of things are anyway like what the lecturer avowed they were. "John Knox" was the subject the other Wednesday night and, naturally, the Church was filled. Knox, sour John Knox, was a man after their own hearts, and I didn't notice the mention of any blemish on the author of the Scottish Reformation that wasn't excused and passed over. He was the originator of every good thing that Scotland possesses, and this presentment of questionable history along with some equally questionable reasoning, brought my Methodist parson toppling off the nice little pedestal I had got specially for him.

Knox was undoubtedly the great man of the Reformation. He had no great courage, although it was said over his grave that he feared the face of no man, but he had a firm belief that he alone could interpret the will of God; the mental outfit of a bigot; and when he got hold of power he used it as a bigot invariably does, to the detriment of his fellows. The lecturer defended Knox's intolerance, assuming that his intolerance was of things false. The criterion of truth, of course, was Knox's convictions; the voice of his conscience, which in turn was assumed to be the voice of God. This attitude, which is at the bottom of all religious persecution, was a characteristic of Knox and his followers. His conscience—or the voice of God—declared that images or art of any kind about the Churches was of the devil, and the destruction of beautiful things in Scotland at the beginning of the Reformation was nearly as bad for the nation as the persistent belittlement of joy and laughter afterwards. The speaker intimated that the havoc was caused by the rabble that hangs on to the skirts of every party, but Knox, in a private letter, claimed the credit of the destruction at Perth for the Brethren, although in his history the mob got the blame. The idea of violence was familiar to Knox. He preached assassination for those who differed from him in religious matters, although very few of his adorers mention the fact, and he had sat at the feet of the man who had meanly done Servetus to death.

Before setting down some little proof of the blighting effect of Knoxism on Scotland, one of the lecturer's minor contentions is worth considering. He condemned the Queen Regent for her duplicity: suggested that she was habitually insincere and bent on subjugating Scotland to the will of Rome. That, of course, was understandable in a Roman Catholic, but she had something which Knox missed altogether and that was a measure of tolerance in a time when that good quality was generally laughed at. She had also a contempt for the men of God, who, like Knox, were forever ramming the deity down the throats of unwilling subjects. She wanted to quieten

the bigots and adopted towards them an attitude of amused indifference. When Knox sent her a tirade in which she was likened to some of the less virtuous ladies of the Scriptures, she handed the epistle to a courtier with the remark, "Pray you, my lord, to read a pasquil," which, coming to the ears of Knox, sent that worthy off the deep end. He sought to get even by accusing her of wantonness and of an attempt to poison her husband, not a word of truth being in either. Lying, for what he conceived to be the glory of God, was nothing strange to Knox.

After a vain struggle to get hold of the wealth of the old Church which the Scots nobles had commandeered—it was the prospect of that plunder that made the Reformation possible—God's elect settled down to make Scotland truly religious. In reading the annals of the time which followed, one flounders through a mass of venomous religious controversy. Knox, it is true, made provision in the Book of Discipline for schools, but, such as they were, Roman Catholics can take credit, along with Knox, for their creation. It was the money of a Romanist that made the University of Edinburgh possible, but even then it was as a drop in the bucket. Knoxism undone most of the good results of the college, and the years that followed were barren of every good thing in an intellectual way. Buckle says that Knox and his preachers kept the idea of liberty constantly in front of the people by their scorn of those in high places. It is rather a fact that the idea of liberty persisted in spite of them, just as it had been in existence, in a pronounced way, before he commenced his crusade. Knox started restricting liberty immediately he got power; when he was lacking it, he was forever appealing to God to take vengeance on his enemies, and he assured his friends that their personal participation in the removal of Papists from this world had the sanction of God—his God. There had been some signs before the Reformation of the growth of a new literature, but the belief in an infallible book destroyed whatever there was, and the intensive study of that had as a result a period of witch-burning that outdone anything of the kind in either Protestant or Catholic country. And that the degradation was well nigh complete is evidenced by the fact that there was an almost total lack of popular compassion for the victims: mostly old and lonely women. This lust for blood lasted for nigh two hundred years after the prophet of God had passed away. In 1607 his kin were hanging a mere boy, in Edinburgh, for professing deism and urging the Privy Council to purge the land of witches. During this time the intellectual output of the country was an avalanche of theological writing, hardly a volume of which has now the value of waste paper. The eighteenth century had been well under way before the blight showed signs of disappearing, and then it was due to the same spirit of enquiry that rang up the curtain on the French Revolution. And, as always, the theological temper was the stumbling block in the path of progress. Scotland paid for John Knox with two centuries of intellectual and moral stagnation.

H. B. DODDS.

Advertisers undertake a grave responsibility in keeping alive all the newspapers of the country.—*Lord Birkenhead.*

If I wrote my memoirs, not a man would henceforward leave for war.—*M. Clemenceau.*

Acid Drops.

Mr. Sydney A. Moseley undertook an investigation into Spiritualism, apparently under the usual delusion that all he required was to be on the look out for fraud, but with no preparation in the way of an understanding of what was going on under his very eyes. He finished his examination with the conviction that there was nothing in it. That might well have been the end of the matter. But his next step was to inform the readers of the *Sunday Herald*, that while nothing he had seen had impressed him, he was willing to believe in Spiritualism on the strength of the testimony of certain journalistic friends who had assured him that they had been in communication with their dead relatives. So he accepts Spiritualism on the evidence "of the few whose judgment I can trust."

Now that is a fine example of the truth of what we have so often said, namely, that Spiritualism has no better friends in the world than those who offer those who are attracted to it the alternatives of fraud or spirits. Here is the case of Mr. Moseley, one out of a very large number, who finds himself up against the testimony of his own personal friends, in whose honesty he had every confidence, who say that, without the paraphernalia of the professional medium and the rigged-up room, they have been in touch with dead friends. Naturally, in the absence of the right kind of knowledge he and his friends accept one of the alternatives that these expositors of Spiritualism have offered them. None of them realize that the essential question is not whether certain mediums are frauds, but whether the experiences of the ordinary Spiritualist admits of a quite natural and materialistic explanation. We are not surprised that the public exponents of Spiritualism rush so eagerly to reply to the advocates of fraud, but remain altogether silent to the genuine scientific explanation that is offered. The advocates of fraud, as the sole explanation of Spiritualism, fail in their work, because they do not even touch the personal experience of ninety per cent. of believers in Spiritualism.

Lord Sydenham thinks that Francis Bacon is the greatest genius England has produced. We trust that his lordship's preference will send the *Daily Express* readers—and writers—to Bacon's Essay "On Superstition."

Miss Anne Nichols is attempting to square a circle in her play, "Abie's Irish Rose." We are told that every Jew in the piece is played by a Jew, and every Irish character by a Hibernian. Perhaps the stage, will, after all, succeed in doing what tons of faction and dispute about words have failed to bring about—the glimmering of an understanding between races. As Disraeli put it, "one half the world worships a Jew, and the other half a Jewess"; if the proof of belief were as easy as why water finds its own level there might be something to be said in its favour.

Charley Chaplin is expected to visit London in the autumn. It is to be hoped he won't roam about attracting public attention on Sundays. The all-conquering Churches of Christ have a hard job to fill some of the pews in the ordinary way, and if Charley gets drawing the multitude away from the Churches there will be a sad falling-off of clerical takings. The mighty Gospel can't compete with a cinema hero.

Civilization will go out in the flash of the next war unless it learns the lessons of the last, says the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard. Well, if the parsons continue obscuring common-sense facts with silly clap-trap about war being antagonist to God's will, and such like puerilities, the lessons of the last war will very likely not be learned. The peoples of the world need educating with plain facts, and not to be bemused with theological jargon.

During recent weeks a series of revival services have been conducted in St. George's Cross Tabernacle, Glasgow. A great revival of interest in religion is expected, says a pious paper. The good people of the Tabernacle will, we fancy, be able to cherish their expectation for a goodly number of years hence. It is all they are likely to get to cherish.

The emancipation of Chinese women from the cruelty of foot-binding, says the *Baptist Times*, is mainly due to the work of missionaries. Tell us another. The missionaries had about as much to do with this emancipation as the home gospel-experts had to do with the emancipation of English women from the cruelty of tight-lacing.

To say "Eat More Fruit" cost the Fruit Traders' Federation, last year, £40,000. But the return showed the expenditure was justified a hundred-fold. Advertising, provided you can deliver the goods and have something people will like, evidently pays. To say "Come to Church" has cost the Churches the Lord knows how much. But the return for the money and energy spent has been practically nil. Evidently the public has no objection to buying bananas, but it won't take the Churches' spiritual fruit though they give it away. The man-in-the-street is tired of mental indigestion.

The *Sunday School Chronicle* has been graciously advising the B.B.C. on "how wireless might help the Sunday School." The B.B.C., in reply, points out, seemingly, that it is doing its best in this direction, but the nature of the broadcasting organization and the limitations of time make the work difficult. A pious writer thinks that debates on religious subjects would be very difficult to carry out. Conflicts of opinion, he says, in the religious realm are never very edifying, and to broadcast them might result not only in unpleasantness, but might even harm religion itself. For the same reason, he adds, matters of political and industrial controversy are also barred. Obviously, then, the best way to help religion and the Sunday School and to avoid unpleasantness as well as harm to religion itself, is for the B.B.C. to permit professional and other religionists to broadcast Christian arguments and to prohibit all Freethought reply. That is a thoroughly Christian way of doing things, and it is in perfect accord with Christian notions of fair-play and free speech.

Our Sunday School contemporary also remarks that the Christian and humane spirit of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry has now flowered in an entirely new conception of the right social attitude to the criminal. Society, it says, no longer strikes viciously at the unfortunate or malignant wretch who breaks its laws. It realizes that evil is not sufficiently explained by attributing it entirely to an evil disposition. That is a thoroughly Christian way of looking at the reform. We are to infer that the new social attitude is entirely the result of Christian endeavour. Whereas the fact of the matter is that the above-mentioned humane reformers, with the help of other men and women, Christians and non-Christians, had to struggle hard to remove the orthodox Christian notions about "sinners" and how they should be treated. If the orthodox Christian notions had remained, there would have been no prison reform and humane treatment for delinquents. The Christian reasons for striking viciously at the criminal would still have dominated men's minds. It is the slackening hold of Christian ideas that has made the "right social attitude" possible.

At an inter-denominational Conference, at Bloomsbury, on the subject "Christ and Peace," there appeared to be some desire that the Churches should approach the question of international peace from the new angle of organized resistance to war. The theme of one speech was, "No more recruiting sermons!" Dr. Orchard said, "the Church dare not risk another

war." From this, one infers that Freethought criticism has made itself felt. The high plane of thought occupied by Dr. Orchard should be apparent to all. He is not particularly concerned with war regarded as a colossal stupidity. What worries him is that the last war and the part played in it by the Churches have killed people's belief in a loving God and in the Christian religion and its priests. This is a terrible thing to happen, thinks he; let us therefore condemn war, lest we lose our remaining customers. During the past 2,000 years there have been hundreds of Christian wars. But the Churches never condemned war. Only when their interests are threatened do they suddenly discover war ought to be condemned.

A correspondent in a pious paper condemns the reading of Sunday newspapers, on the ground that they contain topics not best suited for a Christian to read on the Sabbath. The Christian, he says, can surely set apart one day when his mind can be especially centred on God's Word and like matter. Sunday newspapers, in the lump, are, we freely admit, pretty poor stuff for anyone to read, Sunday or week-day. But this correspondent objects to a Christian reading anything but the Bible and pious works on Sunday. He thus rules out books produced by our noblest minds and finest authors. And so he is presenting a plea to revive the silly prohibition of secular reading-matter, once current among religionists of former Christian generations. That prohibition helped to produce an unlovely type of Christian, ignorant and intensely narrow-minded. Heaven forbid that he should be revived, or, where he exists, encouraged. Life has been so very much sweeter since his numbers dwindled.

Reviewing the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Treatment of Young Offenders, a Sunday School journal points out that, in the Report, the most notable fact is a complete swing over from blind repression and crude penalties to sympathy, understanding, and humane treatment. The general principle accepted is that it is not original depravity which is the cause of delinquency, but adult ignorance, cruelty and vice. Furthermore, the close connexion of disease with crime is declared, the young offender needing at times medical examination and treatment rather than prison. What our contemporary might have pointed out is that methods of blind repression and crude penalties had their origin in stupid Christian theories, especially those of "Original Sin" and temptation by a devil. Given these theories, the barbaric Christian treatment of delinquents was inevitable. The moral to be read in the Report is that so soon as you get rid of stupid Christian obsessions, you enable sympathy, understanding, and humane notions to have full play.

A sharp distinction used to be drawn between the Church and the world. To go to a theatre or to play at cards was regarded as worldly. To attend a prayer-meeting was regarded as Christian. The Church and the world were kept as far apart as possible. "How different it is now!" says the Rev. A. Gordon James. People are no longer excommunicated for denying the Virgin Birth, or questioning the physical Resurrection of Jesus, or disputing the historicity of Genesis. It is no longer regarded as wrong to visit a theatre, play cards, or smoke. Says Mr. James, "If the Church has become more tolerant, it is also true that the world is more tolerant of the Church." The rev. gentleman is mistaken. Any improvement to be noted has come about not because the Church has learned to be tolerant, but because people within the Church have become more enlightened. They now ignore the Church's historical prohibitions and restrictions as being too stupid for observance, and refuse to take its silly dogmas seriously, as did their forefathers. Nor is it true that the world is more tolerant of the Church. The world simply ignores it, or else smiles at its absurdities. There is a mile of difference between that attitude and tolerance. And it's an attitude that sets the parsons wailing.

Sabbath observance-mongers must be hard-up for arguments. According to the Rev. J. C. Carlile, Church-going on Sunday is a patriotic movement. Why? The human machine, says he, requires one day in seven for leisure; brain and muscles need rest after the six-day toil; man works better after taking this rest. Church-going, of course, supplies what the human machine needs, and so helps "maintain the natural strength and character, without which England must lose her prestige." Well, the licensed victuallers might use much the same argument. People require rest, they could say, and they can get it in our houses. England's prestige was built up by men who drank beer, and took their leisure with a flowing tankard. Come to the pub and be patriotic!

Mr. Carlile, however, declares that people will not be brought back to Sunday observance by pulpit denunciation or recital of the Fourth Commandment. Nothing, says he, can be accomplished by scolding. It is wonderful what insight the rev. gent. has. Pulpit invective has proved useless; so he advises his brethren to cease fire. What a confession of failure that is! We are afraid the new tactics employing sloppy argument will not prove any more successful. The man-in-the-street is determined to use his own judgment as to how he spends his weekly rest day, and to what kind of recreation he needs. He has finished with asking the parsons' advice. And that is a pity, for parsons must live.

Norway has been making treaties with her neighbours, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, and copies of the treaties have been deposited with the League of Nations. Each treaty provides that all disputes shall be settled peacefully. Provided the statesmen of each country cannot come to an agreement, the dispute is to be either before arbitrators or before the International Court at the Hague. Such treaties are more likely to ensure peace than are the frothy outpourings about Brotherhood in Christ, to which the world has been treated by the various Churches and their thousands of priests for the past 1900 years.

The *Sunday School Chronicle* informs its readers that the Rev. Richard Watson (1737-1816) "answered" Gibbon's criticism of Christianity. This is not quite correct. What Watson did was to offer a *reply* to Gibbon, but those who have read Gibbon's crushing rejoinder will agree that there was not much left of the parson by the time that Gibbon had finished with him.

The same journal also remarks that Watson replied to "the famous Agnostic," Thomas Paine. It used to be the Atheist Paine. Now it is the Agnostic, which we assume is intended as a sort of a compliment to Paine, for many Christians nowadays have little fault to find with the Agnostic who admits the existence of a God in the act of professing ignorance concerning his nature. But Paine was neither an Agnostic nor an Atheist. He believed in a God, and his correct description must be that of either a theist or a deist.

The grim smile of irony spreads over the face of history—Vienna has allowed and encouraged Rumanians to unveil, in Vienna, a memorial to Rumanian soldiers killed in the war, and if the priest will kindly step out of the picture it will hasten the day when the last war memorial is erected.

Says "Ezra" in the *Mehodist Recorder* :—

I have met few sceptics whose malady did not originate from a misunderstanding. I have met few, if any, who were wantonly sceptical; and most of the so-called atheists I have met have quite justifiably denied the existence of the God who had been described to them. The cure for such complaints is thus correct information and teaching.

We wonder what kind of Atheists are the "so-called" variety. The Atheists who take this paper are just

Atheists without any adjectival adornments. To become so, most of them had to cure themselves of the religious distemper caught in Sunday Schools and Churches. The cure for such complaint was correct information about, and understanding of, the complaint they suffered from. But they didn't go for this cure to the dope doctors who inoculated them with the disease.

Mr. C. Leonard Woolley was a member of an expedition of the British Museum, and his activities led him to conclusions that prove to be in no way supplementary to the chronology of the bible. In a report of the expedition's work at Ur of the Chaldees, we read, according to the *Daily News*, that :—

Now we are able to picture in detail the civilization of Mesopotamia as early as 3500 B.C. What is truly surprising is the wealth and the high level of culture of that remote time, and the farther we go back the more elaborate and the more finished seems to be the art of Sumeria.

Fifty-four years previous to 3500 B.C. the world, according to the Bible, was just receiving a send-off, and the disinterested student may or may not conclude that there was a lot of overtime worked in Mesopotamia.

Maryland, U.S.A., is not so far away from Tennessee as the moon is from the earth. The *Daily News* re-publish a note from their issue, April 23, 1864, which indicates at least that a little progress has been made :—

IN THE DAYS OF DICKENS.

From the "*Daily News*," April 23, 1864.

"Slaves are cheap in Maryland this year. Three were sold at an auction a few days since at Frederick; one, a girl of eight years old, for one dollar; a woman for 15 dollars, and a woman with a child five years old for 25 dollars."—*Missouri Democrat*.

America, by pressure inside and outside, was forced to relinquish this primitive business. Now that ownership of bodies has become indecent, it is to be hoped that the slave traders in minds will eventually be induced to "chuck it." The consequences of mental freedom would be an asset to any President who gave Abraham Lincoln his due.

From newspaper reports, the impression is gained that the League of Nations is a branch of the Mothers' Meeting Association. The League is now dealing with the question of infant mortality, and as the struggle with armaments continues, the concern for children appears to be as of much importance as Mr. Henry Ford's apocryphal saying, that his customers can have their cars painted any colour they like, providing it is black.

The architect of the universe was apparently otherwise engaged when an accident happened in St. John's Church, Coventry. The cover of the font, weighing a hundredweight, fell, and just missed the rector's head.

Laudor, in his dialogue between Diogenes and Plato, makes the tub philosopher disclaim any interest in meddling with infinity or eternity. A typhoon struck Yokohama with the usual horrible results, and the catastrophes of the world, which cannot be foreseen, and which prayer cannot prevent, are, in themselves, sufficient to close for good the book of words used by other worldsmen, and in the language of Landor, leave the least necessary for the last.

It may be news to the reading public that Palestine is not exactly a country flowing with milk and honey, but it is all to the good that facts little known about it should be made public. In *A Travelling Scholar*, by T. Crowther Gordon, the author records that he found the country a vortex of fanaticism and that in Bethlehem armed guards were necessary to protect Christians from brother-Christians. *Vive la bagatelle*.

National Secular Society.

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

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

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

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

To Correspondents.

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.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—E. L. Bishop, 1s.; R. W. Holloway, 5s.; R. Bell (per John's grandfather), 6s.; J. S. Latimer-Voight, £1 1s.

W. J. W. PASTERBROOK.—Pleased to know that you intend going to the Glasgow Conference. A trip to Scotland should tempt Freethinkers from all parts of the country. They are certain of a warm welcome.

R. W. MCMAW.—There is no Branch of the N.S.S. in Belfast at present, although there are plenty of Freethinkers there. The Secretary is writing you on other matters.

R. BELL.—Thanks for promise of further support to the Endowment Trust.

J. PEARSON.—All you have to do is to write the Headmaster informing him of your wish that your child shall be withdrawn from all religious instruction. That is your statutory right, and it is not within the power of the school authorities to refuse. If any trouble is experienced write again. Your boy must be on the school premises during school hours.

J. LATIMER-VOIGHT.—Sorry to hear of the ill-health in the family. That is the greatest of all troubles. Of course, there is need for Freethought in your part of the world, but please don't think you have cornered all the religious stupidity in your part of the country. There is plenty of it in all directions. Thanks for contribution to Trust Fund.

Mr. H. BURGESS writes from South Africa: "After many years subscription, it is a pleasure to see the *Freethinker* is still good and strong. Many periodicals become stale to the subscriber after a few years. Somehow the *Freethinker* seems to cling on and remain fresh." Perhaps this is due to the fact that the writers to the *Freethinker* write as they feel, and that kind of writing seldom becomes wearisome.

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 connexion 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.

On Sunday next (May 8), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular School, Pole Lane, Failsforth, at 2.45 and 6.30. In the afternoon he will speak on "Why We Need Freethought," and in the evening on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" Mr. Cohen expects to meet a good many Manchester friends at the meetings.

Miss Vance informs us that she has had a number of enquiries from intending visitors to the Glasgow Conference on Whit-Sunday, and it is well that those who intend going should write in as early as possible. What they require in the shape of accommodation should also be clearly stated. By sending in good time it will also be possible to reserve seats, so that the party may travel in comfort and all together. We expect that the week-end tickets will run from the Friday, so that many may prefer to travel on that date instead of on the Saturday.

Members and branches are also reminded that resolutions for the Conference Agenda should be sent in at once. Generally, we have these coming along too late to be of use; there are then complaints made concerning their omission. The agenda paper is open to every member of the Society, whether belonging to a Branch or to headquarters.

The Bethnal Green Branch begins its open-air work to-day (May 1). There will be a demonstration to inaugurate the work, and our old friend, Mr. E. Wilson, has very kindly lent a vehicle for the occasion. There will be several speakers, and we hope that all East London Freethinkers will do their best to be present. The meeting will commence at 3.15. Messrs. Whitehead, Rosetti, Hart and others will address the meeting.

The West Ham Branch also begins its open-air work with a demonstration to-day. The meeting will be held outside the Technical Institute, in the Romford Road, and among the speakers will be Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, and Messrs. Warner, High, White, Seabrooke and R. H. Rosetti. Proceedings will commence at 7 o'clock.

Our shop-manager reports that there has been a delay in sending out copies of Mr. Cohen's *Other Side of Death*, owing to there being some delay at the binders. The copies have now been delivered, but those who wrote will now realize the cause of the delay. Most books appear to go in spurts, and this particular work has been having a run recently.

We are glad to say that we have had to give another large binding order for Drapers's *Conflict Between Science and Religion*. Orders are steadily coming in for this work, both from home readers and from the United States. Our American friends have as keen an eye for a bargain as anyone else.

Apropos of the recent decision of the Birmingham Town Council to let the schools to the local Secular Society, the following resolution was passed by the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. :—

"This Branch desires to place on record its sincere appreciation of the efforts of Councillor Bradbeer, in bringing the matter to a successful issue, not merely in the interests of this Society alone, but in the wider sphere of freedom of speech with the general public."

Councillor Bradbeer, it should be said, fought hard for the schools to be let to the Secularists, on the same terms and conditions as they were let to others, and succeeded in attaining his end.

The Execution of Francisco Ferrer.

A FEW weeks ago there appeared in this journal a letter signed "W. P. Mara," the Hon. Sec. of the Westminster Catholic Federation, defending the execution of Ferrer in Spain, in 1909. I was half-hoping some reader with a little more time to spare than myself, would answer the preposterous assertions and misrepresentations contained therein, for it is not enough merely to say Mr. Mara was not telling the truth.

His letter is a typical specimen of Roman Catholic propaganda. Emboldened by the liberty of speech and thought they enjoy under a Protestant regime, the Roman Catholics now feel they can carry the war into the enemy's camp. They are controlling the Press in an ever increasing number. They are threatening an absolute boycott of publishers and booksellers, who show even any impartiality in the matter of religions. They attack, in their own press, any English writer who does not happen to believe in their nonsensical claims, and refuse to allow any reply to appear; while they insist their own replies should be given special prominence in the enemy press. Thus Mr. Mara took it for granted that this journal would publish his letter (and that it was published shows that the Editor justly upholds the title of his paper), but I think I could make a safe bet with him that none of his press would publish this article—or anything else I may write attacking any of his cherished beliefs or putting him right on his misrepresentations.

Moreover, with a brazenness which would be ludicrous if the implications were not so serious, the Roman Catholics are actually defending their blood-stained history—a history which is so foul in its details, that it is impossible to tell the absolute truth in publications designed for the general public. We had an example of that the other day, when the Rev. Montague Summers defended the wholesale burnings of "witches," and gave as one of his reasons, that they actually flew to their meeting-places on broomsticks!

Such trifles as the tortures and the *auto-de-fés* of the Inquisition, the massacres of the Albigenses and of St. Bartholomew's Day have now their self-satisfied apologists, and so we must not be surprised to find Mr. Mara joining in the chorus and telling us, with what looks suspiciously like real gloating, that "in his opinion, Ferrer was rightly executed." Considering he has also just informed us that the Pope sent a telegram to the King of Spain "pleading that Ferrer should not be executed," and therefore presumably felt some qualms about the verdict, it is interesting to find Mr. Mara asserting his right of opinion as against that of his Supreme Head; but what a pity it is we are not told *why* the Pope sent that telegram.

Coming now to the question of Ferrer, the chief point in Mr. Mara's letter is that "his presence and complicity in the rising at Barcelona *and district* was sworn to by nineteen witnesses." (Italics mine, but please bear in mind "*and district*"). What Ferrer thought in 1885, when he was but 26 years of age, is utterly beside the point. It has been proved over and over again, that his ideas on the question of revolution had materially changed as he grew older. He was against anarchism and the shedding of blood, and to drag in his early and unformed opinions as one of the reasons why he was rightly executed, is the kind of thing we expect from Roman Catholics, but not from any serious student of the question at issue. Note also, how Mr. Mara drags in the late William Archer so impartially, don't you know, that

Ferrer's "teaching was not merely anti-clerical, but anti-religious." What weighty reasons for executing a man! It was done by Mr. Mara's Holy Church regularly for centuries, and only stopped because there were too many unbelievers to work upon—not because the Church thought it wrong, of course. But is not his letter a proof how he wishes they could start the same thing again?

Those nineteen witnesses are just casually put in towards the end of his veracious communication—so glibly and so firmly. They were quite unimpeachable naturally. Their evidence was so conclusive, was it not? There was not a shadow of doubt about their seeing Ferrer in Barcelona "*and district*" was there?

Will the reader take and read Archer's book written for *McClure Magazine*—an impartial investigation, if ever there was one, and one of the most scathing and contemptuous attacks on Spanish "justice" ever written. He gives a full report of the trial, and the "evidence" of the witnesses. Mr. Mara obviously hoped that none of *our* readers had the book, or that they could not read Spanish, or actually he must have thought we would take the word of a Roman Catholic on such a subject!

The nineteen witnesses were all Roman Catholics, of course, and history knows quite well the kind of evidence they would be responsible for. How many thousands of "witches" have been burnt and tortured on the same kind of evidence!

Well, here are three of the witnesses at Ferrer's trial.

Verdaguer Callis "affirms that according to intelligence, which he has no means of verifying, but which he believes to be exact," the events "were impelled and guided by Ferrer."

Emiliano Iglesias "had not seen Ferrer for nine months."

Garcia Magallon related a conversation with a journalist named Pierre, who told him that he had heard it said that the events were promoted under the direction of Ferrer.

Were they not wonderful witnesses to swear away a man's life? Archer says, "I no sooner procured and read the official version of the trial than all doubt was at an end. I knew that Ferrer had been the victim, if not of a judicial crime, at any rate of an enormous judicial stupidity." He carefully examined all the evidence—including the Catholic, for which he could find nothing too contemptuous to say—and concluded that, as in the Dreyfus case, "we could see militarism inspired by clericalism riding roughshod over the plainest principles and practices of justice."

But the Royalist Militarist Catholics, who accused Dreyfus, were too frightened to go the whole hog. Not so those in Spain, who in defiance of the opinion of every unbiassed mind in the world (not Catholic) gloried in their power to shoot an innocent man, who happened to be not merely "anti-clerical, but anti-religious," and who also happened to be somewhere near Barcelona at the time of the riots. And eighteen years after the terrible event which did Spain quite as much harm as the infamous Riff campaign, we have Roman Catholics here glorying in the execution.

What a pleasure to record that Mr. Mara, like Mr. Montague Summers, is a Roman Catholic!

H. CUTNER.

WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE.

Of the third part of the national wealth owned by Mexicans, 60 per cent. is still in the hands of Roman Catholic priests or institutions.—President Calles, quoted in *Christian Science Monitor*.

The Beginnings of English Drama.

THE most potent shaping factor in the evolution of the English drama were the Miracle and Mystery Plays: popular about four centuries back. Here, as in the Elizabethan drama, we have the Romantic (the free) construction, as opposed to the restrictions in the Classic drama; have men and women of various rank and character speaking a language natural to them; the mingling, in relief, of the humorous with the serious element in life: in brief, the broad appeal to the populace, rather than the restricted appeal to the dilettante.

These plays, that hold important place in the popularising of the Church legends and Church doctrine as well as in the evolution of our drama, are to-day kept in the background by the Church. Is it that the Church finds them too provocative of laughter? "The subjects they treat of," I once heard a University lecturer say, "were fearful and stupendous realities to the people at the time." Yes; to some. To some yet they are fearful and stupendous realities. To some they are not. And to some at that day they were not. The priests themselves, I judge, were among those who stood least in awe. Chaucer, indeed, long before, had shown the rogues bubbling over with merriment in their business. Who can believe that the writer had a straight face who prepared this tit-bit for the populace, in the Mystery of the Incarnation?

[Mary has asked how it shall be done.]

GABRYEL.—The holy gost schal com, fro above, to thee; and the vertu of hym, hyest, schal schadu yu.

[Here the Aungel makyth a lytyl restyng, and Mary beholdyth him, and the Angel seyth,]

The Holy Gost

Abydyth thine answer and thine assent.

Gyff me my answer, now, lady dear!

MARIA.—With all mekeness I 'clyne to this acorde;

Bowynge down my face with all benygnyte.

Afyr thi worde be it don to me.

GABRYEL.—Gramercy! (in modern equivalent:

"Thanks very much!") my lady fire!

Gramercy of your aunswer on hyght!

[Here the holy gost descendit, with vj bemys, to o' lady; the sone of the godhead, nest, with vj bemys, to the holy gost; the ffadyr, godly, with vj bemys, to the sone; And so entre, al three, to her bosom.]

Or take this, in the Mystery of Joseph's Jealousy:

JOSEPH.—How has thou ferde, jentyl mayde,

Why I have be' out of londe?

MARIA.—Sekyr, ser; beth nowth dysmayde,

Byth afyr the wyl of goddys sonde. (Only

after God's will as proclaimed.)

JOSEPH.—That semyth evyl, I am afrayd;

Thi wombe too hyge doth stonde;

I drede me sor I am betrayd,

S'n other man thee had in honde,

Hens, sythe, that I went.

*

Sey me, Mary, this childys fadyr who is.

MARIA.—The fadyr of hevyn, and se, it is;

Other fadyr hath he non:

I dede nevyr forfete with man, I wys,

Wherfor', I p'y yow, amende yo' mon,

This childe is goddys, and your'.

JOSEPH.—Goddys childe! thou lyst, in fay'!

God dede nevyr rape so with mayde.

Ya! ya!

MARIA.—Alas gode spowse! why say ye thus?

Alas, dear husbund, amende yo' mod!

It is no man, but swete Jhus,

He wyll be clad in flesch and blood,

And of yo' wyff be born.

SAPHORA.—For sothe A'ngel thus sey'd he,

That goddys sone, in trynite,

For mannys sake, a man wolde be,

To save that is forlorn.

JOSEPH.—An A'ngel!

It was s'n boy began this game,

That clothyd was clene and gay,

And ye geve hym now an A'ngel name.

Alas! alas! and welaway,

That ever this game be tydde!

Ah, dame! what thought haddyst thou?

Here may all men this proverbe trow,

Thou many a man doth bete the bough,

Another man hath the brydde.

(Another man gets the bird.)

And if, in these Mystery Plays, the priest many a time was winking hard, and bawled out "Gramercy!" with gusto to stifle his laughter, who can doubt that some of the populace were gifted with vision and a sense of humour?

See, then, how far the Mystery Play brings us. First, they yield a dramatis personæ of varied character: the ffadyr, godly; Joseph, the reputed ffadyr; little Mary; Saphora; Angel Gabryel, with wings and feathers; and the Holy Ghost—to borrow half a line from Wordsworth—"slipping in between." Next, there is in these plays a unity of action: the only unity essential to drama. Yet more, they exhibit the solemn piffle and the juggling mysteries that make up our heavenly heritage.

The Morality Plays followed. These, in the evolution of our drama, are a retrogression: in this: they substitute abstract Vices and Virtues for persons. With no variety possible in any individual of that dramatis personæ, they soon become monotonous. Even "Everyman" I would not care to read again. There is too much motthing in it; too much of your Methody.

What a change, what relief, when we turn to the early English comedies—to "Gammar Gurton's Needle" and the like! Here we have exuberant fancy and full-blooded fun.

One must notice the introduction of the Classic drama into England at this time. What was it? A series of attempts by University men to render in English something of the spirit and the method of the Greek tragedians. We honour them for it. But the Classic drama never captured the populace in England. In method so different from the Romantic drama, it could not unite with it, could not modify it. The employment of a "Chorus" in Henry V. is a clumsy piece of botchwork.

That we owe to the English Classic drama—to the author of "Gorboduc"—the introduction of blank verse, crude as he yielded it, is pure accident. Marlowe came. He took the crude verse of "Gorboduc" and fashioned of it a perfect instrument of expression.

FAUST.—Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,

And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?—

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a

kiss. (Kisses her.)

Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it

flies!—

Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.

Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these

lips,

And all is dross that is not Helena.

There you have the verse, perfect to its purpose,

which Shakespeare was to carry into infinite variety.

Again: in the plays of Marlowe, prose and verse alternate, in the happiest manner, as the spirit of the scene is tragic or burlesque, dignified or familiar. So, later, in the plays of Shakespeare. Marlowe, too, showed to his contemporary greater daring in dramatic attack, and imagination ranging over all time. Who was it but he that Shakespeare had in mind when he lamented his own immaturity:—

"Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope?"

H. BARBER.

"Towards Moral Bankruptcy."

I FIND I have a weakness for reading all those jolly books that tell us to have lots of children; and M. Bureau's volume, *Towards Moral Bankruptcy* (Constable, 16s. net), is the latest to come my way. The work is worth perusal. There is a foreword by the Translator, a preface by Dr. Mary Scharlieb, and 538 pages of print.

The Translator obligingly informs us that this publication is a scientific study, not a Christian apologetic. I say obligingly, because without that note some hasty persons might be tempted to see more apologetic than science in the book, especially as the learned author makes no secret of his Roman Catholicism. The Translator adds: "Yet it makes fairly evident to any reader who has not prejudged the case, that the way of social security and sane progress lies along the sharply defined and well-trodden road of Christian morality." I am a little puzzled here. If the Christian road of morality is well trodden, how comes it that M. Bureau is writing a book called *Towards Moral Bankruptcy*? Moreover, would it be indiscreet to ask the Translator to tell us where to find this sharply defined Christian road. Can this highway be under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church, and be a way in which wayfaring men, though fools, may not err therein? I think, perhaps, I am right, especially when I remember that both Torquemada and Pope Alexander VI. were extremely adroit walkers along this Christian thoroughfare.

There was, however, another puzzle in this book. I had always believed doctors to be very intrepid persons. Do they not flit from death-bed to death-bed, vary the monotony by an occasional visit to a patient in child-bed, cut the Sunday joint with an impressive dexterity first learned at post-mortem examinations, and talk amongst themselves of what to laymen would be unmentionable horrors? I had thought that nothing daunts a doctor, and that masters of surgery were unblenching. But I am wrong. Dr. Mary Scharlieb, who is a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, a Medical Doctor, and a Master of Surgery, was unnerved when she came to read this volume. She writes: "When the publishers most kindly asked me to write a preface to the book, I naturally set to work on reading it in order that I might have somewhat to say. However, the first few sections involved so much moral nausea that my courage almost failed me to complete the task. The picture drawn by the gifted author of the terrible depths of moral degradation induced a feeling that even to touch the printed page was a contamination. But I read on." These are strange words from a lady who, by her profession, may be supposed to be tolerably acquainted with such a subject, shall we say, as obstetrics or forensic medicine? Lest, however, my readers should hastily imagine the erudite authoress of the preface of the book under discussion to be unusually fastidious in moral questions, I shall copy another of her paragraphs that displays more fortitude. "This lesson" (that of the full quiver) "has been brought home to the hearts of all who love France, and should find an echo in those who have a goodwill towards Britain, for unless these two great and enlightened countries fill their colonies and dependencies full of man power, the next great war against the countries that have teeming millions will find them unable to dictate the terms of peace." It will, perhaps, be conceded that there is a robustness of sentiment here that was not so obvious in the former

citation. One is, of course, grateful for any receipt, however unpalatable, for winning the next war, but it must be pointed out that unless Dr. Scharlieb and M. Bureau can dangle a better-looking carrot than dictation of peace terms before we poor donkeys of the public, we are really not likely to make much progress in the population race.

This is why all these well-intentioned books, written with the object of increasing the birth-rate, are doomed to sterility. There is, indeed, an element of unreality in them. The writers are almost inevitably persons whose religious scruples do not permit them to approve of neo-malthusian practices. A frontal attack in the name of religious taboo would, at this time of day, be of no avail. The public would simply pass by such books. Hence these sociological studies, of which M. Bureau's is a conspicuous example, in which religion masquerades as science, and piety dons a cap and gown. At this point I should like however to pay a tribute to M. Bureau's admirably ironical style, which the translator has excellently rendered into very good English. I will give one example of our author's quality. "To write a licentious book is courted no dishonour, still better, if it runs into many editions, its success may lead to a chair in the Academy, or, at least, to the Croix d'honneur. Sometimes the honourable author sits as a judge at the Assizes or in the Criminal Court, in cases of abortion or injury to those under age, but such, it seems, are merely youthful sins, which a kindly judgment easily pardons, and some questionable performances no more hinder a fine literary career than they compromise an advantageous political one." This, I submit, is a trim piece of writing.

To the purely objective observer such a book as M. Bureau's serves two distinct interests. It has value in its statements of fact, and here the book in question is well documented, and the facts, as Dr. Scharlieb found, are fearlessly faced as indeed becomes one who is of the religion of a Sanchez and a Liguori. But the work also has a value as a psychological document, in so far as the mental processes of a religious man confronted with the darker problems of life are set on record. As to the constructive proposals for the amelioration of the state of affairs revealed and for which the book was of course written, this study of M. Bureau seems to have no value whatever. The assumption that man can build up a golden age is perhaps as natural to make as it is certainly fallacious. In order to effect his reform, M. Bureau does not scruple to recondition mankind itself. His proposals for avoiding Moral Bankruptcy are as follows:—Outside marriage there is to be complete chastity. Within marriage such continence as shall keep the family within the limits of five or six children. Morality is to be backed by religious sanctions. Marriage is to be indissoluble, and all neo-malthusian practices are to be abolished. Even with the proviso that these are merely asymptotic ideas continually approaching the abscissa of the ideal, it is easy to see that an unregenerated humanity will not form a framework sufficiently resistant to hold these things together.

With regard to birth-rates, in spite of M. Bureau, these will continue to fall among the cultured classes everywhere in the world. Prostitution cannot, I think, be abolished. There is just the possibility that it could be made clean and decent, and M. Bureau would have been better employed had he seen fit to call out for soap and water rather than for Christianity as a cure for certain of the ills from which mankind unhappily continues to suffer.

WILLIAM HERBERT.

The Comic Side of Rotary.

AN exalted man of letters once said, after a crab supper that Woman would be the last thing civilized by Man. In the Stone Age, Man started the job by knocking the brains out of truthful Woman. In this Age—the Electric Age—Man has doubts of his fitness for this noble task, so he has set about making up his deficiency. Witness the number of mutual improvement societies.

One of these societies, just come of age, is devoted to the spiritualization of a particular section of mankind. It is called Rotary. A year or two ago women toyed with the idea of emulating the men by forming Women's Rotary Clubs. Then they suddenly dropped it. The Rotary way to civilization was an exchange of giddiness for dizziness.

Rotary is composed of successful men; so runs the script. Among them are traders, doctors, lawyers, licensed victuallers and parsons. By getting together like the Frothblowers, they aim to profitably purge themselves of selfishness. A Titanic job! Granted, but Rotarians do not quail. They are optimists to a man; for Rotary hails from Chicago, where, when they say "can" they mean "tin." And the wheels of Rotary are made of "tin." More money is the cry at present, to found Rotary Clubs all over the world. The extra capitation tax for that object may be opposed by many Scottish and English Clubs, but it is a necessary means to an end, and the proposers know their business. For when a principle won't root and thrive of itself, it evidently lacks Vitamin D. Artificial aid must be applied until some healthy acquirement is evolved, which will tend to natural expansion. As yet no Rotary Club has died out. It is told that a black flag will be hoisted in Chicago should this disastrous day dawn.

The successful men look on Christ as the first Rotarian. In him is exemplified their slogan, "Service above self." When he comes again, his first visit will not be to the slums, but to the headquarters of Rotary; and as the donkeys he used to say "Gee" to, are scarce in the New Jerusalem, we picture Christ, after his aerial descent, on two powerful limousines in a triumphal procession to meet the new St. Paul—Paul Harris, founder of Rotary. The other Paul—the Jew—would be "fired," and a movie taken of Jesus at a rotary luncheon, performing the old miracle, particularly welcome to-day in America, of turning a "dry" luncheon into a "wet" one.

From this foregoing you conclude that Rotarians are religious. Well most of them are, and Rotary is in a sense a religious movement, but it must not be shouted from the housetops. Many worthy organizations have split on the rock of Peter, therefore Rotary says there must not be any religious discussion. The rule is not always observed. At least if there be no religious discussion, Christians with characteristic humility blushing "serve" their narcotic. And, of course, there is "Grace before meals." The chaplain of the club asks God to make the successful men truly thankful for what they are about to receive, a message that gets lost in transit, or else the Lord deems the request too trivial and absurd for a planetary engineer; for all around the tables one hears that the soup is salty, or that the steak is tough, or something that looks as though the devil had got the supervision of the cookhouse.

The "grace" has just been responsible for a little comedy in *The Rotary Wheel*, a magazine devoted to British Rotary.

A Manchester member wrote, suggesting that the grace and the loyal toast be dispensed with at the

weekly luncheon. His main argument was that these customs were mere formalities, and not fair to members who were Jews, Atheists or Republicans. The Editor of *The Wheel*, a charming, tolerant man of the world, invited an expression on the matter from Rotarians. He got it. From all quarters came protests couched in the way Freethinkers are conversant with. "The bulwarks of the constitution," "the fabric of society," even Rotary itself stood in deadly peril by the very mention of such blasphemous and seditious propositions. An immediate Past-President in some remote district trembled like an "aspirin" at the thought of it, and predicted Rotary's downfall, and presaged his own secession on that day when God and King ceased to function at the three and sixpenny luncheon. The Mancurian was asking them to disown the sources of their success. So down went the Manchester man under the fire from the battery, and in the most gracious terms tried to mollify the protestants for the stew he had caused. To be a Daniel among roaring—I mean Rotary lions is a daring act.

Another comical incident. It is the custom to have speakers at the weekly luncheons, presumably for the education of the men who have been successful in the battle of life. Mr. Shaw, the author of *St. Joan* and other works not known to successful men in Chesterfield, who may or may not be Rotarians, has been such a speaker on two occasions. Recently, at Kingsway Hall, he flicked Rotary on the nose end. He couldn't vision the salvation of the world issuing from the mentality of the captains of industry in Rotary's ranks. Up rose the Rotarians, the I.P.P. amongst them, to show that Scepticism was the serpent in their garden of Eden. Some of them in honeyed accents twitted Mr. Shaw with ingratitude, for saying what he did, after eating their dinners free of charge. Mr. Shaw is unrepentant. In a final word, through his Secretary, he says he has shot his bolt at Rotary. He helped it when it needed help, and must be left to die in peace now that it is flourishing. It is open to suspicion, that Mr. Shaw sees in Rotary a rival to his own pet "religion," Creative Evolution, on which he is banking for a great re-birth of Art. We hope the re-born will be delivered without chloroform.

ROTARIAN.

Notes from Last Week.

By FLAUTIST.

Christian legends are most interesting and attractive things, as we are most primitive myths, but from the point of view of their being accepted as statements of actual fact, they are material only for studies in mental pathology.—*Views and Opinions.*

Other gods were slain, and were resurrected, Jesus Christ merely followed the fashion.

Views and Opinions.

Revivalism is often but a commercialized method of producing conversion.—*J. T. Lloyd.*

A newspaper's profession of impartiality usually amounts to keeping the field clear for religionists.

To Correspondents.

It would not be an excess of gratitude to be in debt to life, for such gifts of experience that afterwards in their common acceptance, make life an interwoven pattern of diversity.—*Tristram.*

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As a forty years' reader of the *Freethinker*, and having always been under the impression that the paper was, to some extent, the organ of the Society whose motto is, "We seek for truth," I confess I was greatly surprised to find one of its contributors classifying himself as "an expert liar," and "credit dodger." But I can easily imagine seeing Mr. Bryce donning his war paint had anyone else thus described him. Yet surely this adds neither credit nor dignity to the paper or its editor. Then Mr. Bryce gives us the boast of another presumably accomplished liar, who "could easily make thirty-six shillings per day in a coal mine." This sort of flabdoodle won't do Mr. Bryce, and the sooner you get a chat with friend Burril or some other intelligent miner the better. If Mr. Bryce has exchanged his Socialism for Toryism we cannot all admire his choice, and stuff like this may help to account for some of the disparaging remarks one frequently hears from Socialists concerning the *Freethinker*. We recently had the trade union leaders compared to the "blind leaders of the blind," and Karl Marx and Jesus Christ. We now get the second-hand insinuation that Socialists don't pay for what they get. Whilst "Jenkins" is a blind for an easily recognisable personality. I don't think he will thank Mr. Bryce for this tale of "dope and tory." Let us hope such articles are not written after a visit to that pub, he calls the "Blue Man." But I fear many will begin to have their "doots."

J. G. BARTRAM.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

WE brought our indoor meetings to a close on Sunday evening last, with an inspiring and invigorating lecture from Mr. F. A. Hornibrook, on "Religion and Health." After a short address, in which Mr. Hornibrook stressed the necessity of a healthy and properly functioning body to a healthy and reasonable frame of mind, the lecturer gave a display of the physical exercises and native dances with which his name is now so widely connected.

The only regret was that there were so few present to appreciate the invaluable lesson provided for them. One of our members explained that he had endeavoured to bring two Christian friends, who had benefitted from reading Mr. Hornibrook's book on obesity, but their prejudice against any instruction given under the auspices of Freethought was too great to allow them to attend! Can bigotry go further?

Our open-air meetings begin to-day, in Regent's Park, at 6 p.m., Mr. Whitehead will be the speaker.—K. B. K.

WEST LONDON BRANCH.

THE new Branch has made a promising start with its open-air meetings, and both the number of listeners and the interest displayed augurs well for the future of the Branch. The Branch made its debut on Easter Sunday, when Mr. A. H. Hyatt, as might have been expected from such an experienced campaigner, kept large crowds intensely interested both afternoon and evening. Last Sunday, despite the inclemency of the weather, the officials of the Branch were able to attract and hold considerable audiences in the afternoon, the sizes varying in inverse relation to the showers. It is gratifying to find a great improvement in the class of questions put, and in the demeanour of the majority of enquirers whom, presently, the adjective "reverent" (so beloved of our religious friends) will fittingly describe.

One listener, in pressing a donation upon the Treasurer, regretted that his religious surroundings did not permit him to enrol himself as a member as he would like to do. There are, of course, thousands of latent Freethinkers, such as he; and the best advice we can offer them is to "go and do likewise."

In the evening, Mr. Jackson gave a most interesting discourse upon "Buddhism in its relation to Freethought."—W. P. C-E.

Mr. Whitehead's Mission.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S Open-Air Campaign starts in London to-day, at Victoria Park, at 3.30. He opens at Regent's Park also, at 6 p.m. On Monday, May 2, Mr. Whitehead will be at Highbury Corner at 7.45, and every evening for the rest of the week. Any North Londoners who can support him will be very welcome.

For further particulars of his London lectures, see Guide notice weekly.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2) : 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Art and the Unconscious."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.) : 7.0, Joseph McCabe, "My Impressions of the United States."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.30, Demonstration. Messrs. G. Whitehead, R. H. Rosetti, J. Hart and others.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain) : 6.0, Mr. George Whitehead.—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common, 11.30; Brockwell Park, 6.0) : Lectures by Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park) : 11.30, 3.0 and 6.30. Speakers, Messrs. Saphin, Ratcliffe, Botting and Hart. Thursday, Meeting at 7.0.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, B. A. Le Maine, 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Jackson, and Maurice Mauvrey. Every Wednesday and Friday meetings at 7.30.—Various lectures.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH (Assembly Rooms, Front Street) : Open daily for reading, etc., from 10 a.m. All Freethinkers and enquirers welcome.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Royal Buildings, 18 Colquith Street, off Bold Street) : 7.30, Mr. E. Egerton Stafford, on "Atheism."

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S.—Ramble to Crookston Castle. Meet at Crookston Toll, at 12 noon. Via Green (Paisley) car, "22 B" to Crookston Road. Join car at Glasgow Cross, Jamaica Street, or Paisley Road Toll.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.

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but Cowan's first sensation was frank amazement. He gazed at the handsomely displayed patterns, the artistic style book, and the illustrated measurement form. He could only guess at the cost of these, and place it, vaguely, at “a lot.” But there were sevenpence-worth of unused stamps and a really good measuring tape of whose value there was no question at all: and all entrusted to him, a complete stranger, just because he read a Rationalist journal and had responded to one of its advertisements! Cowan reasoned that people who trusted like this were themselves worthy of confidence. Following where reason led, he ordered a suit—an act which made him not only a satisfied client, but this firm's most enthusiastic recommender. Cowan's is an authentic experience, and Cowan strongly urges you to write to-day for any of the following:—

Gents' A to D Patterns, Suits from 55/-; Gents' E Patterns, Suits all at 67/6; Gents' F to H Patterns, Suits from 75/-; Gents' I to M Patterns, Suits from 98/-; or Ladies' Fashion & Pattern Sets, Costumes from 60/-; Frocks from 47/-

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