

The
FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

Vol. XLVII.—No: 24

SUNDAY JUNE 12, 1927

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Science and God.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	369
<i>The Ascension.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	371
<i>Brimstone and Treacle.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	372
<i>Holism and Evolution.—W. Mann</i> - - - - -	373
<i>The Age of Unreason.—W. Thompson</i> - - - - -	374
<i>N.S.S. Conference.—Executive's Annual Report</i> - - - - -	378
<i>Strange Tales.—Alan Tyndal</i> - - - - -	381
<i>The Truth about China.—H.C.</i> - - - - -	382
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

(Concluded from page 354.)

Science and God.

It would be foolish for anyone to object to the use of figurative or symbolical language in the endeavour to express thought. Language is far from a perfect instrument for this purpose; it is merely the best we have. But language becomes a hindrance instead of a help if, having used certain phrases as mere figures of speech, we think of them as expressing actual, concrete fact. I do not think that anyone can carefully read Sir Oliver Lodge's lectures on "Science and Human Progress," without feeling that he has fallen into this error. Here are a few instances of such. Concerning the general structure of the universe we read:—

- (1) If anyone is able to contemplate the universe in all its magnificence and interlocked beauty and variety, and come to the conclusion that nothing higher than mankind exists in it, I cannot envy him his commonsense.
- (2) There is nothing haphazard in the universe.
- (3) Can anyone rationally suppose that all this is accidental?
- (4) Depend upon it that the universe is rational.
- (5) The human mind is not alien to the universe; it is in harmony with it.
- (6) There is such a thing as psychical research as well as physical research.

With regard to No. 1, it is only necessary to say now that the very terms "higher" and "lower" have no scientific significance whatever, save as a convenient classification of phenomena in relation to standards created by ourselves. What science sees in nature is not "higher" and "lower" forms of existence, but differences. And it is not something "higher" than man Sir Oliver is after, but something different from man, some guiding and directing intelligence, who is responsible for the "order" of nature. And for that there is no scientific warranty whatever.

Red Herrings.

Numbers 2 and 3 are almost hopeless in their lack of scientific precision. Science knows nothing whatever of such conceptions as haphazard or accidental, which can only mean here as things occurring uncaused. Such a meaning is not merely unscientific, it is unthinkable. If there is any meaning in Sir Oliver's use of the terms, it must be that if the structure of the universe has not occurred by "accident," or in a "haphazard" manner, then it must have been designed, and we are thus back, at one jump, in the crudest form of theism propounded under the guise of science. The real issue is not between accident and design, but between caused and uncaused phenomena. And to state the issue thus plainly is to settle it. If a particular phenomenon is the consequence of preceding conditions, it follows that the only thing possible is that which happens. If it does not occur as a consequence of preceding conditions, then it would be, so far as science is concerned "haphazard" and "accidental." A governing intelligence directing things in accordance with some prearranged plan of its own, would stand for Sir Oliver's deity, but it would also make science impossible. Nothing would be left but blind faith in a "Directive Power" that doeth all things well, even though we see quite plainly that all things are not well. Numbers 5 and 6 are samples of mere verbal confusion. Of course there is such a thing as psychical research, if by that is meant psychological research, and, of course, mental phenomena are not alien to the universe, if they are products of pre-existing conditions. The first statement means that science in its work of grouping phenomena arranges them with reference to their outstanding and peculiar characteristics. The second, that mental phenomena are consonant with the universe as a whole because they are the outcome of natural forces. But if mental phenomena are not the outcome of pre-existing forces, then they are not consonant with the universe that science knows and with which science deals. They are something that results from an unknown and indeterminable force. Thus, these statements of Sir Oliver Lodge are either confused expressions of the first principles of Determinism, or they are quite unscientific, and mean nothing at all.

* * *

Design in Nature.

There is one passage in the work before us which carries us right back to the days of the Bridgewater Treatises. Here it is:—

The Universe is shoutingly full of design, plan, intention, purpose, reason, and what has been called the Logos. Without it was not anything made that was made. Not only the heavens, but the earth; not only the flowers, mountains, sunsets, but every grain of dust, the beautiful structure of every atom, proclaim the glory of the Being Who planned and understands it all.

If this was a correct and scientific summary of the position, then indeed might we believe that a revival of religion was at hand. For this kind of thing belongs to the eighteenth century rather than to the twentieth. But if Sir Oliver Lodge calls this "a point of view attained through a training in scientific study," one can only open one's eyes, and say that if this is so, then every pulpiter must be regarded as well on the way to becoming a first-rate scientist. Sir Oliver Lodge's own evidence is—we say it with all respect—exactly of the kind offered us in the fact that great rivers run by big towns, or death comes at the end of life, instead of in the middle of it. He finds arrangements of matter, or of living beings that are advantageous, and sees design. But if the play and balance of forces were not such as to permit life, life could not exist. And it is an open question always as to how many planets have passed through the cycle we are now passing through, in how many celestial bodies the arrangements have been such as not to permit the appearance of life at all, and there is the practical scientific certainty that one day, however remote, the balance of forces will be such as to make life impossible on earth. Moreover, as a scientific fact, it is certain that unless a particular arrangement of forces could by themselves produce what we see produced, all the directing possible would not enable them to do so. The intelligence of a chemist may bring together certain elements that produce a definite result; but unless the capacity for producing that result was present in the elements, bringing them together would be futile. So that in the very act of proving that certain things are evidence of design, Sir Oliver Lodge would be forced to admit that the same result could be brought about without it. Evidently, the universe is not quite so shoutingly full of design as Sir Oliver thinks. The whole truth is that these views do not spring from Sir Oliver's scientific studies at all. They are held independently of them. What he does is to press them into the service of a number of wholly unscientific opinions.

* * *

Evolution and God.

I left number 4 of the sentences selected from Sir Oliver's lectures, in order to take it with his remarks on evolution. "Depend upon it," he says, "the universe is rational." That may mean several things. What he appears to mean is that the universe is saturated with "mind," which so far as we can see is not true. For either we mean by mind what we mean when we use the term concerning human organization, or we mean something different. If something different, then it is not mind. If it is the same, it is impossible to think of "mind" except as in association with an organism. The illustrations given do not prove Sir Oliver's point. All they show is that it is possible to arrange phenomena in an intelligible order—that is, in such an order that we can foretell what is to happen, given certain conditions. The universe is intelligible so far as we can arrange and classify experience, and so long as that experience is uniform. But the universe is certainly not rational, if by that is meant that it works on lines that would commend themselves as the best possible. Even Sir Oliver has qualms on this point, for he asks concerning evolution:—

Why should there be a gradual process at all? Why should species arrive which turn out hopeless and fail? Why should anything come into being that is imperfect, or less fit than it might have been or than others are? Why are there malformations, monstrosities, and utter failures? These strange occurrences give to the process an air of experimentation like a tentative operation, as if there might be gradual improvement on first attempts.

Exactly; why should there be this long-drawn-out process, with its waste and suffering, if there really does exist a Creator who brought everything into being? Would any man who first began experimenting with aeroplanes have made a number of faulty or useless machines if he could have made the perfect one right off? Or are we to think of this "Being" as just an industrious mechanic kind of a god, who, finding himself faced with a world, tries to make the best he can of it? In that case we are left exactly where we were with regard to an originative and creative plan. What we have is, not a God, but an industrious architect, who is as much at the mercy of his materials as any one of us.

* * *

Faith and Fact.

Sir Oliver Lodge's attempts to find a way out are amusingly ineffective. He says that the "very human method of creation" is "just an instance of how our minds are in harmony with facts"—one more instance of the design in great rivers running by large towns. "Why," he says triumphantly, "even those who exclude the deity from their consideration . . . can see that everything is well adapted to the conditions." But it might have struck a man with a scientific training that (1) unless a thing is adapted to the conditions that permit it to persist, there is an end of it altogether. That kind of adaptation is not an indication of design but the registration of a result. And (2) adaptation is not a singular fact but a universal one. Adaptation to conditions is true of everything. There is the same degree of adaptation in a malformed body or a dead one as there is in an ideal or a living one. All adaptation means, as a natural fact, is that the consequence agrees with the conditions of which it is the expression. It is only in relation to an ideal end that it becomes perfect or imperfect. And at the end of it all we get the pious conclusion that "No doubt this process is in truth entirely reasonable; but whether we know the reason or not we must accept the fact that it is so." So, in the end we come back to an act of faith. The scientist gives way to the preacher, the paraded exercise of reason to an act of blind faith, the platform is converted into a pulpit. There was really no need to go to a scientist for this kind of thing. Save for the better appearance, the Bishop of London or a Salvationist could have done it equally well. Sir Oliver Lodge may be under the impression that he was asked to deliver these lectures so that he might give a view of the universe "attained through a training in scientific study." It is likely to be nearer the truth that the invitation proceeds from the expectation that he would use the prestige gained as a scientist to bolster up unscientific opinions, and cast the protective mantle of science over the body of a discredited superstition.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

At The Play.

I LOVE the holy pander—winsome wight,
The soul's purveyor, sweet as flowers of May,
Who, seeing Virtue baffled of her prey
Yet, shameless, leads him to the realms of light:
Is goodness as abortive in our sight
That we must guide her in the narrow way,
Lest cruel Truth should lead us far astray,
And show the wicked on his throne of night?
Thus must we flatter aye the meaner soul,
And Life must be denied, without, within,
And every faith be swallowed in the whole
So Dame Convention in the end may win:
And thus must evil pay its daily toll
To Virtue,—dead without the sop of Sin!

WM. J. IAMB.

The Ascension.

ACCORDING to the teaching of the Church the ascension occurred forty days after the resurrection; but in Luke's Gospel we are assured that it took place on the evening of the resurrection day. In this narrative two appearances of the risen Jesus are reported to have been made on that day, the first to two men on their way to Emmaus, and the second to the eleven disciples and those assembled with them at a house in Jerusalem. To these he suddenly became visible and spoke intimate and comforting words, and afterwards, the same evening, led them out until they were over against Bethany, where he parted from them, and was carried in a cloud up to heaven. In its original form Mark's Gospel records neither appearances nor ascension. According to Matthew, Jesus made no appearance at Jerusalem except to the two Marys, and there was no ascension. In John's Gospel several appearances are recorded, but there is not a word about the ascension. In Luke, then, only one of the four Gospels, that by reality, mentions the ascension, and Luke is also the author of the Book of the Acts; and here we read of "the day in which He (Jesus) was received up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Ghost unto the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom he also shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God." Thus Luke flatly contradicts himself without a word of explanation. In his Gospel he treats the resurrection and ascension as two events which happened the same day, while in the Acts he places an interval of forty days between them, which positively proves that he cannot be accepted as a reliable historian. We are fully aware that theologians are in the habit of treating the resurrection and ascension as but two parts of one act, and we have no objection whatever to their so regarding them, because the one is fully as unhistorical as the other. They are but fairy tales told by those who believed them to be, or at least wanted them to be accepted by the readers, as historical events. Concerning the alleged appearances of the risen Jesus the author of *Supernatural Religion* observes:—

The third Synoptic gives evidence that the risen Jesus is not incorporeal by stating that he not only permitted himself to be handled, but actually ate food in their presence. The fourth Evangelist attains the same result in a more artistic manner through the doubts of Thomas, but in allowing him actually to put his finger into the prints of the nails in his hands, and his hand into the wound in his side, he asserts that Jesus rose with the same body as that which had hung on the Cross. He too, whilst doing this, actually endows him with the attribute of incorporeality; for, upon both of the occasions which we are discussing, the statement is markedly made that, when Jesus came and stood in the midst, the doors were shut where the disciples were. It can scarcely be doubted that the intention of the writer is to represent a miraculous entry (pp. 840-1).

That line of criticism might be pursued much further, but that is not our main purpose in the present article. Our object is rather to bring the light of Christian history to bear upon the Gospel narratives of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. In the *Church Times* of May 27, there is published a characteristic sermon by Bishop Gore, entitled "The Risen and Ascended Lord." As most of our readers know, Bishop Gore is at once a distinguished Anglo-Catholic leader and a well-known social reformer. In the latter capacity we cherish the most sincere admiration of him, whilst in the former

we hold him peculiarly open to criticism. The first part of the sermon now before us is devoted to a simple recital of the Gospel narratives of the resurrection and ascension. He expresses his opinion that during the forty days' interval between the two alleged episodes Jesus had his abode in the heavenly sphere, wherever that may be; but in that question we are not in the least interested. Then he indulges in the following interpretation:—

To the disciples the vision and the acted parable of the Ascension which occurred before their eyes, were given them in order to teach them a new lesson. The Resurrection of our Lord had taught them that God vindicated His apparently humbled and discredited Servant. He had vindicated the Christ. The lesson of the Ascension was that "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

As a matter of fact the lessons which God intended that the resurrection and ascension should teach are still unlearned by the overwhelming majority of the world's population. After two thousand years Jesus has never yet reigned "where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run" nor is there any prospect of his doing so within the next two thousand years. He has not yet reigned even in Christendom. There was a time when the Church did rule with a rod of iron. With a high and unscrupulous hand it cruelly crushed every attempt at rebellion or revolution. No escape from its abominable clutches was possible. Within it the Gospel Jesus was conspicuous only by his absence. But to-day even the Church has been deprived of its all-conquering power, and even in Italy and Spain it is no longer the monstrous tyrant it used to be in days of yore. In this country three-fourths of the people are completely beyond its controlling influence. Bishop Gore is not above admitting that "sometimes, as we read or hear the boasts of the champions of orthodox doctrines, we are filled with a deep sense of dread because the spirit of their language of triumph appears to be so sadly mixed. We know what it ought to be, but we are sometimes ashamed of what it is." He says:—

We know that no movement can rightly claim the Name and authority of Jesus that is unscrupulous or worldly in its methods. And yet how much of this is there to be found in the language and policy of the champions of the Church in history or to-day! How much of unscrupulousness do we find in many heroes of the Faith! What little regard for the exact truth! How much personal self-assertion and arrogance, cloaking themselves under Divine claims! How much human anger, though "the wrath of men worketh not the righteousness of God"! How much injustice and unfair criticism! How much contempt where there should have been sympathy!

We all know how terribly justified that bitter indictment sadly is, and its justification is to be found not alone in the Anglo-Catholic Party in the Church of England, but practically in every Christian denomination under the sun. Those accounted heterodox can no longer be burnt at the stake or beheaded with the axe, but they can still be slain by the tongue of lying slander and wicked innuendo. And what Church is there in any land which does or can refrain from pursuing a policy of malignant persecution towards those who call themselves Freethinkers?

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be concluded.)

Progress I define as the emergence and increasing dominance of mind.—Dr. Saleeby.

Brimstone and Treacle.

"If instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him with a semi-caress, by which he shall, in his anguish, be rendered dubious whether, indeed, anything has hurt him, you are an engine of irony."—George Meredith.

"Laughter is the property of man."—Rabelais.

BYRON once said that "ridicule is the only weapon the English climate cannot rust." Yet ridicule is not popular in this country, and irony has many enemies. Simple people, who must be literal or nothing, dislike it. Women, more often than not, do not care for it at all. And those other wearers of petticoats, the priests, whose professional gravity prompts them, look askance at it as being something unseemly and unbecoming.

Without it is based on truth, said Heinrich Heine, who was himself a master of the lash, wit is only a sneeze of the reason. Every great wit in literature has been a man of serious aims, and the greatest writers have been the greatest wits from the far-off days of Aristophanes to those of Anatole France. Some of the best masters of irony have been among the most earnest soldiers of progress. Perhaps the most perfect examples of irony are to be found in Voltaire's *Candide*, the wittiest book in the whole world. Here is an example taken at random. When the unfortunate and unhappy *Candide* was to be punished as a military deserter :—

He was asked which he would like the best, to be whipped six-and-thirty times through all the regiment, or to receive at once twelve bullets in his brain. He vainly said that human will is free, and that he chose neither the one nor the other. He was forced to make a choice. He determined, in virtue of that gift of God called liberty, to run the gauntlet six-and-thirty times.

After Voltaire, Heine is perhaps the most brilliant ironist. For seven years prior to his death he lay sick and solitary on a mattress-grave, his back twisted, his legs paralysed, his hands powerless, his sight failing. "God's satire weighs heavily upon me," he said :—

The great Author of the Universe, the Aristophanes of Heaven, was bent on demonstrating with crushing force to me, the little so-called German Aristophanes, how my weighted sarcasms are only pitiful attempts at jesting in comparison with His, and how miserably I am beneath Him in humour, in colossal mockery.

The untamable humourist kept his most wonderful jest for the last. Reproached by orthodox friends for his levity in religious matters, he said : "God will forgive me, it is His trade."

A superb example of sustained irony is to be found in Gibbon's famous fifteenth chapter of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; sketching with masterly skill the rise of the Christian religion. We all realize Gibbon's position. He was pretending to give an account of the early Christians from the orthodox standpoint, so as to hoodwink the pious. This is how he does it :—

But how shall he excuse the supine inattention of the Pagan and philosophic world to those evidences which were presented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reason but to their senses? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the Church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alteration in the moral and physical government of the world.

Gibbon is ostensibly censuring the sages for overlooking the Bible miracles. In reality, he is denying their occurrence by slyly pointing out that there is no contemporary record of them from disinterested sources. How masterly, too, is Gibbon's command of language, "sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer." Listen to his sarcastic description of the Christian Knight-errant, who :—

As the champion of God and the ladies (I blush to unite such discordant names) devoted himself to speak the truth, maintain the right, and protect the distressed.

Jonathan Swift, like Gibbon, was a master of irony. Voltaire recommended *The Tale of a Tub* as a superb satire against religion, and Thackeray denied Swift's belief in that Christian religion which he had pretended to defend in his ironical *Arguments against Abolishing Christianity*. If Swift's sword was sharp, it was a double-edged weapon, as may be seen by the sardonic climax :—

To conclude, whatever some may think of the great advantage to trade by this favourite scheme, I do very much appreciate that in six months after the Act is passed for the extirpation of the Gospel, the Bank and East-India stock may fall at least one per cent. And since that is fifty times more than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason why we should be at so great a loss for the sake of destroying it.

A most striking example of Swift's peculiar humour is *A Modest Proposal*, which is a reasoned proposition to use up for food the superfluous children of poor people. Irony will also be found in Fielding's *History of Jonathan Wild the Great*, a biting record of the "greatness" of a scoundrel, and well worthy of the attention of those newspaper editors who so often hang haloes on murderers' heads. There is irony in plenty in the acidulated pages of Gustave Flaubert, and under the scholarly sentences of Ernest Renan. Listen to his remarks on David, "the man after God's own heart" :—

We shall see the brigand of Adullam and Ziklag assume gradually the airs of a Saint. He will be the author of the Psalms; the sacred choregus, the type of the future saviour. Jesus must be the son of David! The evangelical biography will be falsified in a multitude of points, by the idea that the life of the Messiah should reproduce the traits of David's. Pious souls, while enjoying the sentiments, full of resignation and tender melancholy, of the finest of liturgical books, will fancy themselves in communion with the bandit. Humanity will believe in a final justice on the testimony of David, who never thought of it, and of the Sybil, who never existed. O the divine comedy.

Irony also lurks in the robust pages of Rabelais, and in the suggestive sentences of Denis Diderot. The greatest living English writer, Thomas Hardy, has shown himself a master of irony, particularly in the concluding chapter of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, in which he makes play with "the President of the Immortals." But the dictionary definition of irony must be altered. It is not nearly enough to say that it is "a mode of speech expressing a sense contrary to that which the speaker intends to convey." It may be true of the simple, elementary irony of the Christian Bible, which describes a thoroughfare as "the street which is called Straight," and which travellers describe as being straighter than a rainbow, and not so straight as a corkscrew. It may also be true of the open-air irony of the Cockney who called after a woman cyclist with large feet, "Hullo! Trilby," but it by no means defines the more complex irony of literature, which has been used by some of the greatest masters of language in the civilized world, both ancient and modern.

Holism and Evolution.

GENERAL SMUTS has lived an adventurous life, he has played many parts and distinguished himself in all of them. Born at Cape Colony fifty-seven years ago, he was, at the early age of twenty-eight, appointed by Kruger to be State Attorney to the South African Republic. During the Boer War—which reflected no credit upon our diplomacy, morality, or military capacity, and lowered us in the eyes of the world—he held supreme command of the Boers in Cape Colony, until the Conference at Vereeniging, where he declared in favour of peace. After the war he devoted himself to reconciling the two nations, and when the Great War came we found him fighting on our side. Upon the death of Botha, in 1919, Smuts became Premier of South Africa, remaining in office until 1924. Now he comes before us in the new and unexpected character of a philosopher.

In his book *Holism and Evolution* (Macmillan, 1925), General Smuts sets forth the result of his studies and reflections of a lifetime, which have been, he tells us, the "relief of heavy political labours." The process to which he has given the name "Holism," is the capacity of Nature to evolve, or create, wholes; this is the fundamental principle of Nature from which everything progressively advances. We see it in the building up of atoms, of molecules, and chemical compounds in the inorganic world; and in the production of plants and animals in the organic world: "Holism as the operative factor in the evolution of wholes is the ultimate principle of the universe." Plants and animals, for instance, are made up of constituent parts and yet possess a specific character, or individuality of their own: "Holism in all its endless forms is the principle which works up the raw material or unorganized energy units of the world, utilizes, assimilates, and organizes them, endows them with specific structure and character and individuality, and finally with personality, and creates beauty and truth and value from them."

It will be seen that Holism—we should have thought Wholism would have been a better title—belongs to the philosophical group represented by Bergson's *Élan vital*; Bernard Shaw's *Life Force*; and Prof. Lloyd Morgan's *Emergent Evolution*. But unlike the last named, who still finds a use for God and the Soul, General Smuts has no use for either. He observes: "There is universal agreement with the well-known argument of Kant, that from the facts of Nature no inference of God is justified. The belief in the Divine Being rests and necessarily must rest, on quite different grounds. From the facts of Evolution no inference to a transcendent Mind is justified, as that would make the whole still of the same character and order as its parts; which would be absurd, as Euclid says. From the facts neither an organism nor a mind in Nature can strictly be inferred; still less a personality constituted by both." Nor is it necessary to make the assumption, he continues: "There is indeed a trend in Evolution, but it would be wrong and a misnomer to call that trend a purpose, and worse to invent a Mind to which to refer that purpose."

The same with Life and the mind of man: "Life is no dove that has flown to our shores from some world beyond this world; mind or soul is not an importation from some other universe." The popular traditional view of life and soul dwelling together in the body of matter: "comes from the hoary beginnings of human thought and speculation, but it is definitely abandoned by all those who have assim-

lated the modern view-point of Evolution. For them in some way not yet fully understood, but accepted as an undoubted fact, both life and mind have developed from matter or the physical basis of existence." (p. 8.) This view of nature, he claims, brings us nearer: "the monistic conception of the universe which is the immanent ideal of all scientific and philosophical explanation." The monistic philosophy, which teaches that there is only one existence, and not two, a spiritual and a material, was the philosophy of Charles Bradlaugh and Ernst Haeckel.

In the chapter entitled "Darwinism and Holism," General Smuts pays tribute to the great naturalist: "He has changed our whole human orientation of knowledge and belief, he has given a new direction to our outlook, our efforts and aspirations, and has probably meant a greater difference for human thought and action than any other single thinker."

With the discovery of the electrical composition of the atom, and the conjecture, by Sir Oliver Lodge, that the atom is merely a concentration, or whorl in the Ether; some of the demi-semi pious journalists of Fleet Street, had a brain-wave. The Ether, which was not material and had always eluded demonstration, must be spiritual; therefore the origin of the universe must be spiritual, and not material as those vulgar infidels contended. General Smuts deals effectively with this argument. He observes:—

To view the ideal or spiritual element in the universe as the dominant factor is to ignore the fact that the universe was before ever the ideal or spiritual had appeared on the horizon; that the ideal or spiritual is a new and indeed recent creation in the order of the universe, that it was not implicit in the beginnings and has not been reached by a process of unfolding; but that from a real pre-existing order of things it has been creatively evolved as a new factor; and that its importance to-day should not be retrospectively antedated to a time when the world existed without it. Where was the Spirit when the warm Silurian seas covered the face of the earth, and the lower type of fishes and marine creatures still formed the crest of the evolutionary wave? Or going still further back, where was the Spirit when in the pre-Cambrian system of the globe the first convulsive movements threw up the early mountains which have now entirely disappeared from the face of the earth, and when the living forms, if any, were of so low a type that none have been deciphered yet in the geological record? Where was the Spirit when the Solar System itself was still a diffuse fiery nebula? The evolutionary facts of Science are beyond dispute, and they support the view of the earth as existing millions of years before ever the psychical or spiritual order had arisen; and what is true of the earth may be similarly true of the universe as a whole. (pp. 330-331).

As he further remarks: "Mind is not at the beginning but at the end." If there is anything Spiritual and divine in Nature—we prefer to name them mind and intellect—then they have evolved, by a progressively ascending scale, out of Nature: "Mind is the eye with which the universe beholds itself and knows itself divine. In Mind, Nature at last emerges from the deep sleep of its far-off beginnings, becomes awake, aware and conscious, begins to know herself, and consciously, instead of blindly and unconsciously, to reach out towards freedom, towards welfare, and towards the goal of the ultimate Good." (p. 229).

Scientists do not, as a rule, welcome intruders upon their domain, they are generally extremely critical, not to say rude; therefore General Smuts is to be congratulated upon the warmth, not to say enthusiasm, with which his book has been received in the scientific world. Prof. Sir Arthur Keith, in a long review, after stating that the author has not gone to tradi-

tional sources for his information, says: "he has taken the great book of Nature as his Bible and physicists and biologists as his prophets, and one marvels at the accuracy and intimacy with which he has assimilated the latest teaching of the laboratories"; and expresses his belief that: "Some day General Smuts' principle of "Holism" will pass from a mere speculation into a definite biological reality." ² And further: "he believes, as I do, that man's body and mind—all that we call the human soul—has arisen, stage upon stage, from the humblest forms of living things." And concludes: "We see here the trend which evolution is taking in the shaping of our religious beliefs, it is ever towards a world in which its affairs move under a control inherent in the nature of things. There is no halfway house for the Church once it admits evolution as a creed: it has to accept all or deny all."

Professor Graham Kerr has also given the book his blessing. After testifying to its author's "intellectual power, to his honesty of purpose, and to his remarkable freedom from prejudice," he concludes a long review, extending to five columns of *Nature* (February 26, 1927), by saying that the purpose of his review is: "to direct attention to a remarkable and important work which should be read by all interested in the philosophy of the world in which they live. As will have been gathered, General Smuts' book is a step towards that merging together of science and philosophy which is bound to come at no distant date. Men of science and philosophers alike are aiming at the same objective—the unravelling of the meaning that lies behind phenomena."

We hope that General Smuts will continue his study of Nature and give us more books embodying the results.

W. MANN.

The Age of Unreason.

HAIL! Twentieth Century! Age of enlightenment, progress and scientific marvels. Thus were you greeted not many decades ago, when autocars were a novelty, flying yet a dream, and there still obtained types of humanity with mentality low enough to believe the assertion of Messiahship of a fornicating London parson.

Rather an age of promise that never reaches fulfilment—of frustrated endeavour that is applauded as the acme of accomplishment. Out of the infinite world process, the chaos and strife, have been engendered and lugged to your bosom for a while sometime, promising abortions! Bred and weaned in ignorance and apathy, inculcated with prejudice and convention, worthy issue, these, to perpetuate the errors of the past.

An age whose art, both pictorial and sculptural, from its alleged ultra-civilized sub-consciousness pretends to improve upon nature's forms; whose æsthetic impulse urges it to produce such grotesque atrocities as the memorial to Hudson and the Gunners' memorial at Hyde Park Corner.

An age that was led by its false teachers, opportunist politicians, sycophantic priests and international financiers into the greatest crime of all history. Where, thanks to the influence of international propagandists, the flower of our manhood was incited to slaughter each other in millions, and the moral and ethical standards of whole nations were sapped and perverted to an incalculable degree. An age that witnessed the appalling spectacle of hundreds

of thousands of combatants sacrificed unnecessarily to satisfy the personal jealousies and ambitions, the blind egotism and the crass ineptitude of an aristocratic military caste; that is now inspired to organize a League of Nations that formulates edicts, whilst the nations represented still retain their secret diplomats and increase their armaments in preparation for further futile destruction.

An age of psychological quacks that seeks to ameliorate the result of bad living and worse thinking by probing into the sub-conscious mind of the human animal; so that every dolt with morbid introspective tendencies can have what he calls a mind analysed, and his neurotic fancies and perverted tastes and activities condoned.

An age whose popular music and dancing reverts to savagery; that with nauseating enthusiasm adopts from the Melting-Pot of the West the rags and tatters of a perverted and erotic art that diverts those of the younger generation of Mammon-worshippers in their intervals of dollar-collecting and drunken debauchery; and whose devotees, although pretending to civilization and culture, show more fatuous credulity in mascot and omen than do savages in darkest Africa. What could be more symptomatic of the *malaise* that affects society?

An age of obscurantists whose leaders of thought—professors of science—give publicity to what they assert are epoch-making psychical discoveries, yet who do not deign to apply to their experiments even elementary scientific research. In the wake of whom follow a set of pseudo-scientific priests who, whilst still retaining the old theology for the benefit of the "masses," endeavour to preserve the respect and approval of the half-educated "classes" by the invention of a scientific-religious-philosophical farrago, so involved and contradictory that all thinking people recognizes its authors for what they are—time-servers, place-seekers, toadies, liars and parasites. A clergy so vacillating and inconsistent as to try to revivify a dying creed by attempted improvements upon what they have always asserted is inspiration.

An age whose educational authorities still retain in their curriculum the same exploded, degrading and vicious theology, and completely ignore the importance of and necessity for the teaching of good citizenship. An age that as yet has far from eradicated the poison instilled into its blood by the medieval Church: a Church that invented the "divine right of kings" (for its own ends) and reverence for hereditary rank and title: that has not yet—despite its democratic leanings—properly realized that any kind of royalty or any kind of aristocracy is rightly an insult: an insult to its intelligence and an insult to its manhood. The only aristocracy worth honouring is that of intellect. To hold a position that is not gained by personal achievement is to invite ridicule, derision and contempt. Even an arrogant intellectual is a menace, for knowledge, as are all things, is continuously in a state of flux, and the highest philosophical concepts of to-day may be the common-places of to-morrow.

Better far to have lurked with pithyechanthropus in his cave than to be held back on the threshold of enlightenment by fools and knaves.

W. THOMPSON.

Those who are most open to new ideas and readiest in adopting new inventions, and in setting aside faiths and formulas no longer adapted to progressive humanity have the future for their own, and their species will, like dominant organism, supplant and supersede inferior forms.—J. M. Wheeler.

² Article on "Science and Religion." *The Sunday Times*, October 3, 1926.

Acid Drops

"What Our Churches Are Doing," runs a heading in a pious journal. We gather, from reports, that the Churches are still telling the old, old story; still duping the same old crowd; and still passing round the same old collection bags to keep the pastors' pot well boiling.

A factory in London, we learn, has been producing pottery for the past 250 years. That's nothing. Papa's Romish factory has been producing authentic pieces of the Cross and relics of the Saints for the past thousand or so years; and it still finds a ready market for the goods, though buying is not quite so brisk as it once was.

Mr. H. T. Silcock, M.A., of the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association, declares that ethics and social service are also alternative modes of religious expression. He adds, much of the distrust of all systems of religion is in reality deeply religious. Now, the readers of this paper have a pretty thorough distrust of all systems of religion. According to Mr. Silcock they are deeply religious without being aware of the fact. It's nice to know that. It makes us feel good all over to think that we have helped readers to acquire this deep religiosity.

Extracts from an interview with Prof. W. F. Loft-house, of Handsworth College (Wesleyan Theological Training College):—

"To become a preacher the primary need is to understand and get at the spirit of the Bible . . . in which the message the preacher has to deliver is contained. This involves a knowledge of the languages in which the Bible is written. So Hebrew and New Testament Greek form an important part of the curriculum; and, I should like to emphasize the value of this teaching of the languages in training the men in exactness. Much of the theology and philosophy forming part of our instruction is necessarily not exact in its nature, and the student needs some form of mental discipline if he is to avoid sloppiness of thought; and for that kind of thing Hebrew and Greek grammar provide a valuable antidote."

"Something more is required . . . if the young minister is to stand on his own feet when he has left College. Our ideal is not that of the seminary in which the student learns by rote all that can be taught, and then goes out into a critical world to repeat it like a human gramophone. We try to train our men to think for themselves . . . No man can expose the weakness of the Roman claims or the agnostic position, unless he understands also their strong points; we must therefore deal frankly with these subjects, and with questions raised by the Higher Criticism, if our ministers are to be men with their faith firmly rooted in knowledge, and not dependent merely upon tradition and early bias."

All intolerance is stupid. It can do nothing to stop progress, says Mr. E. R. Thompson, M.A. Since the beginning of time intolerant people have tried to make the world stand still, but it has gone steadily forward in spite of them. We do not quite agree that intolerance can do nothing to stop progress. It most certainly hinders progress. And the intolerant people who do most hindering are the religious. Why this should be so is obvious enough. When men and women declare that a God-given book is the only true guide for both society and the individual, when they believe that all are "wicked" who refuse to acknowledge the book's authority and dare profess different opinions, intolerance and persecution and repression become exalted into virtues.

The Archdeacon of Bedford thinks that religion is being made too easy. Once upon a time, he says, there was too much hell in the service; now there is not enough. So the Archdeacon wants to give them more hell. But what is the use of giving hell to people who do not believe in it? We admit the situation is very distressing—to the Archdeacon.

A *Daily Chronicle* writer recently presented a little essay headed, "In Defence of Doubt." Of this the following is a portion:—

Doubt is the test through which every truth must pass if it is to be of any use to us. Anything we accept without question is valueless to us. It weakens rather than strengthens character. It is apt to make the mind torpid, inert. Whatever we know about ourselves, about the world we see around us, about the universe, is the result of doubt . . . Galileo could not have discovered that the earth went round the sun, if he had not begun to doubt whether the sun really went round the earth, as the mass of people in his time believed. Doubt is the father of all knowledge, all clear thinking, all progress. Without it we should stagnate, petrify, decay.

To have summarized the Freethought attitude so neatly, the writer must have been a pretty close and constant reader of the *Freethinker*. If his essay sets *Chronicle* readers questioning and thinking in regard to the Christian religion, we fancy the parsons will not feel inclined to shower down blessings upon him. Be that as it may, we thank our daily contemporary for publishing some elementary Freethought sentiments as a slight offset to the pious twaddle it usually ladles out every Saturday.

Apropos of Sinclair Lewis' *Elmer Gantry*, the Rev. J. C. Carlile remarks:—

When you think of it, novelists have not been over-generous in their treatment of the Free Church minister. Charles Dickens and Mark Rutherford have given some terrible examples, and too often the minister is represented as very dull or very deceitful. In comedy he is usually the fool, but in reality he is a quite different type. There is still room for the author who can present the real minister, the man as he is, with his weaknesses and addities, but a great sincerity and a passionate desire to be of service in the Kingdom of God.

But we fancy authors who have pilloried the parson would not claim to have depicted all types of clerics. They have showed the world what the worst can be like. The value of their revelation lies in the fact that they have taught people not to accept the parson at his own valuation, and not to believe that a man has necessarily a first-class character merely because he professes religion.

That there are other types of ministers may be admitted. George Eliot, in *Felix Holt the Radical*, revealed an admirable little man in the person of the Rev. M. Lyon. But what we refuse to believe is that a minister, or any other man, is sincere and desirous of rendering service to the world—not to the "Kingdom of God"—as an inevitable outcome of his being religious. The mere fact of there being outside the Churches men who possess these qualities, puts that contention out of court. As George Eliot showed, there is a Rev. M. Lyon, but there is a Felix Holt too, with sincerity and a passion for service to his fellows.

"It seems," said the Bishop of Blackburn, addressing a Lay Readers' Conference, "as though in the life of England to-day religion was being dethroned. There was a time, not many generations since, when the Church could speak with the voice of authority, and whether men liked it or not, no one ventured to question its right to speak." Quite so, and we have no doubt the Bishop deeply regrets the changed circumstances. All that need be added is that there is scarcely a subject on which the Church did speak with authority on which it was not shown to be wrong. And the breaking of the authority of the Church is detailed in the torturing, execution, and imprisonment of brave men and women who won for those who live to-day the right to ignore the church, and whose work fully justified the contempt in which so many hold the Church at present.

According to Dr. L. D. Barnett, in the *Daily Express*, 230 millions of people embrace Hinduism. This should cause many Christians to reconsider the copyright of their own particular brand.

We are much obliged to Canon A. N. Cooper for telling us in the *Daily News* that we are apt to think of the French people as members of a free-thinking nation. What he did not tell us is that an open profession by French public men of atheism does not penalise them. Our English Christians still have the power to make it uncomfortable for any public man who says outright that he does not believe in the vague and nebulous sort of a something somewhere; our newspapers yelp in the same tune at a distance.

The *Church Times* is angry because the Bishop of Liverpool has permitted a divorced woman to be married in one of the churches in his diocese. But the Bishop of Liverpool is a State servant, and is only allowed to perform a legal marriage so long as he has the authority of the State to do so. All the verbiage about God in the marriage service is, so far as its legal aspect is concerned, so much rubbish. It is from the State that the Church derives its authority to perform marriages, and it is a piece of impudence for a State servant to attempt to dictate to the State the conditions on which he will use the powers which he owes to the State and to the State alone. For one who does not agree with the marriage laws of the State, the honest course would be to resign. But to act honourably in such matters is the very last thing that most clergymen think of. They prefer to prate about the law of God, and Christian morality, and to either take money for what they do not do, or doing things in which they do not believe. A very strange thing is the Christian conscience.

The Industrial Christian Fellowship, declares the Rev. R. H. S. Gobbit, does not wish to be a spiritual society of Frothblowers, but wants to be the Mustard Club of the Church. The rev. gentleman, we presume, fancies that as Christian clients are getting tired of stale Nazarene lamb, the Fellowship will supply a condiment to tempt jaded appetites into activity.

This is a free advertisement. "The Order of the Child" sends us a circular asking for subscriptions, in order to promote the passing of the Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching to Children Bill, now in its second reading. It is afraid that the Bill may be crowded out, and the work will have to be done all over again. The Bill is to prevent blasphemy or sedition being taught to anyone under sixteen. Parsons and members of Parliament are not protected under this Bill, as sixteen means sixteen years, it is not a mental efficiency test. On the other hand, its promoters emphasize the need for teaching as much religion as is possible to children below sixteen years. They explain that they are not mature enough to exercise independent judgment below this age.

Possessing less Christian bigotry and more impartiality, modern literary critics are better able to appraise than were former generations of critics the merits of great Atheistic writers. Hence we find Mr. George Sampson, a well-known educationalist, writing in the *Daily News*, thus:—

Matthew Arnold's famous dismissal of Shelley as a "beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain," is probably the most stupid criticism of a poet ever made. As Mr. Bernard Shaw remarks, Shelley's contemporaries did not in the least think of Shelley as an angel; they were convinced he was a fiend; and the law therefore deprived him of his rights as a man. So little was he "ineffectual" that there was probably no time of his life when he failed to give the acutest twists of alarm to whatever governing powers he encountered.

Mr. Sampson might well have explained that Shelley was regarded as a "fiend" and deprived of his rights as a man, because he publicly avowed himself as an Atheist. For being intellectually honest, Shelley had naturally to suffer the penalties Christian bigotry was able to inflict. Bigotry has always found it hard to forgive a crime like that.

Whitby has been enjoying a voting farce organized by the local Sabbatarian fanatics, who are deeply concerned with preventing other people from doing as they may think fit with their leisure hours. According to a pious journal, "the ratepayers by 3,000 votes to 400 have voted against Sunday games," but the Urban District Council have ignored this vote, and also the protests of the Churches, and confirmed a previous decision to continue Sunday games by 11 votes to 6. Our contemporary's comment is: A very serious situation is created when a democratic vote is over-riden in this way by a small autocratic body; and it would never be done if such a body were not convinced that the public generally are indifferent on the matter. The last portion of this statement is a rather useful admission. If the general public are indifferent, one may safely infer that they do not support the Sabbatarian clamour for prohibition of Sunday games. The population of Whitby is about 14,000; and after the Churches have frantically rounded up all their clients, they can register an adverse vote of less than one-third of the total population. Obviously, then, a large majority of citizens don't support these Sabbatarian claims. That being the case, the Council are quite justified in refusing to let the noisy minority influence their decision. The Council are to be complimented on their courage. They can afford to ignore the splenetic splutterings of our pious contemporary.

The modern industrial revolution was an unsettling time for Anglicans. After the Peninsular War, because of trade depression, financial shortage, and a poor harvest, there were riotous outbreaks of the poorer classes in several centres, says the Rev. J. Baird Ewens. And a panicky House of Commons voted a grant of one million pounds sterling for building new parish churches, in the belief that irreligion and not starvation was at the root of the industrial revolution. The new churches, he adds, would be extra bottles to hold soothing syrup to keep the feverish bodies quiet! The reverend gentleman is enjoying a dig at the Anglicans. But as a matter of fact the chapels too have received money, not from the Government, but from panicky wealthy people who fancy the chapels can serve out soothing syrup to keep restless workers quiescent. Certainly Queen Victoria encouraged the Salvation Army with that end in view.

Mr. Cecil Dean, in the *Sunday School Chronicle*, says our day is faced with a difficulty that demands sympathy and understanding. This difficulty, we gather, is the struggle young Christians have in squaring their scientific conceptions of the universe with the miracles of Holy Writ. Mr. Dean says that it is not so much the harmonizing of natural science with the old religious concepts—that leads one into very dubious ways. The vital problem is to gain a conception of God that will fit our present knowledge of his mode of working in the physical world. But, what the modern Christian does is to set out with an assumption that there is a God and that he is a God of Love. His next step is to note only such facts about the physical universe that seem to support his assumption, ignoring the others contrary to it. What is this but "harmonizing"?

A campaign has been started to provide £1,000,000 for purchasing playing fields for children. Four million elementary school-children have no facilities for playing team games at all. Millions of children have only the streets for playgrounds. What is needed, says the *Daily News*, is unstinted gifts of money and land. But when the playing fields are provided, how many will be available on Sunday? Very few, we fancy. One can safely trust the Sabbatarian fanatics to see that the children derive no benefit from the fields every seventh day throughout the year. We suggest that all in a position to give land for the children's use should stipulate that it be available for games seven days a week.

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.—J. Wearing, £1; Miss A. Wilson, 10s. (Quarterly Sub.); H. Pomper, 5s. 6d.

W. STRICKLAND.—Thanks, will prove useful.

S. MAIN.—The superstition concerning the magical virtues of spittle is very old and widespread. You will find it in the New Testament, where Jesus cures a man of his blindness by spitting in his eye. It enjoyed a great vogue in the Middle Ages in connexion with the saliva of certain saints.

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.

The 1927 Conference has come and gone, leaving behind it nothing but pleasant memories, of old friendships renewed and of new ones begun. There was a very good muster of friends and delegates at the Kenilworth Hotel, most of the Branches of the N.S.S. being represented. The discussions on the various resolutions were good tempered and to the point, while delegates and members expressed confidence and satisfaction with the work done and contemplated.

We print this week the Executive's Annual Report, and next week there will be published a summary of the business proceedings. For the thirteenth time Mr. Cohen was elected President of the National Secular Society, and Miss Vance was re-elected Secretary. In thanking the Conference Miss Vance said that this was probably the last time she would offer herself for re-election, and although this would mean a painful break, advancing age and the state of her health made the step necessary. The President also said that in the event of Miss Vance's retirement there would be certain responsibilities which the Society would have to face, and he felt the Conference would wish the Executive to face these responsibilities in a just and liberal manner.

The evening (public) meeting of the Conference was held in the large City Hall. The hall was not filled, which was not surprising, considering the time of the year, but there was a good audience, and the speeches were followed with appreciation and applause. Mr. Hale, late President of the local Branch led off with a comparison between the state of religion in Glasgow today and twenty-six years ago, when the Conference last met there; Mr. Whitehead dealt forcibly with some taunts that Christians hurl at Freethinkers, Mr. Clifford Williams was, as usual, bright and eloquent, Mr. Rosetti's speech, for both manner and matter well deserved the applause it received. A few words from the local Secretary, Mr. Mann, followed, and then Mr. Cohen dismissed the meeting with a brief speech that, apparently, left everyone in good humour, and content with one of the best Conferences of recent years.

Monday turned out to be a fine day, and delegates and members gathered at the Broomilaw for a sail down the Clyde to Lochgoilhead. To those who had not visited the Clyde or Loch Long before, the journey will have provided something to be remembered, and to all the ever-changing scenery, the play of light and shade on hill and water, the mountains rearing their blunt heads to the cloud-massed skies, were enough to lift men above the petty trials and vexations of every-day life. The industrial life of the Clyde and the everlasting serenity of mountains and Loch! A study in man's littleness and greatness—greatness when measured in terms of human capacity and accomplishment, littleness when measured against the vastness and extent of the natural forces that may be either friends or enemies as occasion and his own intelligence determine. The excursion was a fitting sequel to Sunday's work.

We are asked to call the attention of members of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. to a meeting to be held at 50, Whitechapel, on Saturday, June 11, at 7.30, when important business in connexion with the future of the Branch will be discussed.

It would indeed seem as if nature, with its method of never creating a new organ or structure, but only transforming and utilizing an old one, had attached a penalty to every successful attempt to rise above a certain level. If man will walk upright, she sees to it that his doing so shall involve a great liability to hernia. If he will live in cities, she has ready the ravages of consumption. If he will use clothing, she makes him carry round a coating of useless hair as a method of trapping disease germs. So soon as one disease is conquered another is discovered. Pleasures have their reverse sides in pains, and to some pains the pleasures bear a small relation, being chiefly of the character of pains being absent. As a social animal man is only imperfectly adapted to the state, there is going on a constant warfare between his egoistic and altruistic impulses. In fact, it would be an arguable proposition, if we allow intention in nature, to say that man was intended to remain at the animal level, and that having so far defeated nature's intention, he is dogged by a disappointed creator, and made to pay the fullest possible price that can be exacted for every step of progress achieved. Chapman Cohen in "Theism or Atheism."

N.S.S. Conference.

Executive's Annual Report.

By THE PRESIDENT.

THE twenty-six years that have passed since the Conference last met in this city have been very eventful ones. There have been great and drastic changes in the social and political world involving the overthrow of established governments and the rise of new ones. Institutions that seemed soundly established are now seriously threatened; inventions that were then little more than dreams are now accomplished facts, and we have passed through a war which while unexampled in the history of Europe for its savagery and extent, must have given to large numbers the final proof of Christianity's inability to curb the savage in man.

Our own organization has experienced little more than the normal comings and goings, the turns of good or ill-fortune, usual to every Society. Some striking personalities that were then with us, have gone, leaving behind them the inspiration and the fruits of their labours. Others have made their appearance, from whom we expect long and fruitful service. Above all, amid the political and social turmoil the one undeniable feature of the period has been the steady growth of the principles and opinions for which our movement stands. Never, during the two thousand years of Christian history has established and organized superstition been so generally discredited as at present. It is regrettable that this weakening of organized superstition is not accompanied by a corresponding weakening of superstition as a whole, but the mind of the average man or woman cannot throw off the unconscious control of inherited beliefs at once, and it is something that the insolence of established religion should receive so unmistakable a check, and that there should be considerable hesitation in publicly avowing beliefs that were once expressed with all the confidence of an unchallengeable dogmatism.

In turning to the work of the Society, it should be noted that the Balance Sheet is that of the Executive only; it does not represent the income and expenditure of the Society as a whole. Each Branch raises and expends its own funds. The Executive is responsible only for such funds as pass through its books. It should also be borne in mind that the financial side of the movement is to-day partly represented by the Secular Society, Limited, and the financial position of the two may for some purposes be taken as a whole.

During the year the work of the Society has gone on with its customary smoothness and success. There has been a steady accession of new members, and although it is to be regretted that only a proportion of these take an active part in the work of the Society, they are all registrations of its influence, and it may safely be assumed that they will carry with them a broader view of affairs as a consequence of their association with the Freethought movement.

New Branches of the Society have been opened at Weston-super-Mare, West London, Shotts, and Chester-le-Street. The Liverpool Branch has also been reorganized under the name of the New Liverpool Branch. The Shotts Branch is largely due to the activity of the Glasgow friends, who are always ready to lend a hand over a fairly wide area. The Chester-le-Street Branch appears to have started under very happy auspices, and has been fortunate enough to secure accommodation for a reading room, which is open every day for the convenience of friends and enquirers. This is a feature well worthy of note and of imitation.

At the request of the Glasgow Branch, your Presi-

dent undertook a week's lecturing in Glasgow and district. The meetings were all well attended, the arrangements made were excellent, and the audiences good and appreciative. It is probable that the experiment will be repeated during the coming autumn.

The Manchester Branch continues to carry on its work with success, and extends the area of its operations by arranging lectures in Pendleton and Salford. With the huge population of this part of Lancashire there is no reason why Branches should not be opened in each of these places. With Manchester as a centre this would mean a strengthening all round. Glasgow has been busier than usual, and with the assistance of a number of local speakers has carried on a series of lectures and debates over a wide area. Some of these lectures have been delivered before other Societies, and the results cannot but be good. Propaganda has been rather casual in Liverpool of late years, mainly owing to the difficulty of obtaining a suitable hall for weekly meetings. But the well attended meetings addressed from time to time in the Picton Hall by your President, proved that the material is there for a successful campaign. The new Branch has, however, managed to secure a meeting place and the work will now go on more regularly.

Birmingham deserves a special note, if only because of the successful issue to a very long fight. For a long period the Branch had enjoyed, in common with other bodies, the use of the Schools for Sunday meetings. More than twenty years ago this was taken from them on a frivolous pretext, and as an outcome of an engineered wave of bigotry. Time after time application was made for the use of the schools, but they were only to be had under conditions which the Branch regarded as invidious and insulting. The Branch insisted that it would have the schools on the same conditions as others, or not at all. Finally, this year, thanks to the help of some of the more liberal-minded members of the Education Committee, the resolution excluding the Branch was rescinded, and in the autumn it is hoped to resume the meetings with their old time success. We congratulate the Branch on its pertinacity, and on its triumph.

During the year the Executive has been responsible for lectures in the Stratford Town Hall, the Kensington Town Hall, the Portman Rooms, the Battersea Town Hall, and elsewhere. These meetings were well attended, sometimes the hall was crowded to the doors, and the success bears witness to the fact that when good halls are engaged, and the advertising is effectively done, success is assured. The experiment in the Kensington Town Hall would have been repeated, but when further application was made the reply was a refusal. The meeting had been quite orderly and appreciative. Bigotry alone was operative. The Executive also engaged Mr. George Whitehead for his usual summer work out of doors, and very satisfactory reports were received from all parts of the country.

The Executive is glad to note the growth among Branches of the Society of what has come to be known as Bradlaugh Sunday. It is well that at least one Sunday during the year something should be said in memory of the founder of this Society, and of the greatest Freethinker of the nineteenth century. And if it is not done by us, there exists no body of people in this country who will do it. Bradlaugh's uncompromising character, his defiant and plain avowal of Atheism are enough to make many who should feel otherwise, afraid of being associated with his name and work, and so makes it easy for Christians to bury altogether the memory and work of one of the bravest leaders the Freethought party has ever had. The Executive has had under discussion the possibility of founding an annual Bradlaugh Lectureship,

and something of that kind may be attempted in the future.

The reports of the London Branches tell of a very successful season. South London carries on a vigorous campaign at two or three open-air stations, with regular indoor meetings during the winter. It was also successful in securing the services of the Hon. Bertrand Russell for a lecture in the Battersea Town Hall, on "Why I am not a Christian." The North London Branch carries on at Regent's Park during the Summer, and indoors during the winter, with a series of open discussions on a variety of subjects. West Ham as energetic as ever, forms a very happy family; it arranges lectures both indoors and in the open-air, and its series of "Socials" do a deal towards inducing a good feeling between members, while also serving as a means of introducing new friends to the movement. The Bethnal Green Branch is at present in some difficulty owing to the illness of Mr. J. Neate. Mr. Neate is one of the oldest of London workers, tireless in his work for the Cause, and is a member of the Executive and of the Secular Society, Limited. It is hoped that he will soon be able to resume his activities. In the meantime the Executive is lending a hand with the meetings.

It should be remarked that a very great deal of work, in addition to what has been noted, is carried on both in London and all over the Provinces by local workers. It is impossible to minutely record all that is being done in this direction, but the Executive desires to gratefully place on record its appreciation of the valuable work accomplished.

On this head the Executive suggests that much more might be done if in each town or district volunteers could be found who would undertake to keep an eye upon the Press, correcting such misstatements concerning our work as may appear, and bringing forward Freethought views whenever possible, and helping also in the distribution of literature. The Society would be happy to provide literature quite free for this purpose.

The Executive also desires to express its appreciation of the valuable assistance given the Society by the *Freethinker*, assistance given ungrudgingly and gratuitously. It notes with pleasure the growth of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and hopes that the near future will see the voice of our movement placed in a position of complete financial security.

A resolution on the Agenda calls for a special word. For many years a party has existed on the London County Council desirous of putting an end to all meetings—save those of a religious kind—in the public parks. It has tried to do this by a series of annoying regulations, the open policy of prohibition not being advisable. Some eighteen years ago a regulation was passed prohibiting the taking up of collections. The N.S.S. met this with open defiance, and in the end the Council came to a compromise. Then in 1916 another regulation was passed prohibiting the sale of literature in the Parks. At the initiative of the Executive a Defence Committee was formed, and the case carried into the Courts. A complete victory was the result, and the Council was ordered to rescind the offensive resolution. Seeing that nothing could be done, the Council asked for further powers, and as the person to whom application had to be made was by a political accident, that pious gentleman Sir William Joynson Hicks, this was readily granted. New regulations were sanctioned which prohibited altogether the taking up of collections, or the sale of literature. There the matter stands at present.

It should be pointed out that the N.S.S. has no

special interest in these regulations. It affects all parties alike, although the bulk of the work and the finding of most of the costs has usually been left to this Society—this being at present the chief body in this country which pays any regard to freedom of propaganda, whether it immediately affects it or not. It might be possible to legally fight this action of the Council, but that would be costly, and the issue doubtful. It is quite clear that the Council's aim is to stop the meetings altogether. What the Executive can do to prevent this will be done, and the Society's Branches will continue to carry on as usual, with the necessary help from headquarters.

The Executive again wishes to place on record the obligation they are under to Miss Kough for her ungrudging work in the Secretarial office. The health of Miss Vance during the past year has been anything but good, and in the circumstances more work than usual has been thrown upon the shoulders of Miss Kough. It should be added that these services are rendered quite gratuitously.

There are two items which appear on the Agenda, which have appeared there often enough before, but which will continue to appear until they are rendered unnecessary by the removal of the injustice of which they complain. The first of these refers to the question of religious instruction in State-supported schools. Apart from the influence of our propaganda on the public mind, the outlook here is not so encouraging as might be. Politicians who fear so much the organized strength of Church and Chapel are afraid to touch the subject, and the Churches take advantage of this to push their claims as energetically as possible. The present government has expressed its readiness to make arrangements for the more effective provision for religious instruction in all schools and training Colleges, and although up to the present the different religious bodies have not reached that measure of agreement which would encourage the government to act, it is quite on the boards that the need for capturing the child in the interests of denominational religion will drive them into a sufficient agreement to encourage the government to produce a Bill that will establish religion more securely in the Schools than is at present the case. Meetings of representatives are being constantly held to this end, and the Press is being carefully guided in the matter. The danger is more real to-day than it has been for some time, and it is necessary for all who are seriously interested in the matter to do what they can to avert it. The Executive suggests to Freethinkers all over the country, that they should make this one of the test questions to candidates at all elections, besides doing what they can to influence their friends and acquaintances. It is not a question of gaining a sectarian advantage, but that of securing fair play for the child, to prevent its intellect being mortgaged to Church or Chapel, and to leave it free to exercise the responsibilities of citizenship with an open and an informed mind. There is a very great body of opinion in this country, Freethinking and otherwise, that is opposed to the State having anything to do with religion, and it is upon this basis that co-operation could be secured. What is required is to make this body of opinion vocal. This can be done by letters to the Press, by questions to candidates for public offices, and a valuable object lesson would be given if in every locality parents would combine to withdraw their children from religious instruction. This would prove to those in power that others besides they who are constantly manoeuvring to secure a sectarian advantage at public expense, must be considered. The schools should be restricted to the task of training the citizens of the future, and not en-

danger the value of this work in the interests of religious bodies, whose chief concern is the dominance of this or that sect.

The second item is concerned with the existence of the Blasphemy Laws. Recent events in both Canada and the United States have shown that the existence of our own laws act as a threat to religious liberty all over the English-speaking world. In Toronto there was issued a publication called the *Christian Inquirer*. It was not intended to be a permanent journal, and it consisted mainly of excerpts from various Freethinking works. These contained expressions such as are quite common in this country, and could indeed be matched by expressions from the more daring of the heterodox clergy. We have no hesitation in saying that in this country, powerful as religion is, no prosecution would have been possible, or if attempted would hardly have been successful. But in our Colonies and Dependencies religion seems of a narrower kind than it is even with us, and what was not likely here, occurred in Canada. A charge of blasphemy was brought against the editor, Mr. E. V. Sterrey; he was tried before a judge, who in his spare time filled the office of Sunday School Superintendent, and who delivered from the Bench an address on religion which, even in the mouth of a Counsel for the prosecution would have been an outrage on legal decency. The result, was, of course, a conviction, and Mr. Sterrey was sent to meditate in prison upon the quality of Christian kindness and justice.

The defence sent at once to the Executive asking for its assistance. What could be done, at such a distance, in the shape of advice and sending literature dealing with recent trials for blasphemy was done. In conjunction with the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws and the Rationalist Press Association, a sum of £30 was contributed towards the costs of the defence, and letters were received saying how much the action of the Executive had encouraged those on the spot. Still, the result was a conviction, and so long as Christians are permitted to try Freethinkers for the law-made offence of insulting their religion, convictions are almost certain to follow. There can scarcely be any other conclusion where prosecutor, Judge, and Jury are substantially one and the same person.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the existence of these laws are a standing menace to the whole of the English-speaking world. Their abolition in this country could not but have a healthy effect on public opinion elsewhere. Nor should it be overlooked that so long as these laws exist, a change in the political situation might easily give them a much wider application than they have at present. In the famous House of Lords case, *Bowman v. The Secular Society, Limited*, it was laid down that though at present the Common Law of Blasphemy was not invoked against much that former generations prosecuted and punished, yet a change in the state of affairs might easily bring many things within its scope that are now outside. It is this danger that is always before us, and a change in the public temper, or in the political situation, with these laws still in existence, might affect many who now consider themselves quite safe. Such movements as those for the reform of the marriage laws, or of the divorce laws, might conceivably be brought within their scope, and the fact of the advancement in the House of Commons of the Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching to Children Bill, is an indication of the direction of the way in which things might move. There is only one guarantee of security, and that is the abolition of both the Statute and the Common Law of Blasphemy. It is a reform that is much overdue, and if

it were accomplished here it would certainly have a healthy effect on the whole of the English-speaking world.

At the opening of this report, reference was made to the weakening of organized and established superstition. That expression was used deliberately. For while superstition in an organized form has unquestionably weakened, there is still an enormous amount of superstition current. The rage for mascots, the belief in lucky and unlucky days, the vogue of faith-healing, the growth of such cults as Christian Science and Spiritualism, the extent to which all kinds of queer and fantastic superstitions gain followers and support, are all evidence of the hold that irrational beliefs have upon the mind of the people. Our work lies with this quite as much as with the beliefs existing in the established churches. For, after all, the end we are aiming is not the mere destruction of this or that Church, or of even all the churches. Our fundamental aim is the rationalizing of life; the inculcation of a sane and scientific view of nature and the possibilities of human betterment and happiness considered with reference to this life alone.

On a general survey of the field the Executive feels that it has good ground for satisfaction with what has been done during the past year. In all directions the ideas for which we have fought for so long have been steadily gaining ground. It is true there is the sinister feature of the advance of that historic enemy of progress the Roman Catholic Church, but that Church gains at the expense of other Christian bodies, and not at the expense of non-believers. But in spite of this the disintegration of religious beliefs is widespread and unmistakable. It was said recently, at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, that the Scottish people were moving from Religion to Secularism. That may certainly be taken as substantially true of the state of affairs all over the civilized world. The force of education, the incidence of politics, the development of scientific knowledge, the growth of better methods of communications between peoples, these and many other forces are making for the breakdown of religious belief. Towards this end, and towards that of the establishment of more rational and more useful views of life, the movement to which we belong has contributed much. Our own particular Society has always exerted a great influence in the country, quite out of proportion to its numbers, and bearing no relation whatever to its social standing. From the days of Thomas Paine, militant Freethought has made it its task to see that the truth about the current creed should be known among the people so far as it lay within our power to make it known. And if to-day it is possible for many to say what they previously dared not say, if human life is valued more in terms of human possibilities, if knowledge is wider spread, and the sense of freedom greater to-day than it ever was, we feel that in this great work of emancipation the National Secular Society has played and is playing its part, and in so doing renders homage to the many brave men and women who trod with bleeding feet the path that we can now walk with comparative ease and security.

INDEPENDENCE OF MODERN YOUTH.

The young of to-day have few more pathetic delusions than their alleged independence of conduct and character. Independence!—with their American drinks, their American dances, their American music, their American films, their American plays, their American slang, their American literature, their American psychology! No one would mind the follies of the hour if they were English follies. The gravest charge that can be brought against the younger generation is its almost complete surrender to an alien spirit.

Mr. George Sampson (*Daily News*).

Strange Tales.

It must have been quite a hectic time during the period from the first Easter to the original Whitsun. The early disciples, and those ladies from Galilee would never be sure of anything. They lived in stirring times.

Our rector emphatically declared, on Easter Sunday, that within 25 years of the death of Jesus, the story of his resurrection was generally believed. Well, that is not so wonderful if we can credit the editor of the *Freethinker*. If it was a common occurrence, and if they were all anxious to believe, it would hardly take a quarter of a century to establish the faith. Dame Rumour can accomplish wonders in 25 minutes, never mind years.

Counsel for cross-examination must have been scarce. Otherwise certain discrepancies in the evidence might have been emphasized.

Did Peter run by himself to the sepulchre, when Mary arrived with the news, or did he challenge John to a sprint, and was beaten on the journey?

Were there two young men in white in the sepulchre on their arrival, or only one, according to St. Mark?

Was it a fact that Jesus said, "Touch me not," when Mary Magdalene recognized her Master, according to St. John. Or is Matthew more to be relied on, when he affirms, that at the first reunion, the disciples "held him by the feet," naturally loath to part again so soon?

Was Mary only barred, and was it because she had recently lost seven devils?

The sudden loss of seven devils would, of course, make considerable difference in any woman.

These may seem small points to the person anxious to believe by hook or by crook, but really sometimes a man is hanged on the strength of circumstantial evidence.

Those early writers were too "affrighted" to attend to little matters of this sort. They had to get the body out of the sepulchre somehow. Joseph's new tomb had to give up its contents. Details might wait.

And that wonderful Mary was chosen as the first confidant!

When I was a young man I was seriously troubled over the resurrection theory. So tremendous were the issues, according to beliefs inflicted on us, that one felt impelled to study the matter. And occasionally, I furtively read the *Freethinker* through a shop-window. Having recently come from Scotland, that economy will be understood. One day I noticed "Saladin's" booklet on "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead"? which rivetted my attention. On a matter of such vast importance it were best to read all sides. So—Bang went saxepece.

I strove manfully to disagree with "Saladin." I was a model Presbyterian at the time, and could not part very easily with Calvinistic tradition. The fiery Saladin was hard on Prebendary Row, to whom this pamphlet was a reply. At last I was fain to confess that Stewart Ross was a "bonnie fechter," and that the Prebendary had been reduced to a Row of discomfited ninepins.

You see I had always believed in the inerrancy of Scripture. Every comma. You may guess my plight when Saladin pointed out that the canon was settled at the Council of Nice (I think) by a majority of fathers.

Soon after, my Presbyterian pastor came to make his call. I hinted very mildly, that I had some difficulty in accepting, in its entirety, the doctrine of the resurrection. I was assailed by doubts.

Calvin's successor took a kindly interest in me. I was one of the flock. A wayward sheep, may be, but still possessed of a fleece. He had been bidden to "Feed my sheep," and he was not to be deflected from his purpose. It would never be said of him in Milton's words, "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

So he laid his hand on my shoulder, and said he had great sympathy for the doubter. He had been a doubting Thomas himself. He had demanded ocular demonstration of the woundprints. He had oftentimes "Crucified the Lord afresh."

Then I thought there was hope for a little sinner, if such great transgressors were to be allowed the kingdom.

"There is one little book," went on my mentor, that I can safely recommend. It deals with all difficulties, and is absolutely sound on the question. There is not a loophole of escape from its findings. It stands foursquare to all the assaults of the enemy. Get it my friend and study it. It will strengthen you in the faith. It is cheap. Easily digested. It is Prebendary Row on "The Resurrection."
ALAN TYNDAL.

On the Occasion of a Week of International Prayer.

JAHVEH, a-doze 'mong gods belated
And Hebrews superannuated,
Still to be vex'd, it seems, is fated:
They're fuddling him with prayer.

Where'er the Christians whine or shriek,
Up from the populous earth the reek
Of heavy breath comes: it's a Week
Of International Prayer.

Jehovah thus his heart discloses
To favoured Two of the blob noses:
"When Levi's sons wore cloth, O Moses,
I had other things than prayer.

"Cuts from the rump of fatted ox,
Firstlings, the juiciest of the flocks,
And pigeon roast, my ancient Cocks,
Was rather better fare.

"Ah! Abraham, my chosen Dad,
Your Jew-ruled Jacks are all gone mad:
'Tis sad to see them; very sad;
But rather worse to hear them."

Here Jahveh lung his head in shame;
Moses and Abraham did the same;
While from the plagues of earth-born name
The prayers came up in volumes.

Cried one whose wealth could not be told:
"Lord, I have lent thy church much gold,
But have not reap'd my hundredfold."
. . . The eyes of Moses sparkled.

One, now, who had not that vice of age,
Bursting with youth, and all a-rage
With words hot from the Holy Page,
Saluted the Jehovah.

"Thou who didst try old Abraham,
And in the bush didst snare the ram,
Thee I would serve, thou great I AM."
Jave laugh'd: "Go, find a wife, boy!"

Another thus: "Thou at whose nod
Waters stood up from Moses' rod,
Increase our faith!" . . . Replied the god:
"Thy swallow shall grow wider."

Then one who bore a maiden's name,
But who had yielded in love's flame,
And knew that light lips would spit shame,
Bow'd head, and told her trouble.

"O God! the arrow in my side!
Oh, by the dear Christ crucified,
Father, deliver me!" she cried.
But the old god was powerless.

Now, Sir Saint-Joseph, one all froth,
Who wore the Church of England cloth,
And tuned his pipe to earn his broth,
Out-talk'd all competition.

Through all the Prayers, from end to end,
His glib, untiring tongue did wend;
And some, so uniform his trend,
The parrot said twice over.

Moses' majestic head sunk deep;
Abraham's eyelids played bo-peep;
And, last, Jehovah fell asleep:
I left the old god snoring.

The Truth about China.

MR. W. MANN is well known to readers of this journal. His articles have always compelled my admiration and envy. I know no other writer who can so aptly quote authorities dealing with the subject in hand. Indeed his unerring instinct in picking out just the right quotation is a sheer gift. Moreover, Mr. Mann can be particularly deadly when dealing with authorities on the other side, as here again he slyly introduces the "give-away" paragraph which the ordinary reader very often misses altogether.

In this particular booklet,* Mr. Mann is as ruthless and crushing as ever. We get chapter and verse from authoritative writers on China and what they say on the missionary nuisance. This side of the question is, of course, carefully hidden from the general public in England, because those who know and can tell, realize the effect it would have on the holy Christian religion. The speech of Lord Inchcape on missionaries, earlier in the year, raised such a howl that even his lordship has been obliged to remain quiet ever since. But Mr. Mann quotes people like Arthur Diosy, George Lynch, Laffadio Hearn, Arthur Devonport, A. Little, Lord Curzon, Sir H. Norman, Bertrand Russell and a host of other world-famous writers, and a more damning collection of facts it would be hard to find.

In particular, I should call the attention of the reader to the chapter on the great Tai-Ping rebellion. Not many people who know and admire General Gordon—a thorough Christian if ever there was one—are aware that the terrible upheaval which he suppressed was engineered by Christian converts, who "succeeded in devastating eighteen provinces of China and in sacrificing the lives (at the lowest computation) of 20,000,000 men." It must have been pretty awful when the missionary organ, *China's Millions*, describing the devastation in a single province says, "No idea can be conveyed to the mind of the English reader of the sufferings endured by the people of this province during the Reign of Terror."

And the Reign of Terror, mark you, was entirely the work of genuine Christian converts.

And here is another extract on the Chinese and the Bible—Mr. Mann is a perfect genius for finding these things—"The foulest attacks made against Christianity by the Chinese *literati* are loaded to the muzzle with missiles from the Bible, which is a perfect arsenal of weapons to be used against the missionary cause." Fancy the Chinese, of all people, urging against God's Holy Word its impurities!

But the reader must get Mr. Mann's work for himself. It will give him the truth about a side of the whole China business he can never get in our daily Press, the enemy is too strong. The pity is that the pamphlet cannot be distributed among the people who support missionaries. What an awakening they would have about their precious money!—H. C.

Correspondence.

VENUS AND MARY.

SIR,—I have been accused of many things, but Mr. Clark's claim that I believe in a real Venus, who was born of real foam of a real sea, leaves me breathless. Tut, tut, Mr. Clark—did I not say that I believed Mary was as mythical as Venus? For the rest, his further elucidation of the myths deserve my grateful thanks.

H. CUTNER.

P.S.—Will those interested in the little discussion between Mr. Montague Summers and myself over his *History of Witchcraft*, read the review given in the *Times Literary Supplement*, for June 2? My "facts and accuracy" can be then judged independently.

* *Christianity in China: An exposure of Foreign Missions.* W. Mann. 6d. The Pioneer Press.

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., "Conventions and Repressions."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Lecture by F. P. Corrigan.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Lecture by Mrs. R. H. Rosetti.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common, 11.30, Brockwell Park, 6.0): Lectures by S. Hanson. On Wednesday, June 15, at 8.0, Peckham Rye, a lecture by Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Clapham Old Town, a Lecture by Mr. S. Hanson.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30, 3.0 and 6.30, Speakers, Messrs. Saphin, Ratcliffe, Hart, Botting and Baker. Thursday, 7.30, Speakers, Messrs. Saphin and Botting.

WEST HAM BRANCH, N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Lecture by Mr. H. C. White.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Darby and Jackson. 6.0, Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine. Freethought Lectures every Wednesday and Friday from 7.30 to 9.30, Various Lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (McGhie's Cafe, 56 White-chapel): Saturday, June 11, at 7.30, Committee Meeting. Business important. 8.0, Members' Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): Saturday, June 11, at 7.0. Lecture by Mr. Geo. Whitehead.

MR. G. K. HALLIDAY, a member of the R.P.A., and of the N.S.S., is anxious to get in touch with the many friends and admirers of the work of Mr. Joseph McCabe. He will appreciate it if they will write to him at 82, Eridge Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE.

CENTRAL HOTEL, 43-45, Rue de la Marine, Le Portel near Boulogne. Highly recommended. Excellent cooking. Modern Comfort. Good Bathing. Special Terms for June.—Valentin Picard, Proprietor. (Please mention this paper).

YOUR BUYING this journal is an admirable thing. Buying is always a good thing: it helps trade and relieves unemployment. Be sure your spending keeps Freethinkers employed. Write straight away for any of the following:—Gents' A to D Patterns, suits from 55s.; Gents' E Patterns, suits all at 67s. 6d.; Gents' F to H Patterns, suits from 75s.; Gents' I to M Patterns, suits from 98s.; or Ladies' Fashion and Pattern Sets, costumes from 60s.; frocks from 47s.—MACCONNELL & MARR, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1d. stamp to

J. R. HOLMES, East Hanney, Wantage, Berkshire
(Established nearly Forty Years.)

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.
Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

**THE RIDDLE OF PERSONALITY :
Mechanism or Mystery ?**

By PETER McBRIDE, M.D., F.R.C.P.E., F.R.S.E.
Crown 8vo. 200 pp. 6s. net.

Edinburgh Evening Dispatch:—"A well-balanced and entertaining work, from which both the ordinary reader and the expert should obtain illumination."

Sunday Times:—"It has much to recommend it to those of us who so often find themselves trying to understand what we do really believe about the relation of body to mind, and the origin and meaning of life. . . he writes succinctly and well, and has the happy knack of making the reader who is not 'Scientific' understand a point of biological importance."

Popular Science Siftings:—"For all deep-thinking readers, this is indeed a book that is sure to hold you to the end."

Literary Guide:—"Incidentally he offers the best and most scientific explanation of the 'unconscious' mind (p. 146) I have yet seen."

WM. HEINEMANN (MEDICAL BOOKS), LTD.,
20, BEDFORD STREET, LONDON, W.C.2.

**THE "FREETHINKER"
ENDOWMENT TRUST.**

A Great Scheme for a Great Purpose.

THE *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was registered on the 25th of August, 1925, its object being to raise a sum of not less than £8,000, which, by investment, would yield sufficient to cover the estimated annual loss incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is controlled and administered by five trustees, of which number the Editor of the *Freethinker* is one in virtue of his office. By the terms of the Trust Deed the trustees are prohibited from deriving anything from the Trust in the shape of profit, emoluments, or payment, and in the event of the position of the *Freethinker* at any time, in the opinion of the Trustees, rendering the Fund unnecessary, it may be brought to an end, and the capital sum handed over to the National Secular Society.

The Trust has been before the public since October, 1925, and up to date over £5,000 has been subscribed. A sum of £1,000 has been promised conditional on the amount being made up to £7,000 by December 31, 1927, £450 by other friends to make up the £7,000. There is thus left about £1,500 yet to be raised. That should be well within the compass of the friends of the *Freethinker* at home and abroad.

The importance of the *Freethinker* to the Freethought movement cannot well be over emphasized. For over forty years it has been the mouthpiece of militant Freethought in this country, it has never failed to champion the cause of mental liberty in and out of the Courts, and its fight on behalf of the Secular Society, Limited, in which the right of an anti-Christian Society to receive bequests was triumphantly vindicated by a House of Lords' decision, was of first-rate importance to Freethinkers all over the English-speaking world.

The Trust may be benefited by donation or bequests. Donations may be sent to either the Secretary, Mr. H. Jessop, Hollyshaw, Whitkirk, Leeds, or to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, from whom any further information concerning the Trust will be given on request.

All sums received are acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

Four Great Freethinkers.

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

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. An Authoritative Life of one of the greatest Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, and the only one now obtainable. With four portraits. Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

VOLTAIRE, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL, by C. T. GORHAM. A Biographical Sketch of America's greatest Freethought Advocate. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.4.

A Work for the Time . . .

Christianity in China:

AN EXPOSURE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Contains Chapters on: THE JESUITS IN CHINA—THE GREAT TAI-PING REBELLION—EXTRA-TERRITORIALITY—THE BOXER REBELLION—ANCESTOR WORSHIP—BROADCASTING THE BIBLE—DIFFICULTIES IN CHINA.

By WALTER MANN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

“CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA” is a pamphlet that should be in the hands of every Freethinker, for the purpose of putting some of its contents into the head of every Christian.

There is no publication that so clearly exposes the trickery, the false pretences, the dangers of the foreign missionary movement, as does this one. Every reader of the *Freethinker* should have at least one copy in his or her possession.

Price Sixpence

Postage One Penny.

Two copies sent post free.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4

Breaking All Records!!

HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE

BY

Prof. J. W. DRAPER.

THIS is an unabridged edition of Draper's great work, of which the standard price is 7s. 6d. The Secular Society, Limited, has broken all records in issuing this work at what is to-day no more than the price of a good-sized pamphlet. There is no other work that covers quite the same ground, and it should be in the possession of every Freethinker.

Two Shillings

Cloth Bound. 396 Pages.

Price 2/- Postage 4½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

Two Hundred and Twenty Pages
of Wit and Wisdom . . .

Bible Romances

BY

G. W. FOOTE

NO man carried his learning with greater ease than did the late G. W. Foote, and no Freethought writer was ever able to put his conclusions with greater force and wit. The *Bible Romances* is an illustration of him at his best. It is profound without being dull, witty without being shallow. It is as indispensable to the Freethinker in his controversies with Christians, as is the Bible Handbook. It examines the Biblical legends thoroughly, and in a style that the writer had made peculiarly his own.

Well printed and well bound.

Price **2/6** Post. 3d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.