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

**Views and Opinions.**

**Piety and Persecution.**

BISHOP BOSSUET was one of the ablest of the French theologians of the seventeenth century. He was a staunch son of the Church, and his criticism of Protestantism was both acute and deadly. He had a breadth of view—in spite of his devotion to the Roman Church—which few Protestants could rival. This was probably due to the fact that he belonged to a Church that claimed to be universal, and so had to think in continents where Protestants thought in conventicles. Looking over some of his writings the other day, I came across the following passage, which formed a sarcastic comment upon a writer who had been praising the state of toleration that existed in Holland:—

Happy country, where the heretic is at rest as well as the orthodox, where vipers are preserved like doves and innocent animals, where those who compound poisons enjoy the same tranquility with those who prepare remedies; who would not admire the clemency of these reformed States!

Bossuet, I repeat, was a very able man. His ability was unquestioned, as was, where religion was not in question, his humanity. He was eloquent, and kindly in disposition, and so long as he was dealing with ordinary delinquencies, showed himself to be kindly and tolerant. But where heresy was concerned he could see but one proper course to adopt, and that was to carry out the policy of the Roman Church—the oldest, the strongest, and the most logical of the Christian Churches. The heretic must be suppressed at all costs. The truth was so self-evident to him that quite evidently, the mere existence of a State in which the non-Christian enjoyed the same freedom, and the same privileges as the Christian, was so absurd that merely to state it was enough to condemn it. It was as though one proposed establishing a State in which thieves and murderers should enjoy the same privileges as decent citizens.

**The Intolerance of Faith.**

Bossuet lived at a time when Christians had not yet grown ashamed of their religion; when they not merely said with the Bishop of London that nothing could save the world but Christianity, but actually believed it. It was a time when the principle of toleration was advanced by a few with a full sense of the novelty and daring of the suggestion. John Locke's famous letters on toleration, for instance could only have been written at a time when this was the case. For with neither Protestants nor Catholics was there any question as to the legitimacy of the State, under the guidance of the Church, suppressing heresy. The only question at issue was whose heresy was to be suppressed. The Christian—Catholic and Protestant—said that right religious belief must be maintained, and wrong belief must be suppressed. Bossuet's famous argument against the Protestants was exactly that which the Protestants themselves endorsed—with a different application. Both agreed that to give every one the right to form and express their own individual opinion about religion was to run the risk of destroying “true religion” altogether. Deny the right of the Church to prohibit heresy and the way was clear for the complete rejection of religion. You are sheltering vipers, and giving the concoctors of poisons the same freedom as is enjoyed by those who provide the remedy. Heretics and unbelievers must be met with the full force of the civil power, enforced and encouraged by the spiritual thunder of the Church. Men reasoned thus because they were Christians. They persecuted because they were Christians—not because they were of necessity bad men, or brutal men, but simply because their belief in Christianity was sincere. Their conviction as to the necessity of persecution, weakened only as their faith in Christianity weakened. Persecution was born of religious belief. Toleration was born of unbelief.

\* \* \*

**The Origin of Persecution.**

It is a favourite thesis of the modern Christian that intolerance and its product, persecution, does not belong to religion, but was imported into it. That is not true. On the purely secular side the tendencies are all in the other direction. Among primitive peoples, what we see is a readiness to discuss all things that are of a secular nature, or so far as they are of a secular nature, and fear of discussing things that belong to the region of religion. Early man is intolerant only because he is religious, although in course of time the intolerance bred by his religion reacts on the whole of his life. He believes himself surrounded by gods and ghosts on whose goodwill his welfare depends. The gods are there, not as desirable facts, but as facts that have to be faced and dealt

with. It is a sheer delusion that early mankind hunts for gods; the truth is that they hunt for him. They are untiring in their activity, indiscriminate in their vengeance when offended. They rule everything; they cause the food to grow, they send disease, they determine success in war. If offended they punish in a delightfully promiscuous manner. If one member of a tribe offends they punish the whole of the tribe by withholding food or by sending disease. We still see the same belief in those representatives of savagery who tell us that a war, or an epidemic, or a food shortage has been "sent" because God is offended with us. The tribe is collectively responsible to the Gods for what any one of its members may do. What the offended deity wants is revenge. What the tribe has to do is to see that none of its members give him cause to seek it.

\* \* \*

#### Christianity and Human Nature.

All this gives us the beginning of Bossuet's conception of the heretic as a viper threatening the safety of doves, of a poisoner who concocts his deadly things for the destruction of others. It was this primitive conception that the Christian Church revived, established with a strength unknown to the culture of Greece or Rome, which has been responsible for more misery and cruelty and racial degradation than any other single force that has operated during the past two thousand years. And if the Christian theory be true the Church was justified in its action. Man is an immortal soul; his destiny is determined by his belief about God while he is on this earth. The unbeliever, the heretic, is thus a very centre of contamination, a point from which radiates damnation, one from whom the faithful must be protected at all costs. If Christianity is true, that theory is unchallengeable. There is as much reason and as much justification for suppressing the heretic as there is for isolating and confining the carrier of an infectious disease—more, because the carrier of an infectious disease can kill the body only, the heretic can destroy the immortal soul of man. Bossuet would not have denied that considered as a mere man the heretic might be unobjectionable. He might be honest, truthful, sincere, a good parent, a good friend, a good citizen, but he was an unbeliever, and as such a source of danger to man's immortal welfare—and as all good Christians have taught, it is that alone that matters. It was thus that persecution became with the Christian a moral duty, the highest and the most sacred of obligations. And if Christianity be true I agree with him. A Christian ought to persecute—it is a Christian kindness to those around him. He can only cease to persecute when he believes that religious belief is a matter of unimportance at the side of right secular conduct—that is when he ceases to be a thoroughly good and sincere believer in Christianity.

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#### Civilizing Religion.

Primitive heresy is an act of treason to the tribe; the removal of the heretic is an act of social justification. He who offends the gods is bad because he is dangerous. At a later stage of social growth, when the belief in gods is not quite so urgent, and the social sense has become clearer, he is dangerous because he is bad. But the moral badness of the heretic is an afterthought; it is the apology which the bigot makes to his only partly developed moral sense. Long after the conditions which made it reasonable to regard the heretic as a social danger have died out, the feelings associated with heresy continues, and

much the same justification has to be found for their expression. The difference is that they are given a social colour instead of a purely religious one. And here, again, Christianity strengthened the primitive feeling that had become weakened under the civilizing influence of Greek and Roman culture. It not merely re-established intolerance, it made the persecution of heresy the most sacred of all duties. Never in the world's history was the code of the persecutor so elaborate as it became under Christian influences; never was the inquisition into opinions so searching as it was under the Christian Church. Children were encouraged to inform against their parents, wives against husbands; no tie was held so dear that it might sanction or excuse the sheltering of heresy or the heretic. From the field of religion this spirit of intolerance flowed over into social life. Some restraint upon the intolerance of the Church was placed here and there by the secular powers, but so long as the power of the Church was unbroken that restraint was but slight. Only with the development of disbelief in Christian doctrines was there a genuine slackening of the persecuting spirit. A genuine, a sincere Christian cannot but persecute. And it is not the least of the evil influences of Christianity that it seizes upon the better aspects of human nature, the concern for others, and uses that as an incentive to persecution. If Christianity be true, persecution becomes a duty. It only ceases to be such when men and women begin to be doubtful of its truth, and uncertain as to its social utility.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### Who Was the Man?

The man first to name our country (United States of America).

The man first to advocate independence for U.S.A.

The man who did more to achieve this independence than any other man, giving his pen, tongue, sword and pocket-book (purse) to the cause.

The man who in the darkest hour of the Revolution wrote the Crisis, commencing with the words "These are the times that try men's souls."

Do you know that General Washington ordered this mighty work to be read to the Army once a week?

The man who was joint author of the Declaration of Independence with Jefferson.

The man who borrowed ten million dollars from Louis XVI. to feed and clothe the American Army.

The man who established the Bank of North America in order to supply the Army.

Napoleon said, in toasting him at a banquet, "Every city in the world should erect a gold statue to you."

The author of the Rights of Man, acknowledged to be the greatest work ever written on political freedom.

This masterpiece gave free speech and a free Press to England and America.

The man who first said "The world is my country, to do good is my religion."

The man known as "The great commoner of mankind," the "Founder of the Republic of the World."

The man first to urge the making of the American Constitution.

The man first to suggest the Federal Union of the States and to bring it about.

The man first to propose the Louisiana purchase.

The man first to demand justice for women.

The man first to plead for dumb animals.

The man first to advocate international arbitration.

The man first to propose old-age pensions.

The man first to propose "the land for the people."

The man who invented and built the first iron bridge—the bridge that spans the River Wear between Sunderland and Monkwearmouth.

That man was Thomas Paine.

*The Northern Echo.*

## "What is the Catholic Faith?"

(Concluded from page 436.)

As already stated, the bulk of the bishops at the Nicene Council lacked competence to sit intelligently in judgment upon matters in dispute between the Athanasians and the Arians. They were all zealous, passionate partisans, and as Dean Stanley observes, "a larger number, perhaps the majority, consisted of rough, simple, almost illiterate men, like Spyridion the shepherd, Potammon the hermit, Acesius the puritan, who held their faith earnestly and sincerely, but without much conscious knowledge of the grounds on which they maintained it, incapable of arguing themselves, or of entering into the arguments of their opponents." The ablest men were the leaders of the two hostile factions, Arius and Athanasius. The controversy between them only began in 319, just six years before the Council met. The point on which the dispute centred was the nature of the relationship between God the Father and his only begotten Son. Athanasius held the view that they are both of precisely the same substance and both equally eternal, while Arius stoutly maintained that "the Son is not unoriginate, nor part of the unoriginate, nor made of any previously existing substance, but that by the will and purpose of God he was in being before time, perfect God, the only begotten; but that before this generation or creation he was not." What an infinitely absurd subject of controversy! Like all metaphysical questions, it was one about which it was, in the nature of things, utterly impossible for anybody to acquire any knowledge whatsoever. Possibly this was the reason why the Christians of the fourth century succeeded in holding opposite views concerning it, and in arguing for or against them with such impassioned vigour. It was a controversy in which all sorts and conditions of people were profoundly interested, even women and children and some Pagans taking their respective parts in it.

As is well known, the Nicene Council, after two months' more or less acrimonious and tumultuous discussion, came to the conclusion, by a majority vote, that Athanasianism was the true official creed of the Church. This decision was largely influenced, no doubt, by the fact that the Emperor was, at the time, emphatically a supporter of Athanasius and his party, for he had had a letter written to the bishops denouncing the books of Arius, and there was another epistle of his bitterly against the notorious heresiarch. Poor Arius, seventy years of age, was sent into exile, and the leading bishops on his side were deposed. At the time of the Council, Athanasius, being but 25 or 26 years old, and professionally only a deacon or arch-deacon to Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, was not permitted to take any public part in the discussions, though it is a certainty that privately he exerted enormous influence, and thereby made many enemies as well as friends. But he returned to Alexandria a brilliant victor, and on the death of Bishop Alexander was appointed his successor, perhaps before his thirtieth year. His triumph, however, was of an extremely short duration. As the Rev. Samuel G. Green, D.D., well puts it:—

The next two years were a time of anxious interest to the churches, and cast a melancholy shadow over the remainder of Constantine's life. In A.D. 326, he put to death his son Crispus, and afterwards his wife, Fausta. The circumstances of this domestic tragedy are mysterious; still less do we know of the extent to which the sanguinary deeds affected the Emperor's relation to the Church. In the year following we find the Arians again in favour. Con-

stantine had returned to his former opinion, as expressed prior to the Nicene Council, that the divergence of Arius from orthodoxy was rather apparent than real, and that the opposition to him was due in part to jealousy. Constantia, widow of Licinius, the favourite sister of the Emperor, influenced, it is said, by an Arian presbyter, implored on her deathbed that Arius be reinstated. The influence of Eusebius of Cæsarea was employed on the same side. The Emperor yielded, repealing the disabilities that had been imposed after the Nicene Council, and directing Eusebius to command the restoration of the heretical presbyter to his former charge in Alexander. (*A Handbook of Church History*, pp. 278-9).

It is a credible assumption that, when Constantine witnessed the agonies and listened to the pleading voice of his sister, a poignant sense of remorse may have seized him. Both Constantia's husband and son had been slain by her brother's orders. And yet, alas, it cannot be forgotten that the granting of her request for the recall of the Arian leaders rekindled the fire of persecution at various centres which now burned more fiercely and disastrously than during the six years prior to the holding of the Council, with this main difference, that the persecutors of that period became the cruelly persecuted in this. His admirers used to call Athanasius "a little dwarf with an angel's face." Gregory of Nazianzen tells us that he was "of almost angelic beauty of face and expression." Ladies generally found his charm quite irresistible. But after the return of the deposed and banished Arians he immediately assumed the form and character of a fiend from the bottomless pit. The angel's face was suddenly transformed into a veritable devil's face, and its owner was spoken of as "a meddling demagogue," "the odious Athanasius," and "the conspirator, elated by his characteristic rashness." At the Synod of Tyre, to which he was summoned, all sorts of vile charges were brought against him, all of which he energetically repudiated.

This was an instance of the heretics persecuting the orthodox; but it is equally true that the orthodox, whenever they had the chance, treated so-called heretics with the utmost barbarity. Take a backward glance at the time when Alexander occupied the episcopal throne at Alexandria, and when Arius was there in the capacity of presbyter. Alexander was intellectually a weakling, compared with Arius, who possessed "acute powers of reasoning, address, and blameless character." Conscious of his inferiority, Alexander, Dean Milman tells us, "armed himself ere long in all the terrors of his office, and promulgated his anathema in terms of exaggeration and violence," with the result that the brilliant presbyter was expelled from Alexandria, cursed as "the impious Arius, the forerunner of Antichrist, who dared to utter his blasphemies against the divine Redeemer." Athanasius died in 373, and in 412 the infamous Cyril ascended the Patriarchal throne of Alexandria. Cyril was an orthodox divine, who to-day holds a high place in the list of Catholic "saints"; but in character he was rotten to the core. Take one incident in his life as related by Gibbon:—

Without any legal sentence, without any royal mandate, the Patriarch, at the dawn of day, led a seditious multitude to the attack of the Synagogues. Unarmed and unprepared, the Jews were incapable of resistance; their houses of prayer were levelled with the ground; and the episcopal warrior, after rewarding his troops with the plunder of their goods, expelled from the city the remnant of the unbelieving nation. (*Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. v, p. 129).

The Rev. Mr. Cornibee asserts that "Athanasius had contended for the Truth well-nigh alone against the world, and that the Truth had triumphed, as the

Truth must ever triumph in the long run." Surely, the rev. gentleman's memory must be faulty, or else his ignorance of history must be as profound as the darkness of a moonless and cloudy night in mid-winter, because it is an indisputable fact that the Catholic Faith has never triumphed even in Christendom, while it has scarcely touched the Heathen world. True it was for several centuries the dominant Faith of the Church simply because the Church saw to it that all opposition thereto was speedily crushed by force. No, the Catholic Faith has never triumphed, and it has only *survived* at all by the exercise of the most cruel form of tyranny. Persecution has always been the Church's most efficient weapon, and it has often unsheathed its sword in the most unscrupulous and wicked manner. Why is there no Protestantism in Spain? Because persecution has rooted out every vestige of it; and it was only a few years ago that persecution there put to a violent death the brave, freethinking teacher, Ferrer. Mr. Cornibeer speaks as if he were in entire ignorance of the very existence of Protestantism, Nonconformity, and numerous Broad Churchmen and Modernists within his own Church. Furthermore, and this is the most important point of all, the holders and advocates of the Catholic Faith, and of all other shapes of supernatural faith, have almost invariably been opponents of genuine human progress, and ruthless deniers of the right of freedom of thought and expression.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Sky Pilots Off Duty.

"Care I for the limb, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man? Give me the spirit Master Shallow."—*Shakespeare*.

"Broad ideas are hated by partial ideas; that is the struggle of progress."—*Victor Hugo*.

THE private lives of the clergy usually make the dullest of dull reading. There are exceptions, however, and in Mr. E. F. Benson's book *Our Family Affairs*, he gave, some years ago, some very amusing anecdotes of his father, a former Archbishop of Canterbury. It appears that His Grace had an old-maidish horror of smoking, which he regarded not only as a vicious and a vulgar habit, but as a step on the primrose path, which is said to lead to perdition. His clerical colleagues knew of His Grace's prejudice, and on one occasion, at a Church Conference, when the Archbishop went in one night to the bedroom of one of his colleagues, he found the worthy man on his knees before the fire. Benson, who was a simple soul, thought his brother cleric was at his prayers. The truth was that the parson was smoking a furtive cigar up the chimney.

Not only did the Archbishop's three sons smoke like chimneys, but his wife indulged in the fragrant weed. Her son relates, smilingly, how one day, after mountaineering, she complained of a headache, and asked her son for a cigarette. He had not a cigarette, but offered her a pipe and tobacco, and she sat smoking her pipe as sedately as an Indian chief. The Archbishop would have none of the wicked weed. When a manuscript was laid upon his table, and betrayed that the writer had been enjoying a cigar while in the pangs of authorship, Benson attributed the aroma to the notes being written in a smoking carriage. It is, perhaps, fortunate that His Grace was spared the horror of knowing that a popular Church of England parson is advertised as "Woodbine Willie."

Writing of smoking reminds me of a delightful story concerning Joseph Choate, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells. These three wits were

dining together and Choate said: "I am fifty years old, and have never yet smoked a cigar." "I wish I could say that," commented Mark Twain with a smile. "Why don't you, Mark," chimed in Howells, "Choate did!"

Some clergymen are very interesting, especially when they happen to be, like the Rev. Lawrence Sterne, so much more of men than mere theologians. One of the most remarkable of contemporary parsons is Canon Adderley, a peer's son, who has taken a flirtatious part in the Socialist movement. Possessing a keen sense of humour, allied to some force of character, the Canon is justified in describing himself as an "enfant terrible" of the very respectable Church of England.

Long ago, the Canon, in a reminiscent vein, wrote a volume, entitled *In Slums and Society*, which was crammed with good things and excellent stories. "It is not becoming," said he, "for a clergyman to use strong language in print, so I am precluded from telling some of my best stories here." What he did give, however, made excellent reading, for what some narrow-minded folks may find undesirable in an ecclesiastic may be a very popular asset in an author. For instance, Adderley tells a capital story of Canon Liddon, who wrote to a clergyman who had confessed to using one of his sermons in the pulpit: "Dear friend, it is a pleasure in these days, to hear two clergymen saying the same thing." Archbishop Temple, who had been the austere and dignified headmaster of a great public school, figures in his most dictatorial manner. Canon Adderley once had a letter from him consisting of two words, "Thank you," and on another occasion the expansive note: "Your second letter shows me that my first was right." A better story of the stern Archbishop is his reply to the lady who asked him, "Oh, your Grace, I do believe you have not seen my last baby?" "No! and I don't believe I ever shall!"

Canon Adderley's humour is infectious. He tells us of a thick-headed archdeacon who visited Father Stanton at St. Alban's Church, Holborn, and asked if the large statue of the Madonna had miraculous qualities. "If you put down half-a-crown," said Stanton, "I dare say she'd wink at you." Some of the freshest and most telling jests, however, are Adderley's own. He calls the present Bishop of London "the Sunny Jim of the Church" (of England). He refers, caustically, to the "eminent dogmatism" of his own brother, and speaks of the Book of Common Prayer, as by Law Established, as a "very provoking" volume. The stories, however, that are more likely to attract the general reader are those concerning the wicked, outside world, and not the fold of the faithful. Very neat is the anecdote concerning Sir Andrew Clark and Sir James Paget, two famous Victorian physicians, who breakfasted at the same house. Sir Andrew remarked: "I see, Paget, that you haven't many patients; there are few letters." Sir James replied: "I notice that most of your correspondence is black-edged."

Adderley saw Oscar Wilde in Reading Gaol. "Have you ever visited a prisoner before?" asked the author of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Adderley confessed that he had not. "Then, bad as I am, I have made you obey your Master!" To the ready and brilliant wit of Wilde the Canon bears further testimony. Wilde once boasted that there was no subject on which he could not speak at once. Some one suggested "Queen Victoria." "She's not a subject," said Wilde. Adderley has a pretty wit of his own. An angry bishop once accused him of playing to the gallery by talking the language of Socialism. Adderley replied: "It is high time the Church of England left off playing only to the stalls and dress

circle." Some of the Canon's reflections are worth quoting, such as "Converted Tories make the best socialists"; "Extreme Protestants entirely lack humour"; "Since the divorce between religion and amusement we have had to pay for our amusement"; "The way of theology is marked by shaky milestones."

Over forty years ago there appeared a book of poetry called, *Towards Democracy*, which placed its author definitely among the forces of progress. It was the work of a young curate, Edward Carpenter. In the late autumn of his days came a volume of autobiography, *My Days and Dreams*, which told in beautiful English, the life story of a very remarkable man, of noble simplicity and heroic modesty. Born at Brighton, of middle-class parents of ample means, Carpenter was educated at Cambridge University, and proved himself a brilliant scholar. The State Church attracted him, and he took orders under the famous Frederick Denison Maurice, the friend of Tennyson, and one of the most broad-minded priests who ever wore a cassock, but even he could not keep Carpenter in the Anglican Church. For the young curate was reading other things than the Prayer Book and Hymns Ancient and Modern. He was absorbing Shelley's passionate *Lyrics of Liberty*, and soon he was to become a disciple of Walt Whitman. In such august company the young priest was bound to look beyond the narrow confines of the Established Church and the moment, and to scan far horizons and the unalterable stars. Carpenter travelled much during his long life, but his greatest and most notable journey was from the time when, as a young man, he dallied at tea-parties, until he became the austere apostle of Democracy. At a time when greed and selfishness are rampant, his career is an exception so rare as to be scarcely credible. For he actually gave away the fortune he had inherited from his father, and for forty years he worked with labourers, mechanics, and other toilers. In the intervals of a busy career, including open-air speaking, a trying and thankless task for a cultured and sensitive man, he wrote beautiful books:—

"What good is like to this,  
To do worthy the writing, and to write  
Worthy the reading and the world's delight."

MIMNERMUS.

### Whom God Hath Joined!

Whom God hath joined together, let no man  
Asunder rend; so saith the pious kite,  
Who seems to think all texts and proverbs  
right,  
And perfect fitting in a perfect plan;  
They are the weapons of the caravan.  
Of soul and body snatchers for their prey:—  
The heaven made marriage mongers of our  
day,  
Dead meat purveyors who've outlived their  
span:  
Say rather—'tis a game of casting lots,  
For lonely souls are calling o'er the wide,  
And cruel woes have fondest hopes belied,  
And frozen hearts are pining in the shade:  
The Gods have lost the art of tying knots;  
All holy unions on the Earth are made!

WM. J. LAMB.

To the man who lives for an idea, for his country, for  
the good of humanity, life has an extensive meaning,  
and to that extent pain becomes less important to him.  
—Tagore.

### Books and Life.

THE death of Sherlock Holmes will be the happiest on record. Born in the imagination he will quietly expire in the same place. As there is no accounting for taste, the exchange made by the author is in the nature of a white monkey for a black cat, and other spirits are being called from the vasty deep of the minds of those who attend spiritualistic meetings with a fixed intention. What a burden Shylock was to Shakespeare, throughout the play, yet he bundles him off with an "I am not well." A depreciatory review of Gorki's *Story of a Novel* incited our interest, and the whimsical story passed an agreeable hour. Fokine was a half-matured creation of a writer, and he appeared to a lady. The front view of him was perfectly natural, but when he stands sideways he is as flat as a card or a sheet of notepaper. He casts scarcely any shadow in that position, which is faintly reminiscent of Chamisso's *Shadowless Man*. This gallery of shadows is interesting to the student, and persuasive of agreement with Hamlet's well known definition of man. It is perfectly legitimate in the world of art, yet in many ways it seems a pity that the imagination of man has in so many cases run to waste. The imagination of saints, half starved, and self-tortured, has had a miserable effect on the history of mankind, and if life was hard so that a future life was intensely desirable, the obvious remedy was neglected. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has given pleasure to thousands with his Sherlock Holmes; but there was no penalty for unbelief in the detective as a reality. On the reverse side of the picture, there have been strong and tyrannical Churches with nothing more substantial than figments of distorted imaginations, who have sat firmly in the saddle of authority and played havoc with nations if they doubted the existence of a figure as fanciful as Sherlock Holmes or Shylock. We are prepared to wager that mourners would come forward to the detective's funeral if the interment was announced. In the meantime Sexton Blake has recovered from his attack of poisoning, and one shade with elbowless arms will push another and delight children once weekly in the *Union Jack*.

The Hogarth Press has published at 7s. 6d., a volume of Essays, by Leonard Woolf. It contains twenty-six pleasant, witty and thoughtful dissertations on writers, history and politics, which will attract those who love plain speaking, and would be sorry if this rare habit went out of fashion. The giants in prose are nearly all dead, and, with the law of libel steadily becoming so active that it behoves a man to think twice before passing an opinion on the weather, Mr. Woolf, whom we believe contributed to the *New Age*, is to be congratulated for his outspoken opinions. An appreciative and analytical notice is made of Joseph Conrad; a few well deserved thrusts are given at anæmic poetry, under the title of "The Modern Nightingale," and under the heading of "The Two Kings of Jerusalem," the author tells Sir Ernest Satow something useful about "Diplomatic Practice." After 800 pages, Sir Ernest has, and then only vaguely, an idea "that diplomacy can be used as the art of obtaining co-operation between nations and peoples." In the "Gentleness of Nature," Mr. Woolf is satiric, ironic, and bitter, but none the less he hits the nail of truth on the head, and dispels any illusion that nature is kind. Samuel Butler is very skilfully contrasted with Swift and Cyrano de Bergerac, and, an examination of Lord Morley concludes... even thought, if it is to be great and original, must have some passion behind it." These essays are thoughtful, sincere, and straightforward, and there is an undertone in them that bespeaks the writer's self-reliance and an ability to dispense with the easy art of appealing to prejudice.

Readers of Landor will remember an amusing and instructive dialogue between Diogenes and Plato. It is alive with direct criticism of Platonism, and defines the bent of Landor's mind. This writer, who strove with none, was fighting with everybody all his life, and, something in the nature of the measurement of philosophy may be found in Diogenes' questions to Plato:

"Of what value are all thy philosophy and all thy eloquence, if they fail to humanize a bosom friend, or fear to encounter a misguided populace?" In *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*," by George Santayana (Constable, 5s.) the well-known writer very carefully examines Platonism, and by methods peculiar to an analytical temperament, he arrives at the same conclusion as Lander, and in the course of brilliant dialectic, there are bright gems of thought that have their setting in common-sense. Professor Santayana is no whole-hearted supporter of Plato or Platonisms, and the writer's view of the spiritual life is neither Christian nor Platonic. Three excellent virtues, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, now honoured more by the breach than in the observance, were the trinity of the Greek philosopher. And these we think are, in the Freethinker's life, subconscious, like sentiment in business. We recommend this little book as an exercise in abstract thinking, in, as it were, a stretching of the fourth finger of the mind, and, as a sample of the quality showing kinship with Spinoza, we give the following extract:—"Spirituality comes precisely of surrendering the animal arrogance and the moral fanaticism, and substituting for them pure intelligence: not a discoursing cleverness or scepticism, but perfect candour and impartial vision. Spirit is merciful and tender because it has no private motive to make it spiteful; yet it is unflinchingly austere because it cannot make any private motive its own."

This, we affirm, is the skilful rapier play that surrounds and protects the citadel of wisdom, transvalues Christian values, and deals intelligently with a subject that hitherto has been made repulsive by those who, to paraphrase Plotinus, think, by battering the house they live in (the body) the more they improve the inmate. There is more intellectual power to the square inch in this book than may be found in much of Dean Inge's work on Plato and Plotinus; the Dean's exclusiveness in expounding Plotinus, leaves the workman no hope, but Professor Santayana writes without ecclesiastical embarrassment—he has no private motive to make it spiteful. This also was Spinoza's strength.

When H. G. Wells took the field with his fanciful and prophetic novels, his predecessors almost began and ended with Jules Verne. Another Rupert now appears in the person of Karel Capek, who has stepped into seven-leagued boots for use in the world of the novel. *The Absolute at Large* (Macmillan & Co., 7s. 6d. net) is one of the wildest and fantastical extravaganzas that it is possible to read, yet the author's sincere purpose is never in doubt for one moment. In Swift's time satire was directed at contemporaries, at manners, customs, and certain parish pump ideas. Satire was limited in its scope, and of necessity could not deal with matters that now press as a burden on the shoulders of those who, in the present, do not altogether like the way the world wags. Mr. Capek has out-heroded Herod in his treatment of war, and, in his use of a single idea—the releasing of atomic energy—he has provided himself with a vehicle to ride over continents in his survey of the imbecilities of mankind. The cool and indifferent reviews of this novel were the only reasons for getting and reading it, and we soon found the explanation. The novel is built on the too liberal and generous lines of truth to command the bugles of reviewers. The author has no illusions on the "bunk" that is purveyed by the Press; he holds no brief for any religious section of the world, yet he never falters in his intense allegiance to the cause of the common man. We wish him success. The common man does not possess all the virtues nor all the vices. Napoleon used, in his campaigns, at the lowest computation, two millions of the common man. The map of Europe, since that time, has had the appearance of a concertina. The German Emperor, in his failure in 1889 to provide a European War in order to provide Count Walderssee with a job before he grew too old, arranged a punitive expedition into China for his benefit. Perhaps the common man may one day use the same words in connexion with war that formed the brief advice by G. K. Chesterton to Lord Birkenhead—to "chuck it." Mr. Capek is doing his best to help him to say it. WILLIAM REPTON.

## Acid Drops.

Joanna Southcote's box has been opened, and found to contain a number of rubbishy articles, including a novel called *The Surprises of Love, or an Adventure in Greenwich Park*. Of course, this will not cure the followers of the lady. They say that this is not the right box, which is securely hidden somewhere in the country. The papers marvel at the credulity of these deluded people. But is their credulity any worse than that of the average Christian with his belief in such nonsense as the Sacrament, the Virgin Birth, and the rest of the Biblical Miracles? But the followers of Joanna Southcote make but a small unimportant sect. The followers of the major superstition, from which the Southcottians derive, are numerous, well placed, with plenty of money behind them. And that makes a world of difference to the newspapers. So one is an ignorant superstition. The other is a profound spiritual mystery, etc., etc.

Marshal Foch advises us that as a consequence of the war to end war, there will be another last war in about fifteen or twenty years, and then men, women and even children will all be engaged in it. If only these professional military men would remain silent during peacetime, and take a long holiday when a war was on, leaving it for capable civilians to run the war, we should find the chances of maintaining peace and of running a war on sensible lines much greater than they are at present.

The Rev. C. E. Douglas is complaining at the price charged for the new Prayer Book. He points out that the copyright is enjoyed by certain presses, and bearing in mind the advertisement given it by the clergy it must show a very handsome profit. He says that Woolworth's is selling the Roman Catholic Prayer Book for sixpence, while the cheapest English Prayer Book is 1s. 3d. If the buyers of these Prayer Books, even at sixpence, would spend threepence on the *Freethinker*, there would be a clear gain in cash, and certainly in commonsense.

An excellent chance for divine intervention was missed the other day in Scotland. Three women were trapped in a revolving drum, but escaped after their terrifying experience with bruises. We presume that there are so many calls on the Lord in connexion with the revision of the Prayer Book, that he cannot be expected to take any notice of a machine used for the pulping of rags. At any rate, an opportunity for the conversion of scoffers, sceptics, and other folk, who do not live in the foggy land of theology has been overlooked.

From a newspaper, we learn that prominent men in the intellectual, social and athletic life of the universities are once more turning their thoughts to the ministry of the Church. This would indicate that the great revival is now well and truly about to begin. But the statement by the Bishop of Chichester, that over £16,000 has been received by the Assembly for its scheme in connexion with candidates is our dear old friend cause and effect, and the revival after all may be postponed.

There is a movement in Wesleyan circles to raise the standard of the preacher's mental efficiency. What is the matter with prayer in cases of this kind. O ye of little faith.

The make-up editor of the *Daily News* is factious. In three columns together in captions may be read: (1) Registered Nonsense, (2) Recruits for the Pulpit, (3) Where are our Comics? If one reads a newspaper from left to right of the page, the above phenomenon is visible. (O Sun what has thou done!). Another method of reading a newspaper is to turn it upside down, and at the same time play a game of cards. One friend of ours reads his copy for the day whilst lacing

up his boots, and he is thinking of taking to shoes. Mr. Herbert Read, with the calm of compassion and in the spirit of tolerance, states in *The Monthly Criterion*, that:—"An intelligent man ought to be ashamed of devoting more than ten minutes a day to his newspaper. It is never worth more." An examination of the litter in the parks and on commons . . .

We hear talk of a Protestant Upheaval, and we are forced to wonder if it has anything to do with the weather and the ladies' bargain sales.

A short time ago mysterious cracking noises in the floor of the Lady Chapel in Chichester Cathedral were followed, for three nights in succession, by the upheaval of tiles and the overthrow of chairs. The upheavals were found to be caused by a slight subsidence at the sides of the chapel. Now if this had happened some two hundred years ago, one can imagine the good business the priest would have made of the occurrence, the devil-exorcizing ceremonies that would have been in evidence for stopping the upheavals, and the superstitious fears of the Christian flock.

Empty cradles of to-day means empty schools tomorrow, and later empty workshops, states the L.C.C. report on public health matters for 1926. The persons responsible for the report seem concerned more about quantity than about quality. The statement makes one suspect that anti-birth-control fanatics influenced it; for to these, quality doesn't matter so long as quantity is plentiful. Well, even the dullest of country stock-breeders knows better than that.

The Rev. A. Gilbert Adams, of a Bromley-by-Bow Baptist Chapel requires a portable harmonium for open-air mission work, the old one having given up the ghost. He wants some friend to present a harmonium of "loud tone to enable us to continue this service for our Lord." Jesus Christ managed without a harmonium. But his modern soul-saving disciples appear to be unable to get the "message" home without first damaging the ear drums of the unsaved. If the reverend gent. can't get his harmonium, we suggest he should buy a dozen tin whistles.

In a recent speech, the Prime Minister referred to the debt owed by Cornwall to the influence of John and Charles Wesley. We shouldn't call that a debt, but a misfortune.

A war "tank" is to be removed from the Central School playground at Willenhall, Staffs, and disposed of as "scrap." This is an example that other educational authorities as well as city and local councils might imitate with advantage. The only reason that might influence the retaining of war relics is that they serve to remind the nation of its late folly. But as people do not regard them in this light, the best policy is to scrap the lot.

The Rev. F. L. Wiseman says: We want brighter hymns. Now hymns are supposed to be musical praise addressed to God. Does the rev. gent. think his deity is getting depressed at the Church's failure and needs cheering up a bit? If that is the case, we suggest that the rag-time experts be called in to modernize the present dirges with a touch or two of syncopation. No God of Love could possibly resist an appeal to "Abide with me" couched in rag-time.

Building boys is better than mending men, declares a Wayside Pulpit poster. From what we have noticed of the Church's "building" we should say that the world loses rather than gains by the jerry-built boys produced by Christian builders.

"Your ideas of husband's rights are 200 years behind the times," said a Hanley magistrate to a man who claimed that he had a perfect right to strike his wife whenever she disobeyed him. The magistrate meant 1900 years, not 200. He might well have added that St. Paul is regarded by civilized persons as an unreliable guide to matrimonial relations.

The dualism of church and chapel, says Mr. Baldwin, has been the most potent influence in the life of our country. We admit the influence has been potent—poisons generally are—but luckily the antidote of Free-thought has been able to arrest the progress of the poison to a considerable extent.

Apropos of the Revised Prayer Book. Bishop Barnes says: "The issues for which men were martyred at the Reformation are still vital. Opposing principles and beliefs of fundamental importance cannot permanently co-exist in the same Church." It is not exactly a testimonial to the intelligence of one's fellow-countrymen that they should be regarding Prayer Book principles and beliefs as of fundamental importance. Still, bishops must live; and the gentle art of bishoping is to convince people that balderdash is not balderdash.

The Commissioners responsible for the "Eighth Annual Report of the Scottish Board of Health," say of one area:—

Everywhere we noticed an almost total lack of sanitation. Ceilings are falling down, wood-work is rotting away, there are holes in the walls of houses through which the street can be seen. The houses are a hunting ground for vermin of every description . . . Can it be wondered at that such places breed an unhealthy and discontented people? Is it any surprise that the most bitter revolutionists are from Glasgow?

The Rev. Dr. Carlile sees in all that a chance to point a moral. Now is the opportunity, says he, to present the view of life our Lord taught: there is no more pressing duty than to get the Churches to act upon the teaching of Jesus. Christianity has lost influence just in proportion to its loss of Christ. The first revival, he adds, will be a revival of spiritual religion: it may come from some unexpected quarter, apart from organized religion, but it is coming—of that, says the reverend gentleman, he is sure. The wish, we presume, is father to the thought. Be that as it may, the reverend Doctor doesn't picture the Church as being exactly a glowing success.

The Rev. Edith Grace Craig, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hoosick, N.Y., and the widow of a one-time minister, has been appointed chaplain to the New York State House of Assembly. We understand, on none too reliable authority, that she thinks St. Paul a jolly old chap, but that his views of women and their place in the scheme of things are not to be taken too seriously.

There is in the affairs of the London Missionary Society a "crisis." The Directors, in their annual survey of the year, assert that the present income is quite inadequate. The Society has an accumulated deficiency of £46,496, which has accrued during the past two years. This sad state of affairs the Directors believe to be due not so much to a lack of means, as to a lack of will. "A truly consecrated people could supply and carry all that is required in money and men." Evidently large numbers of Christian people are seeing through the missionary swindle, which provides so many soft jobs for the servants of God. The Directors, however, have a cure for the trouble. They suggest a "day of prayer" in all the churches. They want to ask God, "What about it?" and whether he means to let all the missionary staff push off to the workhouse.

*John Bull* to Gipsy Smith: "Pray accept my warm congratulations on the attainment of your jubilee as a preacher. Your charitable sanity has repeatedly been expressed through the columns of this journal, and I assure you that your writings have been appreciated by my readers. Long may your powerful pleading resound from the pulpits of the land!" Carlyle told us what the population of England was, and what type of intelligence it consisted of in the main. If readers of *John Bull* appreciate the Gypsy's stuff, our contemporary with the million circulation must have rounded up a pretty considerable quantity of Carlyle's "fools." Still, million circulations are not to be had in any other way.

In a book about Thomas à Becket, Mr. Sidney Dark says that Becket was deliberately verminous. He wore a hair shirt, and permitted his body to be constantly bitten as part of the discipline of life. When the monks picked up Becket's body they discovered this; his hair shirt and close-fitting hair-drawers were covered with white linen, so that no one should know of the daily agony to which he submitted himself. There is, of course, nothing remarkable about this disgusting practice of Becket. It was common to hordes of monks and "saints" for hundreds of years of the Christian era. What should be borne in mind is that the monks got their stupid and unwholesome notions from reading the "inspired" Word of God. If it be contended that these good Christian men misread Holy Writ, then their God stands condemned—he never told them they were wrong.

Appealing for support to the National Playing Fields Association's scheme, a number of prominent Free Church ministers say that a great extension of facilities for recreation is demanded on serious moral and social grounds as well as for the sake of public health. The unhappy conditions prevailing in slums and overcrowded areas depress vitality, breed discontent and give strength to all kinds of morbid temptations. "Every interest, therefore, of the Christian Church and of the nation would be promoted by increasing facilities for the enjoyment of fresh air, innocent recreation, and wholesome human fellowship." Once upon a time "morbid temptations," etc., were declared to be caused by a Devil, and were to be exorcised only by large doses of the Christian religion. Now, it appears, our modern descendants of the Puritans have discovered a different determining factor and a different cure. Innocent recreation, once regarded by the apostles of killjoyism as worldly, is now declared to be desirable on moral and social grounds. After this, let no man say that the religious mind doesn't progress. We may yet see our Free Church ministers advocating full use of facilities for "enjoyment of fresh air, innocent recreation and wholesome human fellowship" on the Sabbath. But not yet awhile. Our Free Church ministers still believe that Monday's good is evil on Sunday. Ancient superstitions die hard.

It is still customary in some quarters, says Prof. H. G. Wood (Director of Studies at Woodbrooke Settlement), to deplore the prevalence of novel reading. Though, no doubt, novel-reading may become a kind of drug-habit, he adds, and the light-weights among novelists are very numerous, yet it must be confessed that the novel has become a work of art of amazing range and power. The greater novelists of the present time are not content simply to tell a story to while away the time. "They are busy with the interpretation of life, with helping us to know and understand ourselves. And many a reader seeks from his favourite author, if not ready-made wisdom, at least the material for reflection which may make him wise." What the Professor says about the greater novelists of the day is true: and the same applies to the greater novelists of the past. But we should like the Professor to have told us where are the quarters in which it is still customary to deplore novel-reading. We should say the deploring is done

most among pious bigots, whose reading matter is almost wholly confined to the Holy Bible, parish magazines, and the *Christian Herald* type of literature. The type of mind this stuff produces is always ignorant and narrow-minded. If this professor of Woodbrooke Settlement had hinted as much, he might have made a few darkened minds realize their state.

Nobody, says the Rev. John Bevan, of Balham, believes in hell, and it is no use preaching it. That expression lets a little light in on the clerical mind. Mr. Bevan's remark sounds like he would have no objection to preaching hell if the people would take it, but if they will not, then they must preach something else. That is quite in line with the clerical tradition. The most brutal and the most stupid of doctrines have been preached so long as people were willing to accept them. When the people outgrew them, then the clergy obligingly found these tales were untrue and unnecessary. A most obliging mentality has the average parson, if one will carefully examine it.

Mr. James Douglas laments that while the bishops are wrangling over the prayer book, "the people are perishing in the flames of Secularism." That is too bad, after Mr. Douglas has written so much to prove the indestructibility of religion, and man's inextinguishable craving for it. On the other hand, it is not likely that many of his readers remember to-day what he said yesterday. The art of journalism is to provide something that tickles the palate day by day.

We have not had to wait long for confirmation of what was said concerning the readiness of Nonconformists to take a seat in the House of Lords—if they get the chance. The Chairman of the Congregational Union, Rev. F. W. Newland, writes to the *Times*, saying if it is found desirable to associate Freechurchmen with the prelates in the House of Lords, there are several ways in which this could be arranged. And this comes from men who profess to be opposed to the State patronage of religion! We were evidently right when we said that the opposition of Nonconformists was motivated by envy of the privileges enjoyed by the State Church, not by any question of principle. They can be bought whenever the price offered is high enough.

One cannot expect a nation to be well governed, says Dean Inge, when the male population is mentally under thirteen. That the mental condition of the male population should be as alleged by the Dean is admittedly a bad thing for the nation. But we would remind him that such a mental condition is no detriment to the Church—rather is it an asset. Were it otherwise, the Church's prospects to-day would be considerably more gloomy than they are. Indeed, one might say that the mental age of under thirteen is that which is most profitable to the Church. It is the age at which the Church strives hardest to get her dogmas firmly installed in the child, before its mental powers start maturing. And to keep her clients at this mental age throughout adulthood is the only hope the Church has of retaining her clients. We are inclined to fancy the Dean's estimate of a mental age of under thirteen is too low as applied to the whole male population. The Dean has probably been observing only the Church's clients, and not the men who have sloughed off their Christian teaching because they think it an affront to their adult intelligence. Ignoring these men and the Church's clients, one might say that the mental age is now about 16 or 17 years. But that improvement is due not to anything done by the Church, but to the spread of educational facilities. We may add that though the improvement is not much, such as it is does not help the Church. Proof of this can be seen in the fact that when adolescence is passed, an increasingly large number of Sunday-school scholars nowadays sever all connexion with the Church.



## The National Secular Society.

THOSE who attended the Glasgow Conference will not be surprised to learn that at the last meeting of the Executive, Miss Vance placed her resignation of Secretary in its hands. The Executive received the resignation with great regret, bearing in mind her very lengthy service, and her devotion to the work. It is true it is a paid office, but the value of an official to a society such as the N.S.S. is not determined by payment, nor could money purchase the kind of service required. It meant to the members of the Executive the snapping of an old link, and all recognized that until increasing ill-health and the passing of the years intervened, none was more active, or more resourceful in serving the Society than its Secretary. This feeling was expressed by all present, and embodied in the resolution passed. I need say no more than that I associate myself with it.

Miss Vance is also Secretary of the Secular Society, Limited, and it was felt that the members of both bodies would wish that suitable retiring allowance should be made to so old a servant of the Society. Accordingly a joint meeting of the Board of Directors and the Executive was held, and an agreement reached that will provide an adequate annual allowance to Miss Vance for the rest of her life. Fortunately, the finances of the Societies permits this being done. The meeting felt that in the special circumstances, the provision should be as generous as possible, and Miss Vance has expressed her appreciation of, and complete satisfaction with the arrangements made. No more upon that head need be said—at least, for the present. Her interest in the Society remains, and her experience of Society work will be at the service of her successor if and whenever required.

With regard to the appointment of her successor. The post has been offered by the Executive to Mr. F. Mann of Glasgow, and it has been accepted. Mr. Mann has been for some time Secretary of the Glasgow Branch, and has done excellent work in that district. He has the advantage of youth, is possessed of energy, enthusiasm and, I believe, ability. There is plenty of work to be done in connexion with the Secretaryship of the N.S.S., and the Executive believes that Mr. Mann will be able to do it.

Naturally, the Glasgow Branch is parting with him with considerable regret, but the Branch has always been loyal to the movement as a whole, and in this respect quite cheerfully places the interests of the Society before its own. Mr. Mann will take up his new duties so soon as he can make arrangements for leaving Glasgow, which may be in about a month's time.

CHAPMAN COHEN,  
President N.S.S.

### 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.—F. Roberts, IS.

L. ROGERS.—Thanks for good wishes. We are keeping well, but could do with a little more leisure, if we had it.

D. CLARKE.—Tales of dying Atheists have been so often commented on in these columns, that this special form of Christian lying must have some new features to be of interest. Mr. England's article on the topic in Ideas is a relash of some very old lies, not over well

told. The editor of the paper must have been very hard up for copy to publish it.

G. EDWARDS.—Your clerical friend has a lively imagination. Mr. Cohen is conceited enough to think that his services are worth much more than £500 per year, but he would feel "passing rich" if he were able to get it.

G. CHRISTIAN (Buenos Aires).—Pleased to have your appreciation of the weekly "Views and Opinions." We try to make them so fifty-two times in the course of a year.

F. HALE.—Letter received and contents noted.

A. C. MUSGRAVE.—We sympathize with your disgust at the way in which the parsons pull the strings in the political field. But the N.S.S. does not take sides in politics. We have enough to do to carry on with our own special work, and the facts you mention make it the more imperative that our aims should be clear and direct. Freethinkers can do a great deal to make politicians and political bodies less afraid to offend the Churches and Chapels by letting their own opinions on religion be publicly known.

J. E. FINDON.—There is no immediate probability of a new edition of *The Crimes of Christianity*.

H. THOMAS (Cape Town).—Pettigrew's *Superstitions connected with the History of Medicine* could only be purchased second-hand—probably at about five or six shillings. The other two at about 2s. each.

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## Sugar Plums.

We are always pleased to recognize good things in the Religious Press when they appear. So we gladly note the following from a recent issue of the *Methodist Recorder*:—

We are accustomed to point with pride to the union of orthodox piety and reforming fervour in Wilberforce and Shaftesbury; but we must not forget that Ostler and Sadler, Robert Owen and John Stuart Mill, even if their careers were less spectacular than those of the two great evangelists were not behind them in whole-hearted and self-sacrificing devotion to unpopular, but Christian causes.

We are loath to say anything in criticism of this testimony, but it is fair to men like Robert Owen and others to say that their ideas of reform were clearly not gathered from Christian sources, while many Christians who have done good work in reform movements did owe their action to Freethinkers having first called their attention to the abuses against which they warred. Still, it is good to see the work of non-Christians recognized in a Christian paper, and one day, as we have so often said, we shall see the names of Hetherington and Carlile, and the band of Freethinkers from Thomas Paine down to G. W. Foote recognized as among the great benefactors of their time.

We are glad to learn that the West London Branch made a good start with their new station at Ravenscourt Park. Mr. Campbell-Everden was the speaker, and he was listened to with attention and appreciation throughout. These meetings are to be continued every Sunday,

and commence at 3.30. Arrangements have also been made to have the *Freethinker* on sale outside the park gates.

Mr. F. Mann is paying Edinburgh a visit to-day, July 17, and will lecture on The Mound at 7.30. We hope Edinburgh Freethinkers will make a special effort to be present.

The Liverpool Branch appears to be making headway with its open-air work. As a variation from the usual set lecture, on Monday evening next (July 18), a discussion on "The Existence of God" has been arranged between Messrs. Sherwin and Henley. The meeting opens at 8 o'clock.

In a recent translation of *Benedetto Croce: An Autobiography*, the philosopher confesses that he never cherished ambitious dreams in his youth, and that he has never felt strongly any hopes or desires "except—perhaps I may be allowed to say it since it is true—the desire to find my way out of the darkness into light." The philosopher's desire about which he felt strongly was no mean one. And it is a desire cherished by no large number of people. But we think we may safely say that it has brought and still brings many readers to this paper.

### Infidelity and Atheism.

By GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

THERE are two terms which specially excite religious reprobation, and one of them excites mine. I refer to Infidelity and Atheism.

Infidelity is a term I detest. It implies that you believe enough to subject you to reproach, and disbelieve enough to entitle you to be damned. It signifies disbelief too inveterate to allow you to go back to superstition, and too much timidity to carry your doubt to a definite or legitimate result. I am for thoroughness and decision. If it is criminality to disbelieve, I will put scepticism far from me. I will not even tamper with doubt. But if it be lawful to reject from the understanding whatever seems false, then I will disbelieve error as a duty and unhesitatingly doubt whatever is doubtful.

Atheism—objectionable as it is from wanton negative associations—is a far more wholesome word. There is a ring of decision about it. There is no cringing. It keeps no terms with superstition. It makes war and means it. It carries you away from the noisome word jugglery of the conventional pulpits, and brings you face to face with nature. It is a relief to get out of the crowd who believe because their neighbours do, who pray by rote, and worship through fear; and win your liberty to wander in the refreshing solitude where the heart may be honest, and the intellect free. Affirmative Atheism of the intellect is a proud, honest, self-respecting attitude of mind.

### THE NEW GENERATION.

There are people who say ugly things of the friendships between modern girls and boys. They suggest that girls of to-day are immodest, eager for sex experience, careless, and shameless in their code. But is it true? In every generation there are various types. Eighteenth-century literature does not give us an impression of women's chastity; the Victorians concealed many an escapade beneath the cloak of hypocrisy. Ugliness and vulgarity exist in every age. Youth to-day has fewer repressions. Young people talk more freely and they are sometimes noisy, silly, pretentious. The absence of chaperons gives opportunity to the lawless of both sexes, but sensualists, young and old, will always evade restrictions somehow . . . the new generation has evolved further than any before, because there is less prejudice, hate, and intolerance of other people's religion and other countries, for example, among people to-day compared with the era of our parents.—*Dr. Elizabeth Sloan Chesser* (in "Good Housekeeping.")

### Some Reflections.

THE conflict between religion and science is the conflict between knowledge and ignorance. The more intelligent clergy and laity are quite aware of this, but, shrinking from the rough work of iconoclasm, or silenced by economic necessity, they continue to submit to and acclaim the conventional lies of our civilization: Godology in the Church, codology in Parliament. As we listen dutifully to a necessarily strident oration of a young Socialist in the street (worthy son of the famous "Bob Smillie," who was so sane during the "Great War") glad of Sunday diversion and opposition to the Churches, we note a shiny-hatted, stooped and slouching, but immaculately clad cleric, with gamp trailing negligently behind him, immune in conversation with a friend, undisturbed by, perhaps unhearing the youthful orator. The minister we know as a man of erudition, but we see in him a mere "tramp" or super-savage under his clothes and his learning. Another erect and energetic parson passes by, faultlessly attired, but the mere shadow of a man. Verily these command respect. Theirs are most of the well-dressed idlers standing apart, and those ever more daintily clad divinities stepping lightly from omnibuses in the noisy Sunday square. Cold comfort Socialism or Freethought to most of us (rough work iconoclasm, but we must hand out the truth) in the chill wind. Here is an emulation active and enduring, with little regard to reason in politics or religion. Here is the fashionable flock that ought to fill the Churches and gladden the heart of pious convention; but emulation hath a thousand sons and daughters, and its persuasion is pure worldly—fortune, fashion, sex, life, love, are the magnets of the mass of men and women, progress of a kind, instinct rather than reason gives the common urge. The pretty maid is not concerned about the handsome youth's intelligence, religion, or politics—she may find a little comfort in his means. It is only after marriage these murders will out, and the man and woman learn, too late, they are by no means one in body or in mind. For love, philosophy, or mere weakness, the one religion may embrace the other, or marriage may remain an armed neutrality. But where are the wretched all this while, that vast dim background of fashion and culture, the special care of the Salvation Army? Not one is in sight. Who created them, who cursed them? There gravitation hath a thousand sons and daughters—but even these are not wholly lost, even if reason, politics and religion are ineffectual. We have just seen in the *Radio Times* a wonderful photo-group of London slum children, with bright, cheery, bashful, bold, cunning little faces, just like boys everywhere, rich and poor; these, no doubt, from loathsome homes, and lying with the vile, but with a psychology, a human spirit, of their own. An interesting, an inspiring group; beguiling our sad fancy into smiling; prematurely old, with faces preternaturally sharp; clothed in happy rags, something too deep for tears. Children of the gutter, the objects, a few of them, of occasional charity, given a fortnight's fresh air, by plain, wood, river, hill and sea of England's green and pleasant land, then back to Tom-all-Alone's for the accustomed life of the slums, their glimpse of the country a mere Dickensian dream, neither science nor sociology, not one in a thousand of the brats inspired to break with his environment. Such the heard and the unheard, the seen and the unseen material that passes in the mind as we listen to the propagandist wasting his powers on the desert air! But the fact is that not one in a thousand of such speakers is alive with the quintessential concentration and spirit of re-

volt. Only the lava flood of the choicest spirits can stir the sodden and superficial minds of men. Was not one rebel Burns worth all of these? These, indeed, do not fear to speak, but only they have not been "fired." The voice of freedom and equality in "Scots wha hae," and "A Man's a Man," or in Shelley's "Men of England" has never penetrated the inner, nobler ear. Even Burns in his fondly feeble "Cottar's Saturday Night"—a faithful picture of peasant life, not inspiring in the nobler sense—cannot avoid the trumpet call in the closing lines:—

And, then, however crowns and coronets be rent,  
A virtuous populace will rise the while  
And stand, a wall of fire, around their much loved isle.

And this, not merely for "the field of proud honour," but for freedom herself, at home; to lay, not only the foreign "usurper low," but all the enemies of Freethought and the rights of man. In his wider significance Burns was pre-eminently a Freethinker.

Or turn we to the significance of books like Draper's *Conflict*. Nothing more destructive of religion and its defences was ever written. One hopes it is in the hands of every Freethinker; still more that every social reformer has it by heart. What a splendid, unbiassed marshalling and confrontation of opposing views! In a quotation from the preface the author says:—

Ecclesiastical spirit no longer inspires the policy of the world. Military fervour in behalf of faith has disappeared. Its only souvenirs are the marble effigies of crusading knights, reposing in the silent crypts of churches on their tombs.

A great battle is still to be fought between religion and science, ignorance and knowledge; but, concludes our author confidently—we might well say, triumphantly:—

As to the issue of the coming conflict, can any one doubt? Whatever is resting on fiction and fraud will be overthrown! Institutions that organize impostures and spread delusions, must show what right they have to exist. Faith must render an account of herself to Reason. Mysteries must give place to facts. Religion must relinquish that imperious, that domineering position which she has so long maintained against Science. There must be absolute freedom of thought. The ecclesiastic must learn to keep himself within the domain he has chosen, and cease to tyrannize over the philosopher, who, conscious of his own strength and the purity of his motives, will bear such interference no longer. What was written by Esdras near the willow-fringed river of Babylon, more than twenty-three centuries ago, still holds good: "As for Truth it endureth and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore."

We have heard much of thunderous engines of revolt, but the undisputed, indisputable, facts of history calmly, impartially, scientifically, philosophically, and most interestingly stated in this book are surely the most potent engine yet devised for the overthrow of superstition in general and the Christian superstition in particular.

"No spectacle," says Draper in his opening words, "can be presented to the thoughtful mind, more solemn, more mournful, than that of the dying of an ancient religion, which in its day has given consolation to many generations of men." And we might add: No revolution in the mind of a formerly religious person is at once so shattering and illuminating as the change from belief to unbelief in his accustomed faith; the drastic denial of what, at worst, was only mild doubt, or fear, before; when awe becomes contempt or love turns to hate—the latter not always a bad, sometimes a good and necessary thing—certainly a most critical parting of the

ways. A certain unrelated, indiscriminating "love" is taught in Sunday schools, Socialist and other, where a little hate would be more wholesome—hatred of organized sham and hypocrisy, in Church and State, even in morals, wherever sham and hypocrisy are found. We need not of course hate the little harmless unavoidable hypocrisies of social life, which seriously deceive no one, which all of us learn to "see through," and which only, in Emerson's famous example, "a foolish consistency," bothers about. The noble scorn of more imposing infamies is finely expressed in some lines by Pope, which may adorn the end of a too rambling reflection:—

"Nor Fame I slight, nor for her favours call;  
She comes unlook'd for, if she comes at all;  
But if the purchase cost so dear a price  
As soothing folly or exalting vice;  
And if the muse must flatter lawless sway,  
And follow still where fortune leads the way;  
Or, if no basis bear my rising name,  
But the fallen ruins of another's fame;  
Then teach me, heaven, to scorn the guilty bays,  
Drive from my breast that wretched lust of praise;  
Unblemish'd let me live, or die unknown:  
Oh grant me honest fame or grant me none!"

which if not relevant is noble, with the nobility of Wallace, Paine, and Garibaldi.

ANDREW MILLAR.

### A Notable Pamphlet.

THOSE of us who have had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Kerr in lecture and debate, have long known him as one of the finest and most eloquent defenders of Birth Control the movement has ever had. His clear and incisive speech, his masterly handling of the various aspects of the problem, his wonderful array of relevant figures and facts combined with his clear and logical presentation of his case have all put him into the very foreground of Malthusian propagandists and champions. In addition, Mr. Kerr is a convinced Freethinker, and this should make his latest work\* a welcome addition to the library of all those who are keenly interested in social and political questions, or are concerned with the welfare of both individual and state.

The great Freethinkers of the past, Francis Place, Richard Carlile, George Drysdale, Charles Bradlaugh, Annie Besant, G. W. Foote, Robert Ingersoll and many others, all felt that the Law of Population, as put by Malthus was unanswerable. In spite of the obloquy and insults heaped upon them by the great majority of ignorant Christians, they steadfastly advocated Birth Control as one of the principal means of reducing poverty and misery and abolishing war, and it is not surprising that so many eminent modern economists and sociologists are obliged to agree with our brave pioneers. Their references to the subject scattered in many books, blue and statistical, as well as in scientific treatises, have been collected and examined with great patience and care by Mr. Kerr, and his conclusions therefrom are put with all his splendid skill of arrangement and logical sequence.

What his thesis is can be gauged by the following, as set forth on the cover:—

The author proves that Britain is the most densely populated country that ever existed; that her population is still increasing rapidly; that she is losing the foreign trade by which she lives; that she cannot greatly increase her agricultural output without diminishing the product per man-hour, and therefore lowering the people's standard of comfort; and that her only escape is birth control assisted by emigration.

\* *Is Britain Over-Populated?* by R. B. Kerr, M.A., L.L.B.  
1s. Published by the Author, 97, North Sydenham Road, Croydon, Surrey.

To compress a reasoned discussion on such topics, in 118 pages, shows a marvellous power of condensation, but Mr. Kerr writes so clearly and so interestingly, that his little work commands and keeps the utmost attention to the last page. Never does he allow his argument to flag, and those people who imagine that a "back to the land" movement will annihilate our social evils, or that England—even with double her present population—can easily feed herself, should do well to examine what Mr. Kerr says.

There are a hundred extracts I have marked as being of the most vital importance to a solution of our present difficulties, but space forbids my quoting them. And the pity of it is, that, comparatively speaking, so few people will read the pamphlet. If Blatchford's *Merrie England* sold to the extent of a million copies, this should sell to the extent of ten millions. For never was such a stirring message so necessary or so imperative as in these our times.

Mr. Kerr handles his subject like a master, and whether he is dealing with our export trade or imports of foodstuff, whether he is examining the case for coal, with an eye to the unfortunate and unlucky miner, whether he is dealing with common objections or war or emigration, everything he has to say is put with pregnant wisdom and clarity of thought and expression. And his concluding sentence gives the key to the whole: "Hitherto the extension of knowledge and the inventions of science have been swallowed up in breeding."

Ponder over that!

H. CUTNER.

## The Lapse of Louisa Lake.

A NOT IMPOSSIBLE STORY.

THERE can be no doubt that Mrs. Lake was a decided asset to the little community who meet, three times every Sunday and several times during the week, for prayer and praise at the little Mission Hall in Paradise Alley. She it was who led the choir in a loud voice, always half-a-bar ahead of those around her; she it was who supplied the necessary fillip when the rest of the choir were drooping or uncertain of the tune; she it was who made sundry passionate interjections, such as, "Amen," "Alleluia," "God be praised," etc., when the preacher was addressing the throne of grace—thus waking her neighbours and encouraging the preacher to go on for another ten minutes. In addition to this her skill with the bread-knife had made her a great favourite at parties and mothers' meetings, the rapidity with which she prepared the bread and butter enabling her colleagues to take it easy and enjoy a gossip. In all things she was efficient, and it is doubtful if Paradise Mission will ever look upon her like again.

In appearance Mrs. Lake was rather unprepossessing. Her figure, clad habitually in an ill-fitting black alpaca dress of great antiquity, surmounted by a huge brooch reminiscent of a rock garden, was, practically speaking, no figure at all—this being doubtless due to the fact that her capacious bosom having, as it were, failed to maintain itself with dignity in a harsh and unsympathetic world had drooped until it rested in utter weariness upon the maternal abdomen. Add to the above a flat face, upon which time, and the fist of the late Mr. William Lake, had carved its ravages, and you have a fair idea of the physical appearance of Mrs. Louisa Lake.

It is no part of the present writer's task to dwell upon the misery involved in the unfortunate alliance suggested by reference to the late Mr. W. Lake. It is, however, gratifying to recall that it was entirely unproductive of a little Lake; this being due, not so

much to the besotted incapacity of Mr. Lake, as to his habit of knocking the partner of his joys and sorrows down a flight of stairs adjacent to the living room. One night, suffering from a slight obfuscation of vision, due to alcoholic indulgence, he beheld not one Mrs. Lake—but two! He flung himself on the wrong one, crashed heavily through the banisters, and the coroner brought in a verdict of accidental death. It was then that Mrs. Lake began her connexion with the Mission, surrounded by all the romance of sorrowing widowhood.

Reference has already been made to the influence wielded by Mrs. Lake, and if it had not been for the existence of Mrs. Bertha Bottomley there would have been no serious rival to her power. But Mrs. Bottomley undoubtedly did exist; a fact Mrs. Lake acknowledged by calling her a "dear" in public and a "cat" in private. Officially, Mrs. B. reciprocated by calling Mrs. L. "my love," with the mental reservation that she was really a "hussy." In this rivalry Mrs. Bottomley had the supreme advantage of being the senior member. No accomplishment of Mrs. Lake, no arts she might display, no service she might render could alter the irrefragable fact that Mrs. Bottomley had been a member of the Mission since the laying of the foundation stone; and so, whatever the merits of the newcomer might be they could never have the claims to consideration of one who had, as it were, grown up with the place. Hence Mrs. B. was in the habit of scoring all along the line; a fact that filled the Christian bosom of Mrs. Lake with most unchristianlike feelings.

The approach of the Anniversary found our two protagonists engaged in a battle waged with bitter intensity. Mrs. Bottomley desired that her youngest daughter, Hilda, should be selected to sing the solo on this great occasion; whilst Mrs. Lake had practically promised her favourite scholar, Gladys Guttery, that she should be the chosen one. The rivalry being known to the Superintendent, Mr. Mannering—a very mild gentleman who hated "rows"—the selection was being perilously delayed, until reasons connected with the dressmakers made an immediate decision desirable. Accordingly a meeting was called after service one Sunday evening, to make final arrangements and select the soloist. Mrs. Bottomley said she understood that "our Hilda" was to have the part, and thought that it had been understood all the time, she did not know what the dispute was about; Mrs. Lake then said that Gladys Guttery had the better voice and was altogether more suitable, and she considered that her connexion with the choir, of which she was leader, entitled her to some consideration in the selection of a soloist; whereupon Mrs. Bottomley recalled the laying of the foundation stone. Called upon to give the casting vote, Mr. Mannering in a tremulous voice, and with constant reference to "our dear sisters," decided that owing to Mrs. Bottomley's lengthy connexion with and valuable services for the Mission, etc., etc. The lady thus honoured smiled a sardonic smile. And then the storm broke.

Mrs. L. began by associating Mrs. B. with a variety of other "B's," of which "busybody" was by no means the strongest. The force of her outburst stunned the company into silence. The extent of her vocabulary was amazing. She resurrected words that she thought she had buried for ever with the late Mr. Lake. Not that the words were in themselves, particularly sinister; they were strong words, such as were entirely familiar to the worshippers at Paradise Alley and used considerably by them in private; they were, in short, words that you, gentle reader, and I, myself might use if occasion demanded. It was merely that their utterance in this place and at this

time created, what in political circles would be termed, a crisis.

\* \* \*

There can be no doubt that Mrs. Lake is a decided asset to the company that frequent the Red Lion. She it is who leads the company in song when things are tame and spirits drooping; she it is whose voice is heard above the roar of the engine when the company go off for the day in a char-a-banc. Her skill with the bread-knife is as amazing as ever, and her dexterity with awkward beer bottles unrivalled. Her popularity and power being undimmed by rivalry, her bosom no longer cherishes those unchristianlike feelings that erstwhile tortured her and robbed her of nobility. She is an altogether better Mrs. Lake. And if occasionally she lapses into language that would not be deemed fitting in her old surroundings, it occasions no comment from her new friends, and thus we see that the language was not in itself sinister. After all, gentle reader, they were only words that you and I might use.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

### Is There Original Morality?

THE older generation in every age assumes that the younger "ought to know better." It ought to know that it is wrong to do one thing and right to do another; that black is black in morals from time immemorial, and any amount of progress will not change it into white. "You should not have done such a thing," is the verdict of the parent, when the girl or boy has done something that is questionable in the mind of the parent.

Middle age starts off with the assumption that youth has a standard of morality and etiquette equal to, and fitting in exactly with, that they have arrived at after years of conflict. But is their morality a standard? Is it even the highest that can be reached? Can they claim a right to put it down as a basis for the youth that follows. Has youth an original morality on which it must build and from which it must start?

Having made friends with young men and women, I find that their constant question is, "Is it right to do such a thing." Their parents have told them it is not right; that they did not do it when they were young; that it is not permissible by the best canons of morality. These young people see other young people do such things, and they consider such young people as good as themselves.

Is there an original morality? Our forefathers used to say much about original sin. That seemed to pass away, but now it is coming back under a new guise—original morality.

Would a baby left to itself entirely in the question of morals and modern etiquette grow up to like or hate alcoholic beverages? What would happen if a youth were transplanted here from another planet at the age of eighteen? Would that youth, if a girl, drink cocktails, dance until the early hours of the morning, wear short skirts, bob her hair? Would that youth, if a boy, do the things a modern boy does?

From every angle there cannot be original morality, for the youth of every age makes its own standards in this matter, and the older people should not interfere over-much but trust youth to see its way out.

The only standards youth will have, and ought to have, are those they themselves set. When I am asked if it is right to do such a thing, I answer, "Yes, if you are sure it will not make you of less value to your fellow-men. If it weakens you in any way you have no right to do it; if it makes you stronger in any way, do it and have no scruples about it."

"Mother tells me it is not right for me to be out in the small hours of the morning with strange men," said a weak-minded girl to me a week ago. I thoroughly agreed with her mother. Some time ago, another girl of different stamp had the same trouble, but I could trust that girl with any amount of men on an island. Her character would be strengthened in every such experience.

The only original morality is that which comes from clean experiences. Each youth should have the opportunity of thinking out and testing those experiences for himself, and thus come at the only kind of standard that will be of value to him as a future citizen.

(Rev.) E. EBRARD REES.

### Obituary.

MR ARTHUR BARTRAM.

It is my painful duty to record the death of our eldest son, Arthur Bartram, aged thirty-two years, who died at his home, 107, Morley Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on the fourth inst., after a long series of intermitting ailments, borne with remarkable patience, terminating by loss of blood resulting from phlebitis in the legs. Deceased was introduced into the Freethought movement when only a few months old, on being publicly named by our late President, Mr. G. W. Foote. His education at Rutherford College was the result of winning a scholarship, taking second place on the merits list from the whole of Newcastle Schools of that year. Joining the Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S., the I.L.P., and the Literary and Philosophical Society, in early youth he became an omnivorous reader, and later a member of the Socialist Society, The Clarion Dramatic Society, The Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society (on which he served from being a programme boy), and the Douglas Credit Circle, serving as Secretary in five of the above, at different periods. Added to these duties came the editing of *The Whisper*, a small monthly journal of the Theatres for Tyneside. The end came suddenly, after five severe hæmorrhages within a week of return from the I.L.P. camp at Ebchester. Being conscious to the last he died as he lived, a Freethinker, without ever having imbibed any Christian hopes or fears. Despite the heavy rain, which continued all through the day of interment, a large number of comrades and friends gathered round the grave, where Mr. Porter read an impressive Secular address. After which Councillor Locke, J.P., on behalf of the I.L.P., who had known deceased from boyhood, paid a high tribute to the intellectual ability and earnest work of their comrade, the loss of which they deeply regretted, and could ill afford to lose.

A number of representatives were present from most of the above societies. The National Secular Society was represented by Mr. R. Atkinson, from High Spen; Mr. and Mrs. Batey, from Seaton Sluice; Mr. R. Chapman, South Shields; Mr. J. L. Stephenson, Low Fell; Mr. C. Porter, Gateshead; Mr. Lewins and Mr. Peacock, Newcastle.

On behalf of Mrs. Bartram and family, I desire to sincerely thank all neighbours, friends, and members of above societies, also the members of the Newcastle Socialist Sunday School, for their kindness, sympathy and floral tributes in our sad bereavement. As we took our last farewell he rested beneath a large canopy of the most lovely flowers in bloom.

J. G. BARTRAM.

### Mr. Whitehead's Mission at Blackburn.

EIGHT meetings were addressed in Blackburn, all of which were well attended, some exceptionally so. The lectures were listened to with the closest attention, and were followed by numerous questions. A few Catholics were persistent hecklers, and seemed to have a difficulty in restraining their impatience, sometimes interrupting and occasionally with offensive remarks. On the other hand, several keen and intelligent young Unitarians were in constant attendance, purchasing the literature and enquiring thoughtfully and earnestly. Blackburn audiences are sympathetic to Secularism. It is unfortunate that this sympathy does not function in an organized manner.

We have to thank Mr. Glassbrook for making all the arrangements, and Mr. Abbot for his help at all the meetings.

On July 16, Mr. Whitehead will commence a fortnight's propaganda in Bolton.

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 30.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present:—Messrs. Clifton, Coles, Moss, Quinton, Rosetti and Samuels, Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

The Monthly Financial Statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for Chester-le-Street, Glasgow, Liverpool, South London, West London and the Parent Society.

This being the first meeting of the new Executive, the following Committees were elected:—

*Benevolent Fund*—Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough and Miss Vance, Messrs. Rosetti and Samuels.

*Propagandist Committee*—Messrs. Clifton, Moss, Quinton and Rosetti.

Correspondence from Nelson and Hull, requesting supplies of literature, was received; and from Glasgow, asking for a return visit from Mr. Whitehead.

The Secretary reported that Mr. Whitehead was carrying out his mission most successfully, and also that Mr. Rosetti had held a successful meeting in Victoria Park.

Small grants to the Liverpool and Nelson Branches and to the South London Branch for Out-door Propaganda were approved, and Motion No. 12 on the Conference Agenda carried and remitted to the Executive was dealt with, the Secretary receiving instructions to arrange demonstrations in Brockwell, Regent's and Ravenscourt Parks.

As indicated upon her re-election at the Conference, Miss Vance then said that she felt the time had arrived for her to place her resignation of the office she had held for 35 years in the hands of the Executive, so soon as her successor could be appointed, to whom she would most willingly give all possible help.

Miss Vance then retired from the meeting.

The President said, being aware of the position, after due consideration, he proposed to recommend Mr. F. Mann, the present Honorary Secretary of the Glasgow Branch, whose enthusiasm, integrity and ability, in his, the President's judgment, qualified him for the post.

After questions and discussion, it was resolved that Mr. Mann be offered the post, in the first instance, for six months.

The question of a retiring allowance to Miss Vance was then proceeded with, and it was finally arranged that as the Secretary of the National Secular Society also held the position of Secretary to the Secular Society, Ltd., representatives of both bodies should meet on the following Thursday to discuss this matter.

E. M. VANCE,  
General Secretary.

## Society News.

### WEST LONDON BRANCH.

To the gorgeous weather may be attributed the greatly increased crowds which took advantage of the amenities of Hyde Park, among which must be numbered "the feast of Reason and flow of Soul," furnished by the veteran speakers of the West London Branch, who are equally capable of dealing with friend and foe.

The opening meeting of the Ravenscourt Park venture took place as announced. The L.C.C., in the exercise of an ineffable wisdom based upon its idea that public meetings should be held in private places (if they cannot be altogether prevented in the Parks), has allotted to this purpose the most retired and inaccessible spot, so that no casual passer-by may be attracted thereto.

Nevertheless, as a first meeting, it was a success; and the local friends have promised to see that future meetings shall be more numerous attended.—A. B. L.

## 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. Litt., "The Psychology of 'Grievances.'"

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, A Lecture by Mr. Sydney Hanson.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, A Lecture by Mr. Sydney Hanson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. C. Baker. (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti. Wednesday, July 20, at 8 p.m.: Peckham Rye, Mr. S. Hanson; Clapham Old Town, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.0, 3.0 and 6.30, Speakers, Messrs. Saphin, Hart, Baker and Botting; July 21, Messrs. Saphin and Botting.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Messrs. Cutner and Jackson. 6.0, Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.30, Lecturer Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden. Freethought Lectures in Hyde Park from 7.30 to 9.30 every Wednesday and Friday. Various Lecturers.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

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

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (McGhie's Cafe, 56, White-chapel): Saturday, July 16, at 8 p.m. Members' Meeting. Business very important.

#### OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. Meetings held in the Bull Ring Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 7.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall Steps): Mr. Geo. Whitehead will lecture every evening, at 7.30 p.m., from Saturday, July 16 to Saturday, July 30th. All Saints are expected to assist and attend as often as possible.

EDINBURGH (The Mound): 7.30, Mr. Fred Mann, "The Challenge of Unbelief."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (West Regent Street): Every Thursday at 7.30. July 14, Mr. Fred Mann, "Blasphemy and Sedition." July 21, "Socialism and Religion."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Outdoor Lectures at 8 p.m.: Monday, July 18th, Islington Square; Thursday, July 21, Corner of High Park Street and Park Road. Will friends please attend.

SAILORS need not be of the sea, but sailors of commerce waves, carrying craft of their wares to the shores of your home. Such sailors are we, bringing tailoring to your doorstep. Write to-day 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 & MADE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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