

WITH HIGH SPIRITS.

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Views and Opinions.

With High Spirits.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE has just published, at the price of sixpence, a twenty page pamphlet with the title of *A Word of Warning*. It is a solemn, but not very impressive, warning that unless the world alters its way something terrible is certain to happen. We have had many such prophecies before. The Old and New Testaments are full of them, and there is hardly a decade since the New Testament has come into existence that some such grave utterance has not been forthcoming. And were we not solemnly warned by our Prime Minister only a week or so ago, that if the British Empire is seriously interfered with the whole fabric of the universe will be shaken? To learn that the light of the sun may be darkened, that the stars may cease to shine, planets may be disrupted, and the very atoms fly asunder if the British Empire comes to an end, is surely the very last and the very gravest word in the matter of prophetic forecast. And yet, somehow or other, this jolly old world manages to steer clear of these catastrophic dangers. It even got past the greatest and the most authoritative prophecy of all—that of the year 1000, when the Church solemnly assured its followers that the end of the period would see the end of the world. It did see the end of the possessions of a great many people, for large numbers made their property and possessions over to the Church in the hopes of securing safety when the winding-up order was enforced. But nothing serious happened. So it may even be that a change of government will not seriously disturb the structure of the universe, and that though an unbelieving generation pays small heed to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, things may work out all right in the end.

* * *

Revelation and Logic.

Sir Arthur writes with “a strong sense of responsibility”; one might almost say that he writes under

compulsion, for the impulse to write as he does comes from the world of spirits. And although he knows that what he says “are not easy things to say,” yet he says them. One applauds the courage, even while reserving the right to question the wisdom displayed. It appears that for over six years he has been receiving messages “which profess to be, and have every internal sign of being, from a high spiritual source.” He has refrained from publishing the whole of these messages, lest a “detailed and verbatim account would . . . cause panic,” and he contents himself with “indicating the general tenor” of these messages “from a high spiritual source.”

Our minds being prepared for this dread warning, we go on to learn with fear and trembling something of the general message, and in the hopes that no one with a weak heart or shaky nerves, or with any inclination to commit suicide under the influence of terror will read it, I hand on this “word of warning.” The message was

that the world had failed to learn the lesson of the Great War; that only by such tragic visitations could it be chastened and humbled into a more spiritual state of mind, and that accordingly, *unless there was some sweeping change of heart*, a second trial was coming, which would surely accomplish what the first had failed to do. The date of the crisis would be soon, it would take the form of political and natural convulsions, and its effect would be absolutely shattering.

Such, in a nutshell, is the warning as we have received it. Logic is not usually a strong point with returning spirits, and this message is not likely to remove that impression. For example, it appears that it is only by “tragic visitations” that we can get into “a more spiritual state of mind,” and unless we get into this spiritual state without a tragic visitation we shall get another one. But if we cannot get it without one of these visitations, how on earth are we to avert it? And if the second visitation would do what the first has failed to do, that is, to bring about this spiritual state of mind, what on earth have we to worry about? Or if the desired spiritual states are brought about by these visitations, what is meant by making our blood curdle with the information that the visitation will be absolutely shattering? It should be altogether to the good, and the sooner it comes the better. The early Christians and prophet Baxter did this kind of thing much better. They said there would be a great visitation, but they said it would be all to the good when it arrived, and all we had to do was to prepare for it and welcome its coming. I wonder whether it is possible that Sir Arthur has mistaken the message, or was it the vision from the spheres pulling his knightly leg? Anyway, the message seems a trifle mixed.

Be Warned in Time.

These messages, says Sir Arthur, have come unsought, they were outside the medium's range of thought, and "in many ways run counter to our own opinions." The messages have been corroborated by the trend of events, "both in international affairs, and in seismic activity." I am really astonished—astonished at the marvellous intelligence emanating from a "high spiritual source" which could announce the unique message, that unless the nations of Europe altered their policies we were heading for another war, further international unrest, and general world trouble! Readers will observe the originality of the message, and will also wonder that they ran counter to Sir Arthur's own opinions, and were outside the mentality of the medium employed. They will also marvel at the fact of seismic disturbances—earthquakes and similar terrestrial irregularities—being occasioned by our not having experienced a change of heart, and their absence in the future if the change takes place. The theory is not a new one. Theosophists many years ago gave a similar explanation of the cause of the disappearance of the legendary Atlantis, but it is certainly one that the inhabitants of earthquake areas should be made acquainted with.

But with a full sense of the courage required, and of the strength needed to put the truth before the public, our faults are set forth. Here is a faithful summary—

Mankind must learn that religion has nothing to do with theological beliefs. The irrational observances of the Church prejudice man against religion. The best service that can be done to the real Christ is to make him reasonable. Why select the Virgin Mary as the ideal of womanhood? Why not Mary the hard-working partner of a carpenter? We must reject the doctrine of the Sacrament, the belief that "we eat, drink (and presumably digest) the actual flesh and blood of God"; we must get rid of the supernatural character of confession, and also of Baptism, which is obviously absurd, and along with these the doctrine of the Trinity, the fall, and the atonement. We must also use our reason in reading the New Testament, and recognize that it is not historically dependable. Finally, from the same high spiritual source, he has been given the economic message that "some are too rich and some are too poor," and there should be an "assurance of nutritious food, nature, love, music, literature, games, cleanly orderly houses." So ends the message which, if it is ignored, will result in wars, upheavals, etc., to say nothing of earthquakes, inundations, and other cosmical disasters.

Commonplace Spirits.

Now it is not for me to say that high and mighty spirits have not visited Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and poured out their message to his receptive soul. They have not visited me, and so I am compelled to take them at second hand. But I do think it is a pity that these spirits appear never to read a newspaper, or to be in the least degree conversant with the most ordinary thinking that is done on earth. Sir Arthur was probably too polite to remind them that the proper reply to these things being given him as products of highly developed wisdom and profound research into the tendencies of human society, to say nothing of the occurrence of earth tremors—the proper and fitting reply would be the very vulgar "Rats." For ever since the war came to an end, every paper has been saying that we ought to learn the lesson of the war, or there would be more trouble in the future. Books

by the score have been written on the same topic. It can hardly be that Sir Arthur has not come across them. Perhaps he was too polite to tell the spirit that the news was stale, the prophecies old, and just listened to them with the assumed interest that one gives to the fifty-first hearing of a humorous story. And the religious reforms! They make one wonder still more. I need not remind Sir Arthur that all this could have been obtained from the *Freethinker* at any time during its nearly fifty years of existence; but there are scores and scores of parsons in the country who will attack many of the Church's doctrines that he attacks, and they will also make the quite foolish distinction between religion and theology—as though there ever existed a religion without a theology, or a theology without a religion! And, certainly, the spirit touched the high water mark of heavenly inanity when it said that some were too rich and some were too poor, and all ought to have food and clothing and lead comfortable lives. For that is being said by everyone, rich and poor, and has been said for many a year. That is why I call it heavenly inanity; it has no use on earth—for the earthly question is how to organize society so as to end poverty. And here the spirits seem quite helpless. But one cannot expect spirits to enter into controversial subjects. It would weaken the spirit of bovine expectancy on which the security of spiritual communications rest.

* * *

The Euthasia of the Spiritual.

Sir Arthur's pamphlet is interesting, but it is so for a reason that is not very flattering to its author. One cannot say that his "Word of Warning" is unnecessary, but it is terribly familiar, almost commonplace. If Sir Arthur had been approached by a mere human being, who had told him that unless the world altered its ways another war was inevitable, that belief in transubstantiation, or in confession, or in a Virgin mother, is very stupid, or that society should be so organized as to give to all men the possibility of a clean and happy life, he would in all probability have replied, "All true enough, but there is nothing strikingly new about what you say. These things have been commonplaces among reformers for several generations." But when they come to him in the brain-bemusing atmosphere of a seance room, and from the mouth of a visitor from "a high spiritual source," they are received with all the open-mouthed wonder of a primitive savage witnessing a chemical experiment. Bring in the "spiritual" and man reverts, mentally, to a lower stage of culture. He receives a "message" which he could get from almost any daily paper—or from—if one may dare to mention it in the company of angels—the *Freethinker*, as a communication which must be delivered to the world at all costs. Newton propounding his theory of universal gravitation, Darwin enunciating natural selection, or Cortez standing silent upon a peak in Darien, could not have experienced a greater thrill than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in receiving from "a high spiritual source" these commonplaces of the ordinary press. It is a splendid example of the brain-deadening consequences of superstition.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

I like a companionship and converse that are vigorous and manly, a friendship that prides itself on the keenness and vigour of its intercourse.—*Montaigne*.

Free-will was invented by theology in order to shift all responsibility for the existence of evil from the Creator to the creature.—*J. T. Lloyd*.

Writers Who Cheer Us Up.

"The only chance in literature, as in life, is to be yourself. If you try to be more you will be less."

Walter Bagehot.

"When men question, something always happens."

Austin Harrison.

I PICKED up, the other day, a volume of Walter Bagehot's literary essays, and found in it much refreshment. Perhaps he is not much read in these busy times, but he is an author well worth knowing. For he was a man of the world as well as a writer. So personal, indeed, is much of his criticism, that it is sometimes difficult to remember if some of his best bon-mots were spoken or written.

The essays are full of sound sense and brilliant criticism. Commenting on Edward Gibbon's hostile attitude to the French Revolution, Bagehot remarks: "Gibbon had arrived at the conclusion that he was just the sort of person a populace kills." Writing on Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*, soon after its publication, Bagehot comments: "It is incredible that his whole mind should be made up of fine sentiments." How acute Bagehot could be is shown by his ironical remarks on Bishop Butler, the wealthy author of *The Analogy of Religion*, which was a text-book in the unprogressive English Universities for over a century. "No man," says Bagehot, "would ever guess from Butler's writings that he ever had the disposal of five pounds. It is odd to think what he did with the mining profits and landed property, the royalties and rectories, coal dues and curacies, that he must have heard of from morning to night."

Listen to Bagehot's caustic criticism of Lord Macaulay: "His mind shows no trace of change. What he is he was, and what he was he is. He early attained a high development, but he has not increased it since; years have come, but they have whispered little; as was said of the second Pitt, "He never grew, he was cast." A most sardonic jest is aimed at Robert Southey, a former Poet Laureate, who is remembered by his prose "Life of Nelson," which he wrote to keep the home fire burning. Bagehot says:—

His wife kept house and allowed him pocket-money, just as if he had been a German professor devoted to accents, tobacco, and the dates of Horace's love affairs. His epics were to be in the hands of all men, and his history of Brazil the *Herodotus of the South American Republics*. As if his epics were not already dead, and as if the people who now cheat at Valparaiso care a straw who it was that cheated before them.

Great names did not intimidate Bagehot. Writing of Milton, he says: "The debate of the Satanic Council in *Paradise Lost* is a debate in the Long Parliament." How true, too, is his remark: "The reason why so few good books are written is that so few writers know anything of life as it is lived."

Bagehot spoke as he wrote, and some of his jokes are excellent. He remarked to a friend who had a church on his estate: "Ah! You've got the church in the grounds. I like that. It's well the tenants should not be quite sure that the landlord's power stops with this world." Asked if he had enjoyed a dinner, he replied: "No! The sherry was bad, as if I— had dropped his h's into it." Bagehot knew the book of the world as well as the world of books, and this lends spice to his criticisms.

Another favourite author of mine, Ambrose Bierce, is better known in the United States than in England. In America his works have been collected in twelve handsome volumes, but in this country he is represented by stray books which are the joy of

lovers of literature. His adventurous career was very different to the sheltered lives of ordinary writers. When over seventy years of age Bierce was fighting with General Villa in Mexico. A generation earlier he had fought in the American Civil War in the Federal Army, rising from a common soldier to the rank of major. At the close of the Civil War, he wondered whether to devote his life to military or to literary pursuits. He decided to be an author, and made a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. As a story teller he rivals Kipling, Poe, and Maupassant. For humour he is the finest satirist since Jonathan Swift, the author of the immortal *Gulliver's Travels*.

Two of Bierce's books bore the quaint titles: *The Fiend's Delight*, and *Cobwebs from an Empty Skull*. They both revealed a mordant satire that is absolutely unique. The very title page of *The Fiend's Delight* was provocative. It was ornamented with a drawing showing a sooty devil toasting a fat baby at a large fire, whilst underneath were lines reminding the reader that every day one should do a worthy action. Another facet of Bierce's genius was revealed in the book, *In the Midst of Life*, a series of powerful short stories concerned with war, which, for sheer thrills, outdoes the "best-sellers," from Guy Boothby to Edgar Wallace.

Discussing his works, Gertrude Atherton said that Bierce had the most realistic imagination of any of his contemporaries. This quality overflows in his humour. Here are a few examples:—

"If a jackass were to describe the deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man."

"In calling a man a hog, it is the man who gets angry, but it is the hog who is insulted. Men are always taking up the quarrels of others."

"Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling."

"It is wicked to cheat on Sundays. The law recognizes this truth, and shuts up the shops."

"I once knew a man who made me a map of the opposite hemisphere of the moon. He was crazy. I knew another who taught me what country lay upon the other side of the grave. He was a most acute thinker, as he had need to be."

"Most people have no more definite idea of liberty than that it consists in being compelled by law to do as they like."

To pick out passages haphazard is not doing real justice to a notable writer. Not only does a jest's prosperity lie in the ear of him who hears it, but it has its life in an atmosphere of its own, and there are few plants so tender in the transplanting. While the creator of *Mr. Dooley* is welcomed, and Stephen Leacock is popular, one cannot help regretting the scant appreciation that Ambrose Bierce has won this side "the herring pond."

MIMNERMUS.

Spring.

REJOICE! a touch of Spring is in the air;
A patch of blue invades the dull gray sky;
Drear Winter, like a wounded beast, his lair
Must seek, to lay him down, unwept to die.
See, in the wood the catkins now have come,
And in the hedge are tiny jets of green,
Whilst down the lane, not far from the old home,
A thrush is heard and building rooks are seen.
Again the sap is rising in the tree;
Full soon the leaves, green leaves, will burgeon out;
New life now runs in every vein of me
And all my impulse is to skip and shout.
Oh, come, my love, join hands with me and sing;
We will together welcome in the Spring.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

"Two Souls in One Body."

"TWO SOULS IN ONE BODY"; such is the strange title of a book just published by Messrs. Rider & Co. Although published in England, the book was written and printed in America. The author is Prof. H. H. Goddard, professor of Abnormal and Clinical Psychology in Ohio State University. As for the title, the author is not always responsible for that, as I can testify. A spiritualistic friend once jokingly inquired as to whether I chose the title of my book (now long out of print) *The Follies and Frauds of Spiritualism*, from the caption of a Hollywood film. I did not. The name I gave it was *Science and Spiritualism*, but I was informed that it was not a good selling title, and the one it now bears was substituted. The consequence has been, that I have been made responsible for the statement that all spiritualistic phenomena are due to follies and fraud—a statement I have never made; a position I have never held. But that there has been a large amount of fraud connected with Spiritualism is undeniable. It is admitted by such stalwarts as Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge. And while the frauds of Home, Florrie Cook, Eusapia Palladino and others, are loudly proclaimed as proof of Spiritualism, because they succeeded in deceiving some eminent men, I don't see why we should keep silence about it. Science gives consent; some day we may write a book dealing with the other side of the question.

But to return to our starting point. Prof. Goddard is an Alienist, a specialist in abnormal mental cases and insanity; and the book with the strange title—the more strange because the author does not believe that any one possesses one soul, let alone two—describes a case of dual personality which came under his care and treatment. Very little has been written, in this country, upon the subject of dual, or multiple, personality, compared with Germany or France. In France especially, the subject has been widely studied in the clinics and institutions, and many books written upon the subject.

On September 22, 1921, Prof. Goddard received into his institution a young woman of nineteen years of age, of pleasing appearance, delicate features and in every way highly attractive. Her friends had brought her from some hundred and fifty miles away, in a motor, arriving in the evening. She was easy in manner, and spoke naturally in a well modulated voice. When asked if she had enjoyed the ride, she replied, with a winning smile, "I am afraid I do not remember much about it. I think I slept most of the time." At supper she ate moderately and with an air of refinement, which showed a careful bringing up. She retired early to rest, saying she was tired. She was pleased with her room and agreeable to all the people she met. Her name, by the way, is suppressed and she is known in the book as "Norma."

Prof. Goddard did not see her arrive, but next morning he hastened over to see the new patient. But a great transformation had taken place. Instead of the refined and agreeable young lady—but let Prof. Goddard give his experience:—

She was sitting up in bed, while around her were the nurse and one or two assistants. As I stepped into the doorway, she caught sight of me and shouted with a loud boisterous laugh, "Oh, there is Sarah." As I approached the bedside, she greeted me in a childish, careless tone, with "Hello!" I said, "What is your name?" To which she replied with the same careless tone, "Polly."

"And how old are you?"

"Four years."

"And what are you doing?"

"Playing."

And she continued to play, paying no more attention to me than any four-year-old child might to an adult who was not in the game. When I sat down by her bedside and spoke to her again, she looked up and called out, "Oh, see the funny eyes!" and grabbed for my glasses. We learned that "funny eyes" was her name for glasses. She next spied my Eversharp pencil, grabbed it out of my pocket and unscrewed the top. When I tried to take it again, she snatched it away and cried in a petulant tone, "No." She unscrewed it, took it all apart, scattered the leads all over the bed. These however, she picked up and put back, and finally handed it to me really none the worse. (Prof. H. H. Goddard: *Two Souls in one Body*, pp. 2-3.)

When her dinner was brought to her, she ate voraciously. Large mouthfuls and everything at once, grabbed everything within reach and called rudely for what she could not reach. She could neither read nor write, and her language was mostly baby talk, such as, "Can 'oo do that?" or "Me can do this." This was the secondary personality they had heard and read so much about, for it had been widely discussed in the newspapers, and explained in all manner of ways, ridiculously wrong of course. She had forgotten everything that had happened to her since she was four years old. Suddenly she fell back on the pillow like one who had fainted or dropped dead. She was shaken and shouted at in vain, nothing could awaken her. After a few minutes she might become very violent and wild in her sleep, and after a longer or shorter period, become quiet again and then awaken, when she might be Polly, or she might be Norma. In the Polly state she was not only insensible to pain, but entirely unconscious of it. One day the physician went to the extreme of thrusting a sterilized needle under the finger nail, half-way to the root of the nail, without the slightest finching on her part. Later, when she woke as Norma she complained of the pain and wondered what caused it. During her first day she changed personality eleven times, being Norma five times, and Polly six. Late the following day she changed to Polly and remained in that state for six days. The case aroused great interest. Says Prof. Goddard:—

The reader who thinks that the idea of demon possession is confined to Biblical times, or that the belief in it passed out in the Middle Ages, will be somewhat surprised to learn that we had several letters from friends who desired to help Polly in her difficulty, and who insisted that hers was a case of demon possession. One man sent a pamphlet entitled, "A Case of Demoniacaal Possession," which described a case that occurred in May, 1842. The Foreword says: "In the following narrative the reader is presented with a well authenticated case of diabolical possession occurring in our own times. It is one of many that might be recorded. All of them are marked with features that recall the gospel narrative. (p. 45.)"

In an Appendix at the end of the book, several more of these letters, in the same vein, are given; which shows how the Bible teaching perpetuates these ancient superstitions which ought to have been dead long ago. Prof. Goddard says he made daily and hourly observations of Norma for two years, he was familiar with the views of the world's greatest experts in these cases—Charcot, Janet, Prince, Sidis, Freud, to mention only a few—yet only after five years' study did he attempt to propose a theory to account for the entire situation: "But one letter writer reads 'two newspaper articles' and can explain the whole thing. He probably never heard of

one of the men mentioned above, and certainly has never understood their views even if he has read them."

To learn with what patience and skill the Alienist unravelled the details of the cause of this poor girl's condition, and at the end of five years restored her to normal life, we must refer readers to the book; suffice it to say that Norma was one of those unfortunate children who seem born to experience all the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." "She began life as a frail child, one of twins, and continued to have one mishap after another until the final break came." After her birth came ten children continually afflicted with illness, and frequently with death. Her father and mother died of tuberculosis at the early ages of thirty-nine and thirty-eight; the family was scattered; she had to go into service, to wash dishes in a strange home, to take care of somebody's strange child, while she longed for a home with its comforts, for a mother's love and the companionship of her brothers and sisters.

Children, when they find life too hard for them, attempt to escape from reality by building a dream life free from all the hardships of real life. This is what Norma did, and then one day the breaking point was reached. Norma fell asleep, and when she woke, she was in the dream life, and had forgotten her real life. There was not enough energy to keep both lives going, only enough for the region of the brain concerned with the dream life, or the real life, but not for both. Hence the two personalities. And this is no doubt the case with many Spiritualist mediums; they are abnormal mental cases, and not the mouthpieces of spirits or demons.

Mr. Clephan Palmer, an able journalist, who made an open-minded investigation of spiritual mediumship, attended many seances held by different mediums, and has now published his experiences in a book, *The Riddle of Spiritualism* (Rider & Co., 4s. 6d.) We may add that Spiritualism still remains a riddle to Mr. Palmer. But one cannot but be struck by the resemblance between the phenomena of dual personality and that of mediumship.

The medium goes into a trance and then come the "convulsive movements," which, says Mr. Palmer: "It was not a pleasant experience to watch." (p. 109.) So in the case of Norma, after the trance, came violent convulsions, then calmness and the change of personality to that of a child of four years; a childish personality often assumed by professional mediums; for Mr. Palmer complains of "that broken or baby English which is so exasperating a feature of the average mental seance." (p. 137.) The only difference between the two cases being that in Norma the action was involuntary or beyond her control, but the mediums achieve the same result by their own volition.

W. MANN.

WEEP NO MORE.

WEEP no more, nor sigh, nor groan;
Sorrow calls no time that's gone;
Violets plucked the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh nor grow again.

Trim thy locks, look cheerfully;
Fate's hid ends eyes cannot see;
Joys as winged dreams fly fast:
Why should sadness longer last?
Grief is but a wound to woe:
Gentlest fair, mourn, mourn no more.

John Fletcher.

The Sheep and the Goats.

(Matthew xxv. 31-46.)

I.

THE STORY AND ITS MEANING.

THIS parable is a pure similitude, the one point of comparison being the separation of the sheep from the goats by their shepherd, and the separation of the righteous from the wicked by their judge. A certain passage in Ezekiel probably suggested the idea. There the Lord himself is introduced as saying, "Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, as well the rams as the he-goats." (xxxv. 17.) But as the conduct of the ram differs little, if at all, from that of the he-goat, those creatures, as the Greek text proves, are not contrasted in the parable. Flocks irrespective of sex are evidently intended. Harmlessness and helplessness are regarded as the chief characteristics of the sheep. These qualities, if but faintly perceptible in rams, are sufficiently conspicuous in lambs, ewes, and wethers, which form much the larger part of the tame variety. Want of intelligence and of independence, it must be confessed render sheep somewhat antipathetic. In German the term *Schafkopf* (sheep's head) is equivalent to our term blockhead. As regards goats, especially those of the gentler sex which the egoism of man chiefly selects for preservation, they are certainly charming animals. In the sunny lands where they abound it is pleasant indeed to see them reclining gracefully in the street attending their turns to be milked from door to door; and it is no less amusing to observe that whenever the mountain presents a ledge apparently inaccessible to quadrupeds of their size and weight, one of them is sure to be seen there surveying the landscape with a pensive air. It seems really too hard to take such intelligent beings, so full of innocent gaiety, and of elegant caprices, as the symbol of a class condemned to eternal fire for treating their fellows with heartless indifference. Nor does it appear more felicitous to represent benevolent persons as sheep, creatures devoid of wisdom, and with characters as flaccid as their wool. The idea of making the "king" to be one with his "brethren," is ingenious and very dramatically introduced. There could not have been a more disagreeable surprise for the accused persons than to find that they had offended directly against their judge. It is probable that bad as well as good angels are supposed to accompany "the king," the office of the bad ones being to take the goats back with them into "the eternal fire," which was their own proper residence. Among the minor details that show the thoroughly Jewish character of the story are the employment of the technical term "righteous," and the allusion to "the foundation of the world." According to the Rabbins, seven things, to wit, the Law, Repentance, Paradise, Hell, God's Throne and the Messiah's Name, were all created before the world was founded. The object of the parable is to inculcate benevolence, but not universal benevolence. For it teaches that kindness towards a certain class will be rewarded, and that the want of kindness towards the same class will be punished. "The King" judges "the nations" solely with respect to their treatment of his "brethren"; those who treat them well inherit "the kingdom"; those who neglect to do this, enter "the eternal fire." Thus, it is clearly taught (1) that "the nations" are not "brethren" of "the King"; and (2) that benevolence is not rewardable, nor its neglect punishable except in cases where the "brethren" gain or lose by its bestowal or its refusal. Again, although "the King" identifies himself with those who receive benevolence, and with those who are refused it;

and declares that what is done, or omitted, in their case, is done or omitted in his case; yet it is only with his "brethren" that he assumes this identity. Thus considered from the ethical point of view, the parable is very defective, because it limits the objects of benevolence, and makes selfish partiality the determining principle of that great virtue. It is also lamentable to think that in the case of such a natural quality as human kindness, the maker of the parable felt the necessity of bribes and menaces, and was oblivious of such motives as distress at the sight of suffering and joy in relieving affliction; which, if not strictly unselfish are still infinitely better than the impulses which he attempts to evoke.

II

AUTHENTICITY.

Matthew after reporting what is called the Eschatological Discourse, reports immediately the *Bridegroom and the Bridesmaids*, the *Entrusted Money*, and the *Sheep and the Goats*. Then he says that "when Jesus had finished all these words," he reminded his disciples that in two days' time there would be the Passover, the feast alluded to being the one made famous by his death. Thus Matthew refers the *Sheep and the Goats* to the Eschatological Discourse; and he also says of the parable, as he says of the discourse, that Jesus spake it to his disciples.

The *Bridegroom and the Bridesmaids* may be authentic; but the *Entrusted Money* is the contrary. These two parables and the *Sheep and the Goats*, as well as the Discourse whereunto they are attached, would appear to have been taken from an assemblage of Messianic utterances, some genuine, some spurious, which itself could be termed the Doomsday Collection. According to the position which it occupies, the *Sheep and the Goats* was the last parable that Jesus spoke; and certainly it is well adapted to be a conclusion. The account is thoroughly Messianic. "The son of man" reaches earth from heaven attended by angels; and takes his seat on "the throne of his glory" "to judge the nations." Moreover, he is termed "the King," a title generally given by the Rabbis to the Messiah, and he invites "the righteous" into "the Kingdom," evidently "the Kingdom of God," an institution associated with the Messiah's activity. Here it should be noted that long before the time of Jesus, the Hebrew seers had foretold the judgment of "the nations"; but with "the Lord" himself as judge. The prophet Joel, for instance, has a remarkable passage when "the Lord" himself exclaims:—

Let the nations bestir themselves and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. (iii. 12.)

Earlier in the chapter "the Lord" describes the object of this judgment, saying:—

I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehosaphat; and there will I plead with them for my people and for my heritage Israel. (iii. 2.)

This pleading would appear to be of a very special character, for Isaiah declares:—

By fire will the Lord plead and by his sword. (lxvi. 10.)

At a much later period (B.C. 164) the impersonator of Daniel records a vision wherein "the Ancient of Days" appeared upon his throne and "the judgment was set, and the books were opened," but he proceeds to say that "one like unto a son of man" came on the clouds of heaven, and received "dominion and glory, and a kingdom." (vii. 9-14.) This man-like apparition was soon regarded as the Messiah; and the Ethiopic version of the prophecies attributed to Enoch contains, in a certain part refer-

able to the last century B.C., a lengthy passage describing how the Head of Days shall appear with the Son of Man, and how the latter shall be entrusted with the judgment. (37-70.) The early prophets regarded "the nations" as the only persons destined to be judged; but many of the later seers thought that this destiny was common to all mankind, whether alive or dead. In the present parable, the judgment has no subjects save "the nations." These are either taken into "the kingdom," or sent into "the eternal fire," according to the respective ways in which they have treated the persons whom "the King" terms "my brethren." Hence, it would appear that as the "King" is the Messiah, his "brethren" must be the Jews. If it be asked why "the nations" in the parable are condemned only for neglecting benevolence towards the Jews, whilst those in the ancient prophecies are condemned for treating them with violence, it is enough to reply that at the supposed time of the parable the Jews had long been free from any grave oppression on the part of "the nations"; whereas in the days of the ancient prophecies "the nations" were oppressing them cruelly. Moreover, at the date assigned to the parable, a large number of Jews resided out of the Holy Land. Many of these exiles were "the poor of the flock," who though protected by the law from gross ill-usage, were subject to minor vexations, and often lacked the necessaries of life. Hence, as anyone may see, they were very dependent upon the benevolence of "the nations." Taken in the above sense, the parable re-utters some ancient teaching. Thus, according to *Genesis*, when Abram, at the ripe age of seventy-five, emigrated from Haran into Canaan, the Lord said:—

I will bless them that bless thee; and him that curseth thee will I curse; (xii. 3.)

and Isaac, giving his paternal benediction to Jacob whom he mistook for Esau, declared:—

Cursed be every one that curseth thee; and blessed be every one that blesseth thee. (xxvii. 29.)

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle explains to the readers of the *Sunday Express*, that he has been "rousing his dormant psychic powers" by going without food for a week. And the "interesting point is," he says, that psychic powers are developed in this way. We hasten to add our testimony to that of Sir Arthur. Fasting is one of the oldest, the commonest and the most certain of bringing man into touch with the spirit world. Savages habitually practise it, the monks and nuns of the Middle Ages practised it, and in a vast number of cases the method was triumphantly successful. It enabled the Christian to get visions of angels, of Jesus, etc.; the Mohammedan to see visions of paradise with clouds of Houris; and Hindus to get into touch with their particular brand of spirits. Those of our readers who wish to see spirits we strongly advise to follow this plan. If the visions do not come in a week, keep on for a fortnight. If going without food will not do it, try going without anything to drink. If going without drink does not do the trick, try taking a lot of *drink*. These are all good methods of developing "psychic powers." The surprising thing is that Sir Arthur has only just discovered it.

Mr. Malcolm Bird, of the American Society for Psychic Research, has informed the world of the actual colour of a ghost. He says it is liver coloured. The information is interesting, and corroborative. We have always had a suspicion it had something to do with the liver. Another bit of information is that the temperature of ghosts is 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Catholics will be surprised that the temperature is not much higher. But perhaps they cooled down in getting from home to the seance room.

Writing about the widespread decline in attendance at village chapels, the Rev. O. R. Peacock thinks the question of quality is growing more important in these days. In the country, he says, the standard of education is yearly being advanced, and the standard of intelligence (thanks to various modern devices that have brought the countryman in touch with the thought of the day) is in no way inferior to that in the town. Mr. Peacock thinks the standard of preaching must also advance. We admire the rev. gentleman's candour. What he is declaring is that country people, being better educated and more intelligent than formerly, have discovered the silliness of the Christian religion with its mind befogging affirmations. They therefore have deserted the village chapels. We don't quite see what the parsons can do to overcome the difficulty. Once people have acquired a measure of education and more alert intelligence, it is a bit of a task to rob them of these. Yet that is what obviously must be done if the old, old story is to become again acceptable. Still, perhaps our parson friends might be able to rally round the village chapels the less intelligent country folk by organizing a series of bun struggles, whist-drives, recitation and singing concerts, or community dirge singing.

Dr. F. W. Norwood supports a made-in-Germany notion that man can never reach God, but God can reach man; that the Bible and prayer are ways towards God, but not to God. It is wonderful, we think, how elusive God is to his Christian people. The wireless telephonic communication between God and people seems far from perfect. The godly keep on ringing up the heavenly number, but they are never sure they have got it right; though God can get through to them merely to tell them to keep on trying. This strikes us as a darn waste of time and human energy. But then all God's little devices and manoeuvres for man, as expounded by Christian believers, seem like that.

Dr. F. W. Norwood said at Birmingham recently:—

One of the principal things that is wrong with our religious life to-day is that we have not the clear conviction our fathers had about the future . . .

If there is a revival we need more than any other it is a revival of faith in the future of Christ and His Church.

According to this, Christian believers themselves have no real conviction about that wonderful revival of religion and the Churches so optimistically heralded by the newspapers.

Half the food Americans eat, says a noble lord, is tinned. The same might be said of the mental pabulum of both Americans and Englishmen. Both are satisfied with the tinned mediocre wisdom and opinion supplied by popular daily and weekly papers. Unfortunately for progressive thought, the tinning process excludes the intellectual vitamins.

In the Lincolnshire fens hundreds of acres of wheat-land have had to be re-sown because of excessive rain. One of the worst dry periods in New South Wales for many years has ended in a rainfall producing the greatest floods in living memory. Homes have had to be abandoned. In Queensland two rivers burst their banks. The people are left with ruined homes and dead stock. These things be a puzzle to parsons, and to ordinary men and women who have been reared on Christian soothing syrup about a loving Heavenly Father, and who believe weather conditions can be amended by prayer.

We are not an entomologist; and that, we imagine, is a suitable excuse for not knowing anything about the Rev. T. Waugh but the name. Anyhow, this gentleman has just enlightened the people of Horninglow Wesleyan Church with the information that Evolution cannot be true because it contradicts the book of Genesis. That seems to settle the matter. But, if further reasoning is required, Mr. Waugh asks the question: If evolution be true, why did not all the monkeys become men, and why the reversion to type? Suppose we call the

latter a divine institution by means of which the pulpit supply is kept up, and call it a go? We confess that there is hardly an evolutionist in the country who would be equal to the task of answering Mr. Waugh's objections to evolution—so far as Mr. Waugh is concerned.

A Methodist, the Rev. Frederick Flint, says that if the Methodism of the twentieth century is to live, it must be alive to the age and set itself to meet the claims of the hour. Is this a discreet suggestion that the prim Methodist Church had better tolerate dancing and card-playing if it would keep a hold on the younger generation? We shouldn't be surprised if it did do so. It has adopted so very many secular amusements in an effort to retain its clients.

Dr. R. Cove-Smith, Captain of the English Rugby Football Team, recently gave one of those usual fatuous addresses to young people. His theme was the value of combined effort in all departments of life. Christ, said he, "realized this when he picked a team to beat the world—the Twelve Apostles." Judging by the fact that the godly team has never beaten the world, and to-day appears to have smaller chances than ever of doing so, we are warranted in suggesting that the holy selection committee (of one in three, and three in one) was not quite up to its job, even with heavenly omniscience to aid it.

In a recent oration, Mr. John Drinkwater is reputed as saying:—

Distinguished ornaments of press, bench, pulpit and schoolroom were constantly making themselves responsible for telling other people what they ought to do. That was a responsibility of considerable gravity, but it appeared to weigh very lightly upon them.

After this, distinguished ornaments of press, bench, and schoolroom will perhaps amend their ways. It is only the priest who is entitled arrogantly to assume he has a God-given right to lecture other people.

In an article written as a dialogue, the Rev. Russell Maltby makes the other man say:—

Are we to sing doggrel because God can use even doggrel? Never in the world! The only excuse for singing doggrel is that you know no better, and we all ought to know better by now. Why should a man babble before the Almighty?

Why? Because after listening for two thousand years to Christian babble, the Almighty would think something was seriously wrong with Christian people if they ceased babbling. Sooner than scare the Most High, Christians would be advised to stick to established precedent. Let them by no means depart from so beautiful a Christian custom.

Mr. Maltby suggests that it is a defect of Protestant worship that it imposes too constant a strain on the minds of the congregation. Mr. Maltby should be more discreet in exercising that pawky humour of his. The average Methodist congregation is too solemn to appreciate his sly dig.

The editor of the *Methodist Recorder* devotes two columns to "Sacrificial Giving." We gather from these that good men and true have not been so generous as they ought to be, and the editor thinks a lump of oblique suggestion will loosen purse-strings for the benefit of his minister friends. One good turn deserves another. We hope the ministers will reciprocate with a pulpit puff of the *Recorder*.

The Rev. J. P. Stephens, a Congregationalist of Islington, thinks the immense progress that has been made in social matters is undoubtedly due to the impact of the Christian conscience upon public opinion. The records in *Hansard* showing the Anglican bishops' attitude towards social reforms, reveals the kind of impact the Christian conscience made upon public opinion, and gives the lie to the Rev. Mr. Stephens' statement.

The present year, says Mr. George Jackson (in the *Methodist Recorder*), is yielding an unusually large crop of interesting centenaries; "but for most Englishmen by far the most interesting is John Bunyan's." This will be news to "most Englishmen," most of whom attend no church, are not interested in religion, have never read the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and are mostly interested in less childish literature.

"No mau," says a preacher, "really knows what he believes until he has suffered for it." Still, there seems no particular reason in that why the howling street-corner ranter should try to make other people suffer for what he has suffered in trying to know what he knows he believes. Nor can we see why he need be so ready to consign to Hell-fire all men who really know what they don't believe.

To those many unfortunates whom this civilized country accommodates in one or two rooms for sleeping and eating, it must be some consolation to know that God—especially famed for looking after the poor—doesn't have to trouble about a housing problem. The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Committee has authorized grants for building a house for God in Birmingham (£9,320), another at Finsbury Park (£10,090), and a third at Luton (£16,564). Would God, we wonder, be very angry if all this money were used to build houses for human beings? Would he get very cross if the needs of men were attended to before the needs of God?

As a thought for the week, a pious journal prints a saying of Dr. J. H. Jowett: "There is nothing incredible in divine guidance in the details of life if we once assume that God is, and that He is in communion with His people." This reminds us that once upon a time people made the assumption that fairies, pixies, hobgoblins, imps, demons, evil spirits, etc., existed; that man could get into communion with these; and that by signs and portents and omens, guidance in the details of life could be obtained. It reminds us also that between that assumption and what people based on it, and the assumption of Dr. Jowett and what he asked Christians to base on it, is a difference no thicker than tissue paper.

Speaking on Disarmament, Senor de Madariga, of the League of Nations, said that every nation regarded itself as a lamb, and thought of other nations as wolves. A religious weekly commenting on this said that the only solution of the problem of war is a change of relationship between the nations. It added: "and it is for this all lovers of peace must work." Freethinkers will agree with that, but not with our friend's further statement: "it is this that makes the work of the religious and moral training of the young of such vital importance." Now, the leaders of the peoples of the nations have had, throughout the Christian era, religious and moral training—Christian brand. But that era has seen no lack of wars between nations. Indeed, the greatest war-making nations have been noted for having had Christian training. This being the fact, what hope is there that such training will, or can, induce the change of relationship between nations that would be likely to outlaw war? Look at the various Christian sects themselves. There, one finds sectarian rancour and squabbling; evangelicals against high-churchmen, Protestants vilifying Roman Catholics, and vice versa. This is happening in every Christian country. Yet we are asked to believe that this type of Christian war mind will produce such change of relationship between peoples as will outlaw war!

The *Sunday School Chronicle* says:—

It will come as a welcome surprise to all lovers of freedom of speech, that the Government's ban on the broadcasting of statements by the B.B.C. involving matters of political, and religious and industrial controversy, has been removed . . .

It would be a welcome surprise if we could discover that our contemporary had ever done anything towards securing real freedom of speech—that is, the unfettered

expression of every kind of opinion. The same journal adds that the decision places a great responsibility upon the B.B.C., "who, however, may be trusted to see that the balances are held evenly between the advocates of opposing views." In regard to this we reserve judgment. We are waiting to see whether the B.B.C.'s notion of even balance holding between the Christian and the Freethought views consists of excluding the Freethought views altogether. If it does so consist, we don't for a moment expect that that lover of freedom of speech, the *Sunday School Chronicle*, will raise a squeak in protest.

Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen argues that housing is not a political or a social matter; it is essentially a religious question. It is the children, he says, who are the greatest sufferers from bad housing. "Think how their little lives are corrupted and warped through the horrible surroundings in which they live." This is an admission that the deterministic social reformer is right when he contends that environment may adversely affect character, and that character may be improved by altering environment. Despite Sir Arthur's denial, housing is essentially a social question. Perhaps, however, all that Sir Arthur has in view is that the common-sense of the matter needs to be disguised with religious phrases before Christians can be induced to do anything.

It is worth while recalling the traditional Christian method of treating characters warped and corrupted by bad environment. Christianity affirms the "original sin" dogma and the "free-will" theories. On these, the assumption has always been made that warped characters are the result of "sin" deliberately chosen. Hence, the Christian solution for such characters was to preach religion to them. Then came along the horrid materialist with his common-sense solution, that by improving environment character would be improved. It is curious to note how Christians who once condemned this solution now readily endorse it. By all means let us have more and better houses. But intelligent men don't need religious reasons for urging the building of houses; common-sense reasons will suffice.

The Rev. F. I. Wiseman says that the only way to the real salvation of the world is in the spirit breathed by everyone who comes into contact with God in Jesus Christ. May the world be preserved from real salvation! In recent years it has seen more than it cares for of that "spirit." It has seen the spirit operating at Darwen, and in every town when Prayer-book revision was discussed. It caught another glimpse of the spirit at Tennessee and Bootle, and at various theological colleges when heresy hunts were in progress. The recent Blasphemy Trial in Canada revealed another bit of spirit well "over proof." Altogether, we fancy the world can dispense with real salvation.

From figures he has collected the vicar of Islington declares that at least one-third of the children in the borough are not receiving any religious instruction on Sundays. Multitudes are living around him as though there were no God. Young men and women have grown up with practically no knowledge of the simple truths concerning Jesus Christ. Still, there is one consolation for the vicar. All these people without knowledge of God and Jesus are, according to the B.B.C., simply clamouring for the wireless religious service on Sunday. That seems hardly probable; but one must accept the word of a government corporation.

We don't give weekly prizes, but if we did, we should certainly hand one this week to the Bishop of London. Addressing a gathering of Sunday school workers he remarked that women of twenty-one would soon be getting the vote, and he asked, "What is this due to except Christianity?" Those who know the attitude of the New Testament, the Christian Church, and the Christian clergy towards woman will know the answer. But we do admire the Bishop of London. Age does not wither nor custom stale his capacity for variegated stupidity.

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.

H. WALKER.—If it will do any good we may say that your letter is far too lengthy for the character of its contents, for us to afford space for its publication. There are some religious "arguments" that are almost an insult to the intelligence of one's readers to print.

T. WILMOR.—The standard life of Thomas Paine is by Moncure Conway. Conway also published an edition of Paine's writings in four volumes.

S. L.—We have no intention of expressing an opinion on matters that do not concern the welfare of Freethought, or the business of the N.S.S.

E. E. STAFFORD.—Next week.

J. CHRISTIE.—Glad to learn of your successful meeting. Mr. Cohen has been expecting to hear from you.

S. LAYCOCK.—We have dealt with the subject at some length in our *Religion and Sex*. We may write in the *Freethinker* on it when occasion requires.

M. ROSENBERG (New York).—We did not receive your previous letter, and you do not say what it is about. But we are quite obliged for the course of reading you commend—particularly as we read some of them so long ago that we have but a general idea of the contents of the books. All we gather from your letter is that "They are all out out of step but our Johnny."

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 25) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Town Hall, Stratford, on "The Priest and the Child." Stratford Town Hall is easily reached from all parts of London as trams and buses pass the door. Admission is free, and we expect to hear of the usual full hall.

On Thursday, March 29, Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Fulham Town Hall, Fulham Road, at 7.45, on "Things Christians Ought to Know." The Hall is opposite Walham Green Station. He will be followed by Mr. George Whitehead on the following Thursday. We would like to ask West London Freethinkers to make these meetings known as widely as possible. The hall will be crowded if they do. There are a number of printed slips advertising the meetings, and those who can distribute them would oblige by applying for a supply to the General Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, 62

Farringdon Street. It is not an easy task to advertise a meeting in London, and those who can give a hand will be really helpful.

There were two of the best audiences that Plymouth has yet provided at Mr. Cohen's lectures on Sunday last, and both addresses were listened to closely and followed with attention. The Branch seems to be making headway, and it was pleasing to notice the number of young men who are taking a part in the work. Mr. McKenzie took the chair in the afternoon and Mr. Edwards in the evening. Quite a number of questions followed the lectures and several new members were made. A brief summary of the lectures appeared in the local papers of Monday.

Mr. George Whitehead will to-day (March 25) lecture in the Picton Hall. His subject is "Jesus Christ and Father Christmas," and the title should give scope for an interesting address on comparative mythology. The lecture will commence at 7 p.m., and we hope to hear of good meetings.

The Martland estate, of which the National Secular Society is one of the residuary legatees, is in course of realization, and a cheque, on account, of £1,000 has been received by the trustees of the Society.

On the back page of this issue will be found an advertisement of some new books which have found their way into the hands of the Pioneer Press. They are all books worth having, and are offered at less than half the published price. There is only a limited number of each for sale, and those who wish to have them should write at once. But we expect it will be as usual—many wait until the books are gone and then discover they need them very badly.

We hear a deal of what Christianity has done for civilization, and it was a happy thought of Mr. R. Symon to select a specific case where some sort of a test could be applied. In *What Has Christianity done for Abyssinia?* (Watts & Co. 7d.) Mr. Symons takes the case of a country which has been Christian since the fourth century, which has never had to fight the demons of unbelief and Atheism, and lets his readers see what a country is where Christianity has had unchecked sway. We do not think that Christians will enjoy the picture. But we should dearly like to see some responsible person try to reply to the indictment of Christianity drawn by Mr. Symons.

Here is one telling picture which Mr. Symons gives from J. T. Bent's *Sacred City of the Ethiopians*, who gives a picture of "what Christianity was in its most primitive days." The result, as summarized by Mr. Symons is:—

Their beer ferments in a bottle stoppered with cowdung. The hair of women is plastered with butter and unopened for weeks. Dirt and filth of every description are found in houses.

A promiscuous state of intercourse is rampant. The Italian doctors say that syphilis is appalling among the Christian population of Abyssinia.

Monks and nuns may be found in plenty. Bent discovered a very holy old nun clad only in a filthy garment, and her hut a terrible sink of filth. She was covered with crosses from the Mount of Olives, and read her Bible all day long. Monks are so holy that no woman or female animal may enter their rocky monasteries. There are holy wells for the cure of disease. Belief in possession by devils is very prevalent. Traces of Baal worship, such as dancing priests, circular churches, and sacred groves are frequently to be met with.

It is a pity that some of our travel agencies do not organize trips so that present-day Christians might see a picture of their spiritual ancestors, and also learn what a Christian country is really like.

The Origin of Spiritualism.

(Continued from page 182.)

If there be imagined a man stripped of practically all knowledge which is acquirable, we shall reach something approaching the mentality of the savage, a human creature responsive to every kind of sensory stimuli, and powerless to differentiate between the resulting subjective and objective impressions. A child is in the same boat. So is an idiot. So is an animal. All get to their respective limits the same sensory impressions. All are at the mercy of these sensory impressions. They are unable to distinguish the real from the visionary. A dog sees another dog or he sees the reflection of himself in a pool: the one is very assuredly as real to him as is the other. A child in its dreams sees visions and is convinced of their reality. A savage hears his voice echoed between the rocks: his immediate association of the voice with an animate person is certain.

Parental guidance and control correct to some extent the more obvious of these subjective impressions of childhood, and with adolescence sufficient critical examination has been initiated to repress anything of the cruder type. But the savage, both in childhood and maturity, has little in the way of guidance. The animal has a good deal less.

Without knowledge or intelligence it is manifestly and inordinately difficult to differentiate the subjective from the objective. Especially is this so with visual images. To see is to believe; in all, its crude banality holds such indisputed sway that all the accumulated knowledge and experience at our command are insufficient to prevent us confusing the two. While steering clear of the crude errors of the savage, we are to a very big extent suffering constant subjective delusions. We are victims every time we watch a professional prestidigitator show off his strange collection of *locus-pocus* on a music-hall stage; we are victims, on occasion, when walking home on a moonless night. If I see a friend across the street I can never be absolutely assured of his presence unless I cross the street and give him a smack across the shoulders. The very fact that it is relatively rare for anyone to prove the objectivity of his sensory impressions accounts for the delusion that only savages or drunken men, or maniacs, see visions.

But if, in the overpowering main, men are wholly deceived by these subjective impressions, every man, however vast be his experience, however manifold his association of ideas, is partially deceived. Later, we shall see how in a thousand and one ways these delusions may be set up, but for the moment it will suffice to point out how in consequence of the ideas already formed or associated in one's mind, every objective impression must be subjectively distorted. What actually is in existence is relatively fractionary when compared with what we see. Which explains more than any other solitary thing why it is rare for two persons to get the self-same impression from a picture, or an absolute parity of ideas from a printed page of the simplest wording. For utter simplicity it would be hard to surpass the modern daily newspaper. The ideas it expresses are banal, jejune and stereotyped; these ideas are presented in wording designed to appeal to juvenile minds,⁴ and yet it is rare indeed that anyone reads them correctly. Ask the product of the secondary school to read a news

column and you will find not only that he misses words out, but also that he puts others in. A drawing or a painting at its best can only suggest: it is the observer who must fill in the details. And the more filmy the outline, the more slender the sensory basis, the more incorrect the picture as finally completed by the brain.

Vignoli appears to have been the first to thoroughly realize that myth in its evolution goes beyond man and has its actual origin in animal perception. And yet the truth of this is so self-evident that the marvel is that it was never stumbled on before. Every animal or bird in which sensory stimuli arouse something more than reflex action—that is, every primitive living being possessed of a brain capable of conscious thought—personifies every solitary thing, animate or inanimate, within the range of peripheral impression. Intelligent observation of animal actions will prove the truth of this in a matter of minutes. Watch a dog playing with a ball for the first time; throw an empty sack into a hen-run; give to a baby any mortal thing it has never seen before. And in each case observe closely the result.

No impression of any object beyond the intellectual range of the percipient's own mentality is possible. This law is universal. It applies to a canary as to an elephant; to a crocodile as to a chimpanzee; to an Andaman Islander as to an Anatole France. Thus an animal or a bird throws into every object perceived an incarnation of his own powers: it views every new stone in its path as possessed of powers for good or evil. Many similar impressions are needed before the vision of a stick or a stone has created a mental association sufficiently marked to make recognition of harmlessness a conscious concomitant of perception. Millions of similar impressions through many generations will alone develop and crystallize the perception into automate knowledge.

Whether or not animals go so far as to deify any object or any other animal, I am prepared neither to affirm nor deny. Certain it is, however, that there are savage races of sufficiently low mentality to worship individual natural objects, assigning to each a particular god. But in any case it is this universal primitive animal personification that provides the real root of all forms of worship. Primitive man in precisely the same way personifies or animates every sensory impression. But a step from this is the creation of the double of each object perceived. Shadows, reflections in mirroring pools, echoes, fits, cataleptic trances, and above all dreams, give the illusion of a double life. No savage can possibly distinguish between the subjective impression of the dream state and the objective impressions of waking thought. A modern child cannot. Not a few modern men and women cannot. Violet Tweedale, for instance, believes that in sleep the spirit is existent apart from the body.⁵ This is simply a variation of the savage conception of a double or shadow which leaves the body during sleep.⁶ In nearly every race death is metaphorically spoken of as sleep, a clear indication of the natural and indeed inevitable idea that the double has deserted the body for a considerable time.⁷ Thus we get the placing of

⁵ In South Australia *wilyamarraba* (without soul) is the word used for insensible.—*Ency. Brit.*

⁶ The antohypnotic trance of the magician or *shaman* is regarded as due to his visits to distant regions or the nether world, of which he brings back an account.—*Ency. Brit.*

⁷ Natives of Tasmania, Australia, North America, Melanesia, Northern Siberia, etc., are afraid to refer to the dead by name for fear of causing the spirit to appear through invocation.

⁴ If anyone is inclined to doubt this let him pick up any popular penny paper, go through it sheet by sheet, from editorial to racing news, and find, if he can, a solitary line that would seriously strain the mentality of a child of fifteen.

food and weapons beside the dead man's grave.⁸

Coincident with this belief was elaborated the form of myth, whereby through false and primitive analogy the substitution of the image for the real became widespread and extensive. Its genesis lay in the supposition that what had happened to the shadow or soul happened to the body. Hence the embalming and elaborate care of the corpse by the Egyptians, developing in turn, with the elaboration of image-worship, to the conception that a statue or model in the form of the living body would serve equally well. The offerings of food and drink to the statue were exactly as if offered to the living body whose soul was supposed to be incarnated in the statue.

Not by any means is this double, or shadow or soul, or spirit confined to man. Every animal, every object, every force of nature, every abstract quality,⁹ is similarly credited with a spirit. Every strange phenomenon is gaped at as a new god. There are no limits to the deities of a primitive race. It is only with the association of ideas and the consequent classifying of objects or phenomena into homologous groups that gods become limited in number. For instance, a primitive race like the Iroquois Indians assigns to every species of tree its own particular god, while a more civilized race will group all plant life as allied and represented by one god, which may be incarnated in every specimen or in some chosen and representative one. But universal incarnation is pretty rare, applying only to races of the very lowest mentality. For it is difficult to conceive of any grown man, however primitive, worshipping every cow or every snake he comes across. One might as well ask him to worship his wife, or his brother, or his infant son, or his mistress. It is the unknown that is worshipped, whether it be on the banks of the Congo or in a Mayfair tabernacle. It is for this very reason that anthropologists, who assert that worship of the dead was the birth of religion are in error. It is the worship of the unknown, mysterious inner forces projected into sensory impressions¹⁰ by animals and primitive man that is the root of immortality, and, in consequence, of religion. The birth of anthropomorphism and worship of the dead, of animals, of plants, of the phallus, followed. There is not, in this particular work, the space to trace the development, wearisomely slow, of religion; of the displacement of polytheism by monotheism; of the ebb and flow of various beliefs. Nor do these details very much concern the matter. My object here is to point out that all are traceable to one common origin.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be continued.)

Old men hold far too obstinately to their own ideas. That is why the natives of the Fiji Islands kill their parents when they grow old. In this way they facilitate evolution, while we retard its advance by founding Academies.—*Anatole France.*

⁸ A search into the beliefs of all savage and many pseudo-civilized races will reveal the fact that the dead, on penalty of haunting and molestation of their living relatives, must be constantly supplied with food, clothing, etc., equivalent to that which they had in their lifetime. In China this goes so far as to include the provision of money.

⁹ The Grecians, for instance, deified such abstract virtues and vices as Faith, Wisdom, Honour, Safety, Liberty, Victory, Fever, Ill-Fortune.

¹⁰ The belief that the sun, the moon, the stars were each inhabited by a spirit, that fire was directly traceable to a Salamander, persisted for centuries after the death of Jesus. Assyrian, Indian and Scandinavian mythologies teem with references to the worshipping of and sacrifice to fire and water.

A Great American Freethinker.

THE Sunday edition of the *Chicago Tribune* will be less interesting to many of us. I announced last week that the weekly article of H. L. Mencken will no longer appear. It is no use grumbling at the editor. For all I know, the editor may be as sorry as I am. Mr. Mencken himself says that he has given up these articles because he is writing a book. Anyhow, no successor of Mr. Mencken will give us the Freethought, the Rationalism, the frank, uncompromising expression of anti-religionism which has characterized so many of these brilliant essays.

Mr. Mencken, like everybody else, has his faults. He is not *persona grata* everywhere. In fact a recent volume (*Menckiana*) contains nearly two hundred pages of abuse by various orthodox critics of America's most heterodox genius. The abusive epithets remind one forcibly of what Clement Scott said about Ibsen (and others), in the salad days of the *Telegraph*. The mildest calls Mencken "a weasel," the worst . . . no, it could only be printed in *The Christian News*. That even Freethinkers will agree with this man's whole philosophy is not to be expected. Freethought is not a sect, it is not a sort of creed, it is a mental attitude first of all. Perhaps it is secondly a moral sense, for I call no man a Freethinker who is intolerant of the creeds, opinions and convictions of others. Mencken is a robust Freethinker, he is a believer in liberty of thought, he objects to suppression, he obviously respects religion. But he is a very bitter fighter against ideas with which he disagrees. Why not? Freethought only means that the Freethinker takes with perfect seriousness Milton's *Areopagitica*, and Voltaire's audacious dictum: we do not need to agree with a man in order to defend his right of utterance.

Mencken is opposed to all sorts of popular "principles." He has made his *American Mercury* a wonderful demonstration of how to interest the world of intelligent readers without pandering to respectable or "high-brow" inhibitions on the one hand, or, on the other hand, playing to any sort of "gallery." He has no objection to saying the worst about presidents, past, present and future. It is much more to the point than attacking (safely in a far distant republic) a few European kings. He publishes articles, if he likes them, by the most disreputable of writers, even writers who are quite properly in prison for serious crimes. Still more unpardonable, he attacks the PEOPLE themselves.

Upton Sinclair complains that the *American Review* refuses to publish a single word in defence of Prohibition. Mencken says with truth that there are many journals which defend it adequately enough. Others complain that Mencken is too negative, and lacks a sane and consistent policy of his own. He certainly is the high priest of that horribly named "debunkery," which takes the place of a policy amongst very many American Freethinkers. (I am quite sure that Havelock Ellis would feel sick to see himself described by a well-meaning seller of his biography, as the "man that debunked sex"). Mencken's views are all his own. Like most readers I agree with some and disagree with others. But as a Freethinker of great genius Mencken has won the admiring appreciation of us all.

It must then be understood that the extracts I give from his books aim at showing just the one side of Mencken which all Freethinkers will enjoy. They are, in no case, rare exceptions to his habitual way of treating the "sacred subjects," which most of our own timid publicists prefer to ignore or pay lip-service to.

SOME EXTRACTS:

The age of faith, seen in retrospect, looks somehow pale and puffy: one admires its saints and anchorites without being conscious of any very active desire to shake hands with them and smell them. To-day the yearning to get into heaven is in abeyance.

From the earliest days, Christianity has depicted life on this earth as so sad and vain that its value is indistinguishable from that of a damn. Then why cling to it? Simply because its vanity and unpleasantness are parts of the will of a Creator, whose love for His creatures takes the form of torturing them. If they revolt in this world they will be tortured a million times in the next.

Why should religion not be attacked when it is idiotic? What gives a theological imbecility superiority over any other imbecility? Why should a moron dressed up as a Methodist preacher get any more respect than a moron behind a plow?

(About the presence of God) How is it possible for a human brain to be divided into two insulated halves, one functioning normally, and the other capable only of the ghastly balderdash which issues from the minds of Baptist evangelists? What is there in religion that completely flabbergasts the wits of those who believe in it?

The cosmogony set forth in the first chapter of Genesis is so simple that a yokel can grasp it instantly. It collides ludicrously with many of the known facts, but he doesn't know the known facts. It is logically nonsensical, but to him the nonsensical has an irresistible fascination.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

In Quest of the Beautiful.

IX.—PHILOSOPHY.

THE popular idea of a materialist's life is that it is a heap of cinders or a mountain of despair. The world of beauty according to this misconception is a closed book, and the unfortunate victim is supposed to spend his life in a laboratory of gloom, or pessimism. Like most popular ideas this is wrong. Nietzsche, with his ability to speak volumes in a few words, posed the world as an æsthetic phenomenon. And this was the end which I reached in my quest. Materialism helped me to untie metaphysical knots that never were really knotted, and it never once smudged the fair face of beauty wherever my search had taken me in nature: beauty, physical beauty or in the beauty wrought by human hands in pictures, sculpture, music or in the solace of good books. In the world of beauty there was room, enough and to spare, to find acceptance and welcome by the choicest spirits with their inheritance of wise counsel that never carried me to the stars and then let me suffer the fate of Icarus.

In Theognis there was the substance of common sense. Even in the Greek world of myth, there was one striking aspect of beauty; the children of history never despised the body. The Maxims of Theognis were hard, brilliant, yet sufficiently alluring to make me take them for my own: "The practice of mischief, look you, among men is easy: but the method of good, Cygnus, is difficult." This was quickly perceived when experience proved that the world was chiefly peopled by negative forces intent on the destruction of any life-furthering ideas and a mastery of life. Again, somewhere in the region of the battle plane of Arjuna in the Mahabharata was the following thought: "No one of mine enemies will I blame, if he be noble; no, nor will I commend a friend, if he be a mean man." Theognis, who had suffered exile, could see with clear eyes, certain things that we call values in life, and what is life without human values? A truth to be found in Buddha, and also in Nietzsche was crystallized forever in the following: "Nought, Cygnus, is more unjust than anger, which hurts its possessor, by meanly indulging passion."

There was here a psychological truth, difficult to grasp, difficult to practise, but one of the chief steps to be taken and never retraced in attaining individual kingship—a reconciliation to oneself, a conservation of power, and an acceptance of the world without wishing for it to be any different.

In Marcus Aurelius, the quality of beauty led me to appreciate the dignity and depth of one of history's noble men. There is the fatalism of existence, unsought, but by human effort to be overcome. His work was written with blood; his philosophy was hewn from the quarry that leaves so many helpless, hopeless and bewildered. It is like a symphony from the sea when it protests with powerful winds and black night. There must be delicate ears or the wonderful music cannot be heard. It is man's turmoil and struggle with reality, and we do reverence to the human mind in acknowledging its sober truth. Why he wrote his thoughts is one of those titanic mysteries that give, in a small way, a glimpse of human immortality. It is also a magnificent

answer to the cynic question of what has posterity done for us? It is, in brief, a noble Roman's tribute to the aristocracy of his own species. Open him where you will, and a bonfire of your other books would not disturb you.

"Men exist for the sake of one another. Teach them then or bear with them."

This idea of dependence is one that by its neglect causes discord, for we fundamentally belong to the great human family in which my quest had commanded me to hope for good, for, as Bosanquet stated: "Philosophy has not to do with a universe different from the one with which the plain man is concerned"; and I found kinship with his idea with that of Maxim Gorki in one of his excellent and human tales: "It is said that everyone is a brother to another against his own will."

When I found *The Candle of Vision*, in which the author "A.E.," tried to set down what element of truth lay in imagination, another friend beckoned me on in my quest. He has poetic quality and for that reason I approached him with care, but it was almost a needless precaution, as he belongs to the noble band of earth-worshippers in line with Meredith and Richard Jefferies. He presents pantheism in a form that does not ask for blind acceptance—all that he asks is for the reader to try to get his view-point, and, for us, if the best in the universe is not here, what is the use of locating it in the irrevocable past? From his own meditations and close contact with the earth, he had come to the following conclusion—and brought me with him. "I knew the Golden Age was all about me, and it was we who had been blind to it, but that it had never passed away from the world." There is a trick in time; the solution is attempted by those who formulate a fourth dimension, or by those who call themselves mystics. We are all in a stream, where the touch of hands, the tone of voices, sympathies and antipathies all combine to make us beat our hands against the prison bars of past, present, and future, and one little word at some time will make all clear that is only now opaque. "A.E." had successfully brought me to look within myself, and then look outwards with a better vision.

Another writer to whom my quest had brought me was Eden Phillpotts. Although he moved in the land of tragedy and in the world of passions, there was the insistent note on the essential goodness of man whom Victor Hugo described as the tadpole of an angel. The genii of Dartmoor had the power to make his characters live and his pictures of the country are all seen through the eyes of beauty and human sympathy. Wisdom of the earth he has with abundance, and the novel in his hands becomes an instrument for the wide diffusion of those truths that humanity loses at its peril. Tradition, history, earth-lore, a contact with our poor plodding, fighting and brawling ancestors; we have not too many writers who can effectively make a contact with the founders of the race by carrying on the torch of wisdom. And when the fierceness and intensity of modern life, mainly about nothing, or at best a witches' dance round a worn-out money system—when this is put in its proper place, there will be a true recognition of those who have never been false to the human race. Eden Phillpotts will have done his share, and Maeterlinck, with his quiet insistence on beauty, which cannot be glimpsed by many at present, will also share the honour to which multitudes are deaf and blind. The name of Anatole France will also be included with those who have, with a wide sweep, included the past and present, and it was a joy to me to find the following, written by a humanist: "Ever the goal is hidden from man. I have asked my way of all those, priests, scholars, wizards, or philosophers, who claim to know the geography of the Unknown. None of them has been able exactly to point out the perfect way to me. That is why the road I prefer is the one on which the greatest number of leafy elms uprear themselves beneath the most smiling sky. The feeling for the beautiful leads me on. Who is sure of having found a better guide?" My own affirmation to this choice was made nearly forty years ago; there is not the slightest tinge of regret in the decision I made, and I wonder what reader or readers of this series can share the experience with me!

TRISTRAM.

The Shadow Show.

"For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a magic shadow show,
Played in a box, whose candle is the sun,
Round which we phantom figures come—and go."

OMAR KHAYYAM.

THIS WEEK'S NEWS REEL.

The B.B.C.'s relented and they've been and raised the ban on controversial subjects to please the wireless fan. But the medicine-man, as usual, on Sunday night braoadcasts—the ether's free to Jesus, but not iconoclasts! We're on the Eve of Easter when Christ was crucified, and saved the world from sin with blood—unless the gospels lied. But modern youth's not keen to bathe in messy stuff like blood, they'll motor down to Brighton when the tide is at the flood; and 'though they're damned forever throughout eternity, it's a cleaner place to bathe at than the foot of Calvary!

Dean Inge is writing articles, while Beaverbrook applauds. The cash it goes to W.R.—the glory is the Lord's! Sir Austen's peeved with Egypt; hear the British Lion roar, when the Sheikh of the Wahabis declares a holy war. "The country's in a dreadful state," wails a Bishop in despair, "since the House of Commons vetoed the Book of Common Prayer." He wants another Moses to lead us, with his rod, to a cannibal Utopia, where we'll eat the flesh of God!

The Prince has shocked the sybarites that shop at Savile Row, and the skeleton of Zinoviev is rattled to and fro. Sir Alfred's home from Palestine—and they're glad to see he's back! With an olive branch from Bethlehem to hand to Ramsay Mac. Tallulah's telling all the truth—or nearly, so she says; the Afghan King is seeing sights; the British taxpayer pays! Tallulah—Amanullah, between 'em hold the stage. "Give the people bread and circuses"—forget the miner's wage!

THE PAST PANORAMA.

To-day is Lady Day. I find it difficult to agree with old Omar that rent, rates, and taxes are part of our Shadow Show. There's something very solid and material about my little lot of bills. Christians and Freethinkers are as one to-day in one respect at least. In, and out, above, about, below, rents must be paid and gas bills faced. Our candle—the sun, is free, but the figures on our lighting bills alas, are far from being phantom.

But a murrain on the bills. Let us dwell on pleasanter subjects this day. It may comfort you to know that on this date, close on two thousand years ago, a young Jewish virgin was called on by an elegant young member of the Heavenly Air Force.

Very spick and span he looked in his uniform of a long white nightshirt, with convenient slits at the back for his wings. The simple lass was greatly taken by him, and though she thought his conversation verged a little on the indelicate, she found him a pleasant and personable young man.

He informed the blushing girl that his Commander-in-Chief had taken a great fancy to her on account of her modesty and piety. Furthermore, as a token of his admiration and esteem the Commander-in-Chief had decided to present Mary with a bouncing baby! The young lady, being carefully brought up, was naturally rather perturbed at the suggestion.

While appreciating the C-in-C.'s kindness she explained bashfully, "I'm sure he'll realize it's rather an embarrassing gift in the circumstances. Besides, what would the neighbours say?" she added.

The Messenger smiled. He had been specially chosen for this mission, having taken a Correspondence Course on How to be a Convincing Talker in three lessons. He told Mary he quite appreciated the situation, but pointed out that it was something rather special in the baby line that was offered. Not only would the baby be a remarkably fine child, but would actually be the Commander-in-Chief himself in disguise.

But, sure enough, it came to pass even as he had said.

If you don't believe me—ask any Catholic, for to-day is the Annunciation Day of the Blessed Virgin.

On this day also, in 1807, Parliament abolished slavery. Christians, of course, take the credit for the emancipation of the slaves, forgetting that there is no word in their Scriptures condemning the slave system. They entirely ignore the fact that it was a Freethinker and humanitarian like Thomas Paine who fought for the Rights of Man, in the teeth of a bitter and relentless opposition from the Christian Church.

THE GUY NOBODY KNOWS.

There are, roughly, about 23,491 Lives of Christ written at various periods, ranging from the Gospel according to Mark to Sir Hall Caine's monumental effort, which is shortly to be published.

There are twenty-three thousand different aspects of this simple Jewish peasant—and still they come.

He has been described as a God, and as a man, as an anarchist and a constitutionalist, an advertiser, a sportsman, and I am daily expecting to hear him described as an Atheist, and the real founder of Freethought.

America, of course, is well to the fore with books on Christ, written from various angles. He was quoted at a recent Rotary meeting as being the first successful exponent of the slogan "Truth in Advertising"!

Among the best sellers, both in this country and the States, is a book by Mr. Bruce Barton, entitled *The Man Nobody Knows*. It is an attempt to make Christ intelligible to the man in the street without frills and flummery.

In this jazz age of film fans and lounge lizards—when our stage is invaded by Americans, our bookstalls flooded with dime magazines, it is natural that modern youth cannot understand or be bothered with the old-fashioned life of Christ.

OUR DUSTBIN—RUBBISH MAY BE SHOT HERE.

This week's dud sayings:—

"The clergymen is not only the pastor, but the friend and almoner of his parishioners. He has taken upon himself a heavy burden of temporal service in addition to his proper spiritual duties"

Bishop Welldon.

"Apparently the Great Pyramid says the next world war will begin on the 28th May—and the pyramids, say some—never lie."—Lady Eleanor Smith.

"Girls of sixteen are much younger to-day than they were thirty years ago."—Mrs. Bramwell Booth.

"If Jesus Christ were on earth I am sure the first visit he would pay would be to the Kent County Asylum."—James Douglas, Editor, "Sunday Express."

"Spiritualism's main contention is strong and solid. A dozen failures count for nothing.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The Bible is the priceless heritage of every English child.—The Schoolmistress.

"The world will be all right if we let God have his way."—Rev. T. Batterby.

"The religious press enriches and exalts the life of the community."—Methodist Times.

"Be kind to Christ. He deserves it all."

Rev. Dinsdale T. Young.

GWYN EVANS.

Let us endeavour so to live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.—Mark Twain.

Correspondence.

THE CLERGY AND DISCUSSION.

SIR,—I read with interest the article on the "Great Silence." Our own experience serves to illustrate what was there said. Shortly after the opening of the Chester-le-Street Branch reports of our lectures appeared in the local papers. Letters followed, and the Society announced that it was willing to arrange debates with any of the clergy of the district. The Rector of the town was also offered the same invitation. From that gentlemen we received the reply that, "while he did not wish to see an Agnostic Secular world," he thought it would be much better than the lazy-minded indifference that was preached. This was the limit of our success. A debate was arranged with a faith healer, and the opponent, I think, received some enlightenment. I have managed to get a Spiritualist Society to permit a lecture on "A Physical Definition of Spiritualism," and that is to take place on March 26.

I may add that we have a scheme in mind for popularizing Freethought by running a series of Free Concerts on Sundays, with twenty or thirty minutes devoted to an exposition of Secularism. Our first one, on Sunday last, was a huge success. We intend carrying on with this idea.

J. T. BRIGHTON,
(Sec. Chester-le-Street Branch.)

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

MR. KIERNEY'S able lecture on the Douglas Credit proposals evoked much interest and an animated discussion last Sunday. It is a difficult subject to grasp in one evening, in spite of the extremely able manner in which the lecturer dealt with it, and we hope to hear Mr. Kierney again during our next indoor session. We shall be delighted to have our old friend, Mr. Ratcliffe, with us once more next Sunday.—K.B.K.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON—(Indoor).

FULHAM TOWN HALL.—Mr. Chapman Cohen—(See advt. back page.)

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8): 11.15, Mr. Alexander F. Dawn—"The New Spiritual Outlook in the Light of Greek and Christian Thought."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—"Can a Christian be a Socialist?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. P. J. Hand (R.C.)—"The Natural Law and Conscience."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lectures. 7.0, Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman—"Christian Morality and Prostitution."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Ibsen and Modern Drama."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL.—Mr. Chapman Cohen—(See advt. back page.)

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY 34 George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Mr. Bonar Thompson—"Shakespeare." Thursday, March 29, at 7.30—Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH—Tuesday—World's End, Chelsea, 8 p.m.; Saturday—North End Road, Walham Green Church, 8 p.m. Sunday—Putney, Tow Path, 11 a.m. Various Speakers.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. Mann—"Catholic Absurdities." Meetings every Wednesday at Clapham Old Town. March 29—Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A Lecture; 3.0, Messrs. Hyatt and Shaller; 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Le Maine. Freethought lectures every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30. Various lecturers. The General Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 31, at 4 Mill Street, Oxford Circus, W., at 7.30 p.m. All members of above branch will please attend.

COUNTRY—(Indoor).

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools): 7.0, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"The Phallic Element in Christianity."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (78a Front Street): 7.0, Mr. E. Cook—"The Rights of Man." Chairman: Mr. T. Birtley. Monday, at 7 p.m. (Spiritualist Hall, Houghton): Mr. Jno. T. Brighton—"A Physical Explanation of Spiritualism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. H. Lancaster—Musical Evening.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe—"Religion and Character in America."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, William Brown Street): 7.0, Mr. George Whitehead—"Jesus Christ and Father Christmas." Doors open 6.30.

POSITION wanted by out of work member of N.S.S. in Manchester or district (clerical) age 32. Reply Box XYZ, "Freethinker," 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

WANTED TO BUY: private collections of Neo-Malthusian or birth control literature. Odd vols. of Carlisle's publications as well as long runs (bound) of working-class and Freethought periodicals. Give full description and price in first letter.—NORMAN E. HIMES, Holden Green, Cambridge, Mass, U.S.A.

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