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Views and Opinions.

Dean Inge and the Life of Religion.

In the *Evening Standard*, Dean Inge has been discussing, in the course of a couple of articles, the question of the future of religion in Europe. So far as the established religions of Europe are concerned, Dean Inge holds out no hope of their increasing in strength. Of the Roman Catholic Church he says that its political record has been "almost uniformly disgraceful" :—

... founded upon forged title deeds and deliberately falsified history, it has established its power by fraudulent miracles and merciless persecution. The statecraft of these priestly diplomatists has been even more unscrupulous than that of other disciples of Machiavelli, and no government, until that of the Bolsheviks has been so uncompromising in suppressing liberty of thought and speech. Above all, it has steadily put forward, with astonishing effrontery, its claim to be the only true church, and to be the sole repository of divine grace. Rebels against the ... Vatican are handed over, when possible to the secular arm for the destruction of their bodies, and are consigned to eternal torments in a future state.

Now that is a pretty strong indictment of one of the oldest and the still most powerful of all the Christian Churches, and one would like Dean Inge to explain of what value was the inspiration of the Christian faith, when its most prominent representative can have this not too severe indictment framed against it? Every kind of fraud, forgery and lying, every species of intolerance, tyranny, and torture, exercised, not merely by the oldest and the greatest of the Christian Churches, but very often exercised by it under the direct impetus of Christian conviction!

* * *

Primitive Christianity.

But if this indictment holds good of the Roman Church, in what regard does it break down in relation to any other of the Christian Churches? Dean Inge

writes on the assumption that there existed some quite morally pure and intellectually upright primitive church, from which the Roman Church developed, and which, in the course of its development, acquired all the vices he names. But this is pure superstition. There is no trace in history—unless we are to reckon the New Testament itself as history—of a community of idealistic Christians filled with love for each other and for the world around them. So soon as we get a certain sight of Christianity, every one of the evils which Dean Inge marks as assuming a gigantic form in the Roman Catholic Church, can be seen in active existence. There was intolerance, there was duplicity, a boundless credulity which led to the manufacture of all kinds of legends, and, again, so soon as occasion demanded, the fabrication of documents which would serve the interests of the Christian Church. Again, we would like to put to Dean Inge a simple question, but, we confess, not with much hope of getting an answer. Will he tell us just when and where there existed in the earlier centuries a Christian Church which did not display the evil qualities with which he justly charges the Roman Church? The Roman Church was *the* Christian Church. It is the bridge which carries us across the ages to present Christianity. Without it one may fairly assume Christianity would have ceased to exist long since. The only thing which the earliest communities of Christians did not use was the power of the State to enforce and protect its teachings. But that was simply because it had not enlisted the State on its side. So soon as it was taken up by the State, it induced the secular authorities to use whatever force it could. That is the plain historic fact against which any attempt to divert attention from Christianity in general, by vehemently denouncing one branch of the Church, fails.

* * *

New Presbyter and Old Priest.

The futility of the position taken up by the Dean is seen more clearly if one asks whether Protestantism was any advance on the older Church. That it was not more tolerant is shown by its savage persecutions wherever it had the power to initiate them. In England, in Scotland, in America, in Germany, wherever the Protestants could persecute they did so. Most of the Protestant leaders admitted the legitimacy of the principle of persecution, and some, like Calvin and Knox vehemently asserted the duty of the "civil magistrate" to suppress heretical teaching. And as to handing the heretic over to the "secular arm" and consigning him to eternal torments in the next world, we would remind Dean Inge of the long list of heretics who suffered nose-slitting, ear-cropping, branding, imprisonment and execution, in this country alone for doubting the established

teaching. In the matter of truthfulness, the Protestantism certainly shows no better than does Catholicism. It is true that circumstances made it almost impossible for it to forge the number of documents which were forged by the older Church. It was born in a more enlightened age, in the age of the printing press, and when education was becoming more general, and the fabrication of documents on a wholesale scale was therefore rather difficult. But in the manufacture of lying stories about opponents, in the creation of death-bed legends, down to the pale and fantastical yarns of the professional Protestant evangelist, we have only the lingering of the Christian spirit that has made every document of antiquity that has passed through Christian hands more or less suspect. Dean Inge should not underrate the ability of his fellow Protestants in this direction. They have done what, and as much as, they could. If they could not do more, the reason for their incapacity lay in the altered times in which they lived.

* * *

The Decline of Supernaturalism.

Dean Inge does not believe that Roman Catholicism will advance much further than it is at present, mainly because, "it is entangled inextricably with supernaturalism and belief in miracles at a time when scientific education and the scientific atmosphere are becoming generally diffused." We are not inclined to question this, although again, we would like to ask what form of Christianity is not inextricably entangled with supernaturalism and belief in miracles? If we go back to the New Testament, what is more clear than its saturation with both elements? Did not Jesus have a profound faith in the miraculous? Was not the working of miracles one of the evidences of his divinity? What of the miracles of healing, of the walking on the water, of the raising from the dead, etc., etc? It is idle trying to explain these away as the mistaken interpretation of natural occurrences. That explanation will certainly not cover some of the recorded miracles; but even if it did, we are not concerned with what they were, but with what Jesus believed they were, and what Christians have always believed them to be. And if the miraculous and the supernatural go, what is there left of the Christian religion? Of course, for a time the mere using of the old name and the old terms, may serve to keep a certain semblance of Christianity alive. But how long will that last? If Christian preachers are driven to saying openly and in plain language, what so many of them believe, but will not say openly and in plain language, namely that the supernatural is a myth, that the belief in miracles is an expression of ignorance, if this is done, how long will Christianity live after this is made quite clear? You may fool people for a time by giving a new, and generally dishonest meaning, to old terms, but their hold on the general mind will rapidly weaken. Christianity will live only until such time as it is found out.

* * *

The Real Issue.

It is noticeable that in neither of his articles does Dean Inge pay the slightest attention to the positive influence of scientific knowledge on religious beliefs. Perhaps it would not have been very safe to have brought up this topic in the columns of a newspaper that may be read by anyone. Elsewhere, it is true, he has dealt with the shattering influence of Copernican astronomy on certain Christian teachings. But the Copernican astronomy is several centuries old, it is accepted by all, there is no longer any chance

of its being upset, and it is quite safe to say what he has said in the name of a liberal and an enlightened Christianity. But there are other and more recent developments in the world of science, which have a more intimate bearing on religious beliefs than had the theory of Copernicus. That only affected specific Christian doctrines and outlooks. But there are other things which strike at the root of both fundamental religious and fundamental Christian conceptions, but about which men like Dean Inge are suspiciously silent. For long enough I have been trying to get some representative to face the plain question: "Assuming that what anthropologists have believed, for at least the last sixty years, concerning the origin of the idea of God and of a soul is substantially correct, is there any room left for sensible discussion as to the truth of religious conceptions? Must we not either reject all forms of religion as the development of pure delusion, or throw overboard as entirely fallacious all that modern anthropology has to tell us concerning the nature of primitive ideas?" I have been trying to get someone in authority to face this simple issue. But none of them will do so. Yet that is the choice really before us. Either modern science, or primitive delusions plus their subsequent developments. The logical and honest choice lies between the two.

* * *

How Long?

Now it is probably true that for long enough the Christian Churches will succeed by the aid of much side-tracking, manage to keep a considerable part of the population nominally Christian. But no one in his senses can expect their number to increase. However slowly knowledge filters down to the masses of the people, it does reach them ultimately, and sooner or later this makes it possible for the timid ones at the other end to speak out with complete freedom. So again with the specific doctrines of Christianity. How can one expect the number of believers in a crucified saviour, or in a virgin birth, to do aught but decrease in number, when the knowledge that these and similar beliefs have no better foundation than the belief in old women flying through the air on broomsticks, or raising storms by burning a mixture of weeds and the entrails of frogs? Dean Inge says that the religion of the future will be neither that of the Roman Church, nor will it be Protestantism in any of its present forms. But it will be centred in the mind of Christ. That is merely substituting one myth for another. The "mind of Christ" does not exist apart from the mythology of the New Testament. And in the end it is just what anyone cares to make it. This, too, will play its part in keeping a certain number of men and women wedded to the use of the old forms and the old phrases. But faith in phrases will also grow weaker as the level of intelligence increases. Indeed, what Dean Inge says of the Christian Church, may, with truth, be said of the whole of the Christian religion. It may continue "as an extraordinarily interesting survival, for which every classical scholar must feel some sympathy," but its expectations of universal dominion are no more than a romantic dream.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"I am a man of the Homeric age; the world in which I live is not my world, and I understand nothing of the society which surrounds me. For me Christ did not come; I am as much a pagan as Alcibiades of Phidias. I have never plucked on Golgotha the flowers of the passion, and the deep stream that flows from the side of the Crucified, and sets a crimson girdle about the world, has never washed me in its blood."

Théophile Gautier (Mademoiselle de Maupin).

Dogmatism at its Lowest and Worst.

CHRISTIANITY, like every other supernatural religion, is rooted and grounded in metaphysical assumptions. It rests on absolutely no historical facts whatever. Apologists invariably revert, when pressed by anti-Christian arguments, to what they confidently call the indisputable historicity of the Gospel Jesus; but as a matter of literary fact this is a position more open to critical doubt and denial than all others. The Rev. Dr. B. W. Bacon, Professor of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis in Yale University, writing of John's Gospel says: "Real history was no longer attainable. The author of the Fourth Gospel reports no event which he does not take in good faith to be fact. Yet it must be apparent, from his own statement of his purpose as well as from the very structure of the book, that he does not aim to be a historian, but an interpreter of doctrine. He aims to give not *fact* but *truth*. And his handling of (supposed) fact has the freedom we should expect in a church teacher of that age, and of the school of Paul the mystic." Here we find a theologically orthodox American scholar frankly admitting the substantially unhistorical nature of the Fourth Gospel. In the same book, *The Making of the New Testament*, he recognizes the presence of much legendary material even in the Synoptics. To us, the recognition of legends in the Gospels by orthodox divines is an inescapable indication that, to say the least, the difficulty of distinguishing fact from legend is practically insuperable, and the conclusion to which many critics inevitably come is that the Gospel Jesus is nothing but a myth. In no sense or degree whatever can the Four Gospels be regarded as historically true. Their alleged hero never lived at all, but is a creation of a new school of mythology.

What, then, are the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament? Clusters of purely dogmatic assertions made in the interest of a new religious cult looming over the horizon. In this new mythological school there were two powerful parties more or less at loggerheads with each other, the Petrine and the Pauline, or the Jewish and the Gentile. In the end the Paulines carried the day, working with all their might for the triumph of what ultimately came to be known as Catholic Christianity. Now, as everybody knows, Christianity is a system or scheme by belief in the efficacy of which mankind are offered deliverance from the terrors of God's broken law, and the liability to spend eternity in hell-fire. Here we are, then, face to face with innumerable metaphysical dogmas about God, man, sin, Christ, salvation, heaven, hell, and purgatory, not one of which has the remotest actual bearing on human life and destiny, simply because they represent absolutely no existing realities. Even man as conceived by Christianity has never veritably existed at all, while God, Christ, heaven, hell and purgatory are mythical inventions, conspicuous only by their phenomenal unreality.

Sometimes Christian dogmatism descends to great depths of absurdity and inanition. A few Sundays ago the Rev. W. J. Sparrow Simpson, D.D., preached an astonishing sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral, which is published in the *Church Times* of August 12. The text is Matt. xxviii. 19: "Make disciples of all the nations." The first characteristic of this discourse is that it bears no relation whatever to the text, which simply enjoins the duty of evangelizing the world. The sermon, utterly ignoring that duty, is a statement and defence of Anglo-Catholicism. Dr. Simpson justifies Anglo-Catholicism's refusal "to

sanction the sacramental ministrations of any man, however spiritually-minded, if he has not been episcopally ordained." He says:—

It is true that Anglo-Catholicism is exclusive. But exclusiveness is not confined to that school. It is characteristic of the Church of England itself. There is not a single Bishop in the English Church, whatever his school of thought may be, who would authorize a non-episcopal minister to celebrate the Eucharist at any altar in his diocese. He would not like to be responsible for the consequences. In practice, therefore, the English Church is unmistakably exclusive; but that exclusiveness requires to be justified.

The reverend gentleman omits to mention the fact that the Roman Catholic Church does not acknowledge the Divine origin and authority of the Church of England, although it believes in and practises episcopal ordination. The Pope regards the Archbishop of Canterbury as the head of a schismatical and sinful institution, an institution which has no right whatever to be in existence. And yet Dr. Simpson is convinced that the English Church is as nearly perfect as it is possible for it to be, and that being so "it refuses to allow that other communions may rightly adopt any kind of ministry they may prefer." Many other Churches, paying no heed to that absurd ruling, have actually adopted fundamentally different kinds of ministry and ritual.

Now Dr. Simpson stoutly maintains that Anglican exclusiveness is solidly based upon an all-important principle, namely, "the principle of the transmission of authority, authority to minister being conferred by those who are themselves ordained." Then he adds:—

The Church of England insists on this principle of the transmission of ministerial authority from its possessors. But why? Because it is resolute to retain identity with the historic constitution of the Church. That was the official reply of our Archbishops to Leo XIII. They told him that the English Church at the Reformation retained the historic Ministry in the sense in which it had been up to that time in use." Our fathers intended not only to retain the form, but also the meaning.

It seems to us that the reverend gentleman commits the fault of wasting time and energy in the elaboration of a wholly worthless argument. What is the value to the world of the historic constitution of the Church, with which Anglo-Catholic priests are so eager to retain identity? Of what earthly use can it be to trace that identity back to apostolic times? The priesthood has never possessed any authority or power which the laity lacks. To the question asked by the preacher, "Do you believe that the Church has, on the whole, been providentially controlled?" our answer is most emphatically in the negative. We entirely repudiate the theological conception of providence. History tells us, in no uncertain tone, that the Church has often been controlled by wicked men, who utilized it as an instrument to achieve their own selfish and nefarious ends. This is a fact which Dr. Simpson will not dare to deny. In Dr. Green's *Handbook of Church History* we read:—

During this (tenth) century no fewer than five-and-twenty popes and anti-popes occupied the papal chair. But the ghastly record of immorality and outrage begins yet earlier. In the pontificate of Formosus, when party spirit was at the highest in the struggle of competitors for the imperial throne, the Pope, after crowning Lambert, called in his rival Arnulf to deliver the people from the Emperor's tyranny. Stephen, successor of Formosus, a partisan of Lambert, in revenge caused the body of Formosus to be exhumed, mockingly arrayed in full pontificals, and after many indignities, to be thrown into the Tiber. In return, Stephen, when the other party gained the upper

hand, was imprisoned and strangled. The popes who followed in rapid succession have left their names and little else, excepting records of deposition and murder, until the crowning scandal was reached in the accession of Sergius III. through the influence of Adalbert, Marquis of Tuscany, and a noble and wealthy widow named Theodora. This woman, beautiful and depraved, had two daughters, Theodora and Marozia, of like character to herself; and among them they disposed of the Roman See for more than half-a-century (pp. 413-14).

It is by no means pleasant to cite such instances of the corruption and wickedness of the Christian Church; but what else can one do when an eminent Doctor of Divinity speaks of it "as the Divinely appointed instructor" of mankind, and as having been, "on the whole, providentially controlled"? Did the Holy Ghost, whose temple it is claimed to be, forsake it during the tenth century and in other specially dark periods in its history?

J. T. LLOYD.

Cash Box and Cassock

"Within yourselves deliverance must be sought
Each man his prison makes."

Edwin Arnold.

"A world in the hand is worth two in the clouds."

Emerson.

New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient
good uncouth."—*Lowell.*

CHRISTIANS are not all selfish, but they have an extraordinary passion for monopoly with regard to their religion. To associate with them is like dining with a man who has all the pudding and two spoons. In the late World-War, they did their best to transform the battle-fields into mission-fields, and sighed, like Alexander, for more worlds to conquer. Bible Societies distributed sufficient copies of their Scriptures to build a garden city, one society alone boasting of a distribution of forty million copies. Tracts by the hundred tons were circulated, and mostly used by the troops for lighting pipes and cigarettes. Hosts of athletic young clergymen acted as army chaplains, and drew officers' salaries, whilst their clerical colleagues at home, exempted from military service, were free to further their propaganda there. In the intervals of preaching patriotism, they saw the boys off at the railway stations, and returned to hold the girls' hands. Thousands of pious laymen and women handed out tea and tracts at a safe distance from the fighting lines. With the object of winning the troops to religion, the clerical pill was well coated with Sugar. Cinemas, concert-parties, even chorus girls and red-nosed comedians were used as bait for the religion of the Man of Sorrows. There was, however, a big fly in the ointment. Despite all these blandishments, the troops did not display any untoward anxiety for their eternal welfare. Even compulsory church-parades, and the persuasive powers of leather-lunged evangelists, failed to penetrate the cheerful stoicism of the soldiers.

Since the World-War, Christians have not abated their propaganda, but have simply diverted it into other channels. Tracts are still distributed by the hundred tons, bibles are still circulated. Evangelists continue to attract sinners at street corners with the aid of harmoniums and female choirs. The sick are pestered in hospitals; children are tempted by means of "treats" and excursions; and, holiday-makers at the seaside are bombarded with tawdry tracts and deafened by itinerant tub-thumpers. These tracts, indeed, deserve special notice, for they raise once more the question not only of the high moral and spiritual tone of the Christian Religion, but also

of the conduct of Christians themselves. These leaflets voice emphatically very different views to those apologetic and invertebrate views put forward by artful defenders of the Faith in their contests with Freethinkers. In controversy, it is the fashion for the champions of Orthodoxy to explain, smilingly, that, in attacking the barbaric dogma of hell-fire the intellectuals are but flogging a dead horse. That particular horse, however, has a distressing habit of resurrecting, and that there is plenty of kick left in that deceased quadruped is demonstrated by the literature issued for the benefit of the ordinary citizen, and also in that used for the instruction of the unsuspecting young.

Freethinkers who imagine that one of the oldest and most barbarous religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind because artful clergymen appear to be giving the old savage ideas faint support in their pulpit utterances will do well to remember that, while the objectionable dogmas are still taught throughout the Christian world, the protests of the humanitarians are sought to be boycotted. Wherever the clergy retain any semblance of authority and power they still preach a hell of literal fire. In America the Fundamentalists rule the Christian roost, and scores of brass-throated evangelists flame the fires of hell over a continent. Roman Catholics everywhere have never damped one solitary spark of their fiery damnation. The Anglican Church, particularly the High Churchmen, who form sixty per cent. of that body, hold fast to brimstone. Many Nonconformist bodies, and the Salvation Army, include hell in their articles of religion.

Despite the fact that the Freethinkers have made the clergy somewhat ashamed of their more repulsive dogmas, the fight between Freethought and Superstition is by no means over. We have not yet succeeded in eliminating the clergy from our national councils, nor from our schools and universities. In all these places of vantage the clergy still wield enormous power. There are not wanting signs that Church and Chapel may yet combine their efforts against the common enemy, and a recrudescence of superstition may yet cause us need for greater vigilance and activity in the near future.

The social activities of the Christians are not so good as they seem on the surface. Charity is very good as far as it goes, but what the world wants is not alms-giving but justice. If the world were run on fair and reasonable lines there would be no occasion for philanthropy to exist. Christian charity is a sedative and a bribe to the working classes to keep them in order, and to attract them into churches and chapels. In India and elsewhere, the missionaries bribe the natives with medical dispensaries, and at home the clergy use the lure of coals and blankets, soup-kitchens, children's nurseries, scout outings, musical services, and other attractions to poverty-stricken folks. The cash-box and the cassock have always been on the same side, and will be to the end of the chapter. So long as wealthy manufacturers, and plutocratic profiteers have "surplus" thousands derived from underpaid and sweated labour where-with to found and endow churches and chapels, so long will "religion" be necessary to keep people quiet, and so long will thousands of places of worship mock the few lecture-halls devoted to Freethought.

The social activity of Christians is frequently open to question. The case of Stephen Gerard, the American Freethinker, is worth attention. At his death this broad-minded and large-hearted man left substantial bequests to charities, the chief being a magnificent endowment of an orphanage. By express provision in his will, no ecclesiastic, no priest, no

minister of religion, was to hold any connexion with the college, or even to be admitted as a visitor, but the staff of the institution was required to instruct the pupils in secular morality, and leave them to adopt their own opinions. This will have been most shamefully perverted, for the officials are all Christians, and, in order to keep within the letter of the law, only laymen are so employed. To-day the Gerard Orphanage is pointed out as a proof of Christian philanthropy.

The eternal conflict between Freethought and Religion is because the basis of Freethought is intellectuality, and the foundation of religion is faith. Freethinkers are progressive. If sceptics do their own thinking in religious matters they do it in everything else. Spiritual and temporal authority are brought under the same rules, and they must justify themselves. Freethinkers, to a man, are social reformers, and they are usually on the side of justice, freedom, and progress. To make a new world, to make a world fit to live in, no audacity contributes that is not in the first place intellectual. Man's great need is boldly honest minds. The attitude of far too many Christians is to shut their eyes, open their mouths, and see what god (or the priests) gives them. The Christian Religion was hatched under the rule of Eastern tyranny and is a religion for slaves, and not free men. Its message and quietism was acceptable two thousand years ago under the rule of the mailed fist. It is entirely out of touch with the times in which we live to-day, and its very existence now is largely owing to the dead hands of bygone believers.

MIMNERMUS.

The Obiter Dicta of Aloysius Horn.

It has often been stated that the books a man reads are a sure indication of his mental and moral standing. It is sometimes put in a negative way: that an index of a man's mind can be obtained by noting the books he does not read. It is one of those dictums that live mainly by their frequent repetition rather than by their intrinsic worth. I've known Freethinkers with a profound contempt for novels, and yet be imaginative enough; and I have known a prominent member of the Freethinking body militant, whose mind functioned freely and wholly intelligibly around such a subject as the subtle implications bound up in the determinist theory of responsibility, prop up a sixpenny novel in front of him at a meal; and that in a public place too. It may have been safer to do that at the dinner table of an hotel than at home, but it was obvious that fiction—sometimes truth of the best kind—was preferred to conversation when the all-seeing eye was absent. Yet the reading of fiction is anything but evident in his work, nor indeed, any other class of reading. That, whatever it is, is blended in a style, the prominent trait of which is a logical exactitude, combined with a wide range of power and independence.

In my own small way, I have indulged largely, by way of the "Free Library," in that class of literature which starts away with "Deadwood Dick," and after ramifying in all directions, reaches its apex in the pages of Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*. If the value of reading books is the development of man's judgment, the ability to see facts as they are and pronounce sanely on their relation to each other, the work of men like Doughty, Lawrence—much overrated, by the way, both in the deed and the record of it—Burton, Raleigh and the rest of the roaming fraternity, will not be the least of the factors that make for human betterment. So I go on reading the books of the wanderers for my own pleasure, and, if challenged, for the reason given above.

The latest of the nomads to put us under an obligation is Alfred Aloysius Horn, who, fifty odd years ago, was dumped down on the Ivory Coast of Africa, when he was seventeen years of age, to learn the rudiments of trading. Thenceforward he rubbed shoulders with cannibals—most moral of people, so he says—was behind the scenes in a heathen Temple, was initiated into the religion, although he hadn't shed the practice of saying his prayers—took a leading part in abducting a goddess—was friendly with slavers—was explorer and empire builder—fought battles with the river cannibals, and was blood-brother to others equally wild. A good many of his exploits, such as the purloining of the ruby in the sanctum of the white goddess, and his duel with the savage under water, where he was victor by virtue of his swimming under his antagonist and stabbing upwards, is sheer Deadwood Dickism, but he also met difficult situations with the serene and undaunted courage of a Doughty.

I'm concerned, however, with this old veteran's views on a variety of things. He was no mere seeker after physical excitement; he had a huge contempt for the big game hunters; the Sir Samuel White Bakers, who hurried through the killing of a dozen elephants to collect their tails as souvenirs—he was of a philosophic turn of mind, even in his younger days, and a half century of roughing it adds the necessary maturity to his opinions.

The idea of Death comes naturally to the aged. It should come easily and friendly; as Horn says, "if we'd think of Death as the hand of nature it'd be no worse than lying down to sleep in a cornfield. It is when the parsons trick out a natural process with all sorts of common regalia like Heaven and Hell, that it becomes something to fear." Horn had seen it in all sorts of gruesome forms, from the comparative easy way of the old silver-haired granny, who had outlived her usefulness and was tossed into the foaming rapids at the foot of the Sembla Falls, to that of the crucified victims of the Hoodoo Goddess, whose heads were cut off while they were suspended by the feet. Yet he retained a kindly conception of annihilation. His idea of ending the journey was to walk forth upon the veldt, away from the filth of the doss-house, and lie down when he grew tired, as it were, "to pleasant dreams." No man was more in love with life, however. He resented the unnecessary waste of it. When a plucky, or ignorant, lady missionary died of her desire to change the superstition of the river cannibals, Horn summed it up as "another victim to add to their great Josh House called Christianity."

Horn was tolerant of the efforts to Christianize the Africans, but it was tinged with contempt. He hardly saw the need of it. "There's no spot in savage Africa as dark as that end of O' street where I live. The demi-monde and that, drunk with methylated." There is something nauseating about that element in civilized society, and to Horn who had lived among natives, whose sexual morality was of the strictest character, it was doubly so. Not that he was sanctimonious on the woman question. "It's not God," he says, "it's only some goll-darned girl that'll ever expect a sailor to have been something less than man in the exercise of his duty." "Same with traders." In this connexion he draws the line at missionaries. "They generally take a wife with them, by a wise provision of Nature." I expect that is writ sarcastic, but Horn knew the advantage a community derives from the cultivation of the family life, and so did the savages he lived among. Such people do not need the ministrations of a Christian preacher.

Our author differs slightly from Mr. Haldane, who, at the R. P. A. Dinner told his audience that attempts were being made abroad, by artificial means, to pro-

duce hybrids between humans and the higher apes. Should it be successful, it would go far to prove the animal ancestry of human beings. Horn evidently thought that Darwin had settled the matter, and that there was no further need to labour the point. For when one realist on the Muni River caged up a slave girl with a male gorilla—the animal sulked in one corner and the girl cried her eyes out in another—Horn and some of his fellow-traders hunted the experimentalist down, when they heard of it, and shot him. Nevertheless, he had the scientific spirit in him. He knew the precise psychological value of a bottle of rum in its relation to a heathen deity, and in his journeys into the interior he saw the workings of the ancient gold prospectors, and from their tools and totem poles, as well as their style of architecture, he evolved a theory of human migration somewhat akin to that of Professor Elliot-Smith. The man with the catamaran, an exceptionally seaworthy craft of the Malays and kindred races, he avowed, held the world in fee, and he linked up their wanderings half round the world from his own observations.

A book dealing with Africa could hardly be written without coming up against the institution of slavery. The trade in slaves had many undesirable features before Christianity was introduced into the Dark Continent, but, as Horn saw it, it had none of the squalor and money-grubbing aspects which distinguished the trade as carried on by the Christian peoples. He does mention that on one occasion three hundred slaves were slaughtered to wipe out a stain caused by the killing of some sacred birds, but if that is placed against the atrocities of the Middle Passage, it is trivial in comparison. Whatever Christianity may have accomplished in fitting man for a future state, it has consistently worsened his status here on earth.

Horn knew something of Josh Houses, something of the fear and deception lying at the root of the black man's religion. When it is more generally known that Jesus is also a Josh House figure, and that the religion associated with him gives rise to no better results than the fetish of the savage, this old traveller's ethic of decency in dealing with black man and white, will stand a better chance of improving the condition of the "Dark Continent."

H. B. DODDS.

Rondeau.

At curtain-fall we players leave the stage;
We strut no more, nor mouth our parts nor rage;
Then lights are lowered; out the public go;
The doors are locked; and, then, at last, we know
That we must pay the forfeit of old age.
Ah well, perhaps if like the Eastern Sage
We loved life less, and let our minds engage
On thoughts of heaven, more tears for us would flow

At curtain-fall!

Perhaps . . . perhaps . . . but when we draw our wage
For the last time, and turn the final page,
Nothing remains to do except to show
A smiling face to Old Man Death, and so
Make a proud exit, not in vassalage,
At curtain-fall!

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The upward sweep of civilization is not unlike the rising of the incoming tide. It advances and recedes, but each advance carries humanity to a higher altitude than it has reached before.—B. O. Flower.

Acid Drops.

The B.B.C. has initiated a double programme, which will enable listeners-in to suit themselves as to which kind of entertainment they will listen. With regard to Sunday Broadcasting, the organizers point out that the choice here is restricted, because "the range of material suitable for Sundays is necessarily limited." We like that "limited." It would seem that there is as great a choice on Sundays as on other days. What it means is that the B.B.C., being committed to a modified Sabatarianism, decides that there are many things which while suitable for week-days, shall not be heard by those who pay the B.B.C. on Sundays.

So much for the Sunday afternoons. Then we come to the Sunday evenings. One would have thought that as a great many of the subscribers do not want to listen to a religious service, it would only have been fair to have arranged for an alternative to the stupid sermons and meaningless hymns. But nothing of the kind. The B.B.C. decides that what they will do here is to give two religious services instead of one. So that if you do not care to listen to the foolishness of one preacher you may switch on to the foolishness of another one. But if you listen at all, some religious service you *must* have. If you do not want a religious service at all, you must just switch off, and spend the time wondering at the stupidity of those who believe, because the streets are not filled with black-robed priests, that we are not a priest-ridden people. A few minutes might also be spent diagnosing the mental make-up of those who assert that religion is dead, when even with so new a thing as Broadcasting the priest is able to exercise a controlling influence.

Josephine Tesoriere, of Peckham, aged fourteen, was recently missing for five days. It appears she had a craving for adventure, and had wandered about, living for the period on five shillings. A religious weekly comments that clearly the girl has fine qualities, unable to find expression in her normal life. It suggests that the Girl Guide movement serves a useful purpose for girls such as this. They find wholesome outlets for their constructive talents, their social capacities, and the play instincts, which rightly trained become the foundation of sturdy character. With much of this one is inclined to agree, while reserving the right to say that the weak point of the Guide and Scout movements is that they "stress" too much the physical side, and give practically no encouragement to intellectual interests. The result is that though the general character may be wholesome enough, nevertheless the whole mental make-up is lop-sided; so that the child grown adult is an easy prey to every mental thimble-rigger or sophist—political, journalistic, or priestly. Still, what now concerns us is the change of attitude of our pious friends, as a result of diminished Bible influence. Years ago the adventurous or delinquent child would have been regarded as inherently "sinful." The pious diagnosis being different then, the treatment suggested would have taken the form of prayers, threats, thrashings, and repression. But, luckily for the child of to-day, Christian parents and trainers of youth have now got rid of a few of their stupid Christian notions called from Holy Writ; hence the more sympathetic handling and intelligent training of children.

Types of boys brought before Juvenile Courts is the theme of an article in *The Boy*, published by the National Association of Boys' Clubs. A number of lads are described, and mention is made of what they had been charged with. All these boys were asked if they belonged to a Boys' Club, and all said they did not. Their reasons for not joining were as follows: Some had not been asked to join; some preferred the street; some were influenced by friends who preferred the street; some were kept working till a late hour and were tired after reaching home. We fancy there is another reason, and a strong one, why most of the lads prefer to keep

out of these clubs. The clubs are nearly all run in connexion with some pious organization, and the sanctimonious atmosphere of the clubs is naturally repellant to the lads, and so they stay outside. Admitting that boys with certain environment are far better in clubs than on the streets, we suggest the Juvenile Courts would be less troubled with delinquents if the boys were able to join clubs of a more wholesome type than those now available. Philanthropists without pious leanings, who are interested in child-welfare, might do worse than start such clubs.

A Mr. C. Phillips Cape, in a Methodist paper, criticizes the Wesleyan Conference's resolution against Freemasonry. He says: "All agree that Freemasonry is not a religion; then why complain pathetically that it does not 'preach Jesus'?" If Christian men leave Masonry, he added, it might be captured and captained by undesirable persons—by Theosophists or Atheists. Do the opponents of Freemasonry desire this? If it is really a menace to Christianity, they should not rest till they have destroyed it." The particular point here that interests us for the moment is that Mr. Cape should fancy Atheists are anxious to capture the Masonic movement in England if Christians should forsake it. Even if the "Architect of the Universe" affirmation were to be deleted from Masonic formulæ, we imagine most Freethinkers would not care to scramble for a place in Freemasonry; for the pretty sound reason that they would not wish to waste their time with the senseless formulæ and childish ritual of Masonic meetings, in order to help their fellows or to do a few benevolent actions yearly. Besides, in the Freethought movement, which admits both men and women, Freethinkers have ample scope for the play of their social and benevolent instincts. They are bound together by the invisible tie of a common cause and aim, and need no absurd oath to hold them to it.

Says a writer in a pious contemporary, we are up against the stark, staring fact that young people absent themselves from public worship because they positively dislike it. Not only do they fail to derive any spiritual good from it, but it bores them so stiff (to use their own expression) that almost any occupation is deemed preferable. And there's a candour about the attitude, he says, that is even more amazing than refreshing. Young men do actively hate going to church, and are too honest to pretend otherwise. Well, the parsons are always exhorting others to honesty, but we imagine they are not particularly pleased with this manifestation of it. After what this writer in our contemporary says, one cannot help wondering how much truth there is in that beautiful rumour about an imminent revival of religion. Perhaps like that too previous obituary notice of Mark Twain's death, it is a little exaggerated. Or maybe the prophets hope to achieve it by mass-suggestion.

Said the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, at the City of London Vacation Course in Education:—

It is obviously more difficult to be a good European than to be a good Briton, and it is difficult to see precisely how best either in our public or private capacity we can advance the interests of Europe as a whole. But Great Britain is not purely a European country. It has wide-spread over-seas dominions, and from time to time there might arise a conflict of obligation, real or apparent, between the claims of the British Empire. British statesmen will naturally think of the interests of the British Empire first, and the interests of the Continent of Europe second; but do not imagine that those interests are generally discordant: on the contrary, they are generally identical.

The aim of Mr. Fisher's whole address appeared to be to get Britons to regard themselves as citizens of the world first, and of the British Empire afterwards. With that aim we are heartily in accord. But it is deucedly hard to get such a notion into British heads. And that is a fact to be deplored, since the future peace of Europe depends so largely upon the notion being widely accepted here.

A Wesleyan local preacher at Southwold, Suffolk, said recently: "Many people take their troubles to the Lord and bring them away again. Let us leave ours with Him." That is good advice. There is nothing like returning unsatisfactory goods to the sender.

Bishop Hamilton, of the United States, was asked: "What of English Methodism? What impressions of it in the year 1927 will you take back home with you?" Said the Bishop:—

Well, some people talk a lot about decline in church-going. It's just a temporary depression, that's all . . . I believe the people are turning to religion.

We hope the good man is truly honest in his optimism. Our own observation prompts us to say that the "temporary depression" has an aspect of permanency. And so has the parson's depression about the depression.

Most of the calamities of the world have been due to ignorance and stupidity, declares Sir Samuel Hoare. We can assure him that one of the worst calamities—Christianity—was certainly due to the causes mentioned. Still, there's consolation in the fact that the world is beginning to shake off the worst of its effects.

Keep things alive and free, says the Senior Inspector to the Board of Education. Well, Freethinkers are doing their best to this end, despite all the vested interests of churches and chapels trying to keep things dead and in bond to First Century notions.

The District Council of Barry has refused to permit Sunday photography on the beach. Thank God the Barry Council has done its bit towards saving old England from that dreadful Continental Sunday.

From a Lord's Dayer's advertisement we gather that prayer alone was not of much use in the Southend campaign against Sunday Dog Racing. What defeated the "intended dishonour to God's Day," was the appeals to the Government, to the Police and the Mayor and Corporation; the work of a staff of organizers; the manifestoes to the public; the interviews with ministers of religion; the resolutions of protest arranged in all churches; the public demonstration; the newspapers approached and induced to join in the protests. Yet if prayer alone can work miracles, the above-mentioned manoeuvres were not really necessary. Can it be that our prayer-mongers are losing faith in the old specific and are putting their trust in secular devices? Our pious friends may rejoice at a few "magnificent victories" such as this, but after all they don't gain much. Nowadays, if people are denied Sunday pleasure in one direction they can find it in another. And in any case, they are not attracted into the churches. On the contrary, they are only the more antagonistic, because they resent being denied the freedom to choose how they shall spend their freedom from labour.

The *Methodist Times* acknowledges that Sunday is now given over to all sorts of games and amusements. A new generation has sprung up which smiles at the old-fashioned Puritan standards, never reads the Bible, seldom, if ever, goes to church, and demands with an ever-increasing imperiousness that everything it asks in the way of pleasure shall be granted. The one aspect, we are told, of the Sabbath question not receiving the consideration it deserves is that the selfish demand for pleasure on the part of people who have every opportunity of getting all that is needed during the week, is turning the Sabbath into a day of hard labour for those who supply the demand. Our contemporary says the real "kill-joys" are not the pious, but those who steal away the only day of rest and quiet from their fellows. This wonderful concern for the welfare of the workers is

about the limit of nauseating cant. The churches that engineer Sabbatarian protests never have done anything to advocate or secure shorter working hours and more leisure time. Yet the Sabbatarians, after the workers have gained these things, have a cool cheek to use the fact of there being more leisure as an argument against the pleasurable use of Sunday. The Lord's Day rabble have no real concern about Sunday workers: for their out-cry against Sunday pleasures would be just as noisy if no Sunday labour were necessary for Sunday pleasures, and if there were no week-day leisure for amusement and only Sunday were available for it.

Says Mr. Sean O'Casey, the playwright; "I don't find writing easy. I thought five hours to-day and wrote two lines." There would seem little fear of Mr. O'Casey qualifying for the job of leader-writer on a popular daily. Our moulders of public opinion are required to write a thousand lines without thinking at all. That is how they are enabled to get in tune with the type of readers who in the lump make million circulations possible.

A popular, though incomplete definition of relativity was, that Einstein had caught light bending. The "pictures" in a film "Nell Gwynn," have caught Pepys note making, and, history on a blameless white sheet may make one renew acquaintance with the diarist. As showing the round peg of religion in a square hole, he writes on May 25, 1662: "To church, and heard a good sermon of Mr. Woodcocke's at our church: only in his later prayer for a woman in childbed, he prayed that God would deliver her from the hereditary curse of child-bearing, which seemed a pretty strange expression." The church then, in those days, not content with having the devil for a scapegoat, must include woman also. Some day, perhaps, we shall have a history of the part played by all churches, in the deliberate robbing of mankind of a most precious quality—self-reliance.

Stephanie Gray, an authoress, was recently charged with attempted suicide. She was "down and out" when she made the attempt. She asked the magistrate not to place her on probation. The magistrate (noble fellow) said he was not thinking of probation, but of prison for six months—she had attempted suicide. We think this sorry game of persecuting would-be suicides should be put a stop to. A person who attempts such an act as suicide has usually been through acute agony of mind, and does not require the added agony of Police Court and prison to be added to past misery.

"The Wideness of God's Gifts," is the theme of an article in a religious weekly. The article seems incomplete, since no mention is made of certain gifts such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, storms, famine, and other good things the Lord delights to share among the creatures of his creation. It seems a pity to omit these things from such a discussion, since God's goodness cannot be rightly appraised unless all his gifts are apprehended in the lump.

Writing about "Truth in Advertising," a weekly paper recalls the fact that a "misleading" specialist advertised years ago, "How to get an income of £10 a week without working for it." A postal order for reply elicited the information: "Fish for mugs as we do!" We fancy some of our popular evangelists get an income on similar lines, the only difference being that they fish for "souls" instead of mugs, though the result is just as gratifying to the "savers," and perhaps after all there is not a deal of difference between "mugs" and "souls."

"The Ruling Passion" is a heading to a picture in a religious weekly, showing a Jewish money-changer in Tunis counting his profits at the end of the day. Why the Jewish money-changer is selected for this disparag-

ing comment we don't know; for parsons go through the same ritual—and in a church, too—after the Sabbath trade is over. And we hazard a guess that they are just as pleased with a good profit as is the money-changer. Since the profits in both instances represents the living of the persons concerned, we fail to see how the one man is inferior or more sordid-minded than the other.

A local preacher somewhere is reputed as saying that true religion does not consist of forms and ceremonies; it is just communion with God. If that is the case, the gentlemen who specialize in conducting and teaching forms and ceremonies would appear to be rather unnecessary; and the pious might as well get on with the communing business alone, and keep their money in their purses. If the local preacher's hearers argue in some such way, we fear the exponent of true religion will be a little unpopular with his minister.

The Rev. Ivan Dingley Ross, a Wesleyan minister, and the son of a minister at Torquay, recently committed suicide in Guernsey. A Methodist weekly, noticing the incident, says the minister's mind had evidently given way. We wonder whether this charitable comment would have been forthcoming had some well-known Atheist been the person under discussion. The chances are that he and his act would have been made to serve to point the moral of the wretched state of mind induced by infidelity, and hundreds of little pulpiters would have carefully weaved the comment into sermons for the delectation of the brethren.

A reader sends us a copy of a religious tract entitled "Is God Dead?" We should say not. God will never be dead so long as people believe in him. But he will cease to exist so soon as they disbelieve. That is why it is important to religion to keep people believing. It keeps the deity alive.

A correspondent in the *Daily News* appears to be on the right track. "Why should it be considered the correct thing," he asks, "to sing 'Abide with me' at the close of a military performance?" The question should be sent to the whole lot of Bishops, who see nothing incongruous in following the Prince of Peace and blessing war memorials. Further pressing of questions of this kind might put Bishops and war in the right light; at present the business is an insult to any one capable of adding two and two together.

In a newspaper discussion on "Weird Books" to read, we notice that the book of Revelations is not recommended.

In Czecho-Slovakia, as reported in last week's *Freethinker*, an attempt to burn an old woman as a witch was frustrated. At the World Conference on Faith and Order, the Eastern Orthodox delegation decided to withdraw. Dr. Nicholai, Bishop of Ochrida, Serbia, would have nothing to do with modern opinion against tradition in an interpretation of the Scriptures. The deductions here are as plentiful as blackberries in September, so that you may pick out the one you like best.

Some Sunderland householders who sought compensation from the Council, for damage done during recent floods, have been informed that the drainage is quite adequate to normal needs, and the Council does not therefore hold itself responsible. The householders are informed that the damage was due to an act of God. We suggest that as God's address is, if not unknown, at least indefinite, claims for compensation should be laid against some of the leading clergy, who officially claim to be God's representatives on earth. It is quite wrong that anyone should be permitted to go about damaging people's property in this manner, without being called to account for it.

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.

HUGH O'KANE.—Thanks for papers. As you say, it all does good, and the same method will not serve to open the eyes of everyone. An argument that is convincing to one man, falls quite flat with another. We will bear in mind what you say with regard to advertising the *Freethinker*, but there are other things in the way for the moment. For the time we must depend upon the efforts of our friends to secure new readers.

W. DUNCAN.—Thanks for papers. Afraid America is quite out of the question at present.

F. W. THOMAS (Cape Town).—Received. We will do what we can to procure a copy of Pettigrew's *Superstitions Connected with the History of Medicine*, but we cannot say when we may succeed in getting it.

A. J. BLOCKLEY.—Received, with thanks. No, we do not lose our readers very easily, but we should like to make more new ones.

E. M. (Manchester).—Please remind us of the particulars of the proposed discussion later, and we will insert a notice. Subjects will be sent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The orders for Mr. Cohen's new book *Materialism Restated*, are coming in well. The book will be ready on September 1, and the copies ordered will be sent out as early as possible.

The *New York Herald Tribune* announces that application has been made for the incorporation of a Society called "The American Anti-Bible Association." The leader of the new society is Mr. W. S. Bryan, who boasts that he has never in his life set foot in a Church. Mr. Bryan's Home is in Tennessee, so that all in that State are evidently not in the cave-man stage of those who were responsible for the Scopes trial. Mr. Bryan is connected with the publishing business, and is himself the author of several novels and histories. The paper from which we quote gives two-thirds of a column to the new movement, and without comment or depreciation.

Since writing the above, we see it reported that Supreme Court Justice Crain has refused to sanction the

incorporation of the American Anti-Bible Association. He returned the papers with the note "I refuse to approve of the evil purpose of this proposed incorporation." So you may have any number of incorporations to support the Bible, but not one that is plainly and honestly in opposition. Still, we do not suppose it will prevent the attack on the Bible going forward, incorporation or no incorporation.

Older readers of the *Freethinker* will be interested to learn that the late G. W. Foote's youngest daughter, Dorothy, is to be married at the end of August, in Sydney, Australia. She has been living in Johannesburg with Mrs. Foote, and left there for Sydney some weeks ago. We wish the bride every happiness and all good fortune in her new station.

Mrs. Foote's only son is living in Johannesburg, and she asks us to say that she will always be pleased to welcome any friend of her late husband who cares to call. Her address is 152a, Banket Street, Hillbrow, Berea, Johannesburg.

G. Whitehead is holding a series of open-air meetings at Manchester during the present week, and we hope that local saints will give him whatever assistance lies in their power. There have, we think, been several attempts at rowdiness in Manchester, and nothing is so likely to prevent this as a good muster of supporters. Time and place of meetings will be found in our "guide" column.

A Glasgow friend has been good enough to insert an advertisement of the *Freethinker*, at his own cost, in *The Cowslairs Co-operative Reporter*. He is of opinion that there should be many more subscribers in Glasgow than there are. Naturally we are of the same mind, and we thank our friend for trying to secure them.

The World's Work, one of the leading American magazines, has recently been devoting attention to what it calls the spread of Atheism in America. Two articles are published in the May and June issues, one entitled "Atheism Beckons to Our Youth," the other, "Atheism Rampant in our Schools." Both deal with the activities of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, and the establishing of juvenile branches in schools and colleges. The articles are fairly written, so far as we are able to judge, and try to state the objects of the movement in the language of its promoters, as gathered from interviews and publications. We are glad to see these articles as evidences of the activities of American Freethinkers, and also of the effect they are producing on American thought.

In this respect the American Press is fairer and more representative than our own. There is, we believe, a far greater amount of reasoned Atheism in Britain than in the United States, but one would never discover this from our Press. Hypocritical to the last degree, the British Press never mentions Atheism, save as some thing that is dead, or negligible. Never, by any chance, does it permit an account of Freethinking activities to appear in its columns. To this extent the American Press certainly shows greater honesty. It does not hesitate to give publicity to what Freethinkers are doing, and when it wishes to know anything about Freethought, it interviews Freethought leaders to find out. Our English papers would in the same circumstances, at the most, select some "tame" Freethinker for consultation, one who might be trusted to say nothing that would shock religious susceptibilities, or it would ask some leading clergymen about it. If all the people cannot be fooled all the time, the Press does what it can to fool as many as possible. And the fools are in the majority. How otherwise could the papers boast of their million circulation?

Troubles, Gloom, Anxiety.

THOUGH I abandoned the creed of Abraham the Sheikh, and Paul the Tentmaker, as far back as 1879, I have occasionally attended church, and observed the slow decline of the Biblical Faith. The coloured windows glow as in 1879; the choirboys' voices ring as then; the people—so many of them grey-haired—kneel to the Almighty Swordsman and Merciful Father as then. But the world without is changed—the world of the Great War, of the League of Nations, of aeroplanes, of wireless, of the short skirt, of Socialism, of multiplied schools, of widespread Free-thought. On a serene sunny morning, in July, 1927, I borrowed prayer and hymn books from the kind verger of Christchurch, Ealing, and humbly nestled in a pew. I had only occupied that station a few minutes when I recognized the customary and ancient spirit of servility. The boys were chanting, quite prettily, the verses:—

Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all. He keepeth all his bones, so that not one of them is broken; but misfortune shall slay the ungodly . . . The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants. (*Psalms* 34.)

Again and again the men and women of Ealing—a Borough largely priding itself on Empire, Aristocracy, Individualism, with a touch even of Fascism—kneelt and bent the head, and implored—"O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us"—"that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us"—"that we may not fear the power of any adversaries"—"there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God!" When a chapter was read (*Wisdom of Solomon*, v.), the church resounded with the Sultan's benevolent assurances that he would protect his slaves:—

The care of the righteous is with the Most High; therefore shall they receive a glorious Kingdom. The Lord shall sharpen his severe wrath for a sword against his insensate foes . . .

But while these heavenly alarms thundered in my ears, I peeped into the Parish Magazine, and discovered that the Christchurch Parochial Council, so far from trusting in the celestial guardianship, had insured the buildings, pulpit, screens, plate, embroideries, stained glass windows, organ, bells, clock, etc., for £56,500. Thus Piety hobbled in the rear of Prudence. And Piety ceased not its cringe and plea. In one hymn it groaned to the God of light: "Pierce the gloom"! In another it wailed: "When I tread the verge of Jordan [that is, Death], let my anxious fears subside!" And outside, in the July sunlight, roses reddened in the villa-gardens, silken-hosed girls played tennis, ten of thousands of motor-cars gleamed and rattled, and citizens read in Sunday newspapers of the achievements of restless and indomitable Man in the creation of railroads, liners, docks, river-barrages, submarines, calculating machines, tanks, and gas-bombs. Which was the real modern world? Which did I belong to? The sunlit world thrilled with new ideas, new devices, new creations, new music, new visions, and new victories even amid new tragedies. But here, in the Christchurch pew, I seemed to be crouching among serfs and bondmen, in an atmosphere of troubles, gloom and anxiety. Without, a passionate civilization, striding bravely under the open sky; within, a shudder as of Cave Men listening to the howl of beasts of prey or hostile tribes—"Lord, have mercy upon us! Christ, have mercy upon us!"

The Vicar ("upon whom be blessing!" as Moslems say of their Prophet Muhammad) quietly preached on the New Testament maxim: "Grow in

grace." Growing, he said, implied bearing good fruit; for, though some species of fruit might deceive men, none could deceive the all-seeing God. Once upon a time (and this was the only smile in his grave discourse), the satirical Momus criticized the God Hephaestus for making a man without windows in the creature's breast so as to reveal the inner thoughts. But, remarked the Vicar, God did actually see into all breasts. Thus the citizens of Ealing were bidden, not to evolve a personal and social ethic out of the personal and social experience, history and reflexion, but to practise a moral drill under the eye of the Infinite Sergeant. I readily admit that the good Vicar's discourse was free from the nauseous elements with which I was familiar in the period 1865-1879—the hell-fire, the skull-and-cross-bones elegies, the blood-bath dips, the warning yells; and his words told of hope, calm and charity. Yes, but no appeal to self-reliance sounded; no rousing song as of Swinburne, who pictures the Destiny Mother crying to Man:—

With all her tongues of life and death,
With all her bloom and blood and breath,
From all years dead and all things done,
In th' ear of Man the mother saith,
"There is no God, O son,
If thou be none!"

At this point, perhaps, you will see what I mean by the decline of the church. I cheerfully acknowledge that, in certain evangelical activities, the church is served by an earnestness of personal devotion in its priests and deaconesses. It is of such things its apologists are thinking when they scornfully fling back any suggestion that their Faith is dying. By the standard of personal devotion and worthiness, I, for one, do not condemn the church of 1927. Yet I deem that the church, in the old Christian sense understood by Saint Francis, Luther, Bunyan, Loyola, Bossuet, Butler, Paley, Chalmers, Spurgeon, and Moody is moving towards inevitable death.

Why?

Christchurch gave me the significant answer. Neither in prayer, nor psalm, nor Bible-reading, nor in the sermon (and the sermon must act as chief test) was any hint given of the tremendous fact that humanity is immensely more courageous in the Twentieth Century than in the First. If I affirm that civilization wonderfully withstood the shock of 1914-1918, I am not condoning the war-method of solving human quarrels. What I am accenting is the valiant reaction of civilization against the cursed and desolating power of war. All the blazes and explosions of the Bible Apocalypse ("Revelation") were a mere child's firework to the horrible realities of the years 1914-1918. Yet everywhere to-day, in economics, politics, literature, science, art and invention, man is untiringly planning, re-moulding, inquiring, tracking, surveying, forecasting, and record-breaking. I will, at any rate, grant credit to the men of old who portrayed the Yahweh of Abraham as handling the universal sword, pulling the universal bow, uttering the universal shout, erecting the universal kingdom, and roaring the universal damn. They did not retire into the timid doctrine that God's main business was to supervise the growing of virtuous fruit on virtuous individual trees. They made him a Fascist of Heaven and Earth, and Autocrat of Stars and Nations and Races. The sweet, childish music of Christchurch is but a thin æsthetic survival of that bold and all-claiming theology of bygone ages. At Christchurch, I heard muttered talk of troubles, gloom and anxiety. I did not hear the hymn of the world-republic raised by the people that march towards a new fraternity, a new order, a new beauty.

F. J. GOULD.

History and Growth of Spiritualism.

IN, at any rate, its incipency, spiritualism was the only form of worship in evidence when man threw off the habits of his arboreal ancestry. Assured as we are of the evanescence of every to-day's truth, with its ultimate destination on a pile of fictions, each of which in its turn, re-burnished and on occasion metamorphosed, re-emerges as a fact, I shall not express amazing doubt if at any moment some searcher after the eternal will-o-th'-wisp proves that a crude and rudimentary form of spiritualism or religion existed in the minds of pre-natal man. Link the incipient brain of the animal with something approaching the reasoning powers of a primitive man and your baboon may become, as your parrot may become, not in either case a spiritualistic anthropomorphist, but the equivalent in the conception of baboon or parrot mentality.

But as mentation develops and the savage interprets every new thing in relation to his own most important self, distortion of actual fact naturally and inevitably follows. Of truth, as a moral conception or rule, he can have no idea. His embryonic thought, truly and crudely emphasizing the Schopenhaurian will-to-live, undecorated by civilized manners, free from the influence of any superimposed system of morality, finds an outlet in plain and possibly unconscious expediency. His universe centres with all naturalness in himself. Knowing neither truth nor its negation, but merely the instinct of self-preservation, his life is dominated by this one big and compelling force. What, judged by civilized standards, would be termed deceit, treachery, brutality, are connected intimately and insuperably with his every-day life, they represent a portion of his defence against hostile conditions.

It is only where reason, in its true meaning of conscious thought, is added to instinct that a distortion of the truth is possible. The baby in arms, utterly devoid of any reasoning powers, is in its cries, its groans, truthful to a degree; in a few years' time it can and will lie with the unblushing impudence of Ananias. With absolute assurance can one from screams and belly-rubbings on the part of a six-months-old baby diagnose stomachache: the same indications at six years may conceivably be a simulated means of securing a half-day holiday from school. But while reason is solely responsible for the birth of prevarication, it is also in its higher manifestations the means of restricting, amplifying or otherwise controlling the lying abilities.

So, the mind of primitive man, devoid of any conception of so-called truth or non-truth, possessed of the first glimmerings of reason, by the incidence of self-deceptive mentation, is bound to form a spiritualistic conception of the universe. And moreover, the savage is, by this fact, as we shall see at a later stage in our enquiry, bound to form one conception and one only, whether he be Australian aborigine, or North American Indian, or Hindu, or Zulu, or Ancient Briton.

With the displacement of ancient magicians or witch-doctors by the more civilized, less barbarous, but not less irrational hierophants, Pagan soul worship, with its polytheistic goddism, stagnated. Necromancy was practised, if at all, in secret. For European hierarchies in the early days of Christianity had a short way with dissenting humans. If they had cast out all ideas of conscious human sacrifice to the Lord God Jehovah, they believed most vigorously in throwing to the devil any of his professed disciples. Witchcraft was blazoned as intercourse with the devil: it was put on the same pedestal of shame

as incubi and succubi, and any persons caught or even suspected of its practise were incontinently sent to hell with a taste of its professed climate to help them on the journey.

Not to be wondered at, therefore, was the acceptance by the yokel of the cut and dried orthodoxy common to the precise environment in which he was born: any amplification of its inherent or disguised necromancy was kept for strictly private moments, for mention in sussurated accents to sympathetic friends, or for secret indulgence with others of like heretical tendencies. True it is that Jacob Boehme, in the early decades of the seventeenth century made fitful attempts to institute a more personal acquaintance with angels. But it was to Swedenborg, the famous seer of the Swedes, that one can with a little mental manipulation trace the nebulous beginnings of modern spiritualism. Whereas Boehme was an ignorant peasant; Swedenborg, a man of some culture, and the author of not a few scientific and learned works, was in a position, despite powerful adverse theological influence, to spread his gospel amongst a wider audience. Benefiting by the spade work of Boehme, unquestionably slight as it was, Swedenborg gobbled up the whole of his predecessor's ideas, and, in an amplified, euphuistic, and more palatable form flourished them before a public to such tune that Swedenborgism became in effect a new religion, and in point of fact is an existent dogma to this very day. Moreover, Swedenborg claimed that his writings so far from being his own, were dictated to him by an angel sent by Jesus for that express purpose. Apparently, however, although with a practice no doubt developed as time went on the apostolic Swede extended his talks to other angels, it was no part of his conception of the spiritual world to admit the possibility of others sharing this privilege: like Madame Blavatsky, in a later century, he was the one chosen earthly subject for the dissemination of Heaven's blessings and God's teachings. And as, with Swedenborg's death, the spirit of Christ apparently hit on no one else as his speaking trumpet, beyond the carrying on of a religion founded on the "true Christian revelation," the whole movement for a time collapsed.

In the later years of the eighteenth century, Mesmer, a German physician of some repute astonished the parvenus of the day with an exhibition of what he was pleased to term animal magnetism, or, as it was subsequently called, mesmerism. Whether the astute doctor, wiser than his kind, had been digging into the lore of the ancient mystics, or whether he accidentally stumbled on the means of inducing the emotional state so described, is a matter that will remain comfortably buried, and, at any rate, is of little moment. Sufficient that under a new name, and duly decorated with fresh trappings, this Dr. Mesmer, of undying fame, reinaugurated a cult that had been the common property of the magicians of every Pagan nation and every savage race since the moment when man left the trees. A gay and giddy time had apparently the goetic Mesmer in Paris, until as a result of investigations by a medical committee, culminating in his denouncement as a charlatan, he thought it wise to try fresh ground. But animal magnetism, in spite of hostile criticism had its whole-hearted supporters, and, along with table moving, engaged a certain amount of attention in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The law, in the fulness of its wisdom, had not connected animal magnetism with occultism; it looked indulgently on table dancing as an innocent drawing-room amusement; whilst Swedenborgism it recognized as a religion and as such a thing apart. Thus those of thaumaturgical bent gibbered their nonsense to their heart's content

and all unconsciously prepared a way for the great spiritualistic movement that was to spread like living fire over the Eastern States of America and Western Europe during the latter half of the century.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be continued.)

In Quest of the Beautiful.

V.—POETRY.

THE guardians of wisdom do not come out of their strongholds to meet you. Readers of Olive Schreiner will remember a short sketch in *Dreams* entitled "The Hunter." An old man, personified by the name of Wisdom tells the Hunter of Truth: "On the grains of credulity she will not feed; in the net of wishes her feet cannot be held; in the air of these valleys she will not breathe." And the searcher for truth dies, holding in his hand a feather from the wing of the elusive bird. Cadence and harmony are, in poetry, an echo of the Beautiful; this draws on the seeker, and the true poet is but a magician inspired by the many-sided appeals of beauty. Creating pictures in every line, in most cases with a direct address to the feelings, the poet plucks the strings of the heart. His attack is on the emotions, yet our best poets have always in mind that powerful citadel the intellect that gives little quarter to the feelings. When we have bent our minds over the Mahabharata, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Koran, the Talmud, the Bible, the Æneid, Dante's Divine Comedy, and Shakespeare, we are left with the idea that the whole of these are only mass attacks on the two sides of us—the head and the heart, or intellect and emotion. And it may explain that it is easier to feel than to think. Our poets take us into dubious company as a consequence; the subtle appeal of beauty through the singers is something to excite caution, and in examining some of the examples of the beautiful in poetry, I found that the best satisfied both the head and the heart.

In Book XXIV. of the Iliad the music of sorrow led me to that point where the beauty in magnanimity was clear. A poet, or poets, touching on eternal happenings in the pageant of life, at this place, was, by art, adding to the stature of human beings. Without going further back in history, for this trait can also be found in the Bhagavad-Gita, here was the dawn of chivalry and something more. It was the beginning of the idea that ultimately truth would not be physically fought for; on that line of reasoning truth would belong to all men who were physically strongest. Pity was no Greek virtue, but, in the relaxing of Achilles' hate for Hector, the magician of words, his world being in his imagination, brought me to beauty in another form. How cunningly too, has Homer staged this scene, with the unconsolable passion of Achilles for his dead friend Patroclus.

A significant phrase, when the welter house of history is surveyed, with its wars, massacres, endless feuds and divisions, is to be found in the two lines, 672-673:

Thus speaking he clasped the old man's right hand at the wrist, lest he should be anywise afraid at heart.

Here is matter in symbolism enough for a book; what words could not explain, was made clear in signs. The beginning was made, however small, in trust; with the clasping of human hands paradise could be brought to earth, but this is but a poet's dream. In the world of imagination dwell for ever the figures of Priam and Achilles, imperishable to me at least, as a form of beauty in the beginning of human qualities to be emulated, to be desired, to be willed by those who are not content with a cynic's or a saint's acceptance of the world.

When Cæsar was conquering Britain, Virgil was achieving victories in a more substantial direction. He was also, by imitation, paying a tribute to Homer in his Æneid. In a magnificent splinter from the original, Virgil takes up the theme of war with barbarism, and, in the first few lines plunges into his subject—the story of a man noted for his goodness forced by the queen of

heaven to pass through many trials, to undergo so many hardships. In book vi. 838-878, the quality of pity undergoes a slight re-valuation—"to impose the ways of peace, to spare the humbled, and to crush the proud." Æneas, the civilizer of men, through the genius of Virgil, adds in a measure to the stature of man, through the medium of making pity a virtue.

In the gallop of history, Schopenhauer brings this quality home—perhaps a debatable quality—when he says that anyone and everyone may be addressed in truth as "fellow-sufferer." There was in the character of Æneas, manly attributes, and in my quest, I found here, beauty in another form. His "piety" or to put it better, his "natural affection" was to me, another form wherein I recognized the beautiful, and it made me prefer to be in hell with Virgil rather than be in paradise with Dante.

Lowell has in a phrase given a clear picture of two poets: "With Dante the main question is the saving of the soul, with Chaucer it is the conduct of life." In the "Knight's Tale," once again, I found the subject of pity:—

"For pitee renneth soone in gentil herte."

There was then, a softening of the animal man; the poets' art was humanizing him. The stringer of rhymes was intent on giving or adding a value to man that was only latent or non-existent.

Chaucer rather than Dante, was for me the poet who was nearest my heart. He keeps to the earth of Meredith, of Jefferies—to the world of fact, and even the world's beauty has not yet been completely explored. Blake's creed was eternal forgiveness—a creed that requires no ritual, no ceremony and no authority; Chaucer, in his works, through his treatment of the weaknesses, the foibles, and the petty vices of his characters, put into practice Blake's very simple ideas. Beauty at this point has taken on a different aspect; it has moved from the external and physical world, to beauty in character and conduct, but it is not so clearly discernible as the beauty of colour and form. An effort has to be made to find it, in study, and contemplation. And this no doubt is the reason why the quest is abandoned for the easier pursuit of superficial pleasures.

In the humanity of Homer, Virgil and Chaucer, there was, for me, this very real side of the beautiful which I had pursued from the age of five. This quality is permanent and fixed and satisfying; it is not caught at first glance, and it is not cultivated or acquired in a day. The real struggle with a man is when he begins on himself, and it is possible that beauty without is helpful to the acquisition of beauty within.

There is to one who is not superficial a certain beauty in the cheerfulness of Horace, as there is beauty in the dignity and effort of Lucretius to tell man to get up from a kneeling position in the world. The mind has to be bent in the search, but the reward is worth it, and it is typical of the true beauty in the works of giants that it may be visited again and again for inspiration and consolation alike.

In poetry, the beautiful allures; it has changed its form, and in the music of sound with sense, the seeker may continue his quest enjoying the counsel and wisdom of those creative minds that have left their mark in imperishable words. The classic world of poetry is the world of caution, of austere art; there is ever-present acknowledgement of beauty in treatment, choice of subject, and elevation of thought. And when the mind is tired, when the new is not true, it may turn with relief to a Greek drama, to a Chorus of Æschylus, to a re-reading of the story of Nausicaa, to the moderate and temperate wisdom of Horace, for beauty gives compensation to those who demand not overmuch and realize the limitations of things that matter.

TRISTRAM.

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camp and courts
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals nor forts.

Longfellow.

Correspondence.

ALCOHOL VERSUS WATER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is not often that I wish to break a lance with Mr. F. J. Gould, whose sweet temper and sunny humour are such that a man must be an utter misanthrope not to go all the way with him in his Humanitarianism—but do, do let me quote a paragraph from the June 19 article on "The Unteetotal Way to Heaven."

"This unusual averment: the tectotal burglar, whose accuracy in safe-breaking, punctuality in arrival at spots before or after the passage of the police, and general alertness of deportment, are immensely aided by his total abstinence!"

That won't quite wash, Mr. Editor! Without being a total abstainer (as we all respect Mr. Gould for being!) even the mildest wine-bibber must concede that alcohol in all its forms leads to crime. When a man is in his cups he does things that he would never dream of perpetrating in his sober moments.

Therefore one deduces (2 plus 2 make 4) that the burglar who is a total abstainer is a figment of the imagination. In other words, a man must be in some way addicted to either drugs or alcohol—anything that will dull the finer sensibilities—before he will even contemplate an attack upon the private rights—in other words again, the property—of his neighbour.

Test this, and the truth will be found: the man whose blood is totally free from alcoholic blood-poisoning cannot be worked up to the mood of robbery. Hence the tectotal burglar is a creature as fantastic as the fabled Hippograph!

In this connexion I remember a long argument with Hornung—who was a personal friend—about the ethics of Raffles. The creator of that gentlemanly burglar-cum-sportsman-cum-gentleman of leisure assured me that he had derived his inspiration for these exploits from an affair with three Australian chums of his ("All the four of us as drunk as owls!"), who one night had actually committed the robbery of an outlying bank branch in Queensland—afterwards to restore their booty, and to explain that it was the result of a "mere mood of prankish dare-devilry!"

In cold clean blood Raffles would or could never have robbed—the two aspects of his character, sportsman and thief, are quite contrary to all the laws of psychology.

Let Mr. Gould admit this: and I return to my allegiance—return with all the fervour of the past score of years; for his books are more precious to me than fine gold.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

THE MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE.

SIR,—In his article on the Jubilee Dinner of this League, Mr. Cutner claims that it has been successful in its objects, and that it has reduced the birth rate of England. There are so many forces at work connected with the growth and decay of nations that a person with a single idea is apt to fall a victim to the ever-present *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy, and so mislead his hearers and his readers. I will, in the first place, quote his remarks, and then examine the validity of his general contention. He said: "I think most people were surprised, but after all, why should there be surprise? One has only to glance at a chart of the Birth and Death rates in England to see how, after the Trial, the Birth Rate in England has gone down from 36 per thousand to 18 per thousand, and thus to realize how thoroughly the work has been done."

The vital point of any enquiry is the relation which exists between the birth and death rates of a community. Apparently there is a constant difference of 10 to 12 per thousand. Which is the variable and which is the dependent variable need not now be ascertained. In England, at the present time, the difference between the two rates is 5 per thousand. According to Mr. Cutner this decrease in the difference is due to the activities of the Malthusian League. I do not suppose this league claims credit for the reduction of the death rate; and if so they cannot claim credit for a reduction of at least a

portion of the birth rate, provided, of course, the two rates are related as cause and effect.

Some few years ago there was a great war raging in Europe, and England lost in dead about 600,000 men, in addition—of the wounded—at least 200,000 men were rendered incapable of marriage by an early death or physical disability. We may therefore safely assume that 800,000 men who would otherwise have become parents were unable to produce 200,000 children yearly. This failure amounts to a decrease of 5½ per thousand, and fully explains the closer approach of the birth and death curves. Owing to the war it is probable that the two curves will cut each other in about twenty years, and then in another twenty years the difference between the two rates will be about 18 to 20.

I have in the foregoing remarks confined myself solely to the crude birth and death rates. The fertility rates show a decrease, but these rates in all countries are dependent upon the death rates, and mankind in the mass needs no teaching from the Malthusian League. If Malthus had never been born the effect would have been the same. After being a reader of the *National Reformer* and the *Freethinker* for over a period of forty years, I have never been convinced that Malthusianism is of any value to the community.

WILLIAM CLARK.

FREETHINKERS AND FREETHINKING.

SIR,—I often think that many people who call themselves Freethinkers are not really so, but are only unbelievers in the Christian religion, as in other respects, particularly where the science of medicine is concerned, they are orthodox in the extreme. Your correspondent, Mr. Vincent J. Hands, however, has learnt from bitter experience, that the medical fraternity (as a profession) is as little to be trusted as the preaching fraternity, and their pretensions just as hollow. I don't like offering advice gratuitously, as I know sick persons are often bored by well-meaning people recommending their own particular nostrum; if, however, Mr. Hands will forgive my presumption, I would recommend him to try the Freethinkers in the profession of healing, I mean the nature cure people, food reformers, vegetarians, cranks, call them by any name you will. If he consulted Reddie Mallet, author of the excellent *Natures Way* series, or Edgar Saxon of the *Healthy Life*, London, he might find that life was still worth living. I write as one who was cured in three months of a serious breakdown some years ago by the late Dr. Allinson, so am not speaking without my book.

THOMAS C. RIGLIN.

HOLISM AND EVOLUTION.

SIR,—Mr. Mann's article with the above title in your issue of June 12, interested me immensely, as indeed all his articles do. His explanation of General Smuts' discovery is so clear, that one feels completely satisfied without referring to the book in which it is set forth. The General's discovery is that the fundamental principle of Nature is to work up the raw material of energy into wholes endowing them with specific structure and character and individuality, and finally with personality, and creating beauty and truth and value from them. But if Nature's hobby is to make wholes, it seems evident that her hobby is also to break them up again, and thus "breakism" is as much her hobby as holism. Many years ago, at one of Mr. Foote's lectures in Liverpool, a very old gentleman, at the conclusion of the lecture, expounded his view in a very humorous way on the subject of God's favourite hobby, which, he said, was to make round things. All the suns and planets in stellar space—countless billions of them—he truly remarked are round. "Roundism" or "Breakism" would therefore be equally as relevant to describe Nature's favourite pastime as holism. In fact, Nature does so many things that General Smuts' selection of the word he coins as "holism" affords a poor idea of all his various and manifold operations.

J. E. ROOSE.

T. Kafue, N. Rhodesia.

Obituary.

MR. JOSHUA VANDERHOUT.

THE remains of a valiant soldier of Freethought, Mr. Joshua Vanderhout, aged 53 years, were cremated on Saturday last, at the City of London Crematorium, Ilford.

Born of Dutch parents and brought up in the Jewish faith, until, as a young man he became acquainted with Freethought, and rapidly developed into a faithful advocate. Very keen on spreading the teachings of Freethought, he carried the fight right into the enemy's camp, indeed, it was whilst doing so, in Finsbury Park about a fortnight ago, that he caught a chill, which, coupled with the fact that for some time he had been a sufferer from bronchitis, rapidly took a fatal turn, pneumonia being the cause of death.

He was also an active worker in the Socialist movement, and became a member of the local Board of Guardians.

The Causes he served have lost a loyal and ardent worker and comrade, and to the surviving members of the family we, of the Freethought movement, offer sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

In accordance with his wish for Cremation and a Secular service, both were carried out, the latter by the undersigned.

R. H. ROSSETTI.

W. HANMER OWEN.

By the passing of W. Hanmer Owen, the ranks of the "Old Guard" have suffered a further depletion, and so year by year death thins out the sturdy band of pioneers who stood with Bradlaugh in his great fight against overwhelming odds in the "eighties." W Hanmer Owen, in those days, was very active in the political arena, being well known up and down the country, and was brought into contact with the great Freethought advocate, for whom he cherished right up to the day of his death, an intense admiration. All of us who were privileged to know the late Mr. Owen, recognized in him a man of exceptional ability, a scholar of wide reading, able to bring a well stored mind to bear on every conceivable subject of importance to mankind, one whose opinions commanded the respect of friend and foe alike. He was always ready to help others "without money and without price," and many there are who owe much to him for his wise counsel and ever-willing help, they are the poorer for his loss. For some time Mr. Hanmer Owen filled the office of President of the South London Branch of the N.S.S., and was a tremendous asset to the branch, and he did not relinquish office till failing health compelled him, but he never lost his interest in the movement, and right up to the last would "break a lance" with those who differed from him. His character was as noble as his intellect, assuredly he was one who "saw life steadily and saw it whole," and he was incapable of truckling to opinions he did not share, or resorting to base methods to secure any advantage for himself. He faced death with the same serenity which exalted him in life, and in my last conversation with him, only a week or two before his death, when he had just recovered from a particularly bad attack, told me that the principles which sustained him in life were sufficient to sustain him to the end, which he knew was not far off. His amazing vitality of mind lasted till the end. Assuredly the lines of Walter Savage Landor fit in with him:—

"I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

Mr. Hanmer Owen was buried at Streatham Park Cemetery, on Friday last, a Secular service being conducted by the present writer. Among the mourners were the widow, Mrs. Hanmer Owen, who had nursed him devotedly all through his long illness, Messrs. Geo. Wood, Singer, Hale, Dunkinson, Mrs. Wray (sister), Mr. Taylor (cousin), and Capt. McCabe. Many beautiful floral tributes were sent.

RALF BROWN.

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.

OUTDOOR.

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

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common, 11.30; Brockwell Park, 6.0): Mr. Leonard Ebury. Wednesday, August 31, at 8 p.m. (Clapham Common): Mr. F. P. Corrigan; (Peckham, Rye Lane): Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday, September 1 (Clapham): Mr. S. Hanson.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY—Ramble, King's Langley and Chenies. Conducted by Mr. B. O. Warwick. Tea at Two Brewers Inn, Chipperfield Common. Take 10.25 a.m. train Euston to King's Langley. Cheap ticket, 2s. 5d.

WEST HAM BRANCH—Outing to Grange Hill. Train, 9.30 from Forest Gate, change at Ilford. Cheap fare, 8d. return. Lunch to be carried, tea will be arranged. Those making own arrangements to Ilford, catch 10.5 train from Ilford, cheap fare, 6d. return. All Freethinkers and friends invited.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Jackson. At 6.0, Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine. (Ravenscourt Park): 3.0, Mr. F. Carter, A Lecture. Freethought Lectures in Hyde Park, every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30. Various Lecturers. A debate between Mr. C. Herbert and the Rev. Mr. Reed on September 2, in Hyde Park, at 7.30, will take place. Subject: "Is Materialism Rational."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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

OUTDOOR.

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

MANCHESTER BRANCH, Open-Air Meetings will be addressed by Mr. George Whitehead as follows:—Saturday, August 27, at 7 p.m., Alexander Park Gates, Manchester. Sunday, August 28, at 3 p.m., Stevenson Square, Manchester. Monday, August 29, at 7.30 p.m., Norman Road, opposite Platt Fields, Manchester. Tuesday, August 30, at 7.30 p.m., Leaf Street, Stretford Road, Manchester. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, August 31, and September 1 and 2, Meetings at 7.30 p.m., at the junction of Langworthy Road, and Liverpool Street, Pendleton, Salford.

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THE "FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT TRUST.

A Great Scheme for a Great Purpose.

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

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

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

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

All sums received are acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

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that Rationalism and Freethought advance ethical standards, impart a higher sense of honour, and cause greater veneration of righteousness? We think such aspiration the very heart of Freethought and Rationalism, and we act upon that belief. We trust Freethinkers and Rationalists as we would trust no others, and in ninety-nine cases in a hundred our faith is justified. Your experience, we are sure, is not dissimilar. Why, then, not trust us? There are so many, many reasons for supporting advertisers in this journal that we can think of none for not doing so save lack of confidence. For years we have told you that science makes it possible for us to do perfect tailoring by post. We have the same ideals as you have. You would not make unfounded claims; why should we? If you are a true believer in the influences of Rationalism and Freethought, you will write at once for any of the following:—

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