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Views and Opinions

Dean Inge and Superstition.

It is not quite clear why Dean Inge has incurred the epithet of the “Gloomy Dean.” It is true he has pointed out that all is not well with Christianity, but that is obvious to all save to those preachers who believe that, by shouting about a coming revival of interest in religion, the people may one day be brought back to the fold. It is true, also, that he has cast doubts upon the value of much that many believe to be reforms, and also upon Democracy. This last feature has roused the ire, and exposed the shortcomings of Miss Rebecca West, who appears to confound doubts about the value of Democracy with a championship of all that is bad, and a discounting of all that is good. It never appears to strike this lady novelist (it is one of the curious features of recent times that anybody and everybody, on the strength of having written a popular novel or two, feels qualified to pose as an authority upon all sorts of scientific and sociological topics) that Democracy, equally with Aristocracy, or Communism, or Socialism, or Constitutionalism, etc., are so many theories of Society, and have to be discussed from that point of view, and not from that of shouting out “Blasphemy” the moment anyone questions our particular social shibboleth. Substituting the sanctity of a social theory, or a particular form of government for the name of Jesus, is a different formula from that used by a Salvation Army preacher, but it does not indicate a different mentality. So I really do not see how Dean Inge deserves the title of “gloomy.” He, at all events, believes he can reconcile religion and science. He believes also that he can re-establish faith in Jesus Christ, and in the face of that he is entitled to be called the “Hopeful Dean.” Above all, he is unquestionably one of the very few men of ability the Christian Church retains. How much he really believes is another question. No one appears to be quite certain about this. Probably he is not quite certain himself.

Religion as Survival.

Dean Inge delivered, the other day, the Norman Lockyer lecture, a lectureship founded in honour of the well known astronomer. His subject was Science and Man, and there were many things said with reference to the effects of a one-sided application of science to life, which one is bound to read with attention and with considerable sympathy. To say that man runs a danger of being mastered by the machine is a reflection that is not original, but it is pertinent. It is part of the fact that our development on the side of mechanical improvement and invention has been disproportionate to our social and ethical growth. And one consequence of this is the worship of wealth, greater, perhaps, with Christian nations than with others, and the yoking of high scientific achievements to comparatively low ethical and social ideals. The other aspect of the lecture was concerned with the need for diminishing superstition in our midst, and for religion to get rid of “pre-scientific survivals.” With both of these aims Dean Inge has my cordial sympathy and support, only it is not the kind of thing one expects from a Dean of the Church of England, that is, if he means all he says.

It is, for example, quite good to work to clear from religion its pre-scientific survivals, but if one does that, what of religion will there be left? It is all very well to call the doctrine of Transubstantiation a pre-scientific survival, or the belief in a localizable heaven and hell, and the “unethical magic” involved in the belief in supernaturalism. But how much better are the beliefs than Dean Inge, presumably, retains, than those he rejects? Are not these also pre-scientific survivals? The belief in a God is quite clearly a pre-scientific product. It is born in the infancy of the race, and all that takes place at a later stage is a toning down of the original belief in such a way that it does not grossly offend contemporary knowledge and taste. How are we going to get rid of the one without the other? If we dismiss one definite idea of God after another, must not the time come when people will ask whether any idea of God is tolerable or possible? Many are, in fact, asking that question now, and the answer is not one which the Dean would relish. If people are told that heaven and hell are not localizable places they are certainly likely to ask whether any such things exist. And when they get to that point they are likely to throw the whole thing overboard as so many “pre-scientific” survivals. Dean Inge looks like emptying the baby out with the bath-water.

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Science and Superstition.

I have dwelt so many times, and at so great length on the danger to civilization of the vast mass of super-

stition that exists, that I am naturally pleased to find Dean Inge following the lead of the *Freethinker* in this matter. He says:—

Science has many enemies. The vagaries of the Fundamentalists in the United States showed that the Mosaic cosmogony has still its defenders. Miraculous cures, necromancy, and other forms of supernaturalism have now more adherents than in the last century. These things are very disquieting, and ought to remind us that progress, not based in an intrinsic advance in human intelligence, is very precarious. . . . I hope that the scientific conscience will win a great victory by driving into Limbo that mass of half-beliefs we call superstitions. It is a big thing, for superstition is as old as man himself, and will not be cast out without strenuous resistance. A scientific education is really able to root out such atavistic fancies as the unluckiness of thirteen, of marriages in May, and of the efficacy of touching wood, which link the civilized European to the men of the slave age.

True enough, in the main, but one would dearly like to know how one is to distinguish between the superstitions which Dean Inge denounces and those he retains. He speaks scornfully of those who believe in a supernaturalistic order influencing the natural one; but if we have only one order, no matter by what term we characterize it, are we not at once reduced to rigid determinism which leaves no room for the operation of any God, whether of a Dean Inge or of a more concrete variety? I agree with Dean Inge that science will have nothing to do with supernaturalism in any shape or form, I agree also that it is on this theory that the belief in miraculous intervention rests, but I also agree with a *Church Times* writer, that if you do not accept the theory of two orders, there is precious little ground for belief in Providence and personal religion. I am not greatly puzzled by what Dean Inge rejects. My puzzlement begins with what he accepts.

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#### Precept and Practice.

Dean Inge talks much of "religion" and of "superstition." How does he distinguish between the two? Over two centuries ago Hobbes gave a definition of the two that has never been bettered. He was writing at a time when the Christian Church took care that unrecognized superstitions should be suppressed so far as it was possible to do so. So he quite properly defined religion as superstition established, and superstition as religion not established. That definition has never been bettered, and it seems to fit Dean Inge with but a slight modification of the terms. Religion is the superstition he agrees with, superstition is the religion he does not agree with. He looks on the religious belief in a God who "is like what many religious believers believe him to be," as a superstition, but the superstition of some "personal God" who is unlike anything we can conceive he accepts as a quite sound religion. Whether a man who can so state his belief in a God has any right to talk of the "half beliefs" of other people as superstition is a question one may well ask. It is good to be told that there ought to be "a more exacting standard of accuracy in forming and expressing opinions," but it would surely be better for the exhorter to set his hearers an example in this direction.

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#### Are We More Superstitious?

I do not agree that there is more superstition now than in the last century. In some directions it is

more aggressive than it was, but there is not more of it. A century ago the Established Church was much stronger than it is to-day. A century before that it was stronger still, and a century before that no other than an Established Church was scarce permitted to exist. But this does not mean that there was less superstition as we go back. What it means is that superstition was more strongly entrenched, better organized, better able to suppress sporadic forms of it whenever they made their appearance in any strength. It was an illustration of the truth of Hobbes's definition. And while the Church had strength enough to see that its own form of superstition held the field, it was able to take care that other forms, if they existed at all, should exist in but a modest guise. To-day things are different. Within the Church itself men of first-rate intelligence are hardly found. And one clear consequence of this is that the lower type of intellect has it pretty much its own way. Outside the churches there no longer exists the power to suppress those forms of religion that are not established. Christian Science becomes respectable (mainly because there is a deal of money associated with it); Theosophy flourishes (another sure sign of disorderly superstition or religion) and finds its fashionable advocates; unofficial faith healers do an open trade, where they would formerly have either worked in secret, or pursued their craft within the church, and could have been counted as true believers. There is opportunity for any new sect to sprout quite freely, not because there is a greater volume of superstition, but because it is not open to such centralized control. The open pursuit and avowal of these things that Dean Inge denounces are to the scientific sociologist only one more piece of evidence that the best intelligence of the country is forsaking religion.

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#### An Obvious Danger.

There should be no reasonable dispute among educated men and women that progress that does not rest on an intrinsic advance in human intelligence is very precarious in its nature. Again I have to thank Dean Inge for so repeating the teaching of the *Freethinker*. Whatever form of government exists—short of a government designed by knaves for the control of fools—its security must depend upon an informed and critical and reason-loving public. But if we believe this it should be well to recognize that so long as we bring up the rising generation to a belief in Providence, in the efficacy of prayer, in the belief that nature was created, designed, and is governed by some extrahuman intelligent personality, we have no reasonable grounds for being surprised that superstitions flourish. A nation that maintains a national church with an army of priests; which cannot launch a battleship unless it calls upon some medicine man to bless it; with one of the same variety to pray over its deliberation in parliament; which brings religion on the board at every possible opportunity; has surely little justification to complain that people are superstitions. We are reaping what we sow. We admit that it marks a danger to civilization, we have been stating so all our life. It is to drive home the lesson that the *Freethinker* exists. The peculiar thing is that a Dean of the English Church should agree with us and still remain in the church.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

How few think justly of the thinking few!  
How many never think who think they do!

Jane Taylor.

## Seeing Shelley Plain.

"And did you once see Shelley plain?"

Robert Browning.

"We make and pass. We are all things that make and pass, striving on a hidden mission out to the open sea."—H. G. Wells, "Tono Bungay."

Few people, even among those interested in literature, have ever heard of Charles MacFarlane, a forgotten author, who died a Poor Brother of the Charterhouse in the "fifties" of the last century. He wrote a large number of mediocre books during a lengthy literary career, and he met a number of really famous people. His reminiscences remained in manuscript form until about ten years ago, when they were published by the house of Murray, and so interesting were these recollections that one may be pardoned for rescuing them from the limbo of half-forgotten things. For MacFarlane, who was a hard-shell little Tory, recorded his recollections with freshness and charm, and it is inconceivable that this posthumous book should share the unkind fate of all his other writings.

Some really notable personalities figure in MacFarlane's pages. For one thing, he met Percy Shelley whilst in Italy, and he declared that the poet was maturing intellectually during the last three years of his life. Indeed, this is proved by the publication of *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*, the latter being the finest tragedy in the English language since Shakespeare died. At Naples, MacFarlane met another great poet, and he records, with gusto, how John Keats flung down some winter roses with the remark: "Humbugs! They have no scent. What is a rose without fragrance?" Thomas Moore seems to have made an unusually good impression, and MacFarlane denies that he was a toady. Thomas Campbell does not emerge so well, for he was attended by a number of Polish refugees; and MacFarlane remarks caustically: "I wonder he never catches the itch from some of his frowsy associates." There is acid, too, in the anecdote of Thomas De Quincey drinking laudanum, and John Wilson's rebuke: "Hang you! Can't you take your whisky like any other Christian, and leave your damned slops to Turks, Persians, and Chinamen?"

There is an entire chapter on Hartley Coleridge, whom MacFarlane thought very highly of. He quotes old Samuel Taylor Coleridge as saying that his son Derwent had his genius, but that his genius had Hartley. An amusing account is given of a famous dinner-out, Tom Gent, who wrote verse in a minor key, and used to print on his title pages, "Thomas Gent, Gent." There are many other anecdotes of famous people in this lively book, and it is highly interesting to recall that the volume was discovered in manuscript in a bookseller's catalogue, the bookseller having brought it among a number of old ledgers and other literary lumber.

MacFarlane got no profit from his excellent book of reminiscences, and even masterpieces do not often bring financial rewards to their authors or their publishers. The remainders of the first edition of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* were sold for a few pence each, and a copy I saw bore the stamp of an Asylum for Idiots, to whose intellects it was doubtless reckoned suitable by the medical superintendent. Keats's works sold very slowly during his lifetime, and Shelley's masterpieces were so unpopular that it lent colour to Theodore Hook's unkind jest that the *Prometheus Unbound* was likely to remain unbound. In his earlier years Alfred Tennyson made little money by his writings, and James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* would never have emerged from the

pages of the *National Reformer*, except for the disinterested kindness of his friend, Bertram Dobell. Robert Browning had to wait for years before his magnificent poems paid their expenses; and Landor was actually out of pocket through his literary ventures.

The facts of Byron's sales are more cheering to those who expect, as Charles Lamb says, "to suck their sustenance, as sick people do, through a quill." Milton, be it remembered, sold his great epic poem, "Paradise Lost," for less than a farthing a line, which compares very unfavourably with the price paid for Ella Wheeler Wilcox's efforts at rhyme. Poor Chatterton poisoned himself rather than starve to death. Sam Johnson devoured his dinners like a famished wolf behind the screen in Cave's parlour, because he was not sufficiently presentable at a tradesman's table. Savage roamed about the streets of London all night for want of a shilling to pay for a lodging, and Francis Thompson sold bootlaces on the kerb-side. Both Henley and John Davidson were broken-hearted by ill-success. To judge of the profits of authorship, we need to see a list of the blanks as well as of the prizes in the literary lottery. The well-known names in the Civil List Pensions are a painful reminder that many authors of repute have contributed to the pleasure of a saucy world and been rewarded with less than the wages of dustmen.

MIMNERMUS.

## Modern Science and Materialism.

(Continued from page 757.)

THE modern scientific conception of Matter and Energy is the very conception that Buchner and Haeckel founded their Atheistic system of Materialism upon. Namely, that Matter and Force (scientists now speak of energy in place of force) are one and indivisible. Or, what Prof. Bertrand Russell, adopting a suggestion of Dr. Sheffer, describes as "neutral stuff."<sup>6</sup>

Sir Oliver Lodge, who will not be suspected of any bias against religion, tells us that: "The aim of physics at the present time is to explain all material phenomena in terms of Ether and Motion. Energy and Matter are now beginning to be considered interchangeable. Strictly speaking, Matter is not conserved, nor is Energy. What is conserved is the sum of the two. Matter is turning out to be one of the forms of energy—a newly discovered form, discovered largely through the genius of Einstein." In a footnote to the above quotation, Sir Oliver makes the honourable admission: "Haeckel of Jena said something like this, years ago, in advance of demonstration. At that time I disagreed with him, and said so; but recent progress has justified his speculation. The assertions of men of genius are often of value: their denials, seldom or never."

So that, instead of the new discoveries, as to the constitution of Matter refuting the Materialist (as the preachers assert), they furnish additional proof of the materialistic hypothesis, and a further refutation of the spiritualistic. As for the statement of Sir Oliver, that the assertions of great men are of more value than their denials, it is beside the point. Every assertion made, involves a denial of its opposite. If you declare that the earth travels round the sun, the assertion involves the denial that the sun travels round the earth.

The recognition, now confirmed, that energy and matter were not two distinct entities, but indissolubly

<sup>6</sup> Bertrand Russell: *The Analysis of Matter*. Page 10.

<sup>7</sup> Sir Oliver Lodge. *The Making of Man* (1924). Page 24.

united, and indestructible, was the foundation upon which modern materialism was founded. Buchner begins the first chapter of his *Force and Matter* with a string of quotations from leading scientists; showing that Force and Matter were, in reality, one and indivisible. Of which we select a sample. It must be borne in mind that where the scientist of the middle of the nineteenth century used the word Force, the scientists of to-day use the word Energy:—

"Force is no impelling god, no entity separate from the material substratum; it is inseparable from matter, is one of its eternal indwelling properties." (*Moleschott.*)

"Matter is not a go-cart, to and from which force, like a horse, can be now harnessed, now loosed." (*Dubois-Reymond.*)

"As we can think of no force without a material substratum, so we know of no matter which is not connected with a number of forces." (*F. Mohr.*)

"We know of no matter which does not possess force, and on the other hand we know of no forces which are not joined to matter." (*Haeckel.*)

"Matter and force are separable only in thought; in reality they are one." (*A. Mayer.*)

"The first and last word of Science will always be the indivisible union between or the identity of force and matter." (*A. Lefèvre.*)

After citing these, and several other writers, Buchner proceeds:—

With these quotations from well-known investigators, learned men and authors, we commence a chapter that is to serve as a foundation for the subsequent investigations into one of the simplest and weightiest of truths, which is, perhaps, for that very reason, one of the least known and least recognized. No force without matter—no matter without force. One is no more possible, and no more imaginable by itself than the other.<sup>8</sup>

One would have thought that as this was the foundation stone of Materialism, its opponents would have paid some attention to it. Not a bit of it. The opponents of Materialism have always represented the materialist as believing in "dead matter" on the one hand, and "force" on the other. Force moving in and out of matter like devils in and out of the possessed. Even Prof. Huxley attributed this view to Buchner, as we have shown elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> The materialist's definition of matter has always been side-stepped. It has never been answered, it has been ignored, and his opponents have made him to speak in the way that suits themselves. It is easy to answer an opponent when you can state his case for him.

Now that the fundamental construction of the atom has been discovered, it corroborates in every particular what the materialist claimed for it. As for the claim that the disintegration of the atom disposed of Materialism, Buchner himself pointed out that: "It has also become very probable through recent investigations . . . that the so-called atoms therefore consist of units of a higher grade, as the molecule does of atoms."<sup>10</sup> He anticipated what we now know to be true.

Then, again, Buchner's contention that there was no such thing as dead inactive matter, is confirmed in every respect by the latest researches. Prof. J. Arthur Thomson, in a work dealing with Science and Religion, in which he appears as an advocate for religion, declares:—

<sup>8</sup> Buchner: *Force and Matter* (1884). Page 3. This was the fourth English edition; translated from the enlarged and revised fifteenth German edition.

<sup>9</sup> W. Mann: *Modern Materialism*. Page 77.

<sup>10</sup> *Force and Matter*. Page 49.

The idea of inert matter must be entirely given up; there is a bustle in the very dust. It is plain that matter has become very tenuous or delicate; and yet there is a remarkable modern justification of the old concept of the "hard" atom.

The general result of the modern inquiry into the constitution of matter is to make the material screen more tenuous than it seemed to our forefathers, and some have drawn the conclusion that this has made the spiritual order or the spiritual aspect of reality more accessible. It is probable, however, that this idea is a confusion of thought. The spiritual is spiritually discerned.<sup>11</sup>

Some sanguine religionists have not only seen in the reduction of matter to electricity an affinity to spiritually, but have gone further and have even discerned God himself as a form of energy. Prof. Thomson observes: "Thus a distinguished man of science has been known to declare that God was to him the sum total of the energies of the universe." Upon which he observes: "We hope not to be thought of as doubting that God is the constitutive principle of the universe, 'the source and home of the whole order of the world,' but we see no particular value in the idea of a God who is the sum-total of the energies of the world." (Page 67.)

But among these "distinguished men of science," who still cling to the antique idea of a God, there are not two of them who think alike upon the subject, or define God in the same way; and each one rejects the conception formed of this mythological being by the others.

It has always been a surprise to us that the Free-thought Party, in this country, have never published a cheap edition of Buchner's *Force and Matter*. It is the clearest, best, and most convincing vindication of Atheism ever written; and is a model of what a polemical work ought to be. It anticipated the progress of science to such an extent that it requires very little addition to bring it up to date, and of how many scientific works, published seventy years ago, can that be said? Very few indeed.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

## "Scotland and the Future."

MR. C. M. GRIEVE, the protagonist of Scottish Nationalism, and one of the new school of Scottish poets, has written a volume in the "To-day and Tomorrow" series, in which he contends that the re-birth of Scottish culture will probably come about through the influx of Irish Roman Catholics into Scotland, and the efflux of Scotsmen out of it. That is a phenomenon which is troubling the Scottish Protestant Church just now, but Mr. Grieve suggests that they will eventually be absorbed into the Roman Church, mainly through their apathy rather than their convictions. Presumably, when that comes about, the mental atmosphere will be such as culture will thrive in, and Scotland will emerge from the tutelage of England and blossom on her own ground. That is what I gather from a rather inconsequent book, and the argument involves the author in a series of statements which explain, to some extent, the harsh way many of his reviewers treat him.

The palmy days of Scottish culture, he says, were round about the last half of the fifteenth century, when "the great Catholic poets," like Dunbar, were augmenting the cultural tradition of the old "makaris," which was to be betrayed, eventually,

<sup>11</sup> J. A. Thomson: *Science and Religion* (1925). Pages 53-54.

by Robert Burns some three hundred years later. Mr. Grieve has a good many of the faults of the ardent nationalist. He speaks of Dunbar having a certain unique intensity of feeling, "the power of expressing that passionate and peculiar force which distinguishes us people of the North from our Southern neighbours." When a writer talks of his clan having a characteristic which lifts it above the ruck of men, he has begun to miss the problem altogether. And when that clan is, to all intents and purposes, of the same household as the people he is, by implication, deprecating, it looks as if he had never glimpsed the thing he sets out to solve. He does not admit that, of course. The tongue of the Scots, he contends, is not a dialect of English; it is a sister language "with different but not inferior potentialities." But there is weighty evidence against that. Heslop, the editor of *Northumbrian Words*, says that the Lowland Scots and the Northumbrian dialects are identical, and Sir James Murray, as well as Professor Skeat, has pointed out that in the fourteenth century, "the whole eastern country, from the Humber to the Aberdeenshire Dee, spoke one uniform vernacular called 'Englesch,' as distinguished from 'Scottis,' which was the Gaelic of the Highlanders and the Galloway Picts." That tongue, in its purest form, is spoken in Lowland Scotland to-day. The assumption that the Tweed separates two types of men is not justified; the men on either side have clashed often enough, and viciously enough, but it was the strife of blood relations. Their cultures, which was microscopic, marched side by side, just as Mr. Grieve wished them to do when, on the cover of his excellent *Northern Review*, he printed a map which extended from the Humber to the North of Scotland, as the territory he was seeking to influence.

To anyone looking to a medieval religious atmosphere for the growth of culture, the work of Burns would naturally be anathema, but Mr. Grieve condemns it on another count. The poet's influence, he says, "reduced the whole field of Scots letters to a 'kailyard.'" That, apparently, because since his time Scottish poets have failed in comparison with those of other countries. But Burns was surely up against one of the things Mr. Grieve pillories as a cause of Scottish deterioration, the Reformation effect. It is true that the church of Burns' time was losing some of its power for mischief, but that power was lessened by Burns' attack. And he was respectful enough of poetical tradition. He did not rely on the Ayrshire dialect altogether for his effect; that is, outside his excursions into English. And as against the Union, one of the three things which Mr. Grieve holds responsible for Scotland's decay, Burns sang national feeling in unmistakable fashion. But "his influence was wholly bad," and one wonders if his freethinking views are not at the bottom of Mr. Grieve's condemnation.

The Union of 1707 is often held up to scorn as having obliterated the Scotsman as such. On the contrary, it really gave him a chance to live. Since the days of Bruce, who was no Scot, but a foreign adventurer, Scotland had been the prey of contending "patriots," who, under the cloak of nationalism, sought their own interests first and last. Bannockburn ushered in a period of decay for both Scots and English. The thirteenth century was a time of comparative peace. Cosmos Innes says that Scotland was more prosperous then than in any other time before 1707, which is a different thing to saying she was cultured, although prosperity is a good and necessary basis for it. But all that was held up and greatly destroyed in the bloodshed involved in the struggle for in-

dependence. That arrested the development of both the intellectual and physical well-being of Scotsmen for three hundred years, and on both sides of the Borders the stagnation set up lasted another century.

Culture was impossible while militarism was in the saddle. And if we go back to Dunbar's time, when a king, trained in England, was making an effort to bring some measure of peace to the country, the conditions for the growth of culture was barely existent. There was a Catholic atmosphere—Dunbar himself was in holy orders—but Catholicism is not primarily concerned with the promotion of culture; it is a preparation for a future state, where the totally deficient in culture may conceivably take a front place. Indeed, more often than not, culture is a deterrent to the Catholic aim. What culture there was at that period, in architecture and literature, came from Anglo-Norman sources for the most part, and was lacking in the breadth and beauty of the peoples further south.

Culture is the outcome of a free intelligence. To be cribbed and cabined is its death-blow, and the dearth of culture in predominantly Catholic countries supports the contention. The Catholic atmosphere in the Middle Ages was like unto the atmosphere set up by rampant industrialism at the present time; an environment under which no really vital culture could persist. A great poet may be thrown up in any conceivable circumstances, but he is conditioned by his surrounding, nevertheless, and his being is no warrant for harking back to his time for inspiration. Mr. Grieve is inclined to take credit to Scotland for the work of Major Douglas, of social credit fame. It may be, then, that from North Britain will come the urge destined to create a social system, which will free the individual from the sordid responsibility of forever grubbing for his daily bread, and give the finer side of his nature a chance to bloom. When that comes about, Scotland will have achieved the distinction of having created her own conditions of culture, free from any contaminating influence of either medieval or modern superstition.

H. B. DODDS.

### American Notes.

#### AMBITIOUS PARSONS.

In the United States Army there are 125 chaplains drawn from various orthodox denominations. The Chief Chaplain bears the rank (and draws the pay) of a Colonel. His fellow-chaplains want to "rise again" like the curate in the limerick:—

"Who lived almost wholly on yeast."

They make the brilliantly original suggestion that they should *all* be Colonels: an army with no privates! The Chief Chaplain (who hails from Salt Lake City, but is a Congregationalist) would like to rank as a Major-General, with ditto emoluments.

You will notice, as usual, that these black-coated gentry are not asking for "a call to larger service." They merely ask the taxpayer to give them more money.

It is exceedingly difficult for a soldier to rise from the ranks to a colonelcy (a Colonel commands 12,000 soldiers) but these commonplace clergymen, often very ignorant graduates of very inferior colleges, expect to "pull" sufficient strength in the lobbies at Washington, to get all they ask for.

#### NEWSPAPERS AND THE CHURCHES.

In the United States the churches obtain a far larger amount of "space" than in England. Religion is still "news" here. As it happens, this fact actually gives Freethought a greater publicity than it receives in England. It is, of course, in most cases opposition and even abuse that Secularism obtains, but I think even this is

far better than the silent boycotting we are familiar with at home. The *Literary Digest* recently had a well-produced photograph of the President of the 4 A's (the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism) and a full page description of the society—with unfavourable comments of course. You will look in vain for any such free advertising in England of the N.S.S., in a high-class journal like the *Literary Digest*.

#### THE PERILS OF COLLABORATION.

A short time ago I quoted some sane remarks about religion from Judge Ben Lindsey. The words I quoted appeared in articles bearing his signature, and they agreed with views I have heard the genial judge utter in public speeches. It is with great regret that I read the following expressions in *The Revolt of Modern Youth*.

An Atheist, clinging to the sharp-edged and terrible truth, as he sees it, is still bleakly worshipping his God, whether he knows and admits it or not. No man can escape God, not even in what he may stupidly believe to be a Godless universe. He cannot even blaspheme, save in the name of a God, whose existence he affirms in his very act of denying it; and the fool who says in his heart there is no God is suffering from a suppressed conviction that God is . . . The revolt of youth bespeaks on the part of our race a native ability to find its soul and to live in harmony with God.

*The Revolt of Modern Youth* is said (on the title page) to be "by Judge Ben Lindsey and Wainwright Evans."

Is this another case of "Collaboration's Complete Contradiction?" Are we to say that all the good things (and there are many) in this book are by Lindsey, and that such banal inept blots as quoted above are all Mr. Evan's contributions?

Collaboration is a peculiar art. Many wise authors begin it, because it promises a division of labour, or double results. It looks easy if you start with two writers of similar powers, and with general principles in common. But books rarely confine themselves to agreed principles. Writing is not the same as life:—

Down to Gehenna, or up to the Throne  
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

is true of writing books, but it is absurdly untrue in the sense Kipling meant it.

Probably the Bible would have been a better book if Solomon had written all of it: anyhow, one could have pinned the author down to some consistent sense. All the theories of inspiration necessitate a human collaborator, and this is perhaps why the Good Book is not always Good: it is neither divine nor human on this very account. The Koran, and Joseph Smith's revelation are specimens of what *can* be done without collaboration, unless, of course, the Prophet in each case was really essential to the revelation. In that way it may be merely another instance of collaboration.

Ben Lindsey must renounce good Evans and all his funny little religiosities if he is to win our respect as a thinker. Lindsey is far too good a humanist to afford to have his work marred by misplaced impertinences attacking the sense and sincerity of Atheists.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

#### Autumn.

SOFT Autumn, Summer's afterglow,  
Brief sundown of the year,  
Fast-fading echo of a happy song,  
Linger a moment as you go;  
Incline your drowsy ear,  
Before you sink into your slumber long.

Your counterpart, the verdant Spring,  
Comes as the welcome morn  
After the blackness of dark Winter's night;  
But Spring, more fair, can never bring  
To weary hearts forlorn  
Such consolation as your waning light.  
Spring's morning calm in blazing day must cease,  
But Autumn's sunset ends in lasting peace.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

#### Along the Beach.

You may descend from the village of Equihen, immortalized by the painter, Charles Cazin, on the long stretch of golden sands that reach to Hardelet—a name that breathes enchantment and romance. You may, with the immensity of shore in front of you, speculate on the chances of the same two grains of sand rubbing shoulders again, after the sea has surged and clawed in its desire to eat the land. Also, you may ruminate on the village, where old boats are turned upside down into dwelling houses. If you have seen a tethered goat on a hill as you pass the lifeboat, you may have noticed the mild, quizzical gaze she gave you, as though looking for your rope, for you are as firmly fastened to yourself with the rope of hunger and sleep and a million other fine steel strands that press into your flesh.

The sense of space on the shore brings home your own littleness. The thunder of the sea, restless, and vindictive, and breathing threats against the land, sounds like some colossal drum accompaniment to a symphony, the meaning of which one cannot grasp. Here, in the yet discernible shape of an ancient paddle-steamer, now a wreck, perhaps a fiddle-string broke of one of the performers. Scudding along on the sand is a land-yacht. Its white sail is like one wing of a huge butterfly; one feels that its owner could have caviare for breakfast every morning all the year round, could order a stuffed dromedary's hump for dinner, and command a bull-fight in a china shop to amuse his wife. The breath of his lightest mood would be an order, and a thousand hands would fetch and carry if he should but sneeze.

From the dunes in the distance a procession of black dots move towards the village. As they come nearer they look like walking black crosses. Looking at a closer range you will find that they are human beings carrying wood. And when you are quite near to them they are bent-backed women, boys and girls. The foundations of their loads are baskets fastened on their backs with ropes. Sometimes they stretch their arms out along the lengthy pieces of wood for a rest or change of position, and this gives the fantastic appearance of a walking cross. Their clothes are a varied assortment of rags; their strong feet crunch in the sand. With their backs bent, they see you as you pass without looking at you. Squirrels of the sea-shore, they are collecting material for the gift of Prometheus for the winter.

The cry of the big sea birds comes faintly to the ears. They are paddling in the fringe of the waves for food; there is neither pity nor questioning of anything in their lives. There are no fat and no thin; there are none with more feathers than another of its own kind. From a contemplation of them the mind is as calm as a mill pond. If one should snatch food from another there would arise no thoughts of legal procedure. They are just—birds.

In the black figures slowly moving I can see the origin of the myth of heaven; in the land-yacht the inhabitant of that celestial place has apparently become tired and weary of all the earth has to give. There might be joy for one of the bent-backed girls—almost a child, if she could ride in the yacht. The gay Lothario would find none in carrying wood from the forest to the fireside. On the uttermost margins of Paris the black-robed shepherds have done their work thoroughly; in the words of Strindberg, "if you mean to bring up a proletariat to demand nothing of life, tell them lies about heaven." And if inquisitive wanderers are told by the shepherds of souls that the natives who carry wood are happy—do not disturb them, appearances are against them.

If you penetrate the forest of Hardelet by one of the streams that sprawl out into the sea, you may see a kingfisher flash his jewelled plumage before he alights on the tangled root of a gorse bush that grows perilously on the edge of the sandy bank. He will, if you find delight in simple things and thereby grow rich, he will if you remain as quiet as the water at the bottom of the well of truth, preen his feathers leisurely, and give you a lesson in self-content. You may also pick a handful of a pretty flower called heartsease. You will need them, for the world was made round so that you could not square it with avoidable misery. WILLIAM REPTON.

## Acid Drops.

Christians are getting some rare shocks nowadays. The latest comes from the headmaster of a Manx Secondary school—he was, we understand, addressing a Methodist gathering, and is reported as saying:—

If I had my way, I would gather every Bible from the Sunday schools and make a huge bonfire of them. For of all the dull uninteresting books the Bible is the worst.

Fancy that, on top of all the standardized talk about the grandeur of the Bible, the sublimity of its language, etc. It is enough to make all past generations of Christians turn in their graves. And we venture to say that to ninety-nine out of every hundred boys and girls the Bible is really a deadly dull book. It has its attractiveness to the adult mind, and its fine store of folk-lore to all who can read it with understanding. But it is not read with understanding in either church or school.

Canon Sinker is alarmed at the vanishing of the old-fashioned Sunday—in other words, at any other place of business than his own being permitted to open on Sunday. He says there are 40,000 shops open now on Sunday, and he would like to close them all, on the ground that people had a right to the day's rest. Well, why not make a start with the churches and chapels? That would show there was no professional jealousy in the suggestion.

Miss St. John Montague, the mystery-monger, who specializes in supplying crude superstitions to servant-girls' weeklies, comes forward as a critic of Dean Inge and his condemnation of superstition. She told a *Daily Sketch* reporter:—

The spirit of Christianity should be tolerance. Things the Dean described as shameful should not be laughed at, even if we don't believe in them ourselves. For example, apart from the fact that it was derived from the incident of the Last Supper, the views of those who dislike to sit down thirteen to a table should be respected.

The Agnostic who would have the Christian superstition treated "reverently" will no doubt appreciate Miss Montague's logic. We don't know whether he extends his reverence to minor superstitions; for consistency's sake, however, he ought to do so.

A Methodist writer has a wonderful wheeze for filling the churches. Not all at once will it do this, but in the future. The wheeze seems to be that the minister and his workers should scrap most of the adult pious activities, and centre on the children. The Sunday schools should be made a hive of activity and centre of attraction for the children seven days a week. The bright genius who suggests this confesses that during two years' ministry he has failed to attract to his church more than half-a-dozen "outsiders," despite personal visits to every home, letters to parents, and special services. His notion appears to be, get the children accustomed to find their amusement in connexion with a church, then when they grow up they will automatically go to church. This is not particularly new; the churches have been trying it for some few years now, and it does not seem to work according to plan. Still, what a confession of failure of the Christian religion there is in it all. It admits that the all-conquering teaching of Jesus is unable to make any impression on adult intelligence, and so the only chance for the churches nowadays is to implant the teaching in the uncritical minds of children, in the hope that some of it will stick throughout adulthood.

Since smokers contribute to the national revenue more than do non-smokers, a writer suggests that members of the Society of Non-smokers might be asked to make a declaration of being non-smokers when filling in income-tax papers. They could then be given a super-tax form, which would enable revenue officials to tax non-smokers to the same extent as smokers. The suggestion is

capable of wider application. As churches and chapels are exempt from paying rates and taxes, non-church-goers must pay more than their proper share towards the Exchequer. A super-tax form for all parsons and church-goers would remove the injustice. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, at his wit's end for new sources of revenue, might do worse than give the suggestion some consideration.

We don't know whether it is that Christians are getting meaner, or whether they have acquired a commercial habit of paying for their Sunday amusement according to value received. Anyway, parsons keep on complaining about miserly response to clerical requests. Thus the Rev. G. E. Hickman Johnson, of Bishopsgate Wesleyan Mission, says rather plaintively:—

We need to deal honestly and candidly with our standards in the matter of giving money and service. How many Methodists are really giving a tenth of their incomes for the service of the Kingdom of God? Yet that was the Jewish standard; surely Christians ought not to accept a lower one! That tenth would settle all Methodist financial problems. I think we need more clear and forceful exposition of the essentially Christian doctrine of *stewardship*.

No doubt. The cant phrases hide the fear that has beset priests everywhere and at every age. "If the people can't be made to support us, what the devil will become of us?"

In his *Life Radiant*, Canon F. J. Horsfield, retells, after an American writer, an affecting little story which has the marks of Christian truth all over it. A Methodist scribe thinks it worth printing for the edification of Wesleyans. The scenario runs something like this: The father—wealthy Californian lawyer—professed Atheist. The daughter—only child—pride of father's life. Father extremely anxious to procure high social position for daughter. Daughter one day passes a church—mission in progress—singing attracts daughter. She enters—takes Christ for her Saviour—is greatly troubled about her father and his views. Meets father in the hall of their home—says, tremblingly: "Father, I have accepted Jesus as my Saviour." Father very angry—pushes daughter away—daughter must give up this mad notion or leave his house. Father arranges "surprise party" on last day. Daughter comes in to meet guests—is arrayed in a travelling suit. Sings—clear sweet voice—"Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee." Intense silence, broken by father's sobs. Father refuses to allow his daughter to go—"For he too had caught a glimpse of the glorified Saviour." An excellent little romance, this. We hope the reader will treat it with the respect which is due to old age. It has, with variations, been going around some few years now; in fact, ever since Christian evangelists started romancing for the Glory of God. Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety. It is indeed "life radiant."

"Ezra," of the *Methodist Recorder*, gives a quotation from Major Lloyd-Jones' book of adventures in Kenya, and hopes Bishop Barnes, whom he admires, may find it of use for a "gorilla sermon." This is the quotation:—

One evening, on entering a glade from the forest, I espied what I took at first to be a gathering of local elders having a discussion. Approaching nearer, I saw to my amazement that it was evidently a meeting of the local "district council" of the apes. One old veteran was standing up holding forth to the assembly, and making his point with violent gestures. He might have been an alderman declaiming about the inadequacy of the water supply, and advocating a new system for which his son-in-law should have the contract. Life in the great forests is a powerful advocate of the Darwinian theory.

We are inclined to agree with the last statement. The ape assembly can be watched any Sunday evening at most Wesleyan chapels.

The Chancellor of Norwich Diocese has overruled the objection of a parson in his district to the inscription "Peace perfect Peace" being engraved on a tombstone. We can quite understand the objection—particularly if the parson happens to be a truthful man. How can a Christian be certain that a dead man is enjoying "Peace perfect Peace"? If Christianity be correct, the chances are that he is having anything but a peaceful time.

In a recent book by the Rev. Dr. H. H. Scullard, the author says: "If Christianity is true, morality has more to do with the supernatural than the natural." There is much virtue in an "if."

Christmas Day falling on a Sunday, the Rev. George Denyer, of Dunmow, Essex, sees danger ahead. He pleads for the religious aspect of the day to be kept strictly to the fore, and the secular activities usually associated with Christmas Day to be postponed until Monday. As the rev. gent. rightly says, if Sunday is observed as a day of revelry it will tend still further to break down the already weakened barrier between the Lord's Day and a week-day. We hope Mr. Denyer's effort in the interest of his trade will not go unrewarded by his bishop.

Because he had talks on sex matters and personal hygiene with his candidates for confirmation, the Rev. R. B. Disney, vicar of Belgrave, Leicestershire, has shocked the good people of his parish. They complained to his bishop, and the vicar has resigned. Assuming that the vicar was giving information of real value, and in the right manner, we extend to him our sympathy. Perhaps, however, he will not mind us suggesting that he might ask himself why it is that the Christian religion never fails to produce a goodly crop of prurient prudes.

The rarest news that ever reached this little land was the news that came from Bethlehem. So Mr. Arthur Mee's *My Magazine* asserts. And what enthralled Mr. Mee is the fascinating possibility that the news was sent from Rome by a British lady who is mentioned in the Bible. It is, he says, a story that captivates the mind, a story that perhaps can never be proved, yet seems likely to be true. The proverbial "blue moon" is like that.

Mr. R. A. Adams, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, declares that the educated classes in India are showing a new attitude in recent years to Christianity. There never has been, he says, a time when educated India has been so thinking of Christ and His teaching. Only a fool would expect Mr. Adams to say the contrary. His job as a paid servant of the B. & F. B. Society is to conjure cheques or silver from the pockets of credulous old women of both sexes. His magic for doing this is the missionary's "Old, old, story" about the success of foreign missions.

For stealing four and a half pints of milk, which she took from cows in a field, a Shillingstone woman has been sentenced to four month's hard labour. The milk was valued at 11½d. This vindictive sentence, where a fine and a caution would seem more applicable, is reminiscent of Christian justice in the days of not so very long ago. Some of our magistrates happen still to be dominated by Biblical notions.

All the world over, says Mr. A. M. Chirgwin, M.A., youth has arrived. The old sanctions have lost their authority; the old restraints have broken down; new and revolutionary ideas are working like ferments in the blood of youth everywhere. The young are demanding admittance to all spheres of life; no danger signals can frighten them; no warnings or even threats can keep them back. The mind of youth is on trek. Moorings

have been abandoned, conventions repudiated, and authority of almost every kind challenged. The tide of youth is rising in every land, for the young have no more regard for international barriers than they have for time-honoured traditions. Mr. Chirgwin, however, declares that it is not Christianity against which the world's youth is in revolt, but the lack of it. Ideas, he says, of a fundamentally Christian kind have found lodgment in the mind of youth. The way of life they are advocating derives at least some of its aspects from the New Testament. Mr. Chirgwin has managed to hatch a beautiful and consoling theory, but it doesn't seem very convincing. What he doesn't explain is, if the revolt is not against Christianity, why is it that the revolt takes the form of antagonism to Christian traditions, prohibitions, taboos, repressions and exhortations? If it be contended that the revolt is world-wide, among civilized nations that are Christian and non-Christian, the answer is that the revolt is against religious traditions, prohibitions and taboos of every kind, and against the authority built up on them and enforcing them. And there is nothing in this from which Christian leaders can extract anything to allay their apprehensions. The blunt truth is that youth is in revolt everywhere because it has started to do its own thinking, and is refusing to listen to its self-appointed pastors and masters, teachers and scolders.

The *Sunday School Chronicle* is grateful to the *Manchester Guardian* for two-penn'orth of hope conveyed in a recent article, "Is Organized Religion on its Death-Bed?" Our Christian friend gives some of the grounds for this hope, supplied by the *Guardian*. These are: the world-wide work of the Student Christian Movement; the quickened conscience of the whole Church concerning the scandal of its manifold and age-long divisions; the sense of obligation for the world's unevangelized millions, revealed in gifts of substance and service on a scale larger than ever before; "the best seller" of the last twelve months was an American missionary's story of things seen and heard in India (*Christ of the Indian Road*). And last, but not least, the alleged historical fact that when Christianity seemed as if it was being stifled in the fatal embrace of its foes, it has revived, and flourished and spread. What a scratch lot of "facts" to build a hope on!

As an offset to these wonderful signs of Christian progress, the *Sunday School Chronicle* has to admit that the war wrought more havoc in the Churches than Christians have yet realized. Sunday schools and churches have great age-gaps in their membership. The men between the ages of twenty-five and forty are not there. "We lost them in the war—in more senses than one." Attendance at churches is everywhere smaller. And our contemporary rather sorrowfully says that:—

Not until we grow a new generation of Sunday school workers [and scholars?] shall we even begin to recover from the losses we sustained during 1914-1918.

There is only one drawback to this hopeful scheme. This is that Sunday school workers and scholars are diminishing in numbers. And they are likely to diminish still more, since parents of the war period are either indifferent or antagonistic to religion, churches, Sunday schools, and parsons. Our godly friend admits that the Church is now experiencing a set-back, but it has "faith to believe that the church will come through triumphantly in due course." That "faith to believe" reminds us of the little parable of the house built on sand.

Within a week £1,479 has been distributed among London hospitals by an anonymous woman. A contemporary comments: "We respect her shrinking from publicity; it has the Christian touch." The implication here, of course, is that charity-giving accompanied by anonymity is the outcome of Christian teaching and is the monopoly of Christians. We should much like our contemporary to try proving that to be the fact.



## The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

LESS than one month remains before us to win the £1,615 promised conditionally on £233, coming in by December 31. A very old friend of the movement, who sent along his "five," Mr. A. J. Fincken, says it would be little less than a disgrace, if, after having gone so far towards completing the greatest effort made in the history of the movement, we were to be beaten on the post. Needless to say, we quite agree with him. But our friends must hurry if we are to succeed.

We require another £233. When that is forthcoming the gentlemen who have promised will send along their cheques for £1,615. Half of this £233 ought to be in our hands by the time we go to press with the next issue of the paper. There is not a Church in Britain that would lose so large a sum for so small an amount. We do not think that Freethinkers will do so either.

### TWELFTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

	£	s.	d.
PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED	6,102	9	3
R. W. Cracklow	20	0	0
A. B.	5	0	0
Mrs. E. Adams	5	0	0
Sydney J. Smith	1	0	0
A. Brooks	0	5	0
T. Bolland	1	0	0
J. Summer	0	2	6
Manchester	1	0	0
N. Higham	0	2	6
O. Underwood	1	0	0
Good Luck	0	5	0
T. Dobson	0	6	0
J. Harrison	1	0	0
J. Newman (2nd Sub.)	2	0	0
J. Wearing	0	1	0
W. J. Lamb	1	17	6
T. Dunbar	0	5	0
In Memory of Charles Bradlaugh	0	10	0
Dr. C. Beadnell	0	10	0
The Flea	1	1	0
R. Roberts	0	6	0
A. J. Fincken	5	0	0
R. H. Clifton	0	10	0
F. Smith	0	10	0
L. Kent	0	2	6
A. Rogerson	0	10	0
W. Challis	2	2	0
A. L. Dorer	0	5	0
F. R. Turner	0	5	0
W. R. Angell	0	5	0
W. C. Tuck	0	2	6
J. W. Wakefield	0	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,154</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>

Promised on condition that a further £233 4s. 9d. is contributed by December 31, 1927 ... £1,615 0 0

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the Freethinker Endowment Trust, and crossed Clerkenwell Branch, Midland Bank, and directed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that a 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.

P. MURPHY.—You must be mistaken in thinking there is any bar to the Freethinker entering the Irish Free State. We are sending you a couple of issues. Why not subscribe

direct? There would then be no doubt as to your getting your copy regularly.

J. NEWMAN.—Sorry we missed you at Kenfig Hill. Another time.

T. DUNBAR.—We value the good will expressed.

E. WARNER.—We have in mind the whole question of better advertising the Freethinker, and when the Endowment Trust Fund is out of the way, we intend seeing what can be done.

H. H.—The Oaths Amendment Act was passed in 1888. It gives any person the right to affirm wherever an oath is legally required.

C. JAMES.—There is no genuine life of Jesus. Every so-called "Life" is an exercise in constructive fiction.

A. B. MOSS.—We are afraid our chance of getting a good rest at Christmas is not very rosy. And so long as we continue in good health, we do not mind.

A. MCKENZIE.—The University Magazine died many years ago. But it is possible to get volumes, or runs of the numbers.

A. C. MUSGRAVE.—Thanks for paper, but it is not a topic in which Freethinker readers are greatly interested.

F. SMITH.—We are gratified by your appreciation of our work.

R. W. CRACKLOW.—Thanks for contributing. We are hoping to get the whole sum before December 31. Many are, we suspect, intending to send, but putting off doing so for awhile.

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, Mr. F. Mann, 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.

Readers will note that there is no article from Mr. Lloyd in this week's issue. He was taken ill some days ago, and the doctor has ordered rest and quietness for a little while, when he expects he will be able to resume his literary work. We went to him a few days ago, and found him in bed, but very much better. So we told him not to bother about articles, but just work as hard as he could at getting well. And we hope he will take our advice. Mr. Lloyd stands high in the affections of Freethinkers, and all will be pleased to see his welcome pen again at work.

There was the usual good attendance on Sunday last at the Stratford Town Hall, to listen to Mr. Cohen. There were just a few vacant seats, but that was accounted for by the wretched weather, which prevented many coming from a distance. Mr. Rosetti occupied the chair, and members of the West Ham Branch were busily engaged about the hall attending to their various duties. There was, we understand, a good sale of literature.

Next Sunday, Mr. Cohen will visit Plymouth, and will lecture twice, afternoon and evening, in the Co-operative

Hall, Frauford Street, at 3 and 7. Good meetings are expected.

To-day (December 4), Mr. H. R. Rosetti will be paying his first lecturing visit to Liverpool. He will lecture in the Picton Hall, at 7, on "God, Man, and Nature." Admission will be free, but there will be some reserved seats at 1s. each. We hope that the Liverpool saints will see that the meeting is a good one, and will help to make it so, not merely by coming themselves, but by bringing a Christian friend along with them.

The second volume of Mr. Cohen's *Essays in Free-thinking* is now ready, and is uniform in size and binding with the first volume. The volume contains some of the best and most pointed of his writings, and is a mixture of the grave and the gay, although the gay is not without that underlying current of gravity, without which humour degenerates into mere clowning. The price of the work, as with Volume I, is 2s. 6d., postage is 2½d. extra, or the two volumes will be sent post free for 5s. As we are nearing Christmas, we suggest these two volumes as a likely Christmas present to suitable friends.

Mrs. E. Adams encloses a cheque for £5 for the Endowment Fund, also 5s. for 100 copies of "An Open Letter to Bishop Barnes." She says that she is not able to distribute many herself, but hopes that some one else will do so, as she thinks it should be well circulated. That is quite a good idea, and perhaps there are others of our readers who would like to follow suit. We will take care that any paid for in that way are well used.

The Annual Dinner of the N.S.S. this year has been fixed later in January than is usual—January 21. Those who look up the almanac will find that this is on a Saturday evening. This has been done on the suggestion of many friends who thought that Saturday evening would be more convenient to many than Tuesday. It will certainly give provincial friends a chance of being present. They could travel to London by week-end ticket, and return on Sunday if they wished. We shall hope to see many of our friends from the country present. The place will be, as usual, the Midland Grand Hotel. Fuller particulars will be given later.

Mr. F. Mann lectures to-day (December 4) in the hall of the South London Branch, 30 Brixton Road, near the Oval Station, at 7.15. His subject will be "From Creation to Evolution."

We are asked to announce that the South London Branch is holding a "Grand Carnival Dance," at the Horns Assembly Rooms, Kennington Road. Dancing will commence at 7.30. Price of tickets, 2s.

We hope that we shall not have to wait for more than twenty years for an English translation of Professor Freud's recent lecture on "The Future of an Illusion," although as the illusion dealt with is that of a religion, we do not suppose British publishers will rush for it. Professor Freud holds that all the ideas of the creeds are the products of pure illusion, the gods being created out of man's feeling of complete helplessness. Religion, he says, plays the same part in human development that certain states do in that of the child, and from which it is the aim of every educator to secure liberation. Man should not lead the life of a child for ever. This, of course, is not the way that English publicists write about religion. Most of them know better, but the correct British way is to write about liberating religion from the influence of out-of-date creeds, etc., etc. In this country you may know that religion is pure illusion, but it is not good form to say so. Still, we hope that some publisher will take his courage in both hands and publish the lecture. After all, Professor Freud is a man of international standing, and that should make it safe enough for even the "reverent agnostic" to be seen in his company.

Mr. D. P. Stichells writes, apropos of the Pitman incident reported in last week's issue, that "this latest instance of boycott ought to make your readers all the more determined to see that the *Freethinker* is rendered as effective an opponent of religion as they can make it." Many other readers have written in the same vein, some pointing out that the immediate need is to see that the Endowment Trust Fund is made as large as possible. Needless to say, we agree with the last suggestion. We receive many letters from old readers of the paper assuring us that the *Freethinker* is now better than it has ever been, but we are not satisfied with making it merely better reading; we want to see it far more effective as a propagandist organ. And that can only be done when it reaches a larger audience than it does at present. This will be done as soon as we can adopt an effective plan of getting the paper better known, which is in turn dependent upon there being larger financial resources behind it.

## Mother India.

HAMLIN town's in Brunswick, but who has heard of Idar?

Know all men by these presents that Idar is in Bombay Presidency, India, about one hundred miles north of Baroda. It has about a quarter of a million inhabitants and a Maharajah. This gentleman, who is also a Lieutenant-Colonel and a Knight, succeeded his august predecessor in 1911, and is entitled to a salute of fifteen guns. He is assisted in his job of governing by a Dewan, or Prime Minister, a new Dewan having been recently appointed. Altogether, one would imagine, a very pleasant little billet.

But uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. The rajah's ungrateful subjects, it appears, have passed upon him and his government certain strictures. In a recent *State Gazette Extraordinary* he has retorted with spirit, informing not only his subjects but the scoffing or indifferent world just what he thinks of the mentality of the Idaris.

His Highness, one gathers, has informed his new Dewan, who has promised to work for the welfare of the State, that no Idar subject is to be given any responsible post. Nay, more, if the Dewan were to recommend any of them for such a post, he, the rajah, would not sanction it. Why so? Because they are selfish, uneducated, inexperienced, and devoid of filial feelings towards their ruler. The population of Idar, according to the rajah, is of "a very queer mentality." This "debased mentality" is attributed to the effect of the soil of the country. Do you doubt this? Then learn, further, that His Highness's revered father told him that this was so. In conclusion the Maharajah condemns mischief-makers. From all of which, it will be seen, this dusky potentate has much the same opinion of common humanity as the sahib of Chelsea.

Another sage, who has recently flitted from Adelphi Terrace, appears to share the rajah's view that a people is better governed by foreigners than by natives. A foreigner can be impartial, for he is indifferent. Partiality—and who is not partial to his kin and his countrymen?—tilts the scales of just administration. So Mr. Bernard Shaw, in his English republic of the future (Part III of *Back to Methuselah*!) secures the good governance of the still sport-loving Britisher of two centuries hence, by filling the highest administrative offices with Chinamen and negroes. An Englishman is allowed to hold the merely decorative position of President!

All the preceding paragraph is, however, by the way. (How Shaw tempts one to ramble). Let us get back to India, and let us consider the point of the Maharajah (and his father) that the soil of his country

is responsible for the deplorable lack of grace of its human products. Shaw, we know—we are wandering again—attributes his countrymen's drawbacks to the atmosphere, and suiting his action to his belief has for half a century avoided that corrupting influence. But what we would, with all deference, submit, in the face of the dicta of the great ones of Ireland and Idar, is that the root of evil is not to be found in the soil, or in the air, but in that befogged mental atmosphere known as religion. In India, in Ireland, and in all countries, the great barrier to progress, to enlightenment, and to sanity (the latter word, as we shall see, in all senses of the term) is, has been, and always will be, religion. And, borrowing a precept from one of these religions, we will add: As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

*Ex pede Herculem*, from the foot, Hercules. From the specimen, it is said, we can judge the whole. Can India, with its population of 319,000,000 (one-eighth part of the world's inhabitants) be judged by the State of Idar? Let us ask another question: Would the quarter of a million Montenegrins be regarded as typical of the genus European? Hardly. Yet with this book before us (*Mother India*, by Katherine Mayo: Jonathan Cape, 10s. 6d.) one would be disposed to say that the Maharajah (and his father) have not one whit exaggerated the debased mentality of the Idaris. Those of us who have followed Miss Mayo in her impressive and depressing narrative will not be the first to rise in contradiction if it is contended that Idar cannot be judged by India. Belike the foot of Hercules was as dirty as his body after his labours in the Augean stable.

What a picture is this that this American citizen presents. What filth, what squalor, what poverty, ignorance, superstition. The stench of it almost rises from the pages as we read. In our school-days we learned that India was "the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown," a phrase that might have passed muster thirty years ago, in the days of Joseph Chamberlain, Kipling and the Diamond Jubilee. But anyone with a knowledge of the state of affairs revealed by Miss Mayo, who desired to frame a deadly insult to our kinsmen in the Dominions could not do better than to suggest that their lustre is less than this festering muckheap.

Let us now attempt the difficult task of condensing into a few words the subject matter of this remarkable book. The author spent several months in India in 1925-6, her object being to observe the common things in daily human life. She did not go to marvel at eastern mystics, but to talk with medical officers. We will quote her own words. "Leaving," she writes, "untouched the realms of religion, of politics, and the arts, I would confine my enquiry to such workaday ground as public health and its contributing factors. I would try to determine, for example, what situation would confront a public health official charged with the duty of stopping an epidemic of cholera or of plague; what elements would work for and against a campaign against hookworm; or what forces would help or hinder a government effort to lower infant mortality, to better living conditions, or to raise educational levels, supposing such work to be required." In view of what our author found, the last six words of the foregoing sentence read like a joke.

But this book is no joke. Miss Mayo treats her subject with the seriousness that it deserves. She writes fearlessly, frankly, and, most important, explicitly. There are times when the implicit must be reinforced by the explicit, and no more so than in the realms with which she deals. Let us illustrate what we mean by this.

In common, I suppose, with most intelligent Englishmen, I had thought that the Hindu custom of child marriages meant that the girl child was betrothed, earmarked, or set aside for future union with her spouse when she had reached an age when—how shall we put it?—when, let us say, a decree nisi could be fittingly made a decree absolute. That is an instance of implicit understanding of a custom. But Miss Mayo tears aside such unthinking easy assumptions (*mea culpa!*) and shows us the hideous reality of child marriages; of little tots of seven, nine, ten, eleven and twelve years old crushed and mutilated by elderly and heavy spouses. Chapter and verse is given for all this in the most explicit manner, and the record is one revolting in the extreme. If you do not like the explicit in such matters, give the book a miss.

All through the book Miss Mayo calls a spade a spade. We are shown the hideous fate of the Hindu widow, saved from *suttee* by the British Government, but condemned by custom—equally religious—to lifelong celibacy and drudgery. When one remembers that the religious interdiction of remarriage applies equally to the girl child who has been widowed in her minority, one begins to gain a clearer realization of the evils that are done in the name of religion.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

(To be concluded.)

### Some Thoughts on Capital Punishment.

THE late numerous death sentences in quick succession give one furiously to think, as our French neighbours aptly put it. They bring home to one's mind the folly, wickedness, and brutality of Capital Punishment, more forcibly perhaps than ever before. Let me at the outset say that with murderers as such I have no sort of sympathy. While some may be deserving of pity, most are cruel and dastardly ruffians, and the balance moral and biological degenerates—from these society must be protected. I am opposed to the death penalty, not from any special regard for what is known as "the sacredness of human life," but chiefly because the deliberate taking of life by society in its corporate capacity, without absolute need, has a brutalizing effect in tending to harden the public mind and conscience as against its finest humanitarian instincts and feelings. It was a practical concession to this sentiment which brought about the law against executions taking place in public. It has been observed that to kill the criminal is never satisfactory, because we leave untouched his accomplices, bad social conditions, and defective institutions. Murderers too—and no one proposes nowadays to execute for any other crime—are not necessarily the worst or most dangerous of criminals, either as a class or as individuals. Then again—as in the Ilford case—there is the sympathy invariably set up in favour of the criminal, rather than the victim, after sentence—a most unwholesome feeling. I have heard several criminals sentenced to death, and could myself never quite escape this feeling despite any detestation of or horror at the crime.

With "the sacredness of human life" objection, I repeat I have no sympathy whatever. If it be needful to sacrifice life—as in war—for the general security of the community, then done it must be, and done it always is whether we like it or not. One hears this phrase constantly used when perhaps some utterly undeserving and cruel murderer's life is in question, but never from the same people when some unjust and needless warlike expedition is on the

cards, nor with reference to the wicked and wanton sacrifice of child life in the slum areas of our big cities—a disgrace to our so-called civilization and Christianity, and one which could have been easily remedied at a trifling fraction of the cost of the late taking sides in Russia. Instead of the cant and hypocritical phrase “sacredness of human life,” we in such cases have dinned into our ears “honour of the flag,” “fight to a finish,” “what’s your Navy for?” “parental responsibility,” “rank socialism,” or “save the rates.” It is truly wonderful how apt we are to be governed by mere aggregates of words which are found on analysis to have but little sensible meaning in them.

As regards those who say or think they are in favour of continuing our present barbarous method of hanging, I often ask them whether they would knowingly sit down to dinner with the public hangman. If not, why not? He is a perfectly respectable functionary, paid by the State to perform a recognized duty, and what we claim to consider a necessary and proper task. I think this very natural and proper repugnance as to associating with any public hangman, may be regarded as the measure of what in our secret consciences we all really think of Capital Punishment, especially when carried out by barbarous methods, despite all bluff to the contrary. Why otherwise this special repugnance, which exists in no other case where it may be needful to take life for perfectly legitimate reasons?

I fear but too many of us have not yet travelled much beyond the old “eye for eye” injunction, and think of vengeance and the infliction of suffering rather than the reform of the criminal and the highest forms of protection for society. Society can be equally protected from the most dangerous murderer by life-long incarceration—and necessarily under brutal and degrading conditions—as by hanging him. But this treatment of the dangerous criminal is a question apart, and does not do away with the, to my mind, perfectly correct dictum that you can always put a man to better use than by killing him.

MANUEL M. FERRERO, A.R.S.M.

### A Miracle.

(Copied from a recently discovered manuscript in Jerusalem.)

JOSEPH one day whispered, “Mary;  
We have all our savings spent;  
We have neither friend nor fairy,  
To advance our modest rent.  
Gone are all our little savings;  
Gone our credit at the store;  
We have only chips and shavings,  
Scattered on the workshop floor.”  
Jesus heard this lamentation;  
Fetched the chips and shavings too;  
Used some psychic incantation;  
Spread his arms and blessed them through:  
Called for pans and plates and dishes,  
These he on the table spread,  
When the chips all turned to fishes  
And the shavings changed to bread.

S. PULMAN.

They love truth best who to themselves are true,  
And what they dare to dream of, dare to do.

James Russell Lowell.

The hearts of men are their books; events are their tutors; great actions are their eloquence.—Macaulay.

### “The Next Religion”?

THE days of the good ship “Christianity,” which has braved so many times and climes, are numbered. The weather-beaten old hulk is floundering in the heavy seas which characterize this restless age of ours. Newer and more seaworthy craft are taking all the competition from under her very nose. Once regarded as the finest ship on the high seas in which to take a health trip from Earth to Heaven—but never the reverse, from Heaven to Earth—she is now being crowded out by modern rivals. Her owners are worried at the loss of trade; her captain’s face bears a gloomy look as he reviews the situation from the bridge. They know that the end is near. Soon will the good old ship sail the seas no more. Soon will come the order for her to be put into the hands of the ship-breakers. The breakers are only too eager to do their bit that will put finis to the career of the Christianity. One of them has already begun work—or rather he is sharpening his tools in readiness.

Mr. James Douglas, well-known in theological fields, told us all about it in the *Sunday Express*. Already he sees the good ship Christianity laid on her side—discarded, and right joyously he greets her successor, “The Next Religion.” Writing under this title recently, he lets himself go with a vengeance and lets us into the secret of the next hocus-pocus medley of illusions and superstitions which he hopes the duped masses are going to lap up—and they assuredly will. After a eulogy of, and liberal quotation from Dean Inge the show begins. We are assured that, although there is a conflict between theology and science, theology being but an obsolete branch of science (cute dodge that), there is no conflict between Christ and science, because Christ reveals the secret of the spiritual life, whereas science merely express the mysteries of matter. This is how Mr. Douglas sees it, but he seems to forget spirit and matter are not two independent entities, that there is no such thing as a spirit entirely disassociated from the human body.

However, he proceeds: “It is startling to discover that theology and science are reaching the end of their tether together. Science is no longer challenged by religion, for science has succeeded in undermining its own foundations so far as an explanation of the mechanical or physical universe is concerned. With each new hypothesis and each new theory science becomes more sceptical about science. There is more doubt in the higher realms of science to-day than in the higher realms of religion . . . So long as we imagined that science could explain the mystery of life, there was some excuse for shirking the mystical explanation bestowed on us two thousand years ago by Christ. But science has now finally confessed its inability to discover even a working hypothesis. It is on its knees before the unknowable . . . Science to-day is saying to religion, ‘I have failed. It is for you to carry on the work of Christ in teaching mankind the hidden secret of the relation of the soul of man to the soul of God. There is a mystery which baffles me and will always baffle me.’”

Who on earth has said or even suggested that science has reached the end of its tether? Certainly no scientist—unless he was speaking in the role not of a man of science, but of a man of God, or rather of the God-cult. Of theology’s failure there can be no doubt, but the idea of science having reached the end of its tether is ridiculous. Certainly there exists doubt in the higher realms of science; certainly discoveries and speculations which would have once been epoch-making are daily being given up because of new discoveries and speculation, which make those of yesterday out-of-date to-day, and old-fashioned to-morrow. But does not all this rather indicate that science is advancing at a rate unprecedented in the past? In the good old days a discovery was made and theories were formulated, and the dust of centuries was allowed to accumulate on them before someone came along and upset them with new discoveries and theories. To-day, such is the progress that science is making that discoveries and theories are upset almost before they are made and formulated. Science is going ahead with such leaps and bounds that it is in a perpetual flux. As to solving

the mystery of life, well, I, for one, never thought or hoped they would. For life is just life. There is no "mystery of life" until man, with his puny brain, his pigmy intellect, his weird notions about finiteness and infinity, mortality and immortality, good and evil, moral and immoral, spiritual and physical, comes along and makes it a mystery, and then demands that that mystery of his own creation shall be solved.

Mr. Douglas's picture of the scientist chucking up the sponge and kneeling humbly down on his knees before the unknowable in the abject attitude so beloved of the Christian is highly amusing. Because the scientist has come up against a knotty problem the Christian, trained throughout the ages to deify the Unknown and term it the Unknowable, imagines that the scientist will hand in his check and kneel down in the mire side by side with his grovelling fellow-creatures. The Freethinker, on the other hand, his mind free from these barbaric survivals, sees the scientist standing before the Unknown, standing erect on his feet, his shoulders squared, his head high in the air, his chin thrust out, in his eyes the light of battle, his whole attitude one of challenge. Victories against the unknown the scientist has many, and he will certainly not turn round and flee now. No, he is advancing onwards to further triumphs.

After a lot of cant on the usual lines about the inadequacy of philosophy, and the hunger for religion and the all-sufficiency of Christ and his gospel, Mr. Douglas rounds off triumphantly: "The world is world-weary, and each one of us is growing weary of the world. That is why we are sloughing all our cultures, ancient and modern, and crawling out of the old religious and scientific and philosophical cultures like a sick snake. The next religion will bring us peace and rest for our souls." Even those who have drunk their fill of the "redeeming" blood of the all-sufficient Jesus Christ seem to have got fed up with everything in general, and long for "peace and rest in their souls"! Hardly much of an advertisement for giving Christ another chance!

Of course, what the Freethinker would like to know is, Why have a new religion at all? Having got rid of the old, useless creed, why not give the thing a rest? But no, people won't have that. If you take away one lot of superstitious and phantastic emanations of a priestly imagination, you must immediately give them another lot, as similar to the old ones as possible, so that they still have something to play with. And so it goes on. As one foolish set of creeds and beliefs is cast off another equally foolish set, but with a more modern appearance, is taken on, and the poor deluded fools pat themselves on the back and imagine that they are making progress! All these new creeds and doctrines, faiths and beliefs, are like so much foul air, which usurps the space wanted by the clean, fresh air by which we live, and without which we die. The Freethinker's job is to fan the wind of common-sense and reason that blows them away, leaving the air pure and clean once more. Not so long ago our scientists, trying to make war as unpleasant as possible for the poor devils who were fighting it for us, produced their hideous monstrosity known as poison gas, with what disastrous results we are only too well acquainted. As we were not allowed to do the only sensible thing and kill off these maniacs and destroy their deadly contrivances for wholesale devastation, we were forced to do the next best thing, and to combat the results of their machinations as best we could—or at least our enemies were, and we had to do the same because of our opponents' equally humane methods of warfare. And the same applies to the manufacturers of the social poison gases we see all around us. Forbidden by law to kill them off in order to prevent them doing further mischief, we must combat their evil work as best we can, handicapped as we are on all sides by religious intolerance and religious malevolence. We must educate the people to see the hideous reality behind the shams, illusions, and hypocrisies with which the exterior is covered, and to realize that the way of salvation lies not in the redeeming blood of a two-thousand scape-goat, but in freedom—freedom of thought, of speech, and of action. That is what Freethought stands for, that is what we are all fighting for, that is the glorious regime to be ushered in when the already too long reign of the

gods is over—freedom. In the immortal words of Swinburne, our bard of freedom,

"And, best beloved of best men, liberty,  
Free lives and lips, free hands of men free-born."

R. H. S. STANDFAST.

## Correspondence.

### BIRTH CONTROL.

SIR,—The following is from a review in a recent issue of *Nature*, written by Prof. E. W. MacBride, of Dr. M. C. Stopes' book, *Contraception (Birth Control); Its Theory, History, and Practice: A Manual for the Medical and Legal Professions*. Prof. MacBride says: "She does a useful service in demolishing the legend, sedulously propagated by a certain coterie, that the legality of birth-control was established by Bradlaugh's fight for it. She shows convincingly that the very pamphlet in connexion with which Bradlaugh was prosecuted had been sold for years without let or hindrance, and that the police only interfered when the publisher added to it several indecent illustrations. Bradlaugh's intervention, so far from helping the cause of birth-control, really hindered it, since it caused it to be associated in the minds of the public with its unpopular atheistic views."

I am not sufficiently acquainted with the history of the movement to be able to pass a judgment upon Dr. Stopes' statement, so heartily approved by Prof. MacBride; but knowing a little of her religious prejudices, I am a little suspicious of her accuracy, in spite of the professor's endorsement. I should like your comments upon the matter, and if she is in the wrong, her point of view, if possible, should be contradicted in *Nature*.

ALBERT R. THORNEWELL.

[It is surprising that Prof. MacBride has swallowed wholesale the perfectly absurd statements of Dr. Stopes with regard to Charles Bradlaugh. She is a quite incompetent "historian" of the birth-control movement, and Prof. MacBride has obviously made no independent investigation. The "indecent" pictures added by the "publisher" to the Knowlton pamphlet, have nothing whatever to do with Charles Bradlaugh anyway, and Dr. Stopes merely copies Mrs. Besant's statement from *Autobiographical Sketches*—a statement difficult to check, as no one seems to have ever seen these "indecent" pictures. Dr. Stopes is simply jealous of Bradlaugh's priority, and attacks his atheism. Yet she actually takes up as her hero in *Contraception* the Atheist, Francis Place! The whole question has been dealt with in these columns a few years ago, and will be exhaustively discussed in a work shortly to be published by Norman E. Hines of Harvard University.]

### "THE MAN NOBODY KNOWS."

SIR,—When I wrote my modest little article on the above, I little thought that it would result in my being identified as one of the Lord's supporters, nor was I aware that I was treading on the toes of Mr. Cutner's own review of the book as indelicately as I appear to have done. Having made so careful a study of the book—which, by the way, he considers "beneath contempt"—I can quite realize that it must seem to be the grossest impertinence for a small upstart of nine hundred words to oppose the big guns which he had carefully manufactured. However, since Mr. Cutner is good enough to admit that I am entitled to my opinion, might I presume to state it further?

If Mr. Cutner's review—which, alas, I have not read—is written in the same tone as his letter about my article, then I can only say that it reminds me of what a review of Paine's *Age of Reason*, written by the Archbishop of Canterbury, would be like. In other words, he is so determined to hear nothing good of that Arch-rascal, Jesus of Nazareth, that he misses the whole spirit and

essence of the book. Although I am just about as anti-Christian as it is possible to be—a statement which I am prepared to prove, if necessary, by so-called blasphemy—I am proud to call myself a Freethinker, and as such I am bound to admit that there is much in the life of Christ which I find most attractive. Such a statement will no doubt shock Mr. Cutner to his very marrow, and I expect he will hasten to repeat his question as to whether I have any proof of the actual existence of the gentleman in question. Let me say at once that I am not in the least concerned whether he existed or not, it does not interest me. What does interest me is that here is the story of a character which I am inclined to like, but which, as I pointed out in my previous article, is smothered and obliterated by stupid stories of miracles and virgin-births.

At least three quarters of my article was devoted to pointing out where the author of *The Man Nobody Knows* was in error; but of this substantial proportion Mr. Cutner makes no mention. I endeavoured to sort out the truth from the rubbish, a task which I consider to be the duty of every Freethinker, and I resolutely refuse to allow my anti-religious opinion to blind me to Truth, even if I occasionally find myself seeking it in the camp of the enemy.

In conclusion, might I ask Mr. Cutner whether he has not been indulging in a very serious waste of time and trouble, if he really considers the work in question "beneath contempt." B. S. WILCOX.

### The National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 24, 1927.

*The President*, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

*Also present*: Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough, Messrs. Clifton, Gorniot, Moss, Neate, Rosetti, Samuels, Silvester, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted.

New Members were received for the Birmingham, Glasgow, and Liverpool Branches, and for the Parent Society.

Correspondence, which included letters from Birmingham, Plymouth, and Shotts, was dealt with.

The Executive further discussed the question of holding a number of meetings in London, and also the possibility of arranging for socials and dances.

The arrangements for the Society's Annual Dinner was considered by the Executive, and the Secretary instructed.

The meeting then closed.

FRED MANN,  
General Secretary.

### Society News.

#### NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

IN spite of suffering from a severe head wound, the result of an accident that happened only the day before, Mrs. Ivy Elstob bravely fulfilled her engagement to lecture for us last Sunday, and gave a brilliant address on the "Future of Marriage." Mrs. Elstob completely captivated her audience, and a keen and pointed discussion followed. A hearty vote of thanks was moved to the lecturer for her courage in giving her lecture in spite of the severe physical pain she was suffering, and everyone expressed the hope that she would soon pay us another visit.

To-night, Mr. George Ives puts forward "A Plea for Easy Death," a subject which is being widely discussed at the moment. We hope for a good audience for Mr. Ives, whose lectures are always stimulating, and give a fine field for discussion.—K. B. K.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

#### LONDON.

##### INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. George Ives—"A Plea for Easy Death."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. F. Mann, "From Creation to Evolution."

##### OUTDOOR.

FREETHOUGHT MEETING (corner of North End Road, Fulham, near Walham Green Church): Saturday, 7.30. Speakers F. Bryant and F. Moister. Local Freethinkers' attendance invited.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Messrs. Hyatt and E. C. Saphin. At 6.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Le Maine, and Darby. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, W. P. Campbell-Everden—A Lecture. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday in Hyde Park at 7.30. Various lecturers.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Assembly Rooms, Front Street): 7.15, Mr. T. Brown—"The Instinctive Basis of Religion." Chairman: Mr. F. Price.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Jno. K. Oliphant—"The Philosophy of Death." The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 p.m., in the Clarion Scouts Halls, 22 Portland Street, North.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, William Brown Street): Sunday, 7.0, R. H. Rosetti—"Nature, Man and God." Admission free. Reserved Seats, 1s. Questions invited. On Saturday, at 7.30: A Social Evening at Royal Buildings, 18, Colquitt Street. Admission, 1s. (including refreshments). Mr. R. H. Rosetti will be present to meet members and friends.

##### OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Meetings held in the Bull Ring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 7 p.m.

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