

BRUTALITY AND THE CHURCH.

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

Views and Opinions.

Brutality and the Church.

The question of whether civilization involves a "softening" of human nature is one that is often discussed, and from many points of view its importance justifies the discussion. It is the question considered in a provocative article by Dean Inge—provocative in the best sense of the word, because it sets one considering the various points raised. The article is, however, vitiated by announcing as a fact something which is only half a fact, and then completely overlooking an explanation of the mistaken half-truth. The question submitted is, "As it possible that easier conditions of life have brought about a physiological change, a heightened sensibility both to suffering pain and to witnessing it in others?" And the reply is, "The first question must certainly be answered in the affirmative."

Now I call that a half-truth, or a half-fact, because while one is compelled to admit that taking people as we find them in civilized countries, there has undoubtedly developed a greater sensitiveness to the sight of pain in others, and also a greater unwillingness to bear pain themselves, to argue that this is the consequence of some physiological change is to make a statement impossible of proof, and one that may be dismissed when the whole of the facts are brought under review. And one cannot help suspecting that Dean Inge is brought to the point of asserting this physiological change, because it would relieve historic Christianity of the responsibility for the existence of the quite gratuitous suffering which he depicts, and which existed under the rule of the Church.

* * *

Are We Changing?

Dean Inge begins by citing the fact that "savages" bear pain better than civilized people. What is the evidence that during the historic period there has

been any physiological change in this direction? I know of none worth bothering about. Some years back (in *Creed and Character*) when dealing with the play of selection in savage society, I pointed out that in uncivilized societies diseases act as a selective force, and thus kill off numbers of people whose like is with us to-day, in virtue of our greater knowledge and quickened sympathies. Disease and the more trying conditions of existence naturally weed out the more delicately organized as well as the actually physiologically weaker. And if that be so, our greater susceptibility to both the sight and the presence of suffering may be due, not to any physiological change in the species, but to the survival under different conditions, of a type of organization which existed as well with savages as with us, but which was killed off before it had time to make its influence felt on the social structure. It obviously cannot be held that the crowd which could in the sixteenth century celebrate a royal wedding by turning a dozen heretics, were more highly organized than a number of Red Indians dancing round a fire that was consuming the body of a white man. Nor do the instruments of torture that were in use, the public whippings, and ear slittings, and breaking on the wheel, etc., argue a very susceptible people. And to argue that there has been during the past three or four centuries any drastic physiological change in the British, French, German, or Spanish people is scientifically absurd.

It is in a social and intellectual, rather than in a physiological direction that we have to look. It is not so much that the race has become physiologically more susceptible to suffering, as it is that better conditions enable the more susceptible to survive and so to act as an educative influence on others.

* * *

Humanitarianism.

That is one cause of the increased sensibility to suffering. Another is the removal of certain obstacles to the free play of human feeling. Here, to begin with, are a few passages from Dean Inge, which most Christian preachers, and particularly our religiously platitudinarian Labour leaders would do well to ponder:—

The Humanitarian movement began to be important in the eighteenth century. . . . In France the movement had nothing to do with religion, unless by a great though not impossible stretch of language we call Voltaire a Christian. The French humanitarians were often avowed Atheists, and I do not think the Church did anything to support the movement. . . . Was Humanitarianism part of the creed of the Reformers—of Luther, Calvin, and Knox? I speak under correction, but I think it was not.

Very much stronger language than this might have been used with justice. The last thing that the

Christian Church has thought of during the whole of its history has been Humanitarianism. It has been deficient in the very principle on which Humanitarianism rested; and the fact that here and there Christians have stood out better than their creed, is proof only of the truth that when they were not fighting organized religion the social feelings were apt to rise above religious belief and religious instruction.

* * *

Society and Suffering.

I have not the slightest doubt but that if Dean Inge had been plain Mr. Inge, and if, instead of being already committed to say as little as possible against the Christian religion, he had been left to look at the facts with an unbiassed mind, he would have seen the absurdity of assuming any great physiological change to account for what lay before him. He might have then given some place to the consideration that how we regard the infliction of pain on others, as well—in a smaller degree—the way in which we ourselves bear pain, is partly a question of custom and imitation. During the war even the finer type of men on active service both inflicted and bore suffering with far greater unconcern than they would have done in civil life. This was not due to any physiological change, it was wholly psychological. They were living in an environment in which the bearing and infliction of pain was the order of the day, where to shrink from either would have stamped one as weak, effeminate, and cowardly. The same can be seen in everyday life. Given a society in which the infliction of brutal punishments is the rule, the people will bear the sight of them with no particular discomfort. Bring up their offspring in a different society and they will be shocked if brought into contact with scenes they would have otherwise witnessed unmoved. Boys in a school where the play is rough and fights frequent, learn to put up with blows and ill-usage quietly, not because there is a lower physiological development, but because it is not good form to complain. There are, of course, differences of sensitiveness among individuals all the time. That is not denied. What is in question is whether the change is a physiological or a psychological one.

* * *

Creed and Character.

Humanitarianism, as a conscious fact, springs, as Dean Inge sees, from the non-religious side of life. But the centuries which he notes as having easily put up with the sight of pain and suffering and brutal tortures, were dominated, consciously, by the Christian Church. And, as I have often had occasion to point out, the effect of Christianity in the brutalizing of character has never been sufficiently noted by writers. This cannot be because the facts were not perceptible. Consider that views of duty, of right and wrong, were all under the control of the Church so far as men considered themselves to be consciously directing their actions. But the Christian Church had committed itself, not to a doctrine of *human* brotherhood, but to a sectarian one only. Its ideal was at best a brotherhood of believers. Outside the pale, non-Christians were not entitled, legally or morally, to the same consideration as believers. They were denied political and social rights, and were outlawed and proscribed on the slightest provocation. One may safely say that few Christians regarded themselves as really owing duties to those who were outside their creed, much as secular governments compelled them to regard certain decencies. When crowds of Christians gathered to see a heretic burned,

they were witnessing, not so much the destruction of a fellow human being, as the punishment of one of God's enemies. Religion did nothing to humanize their feelings, it served but to brutalize them.

* * *

New Standards of Value.

Other factors have co-operated in making modern men and women less tolerant of brutality and suffering; I am calling attention to this one because the *Freethinker* is about the only paper in the country that will do it, and I would not like to have the generalizations of Dean Inge spoiled by the omission of so important a consideration. And we have to add to the fact that Christianity drew a religious line at whole groups of people, the dominance of such a teaching as that of eternal damnation, with the constant dwelling upon the torments of hell by preachers of all denominations. The reaction of theological beliefs on social manners and customs has yet to be fully traced, but one can hardly question that a people whose lowest passions were excited in the name of religious duty, and whose teaching consisted partly in the measuring out of almost inconceivable torments to all who disagreed with them, could not but have their feelings hardened and coarsened in relation to other matters. It is significant that Dean Inge should take the beginning of the Humanitarian movement to be the end of the eighteenth century, and in France, where religious belief had been so rudely shaken by the French Freethinkers. But in this country also, the growth of the deistic movement, the criticism of the Christian teaching and the Christian attitude towards life, all had the effect of changing men's point of view, of creating new standards of value, and of displacing other-worldism by this-worldism. The growth of humanitarianism has been almost exactly proportionate to the displacement of belief in Christianity.

Dean Inge thinks he can see the growth of a new development of Christianity, "which is falling into line with all that is best and most progressive in secular civilization, and among other things has cordially accepted Humanitarianism, for which traditional Christianity provided only an unsatisfactory substitute in 'works of mercy and charity.'" This seems to me suspiciously like noting the growth of a Christianity which is not Christianity at all. Although I suspect that this is the only kind of Christianity that is likely to live.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Styx.

I'll swim the Styx:
Not Charon's boat for me:
I would not mix
With his damned company:
I own to being much, oh much too proud
To join his hell-bound crowd.

I shall get damp,
But that is no great matter:
I may get cramp,
But will avoid the chatter:
For one who stands in need of his long rest
To swim is far the best.

So I will dive
Into that lethal river,
And will arrive
Triumphant, though I shiver:
Good Charon I will not cheat of his fee,
But—solitude for me!

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Genius of Thomas Hardy.

"To bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
That is the top of sovereignty."—Keats.

"I claim no place in the world of letters; I am, and will be, alone."—Landor.

"I pray thee then
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."
Leigh Hunt.

THE death of Thomas Hardy, the greatest of contemporary English novelists, and a notable poet, will be lamented by all Freethinkers. Not only did he add splendour to his country's literature, but he carried high the banner of Freethought. In many ways Thomas Hardy was a writer in advance of his time, and his works in prose and verse are more modern in spirit than any of his rivals', if, indeed, so distinctive a genius can be said to have had rivals. Unlike the sentimentalists, he faced life squarely, and if some of his books make serious reading, it is just because life is not all beer and skittles.

Many critics called him pessimist, but he was too full of pity and sympathy for such a hasty generalization. Not one of his rustics, of his working-class folk, but has a special originality, a native pleasantry, and a cast of drollery. Few writers have strewed over their works such abundant irony. In one of the greatest of his novels, *The Return of the Native*, the chapter in which he introduces the characters bears the heading, "Humanity appears on the scene hand in hand with trouble." In his masterpiece, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the dramatic effect of the tragedy is heightened by the grim comment:—

"Justice" was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Æschylean phrase, has ended his sport with *Tess*.

A master of the lash, Hardy is as fertile as Heine, as detached as Gibbon, as acidulated as Renan. Although a high-brow, there was no lack of comedy in his novels. *The Hand of Ethelberta*, that most whimsical story, is full of humour. *The Laodicean* is inspired with the highest comedy. *Far from the Madding Crowd*, written in his lightest mood, is saturated with the comic spirit. From the opening description of Farmer Oak's smile to the ringing down of the curtain, it is a joy to anyone with taste and perception enough to discriminate between a Molièresque humour and a riotous Charlie Chaplin farce.

Hardy was no less successful as a short-story writer. Indeed, his mastery was unchallengeable. If *Wessex Tales*, and *Life's Little Ironies* had been written by a Continental artist, they would have been acclaimed to the skies. They are as perfect as anything by Daudet or Maupassant, and reveal far more delicate and faultless work than any of the Russian or Scandinavian writers' works.

What shapes arise as you recall Hardy's finest work? Where in all contemporary literature is there nobler work than the poignant scene of the bridal night in *Tess*, or that other showing the dying Jude and the choristers; or the quiet figure of the bereaved girl in the closing scene of *The Woodlanders*, as wonderful a piece of art as Turner's painting of "The Fighting Temeraire"? In these is struck the consummate tragic note, as in old Æschylus and our own Shakespeare. They wring the heart like personal experience. For they are life sublimed by passing through an imagination of uncommon force.

Opinions differ as to which is the greatest of Hardy's novels, but he himself preferred *Jude the Obscure*, and once observed: "When I am dead the only one of my novels that will be read is *Jude the Obscure*. In making this statement, the great nove-

list did less than justice to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, a truly magnificent piece of work that might have been inspired by one of the greatest of the Greek dramatists.

It is a further proof of Hardy's many-sided genius that he achieved success in poetry, no less than in prose. He began his literary career with verse in the far-off "sixties" of the last century, and in the evening of his days he turned again to the muses, and wrote with all the zest and enthusiasm of a young poet beginning his career instead of a veteran who had enriched his country's literature with masterpieces for two whole generations. His poetic masterpiece, *The Dynasts*, alone would have made the reputation of a lesser man. As for his lyrics, they possess a poignancy, a rhythm, and a personal style that are extremely individual. And, be it noted, his poetry has the same intellectual outlook as his prose. Humanity is limned against a remorseless background:—

Meanwhile the winds and rains,
And earth's old glooms and pains,
Are still the same, and death and glad life
neighbours nigh.

The attentive reader cannot fail to note the essential Secularism in Hardy's novels and poems. Even in the earlier books, amid their picturesque colour, their delightful atmosphere, their delicious pastoral scents and sounds, there is a frank and free Paganism. As the author advances in reputation, and grows in intellectual power, the note deepens, until in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* it grows into a cry of defiance, and, finally, in *Jude the Obscure*, a great sob of pain.

This Pagan attitude was habitual to the man. There seems a dramatic fitness in the fact that the last things to be read to him at his own request were a few stanzas from Edward Fitzgerald's version of "The Rubáiyát" of Omar Khayyám, the most splendid poet who swept his lyre under the Mohammedan crescent. The quatrains included the lines:—

"One moment in annihilation's waste,
One moment, of the well of life to taste—
The stars are setting and the caravan
Starts for the dawn of nothing—Oh, make haste!"

Much of Hardy's work was "caviare to the general," and *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure*, were both banned by the circulating libraries, a fate they shared with Meredith's *Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, one of the most beautiful love stories in the language. On its first appearance in serial form, *Tess* had whole chapters mutilated by the blue pencil of the censor. Even so, readers, whose regular literary food was composed of "best-selling" rubbish, were startled. At dinner one evening a lady asked Hardy why he hanged poor *Tess*, when the whole mob of characters in this book wanted hanging. Many professional critics made similar laughing-stocks of themselves, when criticizing masterpieces written "over their heads." Hardy retaliated by gently chiding those journalists, "who had turned Christian for half an hour," in order to abuse him the better.

Although it was not "roses all the way," it is pleasant to recall that Hardy did win real appreciation in his lifetime, and that he did not endure the usual fate of pioneers—of starving to death and having ugly statues erected to their memory afterwards. Both on his seventieth and eightieth birthdays, Hardy received memorials signed by most of the famous literary artists of the day. It was well and happily done, for as his brother writers reminded him in the birthday address, he had always written in the high style, and he had crowned a great prose with a noble poetry.

MIMNERMUS.

God and the Floods.

EARLY on Saturday morning, the 7th January, the Thames overflowed its banks from Woolwich to Hammersmith, and in its course drowned fourteen men, women and children, who were trapped in their homes, without the possibility of escape. Some were sleeping in the basements of large houses, others were caught in their bedrooms, which were submerged to the height of five or six feet, and many had narrow and perilous escapes.

In Bermondsey alone, between 800 and 1,000 homes were rendered uninhabitable, and in some of the very poor districts by the waterside, immense quantities of oil, creosote and tar from oil mills and factories washed into homes and not only destroyed furniture, but also the food that had been purchased for Sunday's dinner. In Deptford the Royal Victoria Victualling Yard was swamped by a weight of water nearly ten feet high, and one of the walls collapsed, flooding over 100 basements in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in this ancient Borough.

All along the riverside, from Rotherhithe, through Bermondsey and Southwark and Lambeth on the Surrey side; and on the Middlesex side, past the Houses of Parliament, the Tate Museum, through Pimlico and large portions of the Borough of Westminster, causing great havoc and loss of life, and so it proceeded through Battersea and Hammersmith to the higher reaches of the Thames.

The amount of property and food supplies destroyed at various wharves and warehouses has been very great, but, of course, it will be a long time before a proper estimate can be made.

However, it has been estimated provisionally that between the Tower Bridge and Southwark Bridge, the damage amounts to not less than £500,000, and probably the total will reach over a million. The various authorities such as The London County Council, the Port of London, The Thames Conservancy and the various Borough Councils affected, have been asking, through their members, who is to bear the blame for this terrible catastrophe? Each of these authorities in turn has disclaimed all responsibility for such an unforeseen occurrence.

Mr. Strauss, however, member of Parliament for Southwark, has boldly declared that it was "an act of God," and therefore, none of these great public bodies are to blame; but like the good and generous man he is, he has set about doing all he could to alleviate the distress in the Borough he represents.

He, at all events, is not like some of the Christians I have met, who proclaim that the disaster was brought about by the sins of the people of London, and that it is only an unfortunate accident that the innocent have had to suffer as well as the guilty. One clergyman puts the blame upon all the public authorities collectively, but if he really believes in a good, kind and loving heavenly Father who knows beforehand everything that is going to happen, surely such a God could have given some of his representatives on earth *exclusive information* as to what he was going to do, so that they might have proclaimed their information from the housetops. God the Father, according to all theologians, is the governor and ruler of the Universe; he knows what is going to happen, even to the fall of a sparrow. Surely such a God would not allow a number of innocent women and children to be drowned at one fell swoop? God the Son does not appear to be responsible for any of the great disasters, he does not appear to have a hand in such affairs; but God, the Holy Ghost, which I understand to mean "The Holy Wind," may have acted in collaboration with the Father. For such disasters as those that come under the head of "The

Act of God," there is no remedy in law. The poor sufferers have to depend upon the goodwill, the humanity and the charity of the wealthier members of the community. And on such occasions the poor know that they are far more likely to get relief and help in a variety of ways from their neighbours and from their fellow-sufferers than *from above*. During the week I saw the portraits of about a dozen young children, whose homes had been destroyed, in a large bed in "The Rotherhithe Town Hall." They were being well looked after, and perhaps they were as happy as they would have been in their homes. But all this was done by the kindness of their friends, and by the humanity of the members of the local Council. I do not say that the clergy of various denominations did not do their part in alleviation of the distress; they did; and so did various members of the Salvation Army; but I claim that they did it on humanitarian grounds—in which case their humanity was better than their creed. It is to be hoped, however, that all the Borough Councils of London, as well as the County Council, will contribute towards meeting the expenses involved in this great disaster so that the cost may be spread over the whole of London.

As Freethinkers we stand in a perfectly rational and impregnable position in the face of such a disaster. We say it was caused by forces of nature, which in our present state of knowledge we were unable to fully understand or control, and therefore we do not lay the blame on any God or gods who are supposed to exist outside nature; but we trust to our men of science to help us to find a remedy and thus protect the poor and helpless from another such calamity in the future.

Such is our hope and such our belief; and these appeal alike to the heart and the intellect.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Spiritualism amongst Pagan and Savage Races and as Revealed in the Bible.

(Concluded from page 54.)

THE spiritualists of to-day contend that their evidence of the survival of the soul and the possibility of communication with departed spirits in the ethereal world is borne out fully and completely by the Bible. Theologians, professional and amateur, while subscribing to the idea of immortality, claim that communication is either plainly impossible or manifestly inadvisable; that the souls with which the spiritualists communicate are evil spirits, equivalent to the demons of the Bible.¹⁴ Now it is readily observable that the whole

¹⁴ As a typical example of the attitude of the English clergy I quote the following gem from a provincial evening newspaper, the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, April 16, 1925: "Outspoken condemnation of so-called 'spirit communication' is voiced by the Vicar of Yeadon (Rev. J. Muir Elliott) in his current monthly letter. 'Let me say quite definitely,' he says, 'that my advice is to leave it alone. If the medium is honest and not mistaken and really is under the influence of a 'control spirit,' how do you know the 'control spirit' is a good spirit and not some evil spirit delighting in deceiving you and causing mischief? It seems to me it is much more likely to be an evil spirit than a good spirit, for I am told that the good spirits progress onwards and upwards to different planes. I have it on good authority that when they progress as far as the third or fourth plane they cannot communicate with earth by speech or movement. I do believe it is possible to communicate with the departed; but it should be left to clever men like Sir Oliver Lodge, to carry out investigations, for they know the dangers and how to avoid them.'" No, not in the time of Julius Cæsar or of Queen Elizabeth was this written, but in this year of grace 1925, by an ornamental product of an English university, and given serious reproduction by what is pleased to term itself a responsible English newspaper! The concluding sentence, with its tribute to the arcane knowledge of Sir Oliver is beyond price!

point of difference is in reality of a tremendous slightness. Both parties are agreed on immortality: that much is crystally clear; without this belief in fact one might as well make a bonfire of all the Bibles and sack the priests. So that, fundamentally and essentially, spiritualism and Christianity are one, as also are Buddhism, Brahminism, and every other religious belief the whole wide world over.

Now, and it must be remembered at this juncture I am dealing entirely with the matter of relative proof, I am free to own that I agree entirely with the spiritualists. Taking the criterion adopted by the psychopomps and the public generally, the Bible, as already shown, provides sufficient evidence of survival and communication to justify the spiritualists in bringing up the Bible as proof. The witch of Endor was a medium, she materialized Samuel, and Saul not only recognized but spoke with him. Moses appeared to Christ. But it is useless to go over this again. The evidence, such as it is, is complete. It is true that the majority of the ghosts mentioned in the Bible are termed evil spirits, but the survival and the possibility of communication with good spirits or angels¹⁵ is proved by the instances given. What exactly were those evil spirits that pervade the Bible from book to book? Neither more nor less than the spirits of the dead kings and heroes deified by the pagans. How exactly these were, by the narrow-minded founders of the Christian religion, transferred into demons is apparent if we carefully consider the origin of Christianity itself as a distinct cult.

Contrary to the opinion held for nineteen hundred years, the real founder of Christianity was not Jesus at all. It was Paul. Had there been no Paul, and had Paul not been an ecstatic, it is safe to assume the Christian religion would never have been born. St. Paul is the man who dominates the New Testament. He is the promulgator of Christianity; the Swedenborg a thousand times magnified of Palestine. Paul wrote his Epistles long before the Gospels were thought of, and although there is no direct evidence of such, it is reasonably safe to assume that whoever were responsible for Mark and the plagiaristic other three Gospels consulted the Epistles and were not a little influenced by them. Now there is no evidence in any of his writings that Paul ever knew either Jesus, or of his evangelical tour through Palestine, until after the Resurrection. Indeed it is supremely doubtful if ever Paul looked upon Jesus as other than an evangelical preacher who was crucified in accordance with the legal form of punishment for heretics and rebels in vogue at that time. Paul's conception of Jesus as a messiah was through revelation after the evangelist's death. The change of view is evidenced in the passage where this Paul, dreamer of dreams, seer of visions, received conversion and revelation at the same time:—

And as he journeyed he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. (Acts ix. 3-6.)

That this theophanic manifestation of Paul's was a subjective one is plain:—

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. (Acts xxii. 9.)

¹⁵ Swedenborg held that angels were all dead men and women.

It is, of course, the same species of messianic delusion that history repeats down the ages, and it resulted in the formation of Christianity, as Mohammed's vision of Allah founded another great cult. Naha Bad got the sacred books of Buddha from the Creator, as did Moses the ten commandments, Mrs. Eddy the book of Christian Science, Joseph Smith the Mormon bible.

Now it is easy to see how the demonology of the Scriptures came into being. It has been sufficiently proved that the pagans of old, like all primitive races the world over, worshipped the spirits of the dead; and naturally enough this led to a polytheistic anthropomorphism, constantly changing and ever-growing. Paul and his compatriots could only destroy this polytheism by the substitution of monotheism, and the coincident denunciation of every other form of ancestor worship, just as Moses declared the Lord God Jehovah the one and only true god, all other gods being evil spirits or devils. To give this decree force and spirit, Moses consummated the rules and regulations of morality and religion known as the ten commandments,¹⁶ and forthwith proceeded to quash forcibly and vigorously every other form of ancestor worship.¹⁷ Whether Moses really inaugurated this worship or whether, as seems probable, Jehovah is the deified Moses, just as Christ is the deified Jesus,¹⁸ is not known. But that Christianity is neither more nor less than the substitution of a monotheistic form of worship of the dead for a polytheistic system is a sure and certain thing: in this lies the one and only explanation of the demonology of the Scriptures.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

American Notes.

HITTING BACK.

There is a good deal of hard hitting in all American agitations. There is much to be said against retaliation in general, without accepting the nonsensical idea of non-resistance to evil. The outrageous fanaticism of Christian missions with their invasive intrusions into one's privacy in order to make a convert, positively invites retaliation. It is a very happy sort of retaliation which is able to "strike only on the box" itself, to hit the actual weapon of offence and help to deprive it of its power.

The American Anti-Bible Society of New York has scored a distinct victory of this salutary form of retaliation.

I recently mentioned, in this column, the Gideon Society, which supplies copies of the Bible to every hotel bedroom in American big cities. Mr. W. S. Bryan, the enterprising secretary of the A.A.B.S., has declared war on the Gideon Society. His plan is an intensive propaganda amongst hotel owners and patrons. His method is to issue a neatly printed leaflet the exact size of the Bible page, perfectly adapted and ready for permanent insertion in the sacred (Gideon) volume. Bane and antidote together! The leaflet will serve as a "guide" to the Bible, pointing out its follies, faults, fallacies, fables, foulnesses and frauds.

There will be no sort of interference with private

¹⁶ The fourth commandment was probably in the nature of a concession: the very fact of its inclusion provides additional evidence of the deep-rooted nature of this ancestor worship.

¹⁷ The rigour with which worship of the dead was denounced is shown in the following passages: Lev. xix. 31; Lev. xx. 6; also Lev. xx. 27. "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them."

¹⁸ The story of Zoroaster affords a remarkable homology to that of Jesus.

property. No Christian need decorate his own personal literature with a commentary he does not approve. Only where there is a public appeal, the public will find Gideon's volume complete and unmutilated exactly as Mr. Gideon would wish, but the public will find simultaneously a friendly word from the Anti-Bible Society, begging a fair-minded consideration of a Freethought view of the Bible, and recommending an impartial study.

The Christian Commercial Travellers Association, which distributes the Bibles, is furious. It warns Mr. Bryan that "there is a law against stealing other people's property." But it remains to be seen whether there is a law permitting a one-sided propaganda. If the book in question were, let us say, *Progress and Poverty*, or any other kind of controversial literature, nobody would disagree that both sides had equal rights (or equal inhibitions) in regard to this form of gratuitous propaganda. The A.A.B.S. deserves the thanks of the travelling public for its good sense and enterprise.

A MONUMENTAL WORK.

How valuable it would be to possess a volume, fully narrating the history of the Christian attitude towards slavery and its abolition. A very fragmentary compilation is possible with some research, but it leaves a wide margin at its best. That margin is always filled up by Christian quotations from Wilberforce and a handful of abolitionists, who are falsely represented as fair samples of contemporary religious thought. Mr. Maynard Shipley is determined that no such hiatus shall exist in regard to the present-day American Christian attitude towards evolution. He has written a closely-documented history of the Fundamentalist attacks on evolution and modernism. His book is to be published by Alfred A. Knopf, under the title *The War On Modern Science*.

It gives the history of the conviction of Mr. Scopes, some of the details of which have never reached England. For example, Mr. Shipley refers to the evidence of famous scientists which the judge (challenged by Mr. Bryan) refused to submit to the jury:—

One of the scientists who went to Tennessee and was barred from testifying for Scopes came from an eastern state that has no medical college. Why? Because there is a law in his state forbidding the dissection of any human body, and no student can be adequately trained in medicine without actually working on and studying the body. When this law was proposed the scientists were indifferent and said it had no significance. What would happen if all the other states passed the same law? The doctors of the future would be untrained and incompetent.

All the instances Mr. Shipley gives are important, although not of equal interest. It is quite a mistake to assume that the Fundamentalist opposition to evolution has no State support outside the Southern States, where ignorance is more firmly entrenched than anywhere else in the civilized world. There is, of course, no State at all where the Fundamentalists are not carrying on their anti-science propaganda. Legislation has been introduced into the legislatures of many States, North and South, to prohibit the teaching of evolution—violation of the prohibition to be made a punishable crime. In several States (Utah is one) evolution is not allowed to be taught in any public school. It is worth noting that there are admirable exceptions amongst Christian denominations, and Mr. Shipley fairly gives information showing several Methodist and other colleges where evolution is taught as a matter of ordinary scientific instruction.

The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church seems to be far from clear. From whatever motive, the Roman Catholics will not join in any Fundamentalist agitation against teaching evolution in the State schools. Mr. Shipley goes so far as to say that "in Roman Catholic colleges, non-Catholic teachers of biology are often employed, and they teach evolution freely." He believes, however, that if it came to a vote, "most Catholics would probably vote for anti-evolution law."

In America it would seem as if evolution is likely to serve as the last great battle ground between religion and Freethought. The field has been chosen by the re-

ligionists. This is what Mr. W. J. Bryan said in October, 1924:—

All the ills which America suffers can be traced back to the teaching of evolution. It would be better to destroy every other book ever written, and save just the first three verses of Genesis.

And Bryan nearly became President of the United States.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH,

Acid Drops.

Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, who did the unkind service of showing up the poor mentality of the House of Commons, by carrying away the members with some cheap "Thank-God-England-is-still-Protestant" stuff, is responsible for the following, according to the *Christian World*:—

Nineteen hundred years ago a young man of thirty, trained as a carpenter, set out from Nazareth to be a preacher. He had been much tempted; tempted to remain in the family business; for he had a mother, brother and sisters; tempted to proclaim himself the liberator and head of a revolutionary movement for the overthrow of Rome and the establishment of a new Jewish State; tempted to use the psychic powers he possessed in the manner of other religious leaders, and become the head of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Now, while it was cruel for Mr. Mitchell to expose the House of Commons in the way he did, it is none the less cruel for the *Christian World* to expose Mr. Mitchell in this manner. Consider (1) The information that Jesus was trained as a carpenter is a mere legend. The story of his working as such is contained in the Apocryphal gospels, and there is told the story of how, when Joseph found a plank too short, Jesus simply stretched it to the required length. (2) The story of his being tempted to remain in the family business (one wonders whether he was promised higher wages, or bigger contracts) is pure imagination. It is a creation of Mr. Mitchell's. (3) There is no evidence whatever that he was tempted to become the head of a revolutionary movement. That, again, is pure romance. (4) Jesus, according to the New Testament, did use his "psychic" powers exactly as all other religious fakirs had done. He had conflicts with devils, he healed the blind, he cured disease by a touch, he cast demons out of people, he raised men from the dead, he miraculously multiplied the amount of food present to feed a multitude. Mr. Mitchell's tremendous eloquence turns out, on the most cursory examination, to be the sheerest fustian that was ever published. But he is quite safe so long as he applies it to religious purposes. For what is wanted there is glibness. Accuracy of statement, and clearness of thought, are drawbacks in such connexion. All the same, if we were Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, we would not have these religious discourses published. If his enemies will publish them, he may have to put up with it, unless he issues an injunction.

Mr. Frank Hodges, at a Whitefield's men's meeting, said that Christianity believes, or stipulates, the Fatherhood of God, and that if one admits the conception of the Fatherhood of God, one must logically accept the moral dictum of the brotherhood of man. It is just as well to remind Mr. Hodges that acceptance of the brotherhood of man theory by no means depends on admission of the Fatherhood of God conception. Assent to the theory can be given on the grounds that every individual is a unit in the social whole, and that relations of equity, amity, and co-operation benefit the whole.

An anonymous writer who specializes in pious uplift in the Saturday edition of the *Times* said recently:—

The finest quality of life is attained by those who, going out in the pursuit of a fine ideal, give themselves to it with unremitting devotion. Men become like that which they sincerely reverence.

Freethinkers go out after and devote themselves to a fine ideal. But we suppose they fail to attain "the

finest quality of life," because they are content merely to admire that ideal, not reverence it.

Education, says the Headmaster of Dulwich College, tries to do for the individual in a few years what the race has taken centuries to learn. To this we will add that religious education tries to implant in the individual what the race has for centuries striven to unlearn.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society has a deficit of £20,000, which it wishes its dupes to supply. We dare say the money will be forthcoming. The old proverb says, fools and their money are soon parted. And missionary societies are adept at the "parting" business, under guidance from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

How did Christ think of himself? A pious journal asks the question. From the three columns of answer, we gather that Christ thought of himself in much the same way as all other ego-centric religious fanatics have done throughout history.

Mr. R. H. Brown of the *Methodist Recorder* deserves to be encouraged. He says:—

Cost what it may, let your search for truth be fearless, for, as Lord Morley truly said: "It is the possession of ever more and more truth that makes life ever better worth having and better worth preserving." Thought only destroys errors, and if such be your stock of beliefs, the sooner you are rid of them the better.

That, of course, is good as far as it goes. But it will not go very far with Methodists. They have no rational means of testing whether a thing is truth or not. They have only the Holy Bible; everything is rejected that does not square with "thus saith the Lord."

Unless the ministry itself holds a high place in the reverence of the people, declares the Rev. F. W. Norwood, great men of special attainments (as preachers) cannot be expected to select the ministry as their vocation. If that is the case, the Churches will be compelled to wait a long time for "great men." Reverence for parsons has gone out of fashion.

Prof. McKenzie, of Parton College, Nottingham, said that the first question to be settled by a Sunday school committee was: What is the function of religious education, and what is the aim in the Sunday school? His answer was that the aim of the schools must be to help the child to acquire a permanent interest in religion, and also a religious sentiment that would become the basis of his personality. The Professor might now explain why it is necessary for the child to acquire an interest in religion, and a religious sentiment, seeing that mankind is declared (on parsonic authority) to be born with a religious instinct, and to be incurably religious, etc.

Discussing the application of psychology to religious teaching, Prof. McKenzie said that it was the duty of Sunday school teachers to try to understand the mental processes that lay behind behaviour, so that they might direct them. The Professor will get teachers sorely muddled if he talks like that. From a study of the Bible they know that when the child is good he has listened to the voice of God, and when he is bad he has been tempted by the Devil. That delightfully simple theory has served many generations of Sunday school teachers; surely it is good enough for this generation. They will begin to think it is all wrong if the Professor talks about trying to understand mental processes. We advise them to stick to the Christian Free-will theory.

A writer in a religious weekly says: "It is remarkable how much homage was paid to Thomas Hardy during the latter years of his life." What is not remarkable is the amount of disparagement and vilification hinted at Hardy during the early years of his literary career. It is not remarkable because Christians always think and act like Christians.

The Rev. Bardsley Brash also says:—

There are some things in Hardy's writings which we wish were not there, some messages for which we crave which Hardy will not give us; but we always find in him a passionate love of Nature, eyes that see the heroic grandeur in simple and unknown men and women, artistry which is like a spell of magic, a noble regard for truth, and a pity near to tears.

We suggest Hardy's "noble regard for truth" may explain why his writings give some things unpalatable to Christians, and why they leave out the messages Christians wish had been given.

The death of Thomas Hardy has provided opportunity for pious dabblers in literary criticism to pay the usual left-handed compliment to a great Freethinker, whom they can no longer disparage or ignore. Hardy, according to one such appreciator, "was nearer to the Gospel and Jesus than were some of his critics." It seems a pity Hardy should have been so near perfection and yet have been unaware of it. That appears always to be the position with the great Freethinker. The Christian living a Christly life in thought and deed is always aware of the fact, but the Freethinker never knows that he has lived like that until after he is dead!

A religious weekly says that though Hardy has been acclaimed as a great figure in English literature, he was but a name to the majority of his fellow-countrymen, and he was read only by a comparatively small number of the reading public. The *Methodist Recorder*, on the other hand, says that one lasting boon Hardy has given the world is that he rescued rusticity from clownishness. "To Thomas Hardy, more than to any other, is due the increasing charm and attraction which the modern town-dweller finds in rural scenery and life." There are some acute observers among the pious.

Christopher South, in the *Sunday School Chronicle*, says he first read five of Hardy's novels twenty-five years ago.

I read all with complete absorption in the stories, but in constant revolt against the philosophy that inspired them. When I had finished *Jude* and *Tess*, with their appalling endings, I felt as if I never wanted to read another novel by Thomas Hardy. It follows then that while I admire his work, I do not rank him among great novelists. Something is lacking for greatness.

Mr. South ranks Conrad intellectually higher than Hardy. Conrad's unbelief, he says, does not affect him (Mr. South) so painfully as the pitiless negation of *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure*. From all this the reader can gather that a real literary critic has an infallible guide for discovering an author's greatness. If what the author says agrees with the critic's religious prejudices, the author is a great writer.

Hardy's death has brought about a great interest in his books. There will be nothing to find in them to substantiate any of the pious gush that has appeared in the daily papers that seemed to be waiting like a shoal of sharks. Simultaneously with the announcement of his decease, at 9.5 on Thursday night, January 11, there appeared two columns of appreciation in the *Daily News*, January 12. This is prompt honour, but we suppose that there is a special set of ethics for journalism that makes the ordinary reader feel a desire to be sick.

The *Church Times*, while not venturing on an objection to Thomas Hardy being buried in Westminster Abbey, evidently feels uneasy on the matter. It says, that if men of all and of no religion are to be buried there, it will make it "difficult to object to the nationalization or even the laicizing of the fabric, should disestablishment become practical politics." We may remind the *Church Times* that the Abbey is not legally the property of the Church, but of the State, and it is for the Secular State to decide who shall or shall not be buried therein. It is only because this right is not exercised that the parsons have a voice in the matter.

We have several times called attention to the campaign that is afoot to give the Churches and Chapels greater control over the Press. There has just come into our possession a circular letter that is being sent round to newspapers, which is sent out with the approval of a number of leading clergymen of all the different denominations, and which is being "watched with considerable interest" by the Bench of Bishops, aiming at making the Press "a grandly effective pulpit." The circular sent out is dated from Russell Square, and has a footnote marked "Private," asking for a "copy of your charges for religious advertisements." We have no doubt that many papers will rise to the implied bribe.

From *John Bull* :—

All denominations, including the Church of England, are joining in a religious demonstration against war. Belated allegiance to Christianity is better than none. Had its followers been faithful, war would have vanished ages ago.

It makes us feel very depressed when we think about the millions of Christians who, throughout the ages, have been unfaithful to their religion; and that, too, during the most flourishing period of the Christian creed. Probably God will forgive them; for he must know that his Old Testament made Christian men view righteous wars as very glorious adventures. Maybe, the unfaithful might have done better if only the Lord had so written his Holy Word that all Christians could have agreed as to what exactly it meant.

A writer in the *Daily Chronicle* discusses metaphorical "apron strings." There are some that just strangle us. They are tightly drawn round our neck, so tightly that we are gradually brought to a state of inertia. The writer must have had in mind the apron strings of Christian dogma. They do all he says apron strings do.

At a recent Clerical Conference, Canon A. Rowland Grant, of Norwich, said that since the rejection of the Prayer Book by Parliament, one could hardly say that the same Christian charity or magnanimity of spirit had been shown by the supporters of the book, they were fain to ask of those who had opposed it. The amount of spleen and chagrin displayed was hardly edifying, while to denounce the speeches in the Commons as illogical, ignorant, and due to wild misunderstanding made strange reading when the legal eminence of at least four speakers was borne in mind. He hoped that those who to-day were going about breathing out threatenings and slaughter would before long come to a better frame of mind. After all this it seems waste of time to enquire what brand of magnanimity, peace and goodwill towards all men was brought into the world by the Christian religion.

Not in striking headlines, but in an obscure corner of a newspaper, we are told that clothes have contributed to the moral decadence of the natives in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Apart from the fact that "moral decadence" is a yard of elastic and may mean anything, it is interesting to learn that according to Roman Catholic standards women's bare arms are a menace to the soul

of Italy, as enunciated by Cardinal Maffi. What an encumbrance to the soul is this nuisance of a body—but, with the milk of human kindness, let us state in all charity, that clothes, for the bodies of many continental priests we have seen, are a mercy, a blessing, a boon, a God-thank-him-I've-got-them, restrainers, and holders together of fat acquired in the laziest way of making a living.

After some two thousand years of Christianity some fifty delegates attended a congress convened by the International Red Cross of Geneva, to examine the question of the protection of civilians from the dangers of chemical warfare. The energy of poultice-makers might be spent better in examining causes which can be learned free gratis and for nothing, from a few independent journals in this country, but it would be useless to apply for this information from the Bishops as they are too busy in the work of adaptation to environment—otherwise known as Prayer Book revision. Another reason might be that they are no authority on matters requiring commonsense.

The Church, with brawling at home and trouble abroad has a pretty kettle of fish. Mr. Moffat, the Premier of Southern Rhodesia, has a few plain words for missionaries. From a report before us he states that :—

Missionaries were blackening the good name of Rhodesia, and natives reading the newspapers would imagine grievances which never existed.

It will appear, therefore, that missionaries will soon be written down as a liability of the Empire, and Lord Inchcape can, with confidence, bag this fact, if he should think that he has said something that sensible people are not thinking.

For the sake of peace Dean Inge was asked to stop away from Hull. He was due to preach a sermon, but a repetition of the disorderly scenes at St. Paul's was feared. Let brotherly love continue.

At the Psychic Book Shop in Westminster, a sale is announced owing to floods. One would have thought that there would have been a few spirits on sentry-go to prevent such accidents to literature, but apparently they were too busy with tambourines or tickling the whiskers of grown-up children.

A GERMAN ON ENGLAND.

The French look for some cheap, rhetorical understanding of the human heart; the German, for a grain of foggy idealism or misty metaphysics; the English demand a mixture of some matter-of-factness, tangibility, sentimentality, and logic.

The prudishness of which the pre-war English reader was accused seems to have vanished. Yet it seems a fact that in English novels sexual problems even now play a much smaller part than in the literature of other countries.

The humour of no other nation is so pleasantly effortless, so clean and 'dry—I want to say, so little greasy—as the English humour. When I want to give myself a cheerful hour I take up one of those splendid and well-aired books which no other nation can produce, and which no other taste so values as the English.

Lion Feuchtwanger.

The Greek was the inquirer, the artist, the thinker, inspired by a living fancy; the Roman was the farmer, the man of deeds, unimaginative and practical. The Roman gods were just powers that *did* things; they had no personal histories. No tales of love and hate and vengeance were told of them, such as Greek imagination invented for the gods of Greece.—Norman Baynes.

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.

R. BISSET.—Glad you found the parcel useful. One may safely trust the clergy never to miss opportunities of the kind you name.

R. BROWN.—The B.B.C. seems quite shameless in its resolve to use its machinery as an instrument of religious propaganda. See "Acid Drops."

F. E. MONKS.—Pleased to hear that Manchester Branch's Social was so successful, in spite of the bad weather.

A. HOLMES.—Your experiences in Telepathy are quite interesting, and we have an open and disinterested mind on the subject. But we can see several considerations that would make your experience less conclusive than you appear to think. The fact, for instance, that the train service is necessarily limited, and that a large number of the possible trains would be ruled out by reason of time, knowledge of each other's habits, etc.

M. SEIDMAN.—One must exercise some amount of liberality in such matters, and it is to be expected that a Free-thought lecturer will, now and again, take a subject that is apart from the beaten track.

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

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Sugar Plums.

The Annual Dinner of the London Freethinkers, on Saturday, January 21, was a pronounced success. The number present was greater than has been the case for many years. The number of provincial visitors was not quite as large as was anticipated, although friends from Grimsby, South Wales, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Bakewell, Saltash, Plymouth, Nottingham, and elsewhere were present, and Mr. Andrew Millar travelled all the way from Ayr to form one of the company.

The dinner was, as usual, excellent; and the speeches of Mr. Harry Snell, Colonel Lynch, and Messrs. Kerr, Rosetti, and Moss were good. The musical part of the programme was by common consent voted one of the best we had yet had, and old attendants at public dinners were emphatic in its praise. For this part of the programme the Society was indebted to Mr. George Royle. His knowledge and excellent taste is placed without reserve at the service of the Society, and everyone was indebted to him for making the evening such an enjoyable one.

The work behind the scenes, arranging tables, placing the diners, etc., etc.—by far the most arduous part of the work, and the least showy—was this year again mainly performed by Miss Vance and Miss Kough, the new General Secretary, Mr. Mann, acting under their advice. This was inevitable in the circumstances, as every Society function has its own individual peculiarities, which a newcomer can only master by experience. We expect the tempers of these two ladies were somewhat tired by a number of visitors who turned up at the last moment, but room for these was found, and

things went with a swing. But a swing that does not have balance behind it is likely to resolve itself into a series of jerks, and the fact that the jerks did not occur is a testimony to the skill with which the whole thing was stage-managed.

Mr Cohen's meeting at Croydon, on the 18th, suffered somewhat from the wretched weather that prevailed. In the circumstances the meeting was a very fair one, and it was more than merely satisfactory from the number of obvious newcomers to such meetings, and the general sympathy with which the lecture was received. There were many questions after the lecture, and several new members were made. There is some prospect of a Croydon Branch of the Society being formed in the near future. There was a column report of the lecture in the *Croydon Times*, which was very fairly done.

On Sunday next (February 5) Mr. Cohen will lecture at Chester-le-Street. Full particulars will appear in next week's issue.

We have received a set of the forty-eight Little Blue Books, written by Mr. Joseph McCabe, and published by Haldeman-Julius, Kansas, U.S.A. The booklets cover a wide range of subjects, and will be found useful for propaganda purposes. Each of the Blue Books runs to about sixty-four pages, and is of quite convenient size to be carried in the pocket. The complete set of forty-eight, published at 3d. each, will be sent post free for 13s., by Mr. G. K. Holliday, 82 Eridge Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey. A complete list of the publications, with titles, will be found on our advertisement pages.

To-day (January 29) Mr. E. Roy Calvert is the lecturer for the Manchester Branch. The meetings, as usual, will be held in the Engineers Hall, 120 Rusholme Road. At 3 p.m., Mr. Calvert will lecture on "The Treatment of Crime—Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow," and at 6.30, on "Should Capital Punishment be Abolished?" Mr. Calvert is the author of a recently published and much quoted book entitled *Capital Punishment in the Twentieth Century*. He is the Secretary of the National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, and is a specialist on the subject matters of his lectures. We hope to hear of crowded meetings.

In his lecture at Liverpool, on Jan. 15, Mr. Cohen quoted from a printed list of some 87 "sins," which a girl going to confession was expected to examine herself on, and write down replies. He called this a Catholic tract, but a listener writes informing him that it is not issued by the Roman Catholic Church, but by Anglo-Catholics. Mr. Cohen accepts the correction, although it will not be denied, we take it, that the same questions are asked by the priest in the confessional, and in any case the questions are too stupid for anyone but a priest to ask a girl. And if it will give our correspondent any satisfaction, we are quite ready to grant that Anglo-Catholics are just as stupid, and as cunning, as the priests of the older Church.

To-day (January 29) being the nearest date to the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh, Mr. E. Hale is taking the founder of the National Secular Society for a subject in the No. 2 Room, City Hall, Glasgow. The time of the meeting is 6.30. Glasgow friends will please note.

Another Social Evening will be held by the West Ham Branch, on Saturday, February 4, in the Earlham Hall, Forest Gate. There will be the usual programme of music, dancing and games; it is hoped that as many as possible will come in fancy dress. There are to be prizes for the best costumes. Freethinkers and friends are all welcome.

We have received several letters from readers who have been writing the B.B.C. on its religious propaganda, and its exclusion. We intended commenting on these in the present issue, but they will keep till next week.

Sex "Morality" of Roman Catholicism.

(Continued from page 59.)

THAT the priests in England get their chattels married is simply a matter of policy forced on them by public opinion. In countries where Catholics are not in the presence of more highly civilized non-Catholics the priests do not worry overmuch about marriage. So long as the supply of chattels is kept up they do not mind. Nay, rather, they would seem to prefer to keep the women unmarried. For then there is more "sin"—and "sin" is profitable. As a result illegitimacy rises to unbelievable proportions—unbelievable that is to English decency. Here are a few statistics taken from *Protestant Progress and Papal Claims*—a wonderful book by an outspoken Scot. Take, first, cities (p. 61—the figures represent % of illegitimate births): London 4, Paris 33, Brussels 35, Munich 48, Vienna 51, Milan 35.

Take countries: England 4.1; Austria and Bavaria, over 12; South American States (R.C.), 30-60.

In 1906 the figure for Venezuela reached 68.8 per cent! Closely connected with illegitimacy is the desertion of children, *i.e.*, making them "foundlings."

In 1910 there were 1,401 foundlings in Scotland. In that same year there were 3,000 in Paris alone, and 40,000 in Italy and 42,000 in Austria.

When Rome was the Pope's own city, that is, when Rome was run by priests, that city of celibates required more foundling hospitals than any other three cities in Europe—and nine out of ten of the poor little things died of neglect and starvation. Think of it—*nine out of ten*.

After Garibaldi had conquered Rome there were found in the graveyard of one convent the remains of over 800 infants—probably all murdered, in the same manner as described by Maria Monk in her account of a Montreal monastery. There are some vile secrets in connexion with priests.

Prostitution is an unsavoury subject, but it is necessary to point out that a known practising prostitute can be a practising and a pious Roman Catholic. No corresponding state of affairs is possible or thinkable among Protestants. I have never heard or read of such a thing—has anyone else? The reason why a Roman Catholic woman can *continue* at this trade is that she can go, daily if she likes, to the priest in the confessional and be regularly made and remade "pure."

It seems to me that here also we get some explanation of the deplorable state to which our theatres and music halls are getting. Indecency in dress and dialogue and plot, have arrived at a deplorable pitch. There can be no question of the immodesty of many actresses and chorus girls—being a matter of public exhibition it is there for everybody to see—and that off the stage they are probably prostitutes will scarcely be doubted. But for those who are Roman Catholics (and a very large proportion of them are), what does it matter? They go to confession and so it is alright. And, unknown to themselves, they are doing priests' work. For the object of the priests is to injure *us*—to injure and weaken England. These girls and women, by pandering to the animal lusts of our people are lowering our moral tone, *weakening us*. The more effective they are in their infamous task, the more satisfied are the priests. Think it over.

The parties who prate and brag about the chastity of their women folk are usually Irish Catholics. But the boasting does not stand full 100% when ex-

amined. We have seen how the confessional is a direct incentive to immorality, but the immorality is kept hidden by, firstly, the policy of forcing early marriages, and secondly by the policy of prohibiting divorce. Divorce proceedings make a public scandal of adultery. The fear of publicity prevents a lot of adultery. But priests prefer secret immorality—they are mortally afraid that publicity would show up the rottenness of their "purity" claims. Also, "secret" sinning brings profitable business to the confessional, and the acquisition of "secrets" adds to the hold the priests have on their chattels. Immorality is profitable to them. The clue to the priests' policy and behaviour is simple—look for what will produce for them most profit, power and influence—and don't make any allowance for scruples—they have none. This matter of Irish "purity" supplies a peculiarly nefarious instance of how priests behave. Girls in Ireland who are going to put up the Irish illegitimacy statistics are hustled over to Liverpool or Glasgow—and as our indignant Scotsman says, "the inflated statistics of Scottish illegitimacy are (then) held up to public contempt by the priests who are responsible for these things."

And what is the future career of these girls, sent to hide their shame amongst strangers? Occasionally some Catholic gets a twinge of conscience and blurts out the truth. In *Protestant Progress and Papal Claims*, the following are quoted from Roman Catholic sources. "The vice and immorality among the Catholic body in Liverpool are fearful . . . nine out of ten of the girls in London Road or Lime Street are Catholics . . . in Liverpool the strongest phalanx in the devil's army is recruited from the ranks of Catholicism . . . thieving, harlotry, intemperance—the majority are Irish Catholics . . . During one year in Liverpool, 21,324 were committed to goal—13,676 Catholics and 7,648 non-Catholics—reckoning women only, 6,439 Catholic women and 2,518 non-Catholic women. The daily average of the prison population was 633.45 Catholics and 327.82 non-Catholics. And of course the Catholic proportion of the population of Liverpool is only a fraction of the whole. Irish morality forsooth!

When Catholics try to make comparisons between countries they "discreetly" confine themselves to two. One is Ireland, which is held up for its beautiful spirituality and "awful" chastity—the adjective is of their own choosing and shows a lack of humour. The other country is Belgium, which happens to be the only Roman Catholic country that has been successful commercially. Of Belgium's commercial morality, one has only to mention Congo atrocities. As to our present subject, listen to this description of the Belgium mining districts: "Immorality and especially that which takes the form of girl mothers is general and widespread . . . the miner *seeks* as a wife the woman who has the greatest number of illegitimate children . . . it is scarcely going too far to say that morality does not exist in the mining districts . . . it is quite a common thing to find in a miner's house, a married man with one or two children of his own, and four or even more sons or daughters of the wife by different men in the pre-nuptial state."

Apart from the illegitimate children, these Belgian miners could probably be described like Scottish Catholic miners thus referred to by Father Graham: "The thing that struck me most of all was the distinctively religious atmosphere about their dwellings . . . there might not be a stick of furniture in the house, nor anything that you could truthfully call by the name of table or chair; the floor might be a mass of filth, the walls swarming with vermin, and the

children all but naked; yet one thing you could never miss seeing—a picture of the Sacred Heart, or of our Blessed Lady, or of the Pope or some such emblem of religion." Thus says his Scotch critic: "Of the drunken blackguards and their wives who were responsible for the naked children, the filth, the vermin and the picture of the Pope, Father Graham goes on to say, 'these people at all events do not forget eternity. Their religion perpetually reminds them of their relation to God; it lifts them above this sordid world and teaches them to remember the supernatural' . . . And this expresses Popery in a word. If there is a picture of the Pope or "Our Lady" or the Sacred Heart, etc., conduct *does not matter* . . . drunkenness, cruelty to children, filth and dirt *do not matter*—the picture of the Pope is there and the perfume (?) of heaven is over all."

The Anglo-Saxon likes to be comfortable. He is clean and thrifty, has a good home and lives well—and these Irish Catholics, prating about their own "spirituality" (*i.e.*, superstition) call the Anglo-Saxon "swinish." The Irish have no humour; they have too much "spirituality."

When a country is 100% Roman Catholic it is a midden—both morally and materially. And the priests are cocks of the midden. I am not talking allegorically but literally. Read descriptions of Roman Catholic countries, both past and present, and you find that morally and materially they approximate to the farm yard.

For 1500 years Roman Catholic priests have wallowed in sensuality. From popes and cardinals downwards they have been far worse than laymen. Nothing in the History of Babylon or Rome is as bad as the record of the Papacy.

In the early centuries of this period, election to the Papacy was a matter of *force majeure* and the Popes were bloodthirsty ruffians. It was a common practice for the successful one to cut out the eyes and otherwisemutilate his defeated rivals—if caught. One Pope did not catch his rival, but after his death the rival succeeded and became Pope Stephen VI. The dead and putrid body of the first-named was dragged from its grave, put on the pontifical throne and judged. The sacred vestments were torn from it, three mouldering fingers cut from the right hand, and the corpse thrown into the Tiber. (McCabe's *Popes and their Church*, p. 32.) Imbecile Roman Catholics want us to believe that these men were God's Vice-Regents on earth!

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be continued.)

Relativity and Religion.

Does the new theory of Relativity, expounded by Einstein, favour religion or atheism? Such is the question with which the ordinary man, unversed in science, but who is dimly aware that there has been a great revolution in scientific thought since the beginning of the present century, is concerned with.

The religious press, as a whole, have welcomed the new theory because, they claim, it has shattered the Newtonian hypothesis, the foundation upon which modern materialism was founded.

The sole interest taken by the religious mind in science, is, whether it supports religion or opposes it. If it supports religion it is good and highly commendable, if it opposes religion then it is bad and accursed. The history of the Newtonian hypothesis proves this up to the hilt. When Newton published his discovery of the law of gravitation, it was denounced by the leaders of religious thought as atheistic, by sub-

stituting the law of gravitation for the action of God. Wesley himself denounced it as tending towards infidelity. Volumes, in this strain, were written against it by the religious leaders of the time. There is not the slightest doubt but that, if the Protestants of that time had possessed the power the Catholic Church possessed in the time of Galileo, Newton's work would have been condemned and suppressed.

But as time went on, and the Newtonian hypothesis became firmly established, and could no longer be opposed, they turned completely round, and professed to find an additional support for religion in the hypothesis that they had previously denounced as atheistic! Now, when Relativity is supposed to have disposed of Newton, they proclaim their joy in the event, because they think that God has been freed from the restraints of physical law, and there is no doubt that if Relativity was discarded, and a return made to the older views, they would be equally ready to turn about again. They resemble the American candidate for election, who, having expounded his principles, concluded: "Them's my sentiments gentlemen, and if they don't suit they kin be altered."

As for Einstein's theory destroying the work of Newton, the idea is absurd. Prof. Rice, in his popular exposition of Relativity, forewarns "the reader against the belief, fostered in quarters where sensationalism pays, that Einstein's work in some mysterious way has destroyed Newton's. The absurdity of such a suggestion will only be too apparent as we proceed. Two centuries of experiment and mathematical analysis lie between the two men, and Einstein stands on the shoulders of the greatest scientific man who has ever lived."¹ Einstein himself observes: "The new theory of gravitation diverges widely from that of Newton with respect to its basal principle. But in practical application the two agree so closely that it has been difficult to find cases in which the actual differences could be subjected to observation."² And again: "No one must think that Newton's great creation can be overthrown in any real sense by this or by any other theory. His clear and wide ideas will forever retain their significance as the foundation on which our modern conceptions of physics have been built." (Page 119.)

Einstein's first success was concerned with the planet Mercury. There was an unaccountable discrepancy in the revolution of this planet, according to the laws of Newton; it was very small, amounting to no more than an angle of forty-two seconds in a hundred years, or rather less than half a second of angle after each revolution. Einstein's new law accounted for this discrepancy, as well as for its absence in the case of the other planets.

Einstein's second success was more sensational, it proved his new method and made him world-famous. Before the advent of Relativity, it was universally believed that light in a vacuum always travelled in straight lines. Einstein predicted that if the light of a star passed very near the sun, the ray from the star would be turned through an angle of one second and three quarters. At the next eclipse of the sun, May 29, 1919—the first after the armistice—two British expeditions photographed the stars near the sun during the eclipse, and the result confirmed Einstein's prediction.

To give a popular exposition of Relativity is by no means easy; in fact, it is impossible to really under-

¹ Prof. J. Rice: *Relativity*. 1927. (Page 8.)

² Cited by E. Slosson: *Easy Lessons in Einstein*. (Page 118.)

stand it in all its bearings without a knowledge of the higher mathematics. A few years ago it was said that there were not more than half a dozen men in Europe who really understood it. As Prof. Bertrand Russell remarks: "It is true that there are innumerable popular accounts of the theory of relativity, but they generally cease to be intelligible just at the point where they begin to say something important."³

A reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement*, some while ago, reviewing a batch of these popular explanations of Relativity, after pointing out their failure, declared his conviction that it is impossible to give a popular explanation of it, but still they come. Benn's Sixpenny Library has just issued one by Prof. Rice. But after the seeker has patiently read all these popular explanations, it is a question whether he would not be rather more bewildered than when he started. However, we can take note of the opinions of those who do understand the theory and its bearing upon religion and philosophy. Prof. Bertrand Russell tells us that, "The philosophical consequences of relativity are neither so great nor so startling as is sometimes thought. It throws very little light on time-honoured controversies, such as that between realism and idealism."⁴ And observes that the effect of the idea of the relativity of time "upon a certain type of emotion is devastating."

"The poet speaks of

One far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.

But if the event is sufficiently far off, and the creation moves sufficiently quickly, some parts will judge that the event has already happened, while others will judge that it is still in the future. This spoils the poetry. The second line ought to be:—

To which some parts of the creation move, while others move away from it.

But this won't do. I suggest that an emotion which can be destroyed by a little mathematics is neither very genuine nor very valuable." (*Ibid* pp. 225-26.)

There is a distinct tendency among some of the exponents of Relativity, not only to discard theology, but to give it a parting kick; thus Mr. C. D. Broad observes, of a certain interpretation of a law of nature, that: "it is as idle as the statements in the Athanasian Creed on the internal structure of the Blessed Trinity." His comment upon the fact that: "One bit of matter cannot be at two different points at the same moment (the only alleged exception to this is the Body and Blood of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist),"⁵ will sound still more shocking to earnest Christians.

Professor Eddington, one of the foremost authorities upon Relativity, far from thinking that the new theory favours mysticism, declares of Einstein: "in removing our fetters he leaves us, not (as might have been feared) vague generalities for the ecstatic contemplation of the mystic, but a precise scheme of world structure to engage the mathematical physicist." (A. S. Eddington: *The Theory of Relativity*. Page 32.)

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Magna Charta was the very reverse of a democratic document. More than half the population were serfs, and in Magna Charta serfs were mentioned only twice, and on both occasions as forms of property.

D. C. Somervell.

The Annual Dinner.

At the Midland Grand Hotel, on January 21 last, London Freethinkers and their friends once again met at the Annual Dinner, held under the auspices of the National Secular Society. They formed a large and happy company. Old members were glad to see new faces, and talk over similar functions held in the past. New members felt the tremendous thrill of carrying on the traditions attached to the old cause, handed down year by year by the veterans in the militant Freethought movement. Many sought-for introductions were made, and altogether a jolly, happy atmosphere prevailed. One missed, of course, some familiar faces—Mr. J. T. Lloyd was, unfortunately, absent through illness, and that genial after-dinner *raconteur*, Mr. George Bedborough, is still in America. An excellent dinner was followed by excellent speeches interspersed with an excellent entertainment. The President's brief but pointed speech dealt with aspects of the movement during the past year. He welcomed the visitors, and touched with keen regret on the illness of Mr. Lloyd, who had attended the Dinner for over twenty years. He was glad to announce how, both in numbers and resources, the movement had advanced, but the more we got, the more we should ask for. As for the Church, he was glad to point out also, how it was gradually adopting the Freethought position of 100 years ago. Dean Inge, Dr. Gore and Bishop Barnes were particular examples of great churchmen taking up our positions—of course, without acknowledgment.

The President continued with a reference to the "temporary" conclusion of the fund, which has reached £8,000, to provide Freethinkers with an endowed journal—surely a marvellous result for such a movement as ours. Even the religious papers began to take notice of us—they thought Freethought was dead, but money commands respect. A paper like the *Freethinker* was a necessity for the movement, and George Bernard Shaw had recently pointed out that it was doing work no other paper did. Freethought was a call to service, and though writing a cheque was perhaps an easy way, what was wanted was *service* for the movement. And with some finely expressed hopes for a better future, Mr. Cohen concluded his excellent address to the applause of the company.

Mr. Harry Snell, M.P., proposed the first toast of the evening: "The National Secular Society." As one of the old fighting members of that body, Mr. Snell was in splendid form. He paid tribute to the great figure of its first President, Charles Bradlaugh, and touched upon the now historic rejection of the revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons. The Churches were re-asserting something of their old effrontery, they thought to dictate to the people of this country, but they had to learn they must obey the people, the State in this country must be supreme. The Bill for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws still came in year after year, and education was still being hampered by reactionary religionists. The N.S.S. stood for liberty, and for universal principles, and it had a forward look. Mr. Snell's heart is still with his old fighting Society, and his speech was a splendid panegyric of all it has stood for.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti supported the toast with an account of the great days of Freethought. Bradlaugh gave us the Affirmation Act, Foote gave us the Secular Society, Limited, so that people could safely leave money to the Freethought movement, and Mr. Chapman Cohen has given us the £8,000 Endowment for the *Freethinker*. These were splendid achievements.

Followed that great young veteran, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, whose fifty years' record—and a fighting record at that—is known to everybody in the movement. Mr. Moss drew upon his experiences of the two Charles'—Charles Bradlaugh and Charles Spurgeon, in his brief and interesting speech, and was glad to note how great has been our progress and our record during his long association with the movement.

Dr. Arthur Lynch proposed the toast of Freethought at Home and Abroad, in a witty speech, full of classical illustrations drawn from famous authors of all ages and

³ B. Russell: *The A.B.C. of Relativity*. (Page 1.)

⁴ *Ibid*. (Page 219.)

⁵ C. D. Broad: *Scientific Thought*. (Pages 156-93.)

countries. It was Mr. T. P. O'Connor who asked him if he thought Freethought had advanced, and his (Dr. Lynch's) reply was, yes and no. Far more people have embraced it, but the Churches, and in particular the Roman Catholic Church, have also had their recruits. It was in the new countries with their virile colonists where religion was strongest. Dr. Lynch, though he did not agree altogether with Russia, was glad that there at least the rulers showed religion to be false.

Mr. R. B. Kerr, who followed, did not agree that Roman Catholicism was making much progress, and instanced that in the Birth Control movement Roman Catholic women were defying the Church. Mr. Kerr gave a historic *resumé* of the way in which Freethought was once claimed as vulgar, and now was quite respectable, while religious people, like Dean Inge, were doing their utmost to show they really had no belief—indeed, that it was belief which was vulgar. Mr. Kerr's speech was, clear, direct, and splendidly received.

The artistes, who provided some delightful numbers, contributed hugely to the gaiety of the evening. All were in fine form. Mr. Finlay Dunn's burlesques, funnily original in treatment, caused roars of laughter. Miss Gertrude Dickson sang beautifully, and Mr. George Ellis astonished everybody by his versatility—to recite as D'Artagnan, a London busman, and a Frenchman, requires some doing. The Misses Elsie and Doris Walters were charming, and their rendering of some of the old songs of Maggie Duggan, Eugene Stratton and other old-time music-hall geniuses brought the passing of years realistically to many present.

Finally, Mr. Leslie Romney presided at the piano, and also, with his sister, gave an excellent duet.

I was glad to note Miss Vance, who so long and so faithfully worked as Secretary of the N.S.S., managed to attend the Dinner. I hope she will be able to come to many more.

After the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" the party gradually broke up, but the evening will long be remembered as one of the most enjoyable in the history of the N.S.S. Dinners.

H. CUTNER.

Correspondence.

THE FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As one of the trustees of the above (and, I feel, with the full concurrence of my co-trustees), I desire to express my heartfelt thanks to every subscriber to the Fund. Our worthy Secretary (Mr. H. Jessop) has, I am sure, got you all written down in the Book of Life of the Trust, and those names are also to be found in the Book of the *Freethinker*.

But I should like to add a few remarks to the full and clear statement made recently by our editor. The £8,000 mark has been passed, and our editor's respirations must by now have ceased to be irregular. But look at the seventh paragraph. In reply to it I say that in my opinion "formal and special appeals" on behalf of the trust are absolutely necessary until such time as the Trustees have £10,000 of invested capital. There must be no slacking or contentment until that goal is reached. The *Freethinker* needs it; the Cause needs it; we all need it to give us the sense of absolute security. And there is the absence of a Sustentation Fund during the past three years to make good. Of course, friends can go on subscribing to the Trust after that figure is reached—until the crack of doom if they like—and be sure the money will be well spent; but give us what is required at the earliest possible moment. Not till then will I agree to "no formal and no special appeals on behalf of the Trust."

Our Editor has promised to take all necessary steps to secure the improbability, if not the impossibility, of our *Freethinker* passing out of the hands and control of our party and Cause as represented by the N.S.S.

As you know, none of us in this thing have any personal or sordid axes to grind, but we have good reasons for wishing to see the Trust in the position stated above. We have ideas of developments in other direc-

tions for the benefit of our movement; but we do not wish to "foul the pitch" for the *Freethinker*. Still, time flies, and some of us are getting old; some are weakly in health; some, after years of toil, have only recently come to freedom from care and anxiety. But all, like our Editor, wish to do something and to see the results, if only a little, of our efforts before "passing over." To know the future is secure for Freethought. We wish to see the morning glory of the coming day!

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK.

THE FARCE OF A FUTURE LIFE?

SIR,—In paying a tribute to the public work of Alderman Mansfield at West Ham, the Mayor, Alderman Streimer, is reported to have made the following remarks:—

"They need not mourn the loss of their late colleague. They were born to die. They all met on the bridge of Time, exchanged greetings, and departed. Yes, they met to part, but did they part to meet? Religionists who believed in Dualism said 'Yes.' Scientific Materialists said that man was a mechanical apparatus, and once the lute was broken sweet tunes could not be produced. Scientific philosophers did not know the meaning of dying. They said that life was continuous. The birth of the child was not the beginning, and what was not begun could not end. Whatever their views might be, whether they accepted the first or third theory, the second was unthinkable."

Of course the Mayor has a right to any opinion he likes, and to express it, and we have no objection to that, but we would point out that for a thinking man to say the opinions of one who differs from him are "unthinkable" is much too sweeping, and savours of intolerance. If he means that the idea is unthinkable to himself, that is permissible; and a convinced Materialist will tell a Dualist that is so because he is such. It is a mere truism and leads nowhere. On the other hand a Materialist cannot think it reasonable to declare that a man is alive when he is dead. And it is mere pandering to unscientific thought to state that—although the body, with all its functions, including thought, has ceased to exist, being disintegrated into its several elements—that something called the man, is still living.

To some, perhaps, the idea that one lives in a life to come, may be consolation and a hopeful anticipation for the future. Let such hug the belief, if they like, but to others such an idea is not worth a moment's thought. It has been asked, "what assurance or expectation can we have that a future life will be better than the present one?" If it has the same Creator and the present life is the best conceivable, as some say, then the probabilities are that the next one, if any, will be worse. And anyway, what does it matter? The right thing is to live now in the present, doing to others as much good as possible and as little harm as may be, and let the question of a future life alone as waste of time. At the best, if we are called to live again, we can do no better than deal with it when it arrives, in the same spirit.

A. E.

A PROBLEM.

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Freeman's letter in the *Freethinker* of 15th inst. I would point out that Zeno's problem does not require a knowledge of the Relativity theory for its solution. The question is very clearly dealt with in Prof. Whitehead's *Introduction to Mathematics* in the Home University Library.

The error of Zeno lies in supposing that if a series contains an infinite number of terms, the sum of the series must be infinite. In the particular case mentioned, the distance between the trains, if measured at the times suggested by your correspondent, forms a series of the type: $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \dots$, each term, except the first, being equal to one half of its predecessor. To make the matter clearer, a straight line 2" long may be drawn on paper. A point distant 1" from each end gives the first term of the series. A length equivalent to the sum of the first two terms is obtained by bisecting the distance between the 1" mark

and the end of the line. The third term is obtained by bisecting the remaining distances, and so on. It will be obvious that, however many terms are taken, the sum of the series can never exceed two. Two is the "upper limit" of the series.

The period between successive measurements of the distance forms a series of the same type. Thus the length of time during which measurements may be taken (before one train passes the other) is finite, even though the number of measurements which may be made in this finite time is, theoretically, infinite.

To suggest that "the resolution is beyond our powers" seems to me absurd. The subject of convergent series is one which has been thoroughly worked out by mathematician.

J. D. WRIGHT.

Obituary.

MISS MARGUERITE MOSTAERT.

It is my melancholy duty to report the death of a member of the North London Branch, Miss Marguerite Mostaert, whose all too brief life—she was only thirty-three years of age—was terminated by a fatal heart seizure on January 11, whilst typing in her office.

Following on a severe attack of rheumatic fever, some years ago, Miss Mostaert had for some time been subject to severe heart attacks, and was fully aware of the precarious condition of her health, but with characteristic good sense, she determined to make the most of her life and her cheerful, amiable and self-sacrificing disposition endeared her to all who knew her. She was an earnest worker in our cause, attending many of the London meetings, and was keenly interested in the outdoor distribution of literature. Her intellectual attainments were far above the average. She was an expert stenographer and was inspiringly helpful to Mr. George Whitehead, being his dearest friend, acting also as his secretary in her leisure moments. In spite of precarious health and multifarious duties, she often found time to spend two or three hours reading to Miss Vance, who greatly valued her friendship. To all who were privileged to know her, her loss will be irreparable.

The Cremation took place at Golders Green, on Tuesday, January 17, when the Secular Burial Service was read by Mr. George Whitehead.

To her aged father and other members of her family, we offer our sincerest sympathy.—K.B.K.

MR. ROBERT PERCY EDWARDS, J.P.

ONE of the "Old Guard," in the person of Mr. Robert Percy Edwards, J.P., or "Bob," as he was more familiarly known, was laid to rest on January 21, at Chatham Cemetery. A month or so ago, he expressed a wish to the writer that we should both attend the Annual Dinner, so as to see and hear some of the old Colleagues. The irony of Fate decreed different, for on that particular day he was buried. The Mayor and other Members of the Corporation, together with a large concourse of people, attended at the graveside. The Town Hall had a flag half-mast high.

Mr. Edwards was sixty-one, and leaves a widow with six children. He retired from H.M. Dockyard a twelve-month ago, after twenty-seven years service, but the pension was inadequate, and since last October he had been a Rating Clerk under the Corporation, relinquishing in doing so, his post as Councillor, which he had held for a great number of years. He was at work three days before his death, the illness being of short duration, and he died in hospital from pneumonia. He was a "Personality" well beloved by all that knew him, and will be missed. There are many Londoners who will remember his activities in the stormy days, when G. W. Foote was with us—he often referred to them; undoubtedly the training he then got, qualified him to be the keen exponent of controversial matters, whether religious, social or political. Of latter years he was a whole-hearted supporter of the Labour Movement. The last rites were conducted by the undersigned.

W. S. CLOGG.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

We had Mr. Fred Mann with us again on Sunday last, who opened a discussion on "Successful Murder," in which many took part. Mr. Whitehead occupied the chair. We were pleased to see Mr. and Miss Dobson from Birmingham in our audience. To-night, Mr. Lombardi opens on "Crime—its Causes and Cure."—K.B.K.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH.

LAST Sunday we had the pleasure of hearing a lecture by Mr. J. Farrand, B.Com., on "The Record of Christianity." He showed the reactionary character of this religion throughout Europe, its bloodthirsty record and its consistent opposition to freedom of thought and progress.

He summed up its record as a proof of our assertion that it has been the historic enemy of progress. Questions which were brisk, testified to the interesting character of the lecture.

To-day (Sunday, January 29) Dr. C. Carmichael resumes his course of lectures on "Materialism Re-stated." This series, which touches problems of great modern interest, should be a source of attraction for larger numbers of local Freethinkers than have attended in the past. Dr. Carmichael piqued our curiosity last time with the problem of Achilles and the tortoise; the solution is eagerly awaited.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture Notices must reach us by the first post Tuesday.

LONDON—(Indoor).

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8) : 11.15, Mr. Geo. F. Holland—"The Theatre in Life."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.) : 7.30, Mr. A. Lombardi—"Crime, its Causes and Cure."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station) : 7.15, Mr. J. H. Van Biene—"Is the Potentiality of Matter Sufficient to Account for Consciousness?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.) : 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"Religion: its Roots and Fruits."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2) : 11.0, F. J. Gould—"The Human Purgatory."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34, George Street, Manchester Square, W.1) : 7.30, General Meeting. Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.—A Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.0, Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Jackson. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith) : 3.0, Mr. 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—"Science and Modern Problems." Chairman: Mr. T. Birtley.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street) : 6.30, "Bradlaugh Sunday." Speaker—Mr. E. Hale. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday, at 8 p.m., in the Hall, 83 Ingram Street.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street off Bold Street) : 7.30, Dr. Carmichael—"Materialism Re-stated." Admission free.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers Hall, 120 Rusholme Road) : E. Roy Calvert (London)—3.0, "The Treatment of Crime—Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow"; 6.30, "Should Capital Punishment be Abolished?" Questions and Discussion.

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of hesitation is in the fact that it is infectious. Your hesitation makes the other fellow hesitate, and you bob about from side to side until you ultimately bang into each other. So your hesitation about writing to us makes us hesitate about withdrawing notices of our startling offers, and we wave them about from week to week, until at last we run into—your order; of course. At all events, just have another look, and judge if we are not right.



Famed EBORAC SUITINGS in all the newest shadings. Mens' ready-made suits, 69s.; Youths' from 51s.; Boys' from 31s.; according to sizes. Can also be made up to special measures; and you can have patterns to choose from whether for readymades or otherwise.

Unsurpassable B SERGES in six qualities. Readymade suits: Men's, 63s. to 88s.; Youth's from 48s.; Boys' from 28s.; according to quality and sizes. Also to special measures.

Patterns for specially made suits you always have had. Remember we are now offering you patterns from which to select readymades—your boys' suits in particular. No more complete service is to be got anywhere than the Freethought firm gives. In justice to yourself and to Freethought enterprise, write at once for these unique patterns.

Of Conscription

there may be more than one opinion. For our part we think it an ugly word and would leave it at that, had someone not just said that "it looks as if the *Freethinker* was going to be conscripted into our business."

Now, we do not think that any paper has ever yet been conscripted by any one advertiser in the sense that the said advertiser secured a monopoly of its advertising space and control of the journal's policy. We cannot conceive of a paper's being "conscripted" in any other way, and merely to state the case is to expose its absurdity. It is something more than absurd in the case of the *Freethinker*.

We advertise in the *Freethinker* because we think the *Freethinker* ought to have an assured income from advertisements. We believe that Freethinkers in particular should advertise in the *Freethinker*, and that Freethinkers ought to support Freethinkers who do so advertise. Our advertisements in these pages have to be paid for whether we get responses or not. Have you thought of that? It explains why we are so insistent about getting responses. Many, many fine schemes launched by Freethought enthusiasts have been frozen, and have perished for the lack of the Sun of Freethought support. We know this, and whilst we have brains to think and hands to use, we shall vehemently strive for the success of our special venture. If you have a morsel of sympathy at all with such endeavour, write at once for a Freethought Fosterer's Certificate.

MACCONNELL & MABE, Ltd., New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

HALDEMAN-JULIUS

LITTLE BLUE BOOKS by JOSEPH McCABE

LIST OF 48 TITLES:

Debate on Spiritualism. Conan Doyle and Do We Need Religion? [Joseph McCabe].
The Absurdities of Christian Science.
Myths of Religious Statistics.
Religion's Failure to Combat Crime.
My Twelve Years in a Monastery.
The Future of Religion.
The Revolt against Religion.
The Origin of Religion.
The World's Great Religions.
The Myth of Immortality.
The Futility of Belief in God.
The Human Origin of Morals.
The Forgery of the Old Testament.
Morals in Ancient Babylon.
Religion and Morals in Ancient Egypt.
Life and Morals in Greece and Rome.
Phallic Elements in Religion.
Did Jesus Ever Live?
The Sources of Christian Morality.
Pagan Christs.
The Myth of the Resurrection.
Legends of Saints and Martyrs.
How Christianity "Triumphed."

The Evolution of Christian Doctrine.
The Degradation of Woman.
Christianity and Slavery.
The Church and the School.
The Dark Ages.
New Light on Witchcraft.
The Horrors of the Inquisition.
Medieval Art and the Church.
The Moorish Civilisation in Spain.
The Renaissance: A European Awakening.
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