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Views and Opinions.

Church and State in Mexico.

(Concluded from page 291.)

ACCORDING to President Calles—and we may take his statements as substantially correct, since they are not denied by the Roman Catholic leaders—his government is aiming at doing in Mexico what other countries have been forced to do when dealing with the Roman Catholic Church. This aim, in detail, is to see that (a) all priests are registered, (b) all Church property shall become State property, (c) priests shall abstain from conducting meetings outside their churches, and shall refrain from taking part in political agitations, (d) priests shall be deprived of the vote, and shall not wear priestly robes in public. Regarding (b) I am quite willing to believe that it is the wealth of the Church on which the government has cast covetous eyes. But so might the same have been said when, in this country in the sixteenth century, Church property was taken over by the State. The truth is that in nearly every case where the Roman Church has been allowed to work its will unchecked, its amassing of wealth has sooner or later reached the point when it became a danger to the well-being of the State; and when, as in Mexico, the Church owns sixty per cent. of the wealth of the country that is outside foreign hands, it may well be held that this point has been reached. And when attempts are made to stir up English feeling on this point, it is well to bear in mind that there is good legal warranty for saying that in this country the property of the Established Church is already State property, and that, therefore, the State has the legal right to put that property to other than its present use if it so decides. The State has as much right to devote to other purposes money given it to use for religion, as Mr. Churchill had to raid the Road Fund and use it for other State purposes. And I say deliberately, that when the wealth in the hands of any class or of any corporation reaches the point at which it plainly threatens the welfare of the community, the State is doing no more than its duty in taking such action as will check the evil. In the case of the

Mexican Church, we should have had exactly the same outcry if the State had resolved merely to place an unusual and special tax on Church property.

* * *

Pope or People.

It seems to me that the justification for (b) and (d), is also fairly strong. The Roman priesthood in a country does actually represent a body of men who owe first allegiance to a foreign power, and one which is concerned with what they declare to be their first and greatest interests. The Church demands unquestioning obedience from its priests; in Mexico they are bound to place allegiance to Rome before allegiance to Mexico, and their readiness to throw the whole country into confusion rather than submit to the secularization of the State, proves this. Says President Calles:—

We shall not allow the Roman Catholic hierarchy to subordinate the State to religious rule. What would Great Britain think if Roman Catholics in the Liberal, Conservative, and Labour Parties united to make her subservient to the Vatican? I think that English priests might be the first to object, because they are Englishmen first. We are trying to make Mexican priests Mexicans first.

With regard to Registration, Mr. Mason found that this was the very kernel of the opposition, to which one might add the objection of the priests to provide a register of all baptisms and marriages. Why? One can only assume as the reason for the objection to the registration of priests, that it is not desirable to let it be known either the number of priests in the country or the extent to which they dominate rural life. The President explained that there was no intention either to interfere with the appointment or the promotion of priests; but if Church property is State property, they believe it is only right to know who is administering Church property, and who is responsible for it; while, bearing in mind the dominance of foreign priests in Mexico, there is some point in the remark of the President that "foreign priests means calamity to us."

* * *

The Gentle Priest.

The one thing that is crystal clear is that the Roman Church will, and must, resist to the utmost of its power any attempt on the part of the Mexican government to subordinate it to the State. It is also clear to anyone but an ardent Roman Catholic, who combines with the strong capacity for seeing things that no one else can see, an incapacity for seeing other things that are obvious to all others, that the Roman Catholic priests are actively encouraging the unrest in Mexico. Mexican methods are, as I have already said, rough; and when it is a case of armed revolution, or even two parties in arms, the treatment meted out by either side in that country is likely to be short,

sharp, and savage. The President does not deny that some priests have been killed and others banished; he merely asserts that the majority of those banished have been Spaniards, not natives. Bishop de la Mora, who was Mr. Mason's chief informant, does not deny that priests have been taken with the insurgents, although he says they were with them as chaplains, not as combatants. But he also admits that when approached by Catholics, and asked whether they were warranted in using force against the imposition of the government regulations, he replied, "We are unable to see anything wrong in Catholics resisting persecution." Mr. Mason asked whether the statement that priests were not sharing in the fighting applied to Bishop Jiminez, who is believed to be the leader of the revolt in Jalisco. He replied, "It includes him too. I receive many letters from him, but in none does he mention military operations." The simplicity of it is very impressive—to English Catholics. Others will be inclined to take the statement with a grain of salt. It is certain that priests have been taken with bodies of combatants. It is also certain that when a passenger train was attacked by Catholics, and nearly 150 men, women and children killed, the attackers were using as a battle cry, "Long live Christ the King," and Mr. Mason reports the presence of gangs of Catholic "hold-up" men near Mexico city, while Catholics openly boast of their ability to bring government action in certain areas to a standstill.

* * *

Champions of Freedom.

Bishop de la Mora says that in Mexico the Church is fighting the battle of religious liberty. That is certainly a new occupation for the Roman Church, and one would wish it extended to Spain and other places. Even Southern Ireland could do with a little attention in that direction. But what religious liberty is threatened? The government has not closed the Churches; it has not forbidden Roman Catholic worship. On the contrary, it is a complaint of President Calles that owing to the action of the priests, the people in many areas cannot get the religious ministrations they desire. The priests' refusal to carry on religious services was one way of incensing the people against government regulations. It is said that the President has publicly announced himself as an enemy of Christ. I do not know whether this is true or not, or whether it is another example of the same logic which led a Roman Catholic to write to the *Daily Express*, explaining that as President Calles is against Christ, and as Christ is the truth, therefore the President is opposed to Christ, therefore the President is a liar. With such people almost anything is possible. But the plain truth is that there is no talk of persecution from any religious body in Mexico save the Roman Catholics. Protestants are allowed to preach unmolested. The one body of believers who shriek out about persecution is the Church that all over the world aims at securing domination in the political field, and which has never relinquished its claim to temporal sovereignty. It is to maintain the political influence and the financial strength of the Church that the priests in Mexico are fighting.

* * *

The Church and Persecution.

There was a very interesting communication from a Mr. W. J. Poynter, which appeared in the *Daily Express*, for April 12, and which is worth recording. Mr. Poynter, it should be said, was, until 1926, a member of the Roman Church. He says:—

In 1924 Catholics were complaining of alleged persecution in Roumania and Jugo-Slavia. I was then

a member of the vigilance committee of the Catholic Federation, and it discussed the organizing of a protest against these grievances. I proposed that such protest should "base itself on the principle that the federation will not countenance persecution of, or disabilities against, adherents of any religion by any power." I argued that that was an opportunity to demonstrate that Catholics are not in favour of persecuting their own opponents. However, nothing I said could induce the federation to adopt such a principle. They rejected it. (The particulars are in the minutes, February 27, 1924, of which my copy is still in my possession.)

This reveals the principle which should not be lost sight of in discussions such as that about Mexico. Do Catholics oppose persecutions as such, or only when they are the victims thereof; or, at least, has the Church abandoned the principle of persecuting its own opponents?

The answer to Mr. Poynter's question is that the Roman Church has never disavowed the principle of persecution. True, it does not call it by that name; it is only persecution when Roman Catholics find themselves ousted from a position of privilege and profit and power, and placed on a level with other groups of citizens. When the Church is attacking others, then persecution becomes defence of the faith, and the suppression of heresy a necessary safeguard of right belief.

What does emerge from a welter of statements and counter statements, is the fact that Calles is attempting to create a modern State with a definite legal system out of very poor material. On the one side he has a people whose idea of government is of the most primitive description, with an extremely superstitious peasantry, and with huge foreign interests anxious to exploit the mineral wealth of the country. In this respect one must constantly bear in mind the statement that while Mexicans own only one-third of the wealth of the country, two-thirds of this is owned by the Roman Church, and the passion of that Church for financial aggrandisement is notorious. On the other side, he is faced with a tyrannical Church which has always enjoyed in Mexico a position of power and privilege, and which has hitherto held itself above the law, or at least held itself at liberty to set any law at defiance with which it did not agree, and which has never hesitated to take the most extreme measures to protect its own interests. Finally, it must be borne in mind that the laws which President Calles is trying to enforce are not new laws. They go back, some of them, to 1917. But the laws in every State must be determined by circumstances, and the disestablishment of the Church, the Secularization of the State, cannot conceivably be carried out in Mexico in the same fashion that it might be elsewhere. And the one certain thing is that, as the history of Europe shows, if the modern State is to emerge, the power of the Roman Church must be broken.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Means and Ends.

Two things I love which none may share with me;
Silence is one, the other Solitude;
For both are needful when I sit and brood
Upon the meaning of Infinity.
Two things I love which I delight to share;
Music, with friends, and Love, with one alone;
For music, like her Voices to Saint Joan,
Speaks to the soul and bids us all things dare.
Alone; or by my love; or with dear friends;
Raised up by music; deep in silent thought—
All these the ever-watchful Church has taught
Are only "Means" and never should be "Ends."
What "Ends" there are I leave the priest to tell,
But this I know—the "Means," too, please me well.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

An Anti-Fundamentalist.

AMERICA is the land of contrasts. In climate you can travel from Arctic snows in the North, to tropical heat in the South. In culture, from Boston Uplift, to Chicago Holdup. And in religion, from the Fundamentalists of the Middle West, to the scientists of the Behaviourist school, who deny, or ignore, the belief in an immortal soul or spirit—although it must be admitted that the Fundamentalists are largely in the majority.

These somewhat platitudinous reflections were aroused by the perusal of *Selected Prejudices*, by the well-known American critic and author, Mr. H. L. Mencken, published by Jonathan Cape in *The Traveller's Library*. Many of our readers will no doubt be acquainted with Mr. Mencken's book on Nietzsche, also of another dealing with Mr. Bernard Shaw's plays. He has also written several volumes of lively criticism under the title of *Prejudices*, and the volume we are dealing with now contains a selection for English readers from these volumes.

Mr. Mencken is undoubtedly the most brilliant writer America possesses, and he is absolutely fearless in the expression of his opinions. He gives the impression of a man thinking aloud and not caring a fig what people think about him. We feel sure that if Mr. Mencken thought that it was right for a man to poison a vituperative mother-in-law, or to marry his grandmother, he would not hesitate to tell it to the world. He proclaims from the housetops, opinions which others, in the circle of society within which he moves, only speak of among their confidential friends, after dinner, when the servants have withdrawn.

If some of Mr. Mencken's remarks about some of America's great men had been written by an Englishman, there would have been a popular demand in the States for an ultimatum. For instance, comparing the national hero Roosevelt, with the ex-Kaiser, he says: "Both roared for doughty armies, eternally prepared . . . Both dreamed of gigantic navies. Both preached incessantly the duty of the citizen to the State, with the soft pedal upon the duty of the State to the citizen . . . Both were intimates of God, and announced His desires with authority. Both believed that all men who stood opposed to them were prompted by the devil and would suffer for it in hell."

If there was any difference between them, says Mr. Mencken, it was all in favour of the Kaiser, who was the milder and more modest; for "it took some colossal event, such as the launching of a dreadnought or the birthday of a colonel-general, to get him on his legs; the Reichstag was not constantly deluged with his advice and upbraiding." Of Roosevelt's gabble about the square deal, says Mencken: "No man, facing Roosevelt in the heat of controversy, ever actually got a square deal. He took extravagant advantages; he played to the worst idiocies of the mob; he hit below the belt almost habitually. One never thinks of him as a duellist. One always thinks of him as a glorified navy engaged eternally in cleaning out pubs—and not too proud to gouge when the inspiration came to him, or to bite in the clinches, or to oppose the relatively fragile brass knuckles of the code with chair-legs, demijohns, and ice-picks." Of Woodrow Wilson, he says: "Wilson: the self-bamboozled Presbyterian, the right-thinker, the great moral statesman, the perfect model of the Christian cad."

In religion Mr. Mencken is quite as outspoken. Compared with his, the religious views of Mr. Wells

and Mr. Bernard Shaw seem to assume the orthodox and conventional faith of a Methodist Sunday school teacher. Mr. Mencken is no reverent agnostic, eternally grieving for his lost faith, and telling his Christian friends how glad he would be if only he could conscientiously kneel with them in worship. It has always appeared to me a pity that these spiritual hermaphrodites ever left their religious faith, and, having left it, that they do not return to it. They would prove as great a nuisance in the religious camp as they are in ours. The Church of Rome, with its ornate ritual, vestments, incense, gaudy images of saints, and latin abracadabra, which seems to attract these half-baked people most, will not have them at any price. It is wise.

"Faith," says Mr. Mencken, "may be defined briefly as an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable . . . A man full of faith is simply one who has lost (or never had) the capacity for clear and realistic thought. He is not a mere ass: he is actually ill . . . The faith takes on the virulence of a chronic infection. What he says, in substance, is this: 'Let us trust in God, who has always fooled us in the past.'"

God is the enemy of man: "The dominating purpose of man in the world is to conquer Nature, which is to say, to defeat the plain intent of God. God and man are the eternal antagonists." And the primary purpose of religion "is to read an intelligible and even laudable motive into the inscrutable assaults of God." Religious views may give a man "a lot of comfort, but they expose him to the dangers which always follow the denial of reality. The man who believes that God is personally interested in him and will save him from harm is in a far more perilous situation than the man who knows better."

The old anthropomorphic notion that the whole universe centres in the life of man, is an exploded delusion: "Once apparently the chief concern and masterpiece of the gods, the human race now begins to bear the aspect of an accidental by-product of their vast, inscrutable and probably nonsensical operations." The old theory "is made absurd by modern biology—but that is not saying, of course, that it will ever be abandoned by the generality of men. To the contrary, they will cherish it in proportion as it becomes more and more dubious." Even regarded as an animal, man is botched and ridiculous. The dog has sharper senses. The lion is more beautiful and dignified. The antelope is swifter and more graceful:—

Man is ill far more than any other animal, both in his savage state and under civilization. He has more different diseases and he suffers from them oftener. He is more easily exhausted and injured. He dies more horribly and usually sooner . . . All the errors and incompetencies of the Creator reach their climax in man. As a piece of mechanism he is the worst of them all; put beside him, even a salmon or a staphylococcus is a sound and efficient machine. He has the worst kidneys known to comparative zoology, and the worst lungs, and the worst heart. His eye, considering the work it is called upon to do, is less efficient than the eye of an earthworm; an optical-instrument maker, who made an instrument so clumsy would be mobbed by his customers. (H. L. Mencken: *Selected Prejudices* p. 83.)

Man claims that he has a natural superiority over the animals by the possession of a soul, the function of which is to bring him into contact with God, and to make him aware of God. Says our author:—

Well, consider the colossal failure of the device! If we assume that man actually does resemble God, then we are forced into the impossible theory that God is a coward, an idiot, and a bounder. And if

we assume that man after all these years does not resemble God, then it appears at once that the human soul is as inefficient as the human liver or tonsil, and that man would probably be better off, as the chimpanzee undoubtedly is better off, without it.

Such, indeed, is the case. The only practical effect of having a soul is that it fills man with anthropomorphic and anthropocentric vanities—in brief, with cocky and preposterous superstitions. He struts and plumes himself because he has this soul—and overlooks the fact that it doesn't work. Thus he is the supreme clown of creation, the *reductio ad absurdum* of animated nature. (*Ibid* p. 84.)

Of all the unsound ideas held by hundreds of millions of eager dupes, says Mencken, "Probably the most patently unsound is the one that is most widely held, to wit, the idea that man has an immortal soul—that there is a part of him too ethereal and too exquisite to die. Absolutely the only evidence supporting this astounding notion lies in the hope that it is true . . . Examine, for example, the proofs amassed by five typical witnesses in five widely separated ages: St. John, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Emanuel Swedenborg and Sir Oliver Lodge. Approach these proofs prayerfully, and study them well. Weigh them in the light of the probabilities, the ordinary intellectual decencies—and then ask yourself if you could imagine a mud-turtle accepting them gravely." (*Ibid*. pp. 89-90.)

The great majority of Christian ecclesiastics, says Mencken, "are still committed to the doctrine that Darwin was a scoundrel, and Herbert Spencer another, and Huxley a third—and that Nietzsche is to the three of them what Beelzebub himself is to a trio of bad boys . . . But if truth has hard sledding, error is given a loving welcome. The man who invents a new imbecility is hailed gladly, and bidden to make himself at home; he is, to the great masses of men, the *beau-ideal* of mankind."

So, if America is the home of Fundamentalism, it also supplies the antidote.

W. MANN.

A Remarkable Forecast.

(Concluded from page 299.)

THIS alone would make any saying attributed to Jesus appear worthy of very close examination; but, in the case of the present one, there is another and no less important claim, because the words: "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come," exhibit the Messianic views of Jesus even more clearly than the words: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished;" and therefore the former passage affords even greater help than the latter in determining the authenticity of the Messianic parables set forth in his name. Of the above-named views, two especially require to be ascertained: What did Jesus think about the relation of "the nations" to the heavenly kingdom, and about the length of his absence from this world? Did he bid his disciples to call "the nations" into "the kingdom" either with or without the intention of excluding the Jews; and what approximate length of time did he expect to elapse between his departure for heaven and his return to earth? On both these points the passage in the Transferred Charge renders clearer and more precise the already unmistakable teaching of the passage in the Forecast.

1. The Call to the Gentiles. The test-verse in the above Charge restricts the labours of the apostles to "the cities of Israel," for it declares that they

will not have gone through those cities before the Son of Man arrives. Matthew, who refers the Charge to the occasion when Jesus dispatched his apostles on a missionary tour, asserts that Jesus began his address to them by saying: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." These words do not occur either in Mark's or in Luke's report of the incident; and therefore it is possible, and even probable, that like the Transferred Charge which follows them at a short interval, they belonged originally to the Forecast, in which case they were permanent directions for all the future conduct of the apostles, and not temporary instructions for their behaviour on a particular mission. Be this as it may, the orders themselves agree strictly with what Matthew himself reports that Jesus said to the Canaanitish woman, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (xv. 24.) Long before then, addressing his disciples in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, as Matthew likewise declares, commanded them, saying: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs." (v. 1, vii. 6.) This name at that day was applied by Jews to Gentiles; (Niddah 77, a., *Baba Kama*, 49, a.); and from the testimony both of Mark and Matthew, Jesus is known to have followed the custom. For they say that when the foreign woman above mentioned implored him to heal her daughter, he replied, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." (Mark vii. 27, Matthew xv.) Here it should be observed that the Forecast contains only two references to the preaching of the Gospel unto the Gentiles, Mark and Matthew being the reporters. In Mark's account, where Jesus warns his followers to expect persecution from the authorities, and bids them to trust divine inspiration for their defence, the warning is separated from the command by the irrelevant and disrupting clause: "And the Gospel must first be preached unto all the nations." It would be hard to find, even in the Synoptics, a more flagrant interpolation. The corresponding reference in Matthew's account occurs in the very place where there appears to have been both transference and substitution. The transferred part has nothing on the subject, but the other says: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations." The passage does not relate to either of its contexts, but it does not sever them for they are quite independent. Luke affirms that Jesus uttered two such predictions after rising from the grave. For in his Gospel he states that on the day of the resurrection Jesus taught the apostles how, according to the scriptures, the suffering of the Christ and its efficacy would be proclaimed "unto all the nations" (xxiv. 47); whilst in his Acts he affirms that immediately before the ascension, Jesus told them "Ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (i. 8.) These citations from Luke have the misfortune to be parts of a ghost story; and the same disadvantage encumbers the only two passages where Jesus is reported to have ordered his apostles to evangelize "the nations." The first occurs in the last twelve verses of Mark, which are regarded as a spurious supplement; and the last three verses of Matthew, which, like Mark's corresponding ones, exhale an unmistakable odour of ripe ecclesiasticism, whilst the verse containing the injunction contains also a baptismal formula suspected of being a comparatively late addition. It is evident from the above analysis that belief should not be given to any of the passages where Jesus is reported to have ordered his apostles to evangelize the Gentiles. Moreover, the behaviour

of those apostles themselves, proves conclusively that they had never received from their master before his death, much less after his glorious resurrection, the order to convert the Gentiles. For, as we learn from Acts x., Peter regarded them as unclean, and never thought of going into their society until he was compelled to enter it by a remarkable vision; whilst years afterwards the apostle Paul, according to his own statement (Gal. ii.), had some difficulty in persuading the Church of Jerusalem to admit his Gentile converts into the fold of Christ; and also discovered that the apostles Peter and John, together with James, the Lord's brother, were resolved to keep on preaching to the Gentiles; which is utterly incomprehensible if Jesus before he died had predicted the coming of his gospel "unto all the nations," and after he recovered from death, had commanded the self-same apostles saying, "Preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xiii. 10.), and "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations." (Matthew xxiv. 14.)

2. The Approximate Distance of the Second Advent. The declaration which the evangelists attribute to Jesus in the reports of the Forecast: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished," agrees with an assertion attributed to him in Matthew's account of his final pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This statement is as follows: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels. . . Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (xvii. 27, 28.) Mark and Luke, when recording what was said at this time, give a different allusion to the coming of the Son of Man; and instead of the final words, "His Kingdom," they have "the Kingdom of God." But the survival of certain bystanders to witness the predicted event is a thing affirmed in all the three accounts. In the Forecast, however, the reference is not limited to persons then present, but is extended to members of the existing generation. Hence it is of importance to ascertain the exact sense of the term "generation," as there employed. "A generation" means all the persons born within a given space of time, as distinguished from their children, who form the next generation, and so on successively. Since, however, human beings do not enter this world in groups at stated periods, but arrive separately and continuously, a vast number of generations is always present. Hence, the phrase "this generation" is applicable to one or another of the many generations co-existing at any given time, but not to the aggregate of persons composing such generations. The possessives "my," "your," "our," etcetera, should be employed to qualify the first reference to any generation, after which the demonstrative "this" may be used with a relative force to qualify any of the subsequent references; as, for instance, "my generation" means those born near the time of my birth; and therefore, having indicated the generation in point, I may afterwards, when describing its peculiarities, refer to it as "this generation" without incurring the risk of being asked, "which one?" Still, in the case of a popular speaker like Jesus, it is vain to expect precision of terms, and therefore we must take into account the vulgar use of the present phrase. On one occasion Jesus certainly employs it to mean adults, or persons advanced in the so-called "years of discretion." There, when complaining that John's abstemiousness and his own indulgence received equal disapproval from those of the day, he said, "Whereunto shall I liken this generation?" Similarly, it might be said of our age, "This generation has little faith in poli-

ticians." But, in neither of these cases can "generation" be supposed to include young folks, much less children. Yet it is very probable that, when saying, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled," Jesus intended "generation" to mean the whole of the existing population, and not simply the adult part thereof, the longest possible life of the youngest child being the extreme limit of duration. The Psalmist (xc. 10) gives eighty years as the furthest term of man's existence; but passages in Genesis (xv. 16) and Exodus (xii. 40, 41) show that the Hebrews once reckoned a generation as covering a century, however few might last out that period. Thus, as Jesus spoke this prophecy very shortly before his death, which is assigned by most of the best authorities to A.D. 30, he must have considered A.D. 130 as the remotest time of the Messiah's advent. But obviously he might have regarded it as likely to occur at a much earlier date, and all uncertainty on this point is removed by the assurance which he vouchsafed to his apostles, "Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." For, according to British engineers, Palestine, west of the Jordan, has a superficial area of 6,040 square miles, the greatest length being 150 miles, and the breadth varying from eighty to twenty-three miles; whilst its territory east of that river is, by estimation, taken to be 3,800 square miles.¹ Thus the whole surface of Palestine is exactly equal to that covered by the counties of Lincoln, York and Durham.²

Josephus, who had been Governor of Galilee, reports in his *Wars of the Jews*, that this province was rich and populous, adding with excusable exaggeration: "The cities lie here very thick; and the very many villages there are here, are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants." (iii. 3.)

Dr. A. Socin, professor of Oriental languages in the University of Leipzig, when writing in the *Encyclopedia Biblica* (1899), says: "The number of two and a half to three millions may indeed be taken as a maximum, the population can hardly ever have been more than four times its present strength, which is estimated at 650,000 souls. Thus in the most flourishing period, about 250 to 300 inhabitants would go to the square mile, while at present there may be about sixty-five, a number which is rather above than below the mark."

The part of England, which, as I have before observed, covers the same area as Palestine, had at the end of last century, 2,423,741 inhabitants.³ Can it be supposed that twelve Mormon missionaries would then have taken more than two or three years to proclaim their doctrines over that part, even though they had been limited to the apostolic means of locomotion?

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Life like a torrent flung
Forever down,
Forever wears a rainbow for a crown.

G. Santayana.

Is it not strange that the race of man should have gone forward so far and so well when all the while most of what it was thinking and believing was not true?

H. E. Amiel.

¹ Ency. Bib. a † Palestine.

² *Pocket Gazetteer*, 1892. No wonder that St. Jerome wrote thus to his friend Dardanus: *Pudet dicere latitudinem terrae promissionis, ne eundem occasionem blasphemandi dedisse videamur.*

³ *Pocket Gazetteer*, 1892.

A Note on the Death of Chopin.

I WAS looking through a recent number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* the other day, when I came across the final chapters of Mr. Guy de Pourtales' *Chopin ou le Poète*, which has since been published in book form.

Anything relating to such master musicians as Chopin, Schubert or Mozart interests me, and, for the first time, I read in detail an account of the tragic death of the great pianoforte composer. Of French extraction and Polish birth, it cannot be surprising to learn that Chopin lived and died a Catholic—though I often wondered what he must have thought of George Sand, with whom he lived so many years, and the galaxy of brilliant people who frequented her salon. Think of Berlioz, Heine, Balzac, Rossini—whose religious *Stabat Mater* is so deliciously secular—and many other geniuses of the gay and witty Paris of the forties of last century! How much religion of the Chesterton and Belloc type could one have found there?

M. de Pourtales quotes, of course, the best authorities, but let me translate a few passages relating to the last days of Chopin, before commenting on them:—

This recital—so important—of the death of Chopin is mostly borrowed from Maurice Karasowski, the first biographer of the composer. Often untrustworthy, sometimes all fantasy, Karasowski, was very intimate with the Chopin family, and his account of the death scenes are authentic.

The Abbé Jelowicki also left some notes, which we have used—though with prudence. His desire to make Chopin die a good Christian made him perhaps exaggerate a little this conversion *in extremis*. It does seem, however, that Chopin died in the bosom of the Church. . . . After a long search, a home was found in Place Vendôme, and Chopin, who was so weak that he could hardly speak, was taken there. He managed to write a last letter to Franchomme. "I hope to see you here, where I am at last comfortable, next winter. My sister stays with me. I send my love, all I can say at the moment, as I am broken with fatigue and feebleness."

Charles Gavard, the young brother of one of his pupils, often came to see and read to him. Chopin told him what books he preferred. He returned with most gratification to Voltaire's *Philosophic Dictionary*, the style of which in particular he appreciated as well as its conciseness and taste. Indeed, one of the last times Gavard read to him, it was the chapter entitled "On the Different Tastes of People . . ." Although he got rapidly worse, the idea of dying did not seem to affect him very much. . . . One of the friends of his childhood, the Abbé Jelowicki, wished to see him when he learned how gravely ill Chopin was. He was refused admittance three times, but managed to let Chopin know and was immediately received. After that he came every day, and Chopin was glad to see a former friend.

"I don't wish to die," he said, "before receiving the Sacraments, so as not to give my mother any pain, but I don't understand them in the way you wish. I see nothing in confession but the solace of a heavy heart in the heart of a friend."

The Abbé later found Chopin a little better.

"My friend," he said, "to-day is the anniversary of the birth of my late brother. You must do something for me on such a day."

"What can I give you?"

"Your soul."

"Ah, I understand," cried Chopin, "take it."

Jelowicki fell on his knees, presented the crucifix to Chopin, who commenced to cry. He confessed and received the extreme unction. Then, embracing his friend, he said, "Thanks to you, old

chap, I shall not die like a pig." . . . He felt himself dying and said goodbye to all present. . . . To Franchomme, he said, "Play Mozart in memory of me."

All night the Abbé recited the prayers for the dying, which all present repeated. Only Chopin remained silent. He died on October 17, 1849, at two o'clock in the morning.

I think the passages speak for themselves. Chopin, of course, was not a militant Atheist, his upbringing made that impossible, but that he had strong Free-thought leanings, it seems impossible to doubt. Dying as he did so young—he was only thirty-nine—and spending most of his time in composing and playing, victim of that dreadful complaint, tuberculosis, he could never have studied the great Rationalists. But one cannot fancy a thorough believing Catholic preferring Voltaire to "holy" devotional works, or coolly telling his priestly friend that he only wanted the Sacraments for his mother's sake—not knowing what they meant, himself.

One can also see how badgered he was by the Abbé, who, like the interfering religious nobodies forcing themselves on the dying Thomas Paine, felt it his duty to thrust religion on the world-famous composer. He cannot, of course, be blamed, but I never see red so much as when I read of the way the ghoul-like claws of the Church are fastened on men in their dying agony.

The conversion—if conversion it was—of Chopin means, perhaps, very little in reality. We have the glorious music, in its own way never equalled or surpassed, and there is precious little religion in it. That is our supreme consolation.

H. CUTNER.

THE GREEK SOURCE OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY.

All our Western philosophy derives from Greece. It was the Greeks who first asked the ultimate questions: What are matter and form and motion, what is justice, what is happiness? It was they who first liberated European thought from the bondage of religious ritual, and applied to the explanation of the fundamental problems of existence the free, unfettered activity of the human intellect. Thus it would be impossible to find a system of modern philosophy which has not its seeds in the Greek faculty for wonder. Even schools of thought such as Pragmatism, which have no analogue in the surviving monuments of Greek speculation, are compelled to work with categories which the Greeks were the first to discover and define.

It is not without significance that the word "psychical" is Greek, for the conception of the soul as the spiritual substance of human personality was a Greek discovery. It was Socrates who first taught the Athenians that it was part of their duty to care for the soul or "psyche," and that the secret of moral health lay in self-examination. For him, as for the Greeks in general, philosophy was not so much an academic study as a way of life. The philosopher examined his own soul and brought others to the test. His discourses were full of ethical direction, prefiguring the Christian sermon of later times, save that the "hortative discourses" of the Hellenes were free of theological sanctions and appeals. All that we mean by the science of ethics, most of what is implied in the ethical basis of European religion, finds a root in the Socratic teaching. Of all the achievements of the Greek genius this discovery, the source and sustenance in every generation of so many saintly lives, has been the most important in its bearing on the conduct of man. We can trace its influence in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius and the *Confessions* of S. Augustine, in the confessional of the Catholic Church, and the casuistry of the Jesuit Order, and more broadly in the conceptions of conscience and duty which, whether they be acted on in individual cases or not, are part of the moral climate of Western civilization itself.—H. A. L. Fisher, LL.D., F.R.S.

Acid Drops.

We are pleased to see *Answers* taking up the question of the religious services and the B.B.C. In its issue of May 5, it asks why there should actually be less sent out to subscribers on Sunday, when people have more time to listen, than on any other day. The answer to this is, of course, the degree to which the clerical advisory committee influences the B.B.C. This advisory committee, by the way, consists of the Bishop of Southwark, Canon Woodward, the Rev. T. Nightingale, Rev. R. C. Gillie, Rev. P. G. McCormick, and Mr. H. Ward (Roman Catholic). The article is very mild in its demands, as one would expect, for *Answers* is not likely to say anything that would rub Christians the wrong way. But it asks for a longer programme on Sunday, following the example of other countries, and asks that the Church service shall be held earlier in the evening, from 6.40 to 7.15, so that more time may be left for the musical programme. It seems that this request was made, and the B.B.C. referred it to the Committee named for decision. Naturally this Committee turned it down. They feared that it would affect Church attendances, as people who wanted a service might prefer to stay at home and have it. It is only in this country that, in the name of freedom, a committee of parsons would be elected to settle whether anything should be done that would interfere with their business.

One would have liked *Answers* to have taken a bolder stand, but one cannot expect papers in this country to take a bold stand where the churches are concerned. One would like the question pressing why the B.B.C., which has received a charter from the government, and which is granted a monopoly, publicly avows it as its aim to "prevent the decay of Christianity," and to develop "a manly Christianity." Nothing can prevent the decay of Christianity, certainly not the unbelievably stupid twaddle that is sent out Sunday after Sunday by the B.B.C. In any case it is monstrous that a Corporation of this kind should prohibit anything being sent out that is against Christianity, forbid anything during Church hours, then forbid anything but religion for another period, and all at the bidding of a committee of parsons. Yet there are those who say this is not a priest-ridden country. The only difference between this and other countries is that our British Protestantism has introduced and developed a peculiarly cowardly and hypocritical form of clerical rule. Still, we are pleased to see the protest in *Answers*. It is an evidence that the agitation which we set on foot more than two years ago is having its influence.

The N.S.S. Conference is to be held on May 27. On the 29th, two days later, terrible things will begin to happen. Between that date and September 15, Armageddon will be fought; Great Britain and America will fight the rest of the world; the Millenium, under the rule of Christ, will arrive. The Conference will have nothing to do with these things, they will follow from the prophecies contained in the Pyramids, and these forecasts have been confirmed by a number of spirits of the very highest grades. This is a sad state of affairs, just as we are getting the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust into shape, and looking forward to some good hard work in Freethought. Drat the Pyramids and these "high grade" spirits. But we have the word of the Rev. Walter Wynne, who is able to find money for the most lavish advertisements, and also of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Only we do wish these prophets and spirits would leave things alone. And those who have bought tickets in this year's Derby sweepstakes will be unable to draw the prize money. Things generally are going to the devil. But Mr. Wynne and the rest of his tribe have votes! And Sir William Joynson Hicks is Home Secretary. And Parliament debates the prayer book. And Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell thrills the House of Commons with "Thank God, England is still Protestant." It is a sad world!

The Chief Constable of Leeds recently told the local Methodist Council that it was not true that all crime was due to drink, or as much as some people imagined. The cleverest criminals were often sober men. Very often the criminal was such because of his environment. He was sure, the Chief Constable added, that people had become more temperate through the influence of outdoor games, lectures, theatres, cinemas, and even dancing halls. There was not, he declared, a wave of crime sweeping over the country, and he gave facts in proof of his assertion. The Chief Constable's remarks must have been rather unsettling to his pious listeners; the lie was given direct to so much that their pastors had told them as fact, or had warned them to beware of.

We fancy some advice the Chief Constable gave to the Churches was none too palatable. Sermons, he said, should be broader—which is another way of saying that they and the sermonizers were too narrow-minded. The spirit of forgiveness should be more manifest, he thought, especially towards people who differed from Methodists in opinion. Now, this plea for tolerance is dangerous to a religious sect. A sectarian community is largely held together by the conviction that the religious opinions of other sectarians is "error." Encourage tolerance, or respect, towards such "error," and you weaken the conviction cementing the community together. Another danger is that the sectarian may become tolerant towards the opinions of unbelievers, and his tolerance may induce him to investigate such opinions. Such being the case, we solemnly warn Methodist parsons not to encourage tolerance, if they would keep the sheep within the fold.

The Glasgow City Chamberlain issues a report of the sittings, let and unlet, in the Glasgow City Churches. This covers nine Churches, and the net result is a decrease of £57 10s. 3d. cash. Another piece of evidence in favour of the revived interest in religion about which we hear so much.

The Bishop of Southwark has formed a committee to consider plays in churches of the Southwark diocese. He says he feels it would be deplorable if the churches were to be used for plays. We agree; it would be far better to stick to the usual comic opera allowed by the Book of Common Prayer.

Mr. Arthur Rank told a missionary meeting, during which all the speakers appealed for more money, "the just shall live by faith, and the Wesleyan Missionary Society shall live 'by faith.'" Faith may move mountains, but it is hard cash that makes the missionary wheels go round. The men of God and the missionary staffs are not, we fancy, keen on living by faith, or there would not be these plaintive appeals for more money from pious dupes.

Wesleyans need to raise their standard of giving, says the high-priest of the Wesleyan Conference. He hopes the crisis (*i.e.*, the Missionary Society's shortage of cash) will lead to larger sympathy, more self-denial, a loftier standard of giving, and to the "consecration of capital." Wesleyans, we take it, are putting too low an estimate on what a pass to Heaven is worth. Since the preaching of hell-fire, and the fear of eternal punishment, has died down, godly men and women are reluctant to pay for the passport what their pastors demand for it. Besides, having dropped many of their Puritan prejudices, they have discovered there are lots of nice things to enjoy in this life, for which money is useful.

In connexion with the centenary of the birthday of Josephine Butler, who fought against the double moral standard for men and women, the system of State-regulated vice, and the traffic in women and children, Miss Margaret Bondfield recently declared: "Everywhere Josephine Butler received encouragement and support

from organized labour." But her husband, Canon Butler, was howled down at a gathering of representative clergy at Nottingham, in 1871, for attempting to read a paper on the subject. This latter piece of history reminds one that clerics in the lump can always be depended upon to prevent public opinion moving forward too rapidly. They are adepts at putting sand in the machinery of progress.

The rector's lure. The Rev. Telford Varley has provided a parking place for motor-cars at Ripple, near Deal, to induce Sunday motorists to attend his church. Free coffee and cakes might fetch a few more clients, or a little jazz on a portable gramophone.

This really is the twentieth century. At Hull, recently, two royal personages laid the foundation stone of the new University College, and the stone was then "dedicated" by the Archbishop of York. The points to note here are, that people still believe there is some special virtue in a foundation stone being laid by royal personages (divinely appointed to rule over us); and very special virtue in the stone having incantations mumbled over it by a priest (divinely appointed to teach us). That is why we remind you that this really is the twentieth century, in case you might fancy it was the twelfth.

Sir Frank Sanderson, the Conservative member for Darwen, has introduced a Bill into the House of Commons to restrict Sunday trading. He complains that in Cardiff there are 1,000 shops open on Sunday, which much upsets the people in Darwen; and in Hull there were 18,698 convictions for Sunday trading last year. Sir Frank is willing to permit newspapers and surgical appliances to be sold on Sunday, and certain other commodities during specified hours. We suggest that to the list of prohibitions should be added Church and Chapel services, tramcar and omnibus running, trading in gas and electricity, with a provision to see that every Christian went to bed at midnight on Saturday, and, as the late G. W. Foote would have said, employed a Jew to turn him over if he wished to move any time between then and Monday morning. There is nothing like being thorough while one is about it.

It is perhaps worthy of note that Browne, one of the two men under sentence of death for the murder of a police constable, is, if his records may be trusted, quite a monument of the Nonconformist virtues. He did not drink, he did not smoke, his sex life was conventionally correct, and we should not wonder if he was always careful never to offend anyone by playing games on Sunday. His one vice was that he was a thief, and his fault led on to murder. But with all that has been said he does not appear to have been dowered with too great an intelligence. First of all, there was the criminal's usual shortsightedness of failing to realize that if he keeps on at the game, failure is almost certain. One slip is enough; and who is there who can be sure of not making a mistake now and again? Secondly, a man with so striking an array of Nonconformist virtues might easily have satisfied his acquisitiveness without running any danger from the police. There is the Foreign Missionary movement, the Home Missionary movement, or the evangelistic platform. With the whole field of religion before him he goes and steals a motor-car! Call you that intelligence? Why, even now, if he were to be released, and took to the "Jesus saved me" stunt, there would be a sure five thousand a year on evangelistic platforms in England and the States. With such a competitor in the field, most of the professionals now at work would have to go out and commit murder in order to get a living.

After listening to unwholesome fulminations against women's dress by Popes, priests and parsons, a breath of fresh air is very welcome. Dr. C. W. Saleeby obliges us with it:—

There is nothing for me to say [about clothing] to young women, but to offer them my congratulations. Allowing the air and the light to reach their bodies, they have gained in every way. The anæmia of young girls has gone, doubtless for ever.

Dear, dear; what a pity! Anæmic minds are so susceptible to religious influences.

A decree issued in Italy bans handshaking and the kissing of a lady's hand, the custom being declared unhygienic. For the same reason a ban might have been put on kissing the Pope's foot and saintly and dirty relics.

Converting the heathen is not the only job with which a missionary employs his time. Sometimes he hunts lions. A Dr. Dixon went a-hunting in Africa, but the lion hunted the Doctor, and the good man got badly bitten. So a religious paper tells us. Providence who safeguards missionaries was evidently taking a nap that day, or perhaps it was working overtime in China.

From a religious weekly, we learn that churches in the United States are trying to attract British preachers by the offer of large salaries. Dr. Henry Howard left English Methodism some time ago to become minister of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, at a salary of over £2,000 a year. Dr. Ward, sometime minister of a Congregational church in North London, has become a pastor of a Detroit church at a salary of £3,000. What a convenience is a pastoral conscience that can enable a man to take £3,000 a year for preaching "Blessed be ye poor," and "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth"!

China is beginning, says the Rev. W. H. Pillow, of Hunan, to distinguish between Christianity and Christian nations; between the teaching of Jesus and the practice of some of his followers. "England must become more Christian before we can persuade China to be Christian." We suggest that, if a pamphlet giving a faithful record of the behaviour of Christians when trying to practise their religion were circulated in China, the Chinese would be still harder to persuade. The Chinese would like to read about the massacres of Protestants by Catholics, the Spanish Inquisition, the slaughter of the Covenanters, the fires of Smithfield, witch-hunting, the persecution of Freethinkers, etc., etc. And what an instructive cinema film these things would make, entitled—"The Practice of the Christian Religion," with appropriate Bible texts, and the dicta of Christian leaders!

Sir Wm. Joynson-Hicks has assured the Committee for the Maintenance of Truth and Faith that his opposition to the New Prayer Book has not been modified by the recent revision. The nation breathes a sigh of relief.

The Rev. S. Chadwick, of Cliff College (a Wesleyan training college), says that many people remind him that the world has changed. He adds: "We are told science is in a chaotic condition because of some discoveries about the atom, so it is not theologians who have a monopoly of difficulty." True; but there is an important difference to be noted here. The scientists encounter difficulty because they are engaged in discovering truth; whereas, the theologians are encountering difficulty because scientific discovery is making their "inspired" and infallible truth appear as error or plain nonsense. Scientists welcome scientific difficulty because truth eventually emerges from it. Theologians hate theological difficulty because the results invariably are dissention, doubt, and lessening of faith, and a continual need for re-interpretation of old "truths," from which arises the further difficulty of getting it accepted.

The Rev. R. A. Lockhart says that the people of the Gold Coast are simple and superstitious. Christians two-thirds made, eh?

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.

F. HALL.—Thanks for review of *The Case for Christianity*.

We have not read the book, but may do so, and if we find anything in it sufficiently striking to be of interest to our readers will probably make it the subject of an article.

D. A. ROWLAND.—H. C. Lea's *History of the Inquisition in Spain*, 4 vols., and *History of the Inquisition*, 3 vols., are the most elaborate and the most authoritative works on the subject. You will probably find the sketches given in Lecky's *History of European Morals* sufficient for the other subject.

R. RAWLINSON.—Mr. Cohen tries to deal as fully as he can with such communications, but you must bear in mind that he is a very busy man, and cannot always give the time to private correspondence he would like. If he was able to employ a secretary or sub-editor, he might have more time to spend in other directions. But the demands of the paper must come first.

J. WEARING.—The full account of the trial of G. W. Foote was published, but is now out of print. We have had in view a series of sketches of the best known trials for blasphemy, but have never yet found time to do them. In the case of G. W. Foote, the chief stress was laid upon the illustrations in the Christmas number of the *Freethinker*.

A. MILLAR.—Shall appear soon.

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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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.

Arrangements for the Liverpool Conference are now practically complete. The business meetings will be held at 10.30 and 2.30, in the Washington Hotel, Lime Street. There will be an interval for lunch, which will be provided in the Washington Hotel at 3s. 6d. per person. Tea may also be had in the same building. In the evening, at 7, there will be a public demonstration in the Picton Hall. Mr. Cohen will take the chair, the speakers will include Messrs. Rosetti, Whitehead, Mann and others. There will be a number of reserved seats at 1s. each. These may be obtained of the Secretary, Mr. A. Jackson, 7 Kirk Street, Bootle, Lanes.

We again express the hope that every Branch will be represented, and that there will be a good muster of members and delegates. Most of the delegates will be staying at the Washington, and those wishing to have rooms booked either there or elsewhere, should write the General Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, without delay. Letters should state exactly what accommodation is required and for how long.

If there are enough delegates who wish to join, an excursion can be arranged to Chester, which will include

railway fare, dinner and tea, and a trip down the river, at an inclusive cost of 9s. 3d. Those who intend taking part in this must let their intentions be known at once.

Mr. George Whitehead will be the speaker in Regent's Park to-day (May 13). We hope that North London Freethinkers will bear the fact in mind. The lecture commences at 6 o'clock. Mr. Whitehead will also be lecturing in South London during the week, after which he leaves for his provincial campaign.

Mr. F. Mann has a busy time to-day (May 13). He will speak in the morning and evening in South London, and in the afternoon, at 3.15, in Victoria Park. Details will be found in our Lecture Guide column.

The West London Branch is continuing its meetings this year in Ravenscourt Park, and has made, we are pleased to hear, a capital beginning. We hope that Freethinkers in West London will give the meetings held here their steady support.

The Manchester Branch has arranged three rambles during the summer months. The first one is fixed for Sunday, May 20, and is in the Poynton district. Members and friends will get the bus from Sharp's Garage, Lena Street, Piccadilly, at 10.45 a.m. We are asked to give the following particulars: Book return to Hazel Grove. Fare 1s. 3d. return. From Hazel Grove to Lyme Park Lodge Gates, then walk to Lyme Park Gate, past Lyme Hall to Bowstones Gate, along the Roman Road towards Pott Shrigley, and on through the Fields to Poynton. No one can be picked up en route unless tickets are purchased beforehand. Tea will be supplied at Poynton at a cost of 1s. per head. Total cost of bus rides and tea, 2s. 11d. Members and friends who intend joining the party are asked to notify the Social Secretary, Mr. T. F. Greenall, at 34 Goullden Street, Pendleton, as early as possible.

To the already voluminous literature of Birth Control, Messrs. Putnam & Co. have added *Medical Help on Birth Control* (6). The volume contains a dozen essays, all by men and women well qualified to speak on the subject. A very interesting essay, which is so short as to be positively aggravating, is one on Early ideas concerning Conception and Contraception, by Mr. W. R. Dawson, which takes the reader back to ancient Egypt for examples. The atmosphere in which this subject may now be discussed is far different from what it was since Bradlaugh and Besant braved the combination of jackass and hyena of English Puritanism some seventy years since, but Sir Arbuthnot Lane is very optimistic in writing that the war was responsible for making people think for themselves, with the result that religions of all sorts sustained a shock from which they can never recover, while "old-world superstitions have completely vanished." Superstitions are to-day almost as rife as they were before the war. They have undergone a change in form, which may be the road to their disappearance, but that is all.

The almost criminal character of Christian prejudice that had to be fought to get the problem of Birth Control discussed in an atmosphere of reason may be seen from the following quotation, given by Sir James Barr, from a pamphlet by Father Keating, written in 1913:—

The Church, looking beyond all earthly good, proclaims that all adults have a right to marry (unless they have abandoned that right by vow, or have been justly deprived of it as a punishment for crime) if they are substantially capable of fulfilling the duties of marriage, including, of course, the education of their offspring. She teaches that no wrong is being done to the State by the begetting of sickly or imbecile children unless the parent can do nothing to support them. Nor is wrong done to such children themselves because, in view of the Eternal happiness normally within their reach, it is better to be maimed or tainted than not to be born at all.

Those who are in any doubt as to the evil character of the reaction of religion on sociology would do well to carefully reflect on that deliverance.

Our Modern Augurs.

SUPERSTITION dies hard even in such high seats of learning as the University of Oxford. Thus we have, in this twentieth century, chairs endowed for the prosecution of studies akin to those pursued in the ancient Roman College of Augurs. The purpose is to obtain knowledge concerning the will of a god, or gods, by some system apart from the exercise of ordinary reason and commonsense.

One of the methods employed by the augurs was haruspication, or the inspection of the entrails of animals, another was the observation of the flight of birds. Others, still with us, are astrology, or the supposed influence of the stars; oneiromancy, the interpretation of dreams; pyromancy, the behaviour of fire; cheiromancy, or palmistry; crystal gazing; the inspection of tea-leaves; and bibliomancy, in which a book is opened, and some one or two lines selected at random.

Most of these methods of divination are looked upon with suspicion by the police, and sometimes a practitioner becomes entangled in the meshes of the law. But there is one of them that is regarded as eminently respectable and proper, because the claims of the Christian superstition and of the Church are based upon it. This is bibliomancy, or the inspection of a book. Not any book, but a collection of writings of unknown authorship called the Bible. The inspection, however, is not at haphazard, but is done in a manner calculated to establish whatever it is desired to establish. This art is now called Divinity, and although its professors would indignantly deprecate and repudiate any comparison between them and the augurs who drew inferences from the "innards" of a sheep, or the gipsy who does the same with the dregs of a tea-cup, they essentially belong in the same category.

Such an augur is Dr. N. P. Williams, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford. He has recently preached a sermon in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on "Science and the Christian Doctrine of Man." Professor Williams said:—

It is very widely believed that the recognition of the unhistoric character of the early stories of Genesis has deprived the doctrine of the fall and of original sin of all positive evidence of their truth, and that the idea of a "fall" is inconsistent with the modern evolutionary view of man's history, which represents it as a gradual climb from low and brutish beginnings.

Probably the majority of the congregation were quite aware of this fact. But they, possibly, did not realize, as fully as do the augurs, that it is upon the assumption of the literal truth of what they well know to be a myth, that the whole of the Christian superstition rests. Let it be generally understood and admitted that original sin and the fall, in whatsoever aspect one may choose to look at them, are inconsistent with what is known to be positively true, then that superstition, and the Church which is based upon it, fall to the ground, utterly, and without any possibility of rehabilitation. The Professor continues:—

The early Greek Fathers did not deny this, but they maintained that, in view of his innate moral weakness, man had not climbed as rapidly and directly as he ought to have done, or worked out the tiger and ape in his constitution as completely as God meant him to do.

How does the Professor, or anyone else, know what God meant man to do? Ask the question, and the augurs will inspect the Book until they find an appropriate answer. This is not difficult from a

collection of over 30,000 verses composed of more than three quarters of a million words, although a good many of them are mutually contradictory. Why has man not climbed, or, in other words, why has civilization not advanced so rapidly as it ought to have done? The answer is, religious superstition, and, in relation to the Western World, Christianity. It is just in proportion as "God" (a combination of the ape and the tiger to judge from his description in the Bible) fades away, that man succeeds in climbing to higher standards of knowledge, of intelligence and of morality, so realizing his essential humanity. The Professor says:—

Given the Christian belief in the absolute holiness, love and power of God, it follows with certainty that God must have intended human nature at the beginning—[when was this beginning?—]to be an image of his own perfection, even though that intention was temporarily defeated by the fall almost as soon as it was formulated.

But, if we refuse to admit this belief, as we do, and call in question the competence of the augurs to decide what the image of God's perfection may be, then their intention also is defeated. This intention, of course, is to support the claims of the Church and of the clergy to impose their pretended knowledge upon the credulity of their partially educated, uncritical, or wholly ignorant hearers. If the power of God is absolute, how came it to be "temporarily defeated"? This is a question which our modern augurs cannot answer, and until they do they must not complain if sensible men reject their findings as no more reliable than if they were to draw their inferences from a flight of crows.

How far religion is removed from, and utterly irreconcilable with, modern knowledge is made plainly evident by the following pronouncement of the Professor:—

It is upon the question of the validity of these ideas that the present controversy as to the nature of the Sacraments really hinges, for if it is true that man is handicapped by an inherent weakness which he cannot remove, the idea of objective Divine assistance bestowed from without becomes perfectly natural, and if we admit that the essential teaching of the historic Church has accurately gauged the needs and ailments of man's nature, we should be all the more disposed to believe that it is not in error in regard to the remedy.

The point is that we utterly repudiate these ideas and challenge their evidences. We do not admit that the historic Church has ever accurately gauged anything except the credulity which accompanies ignorance and superstition, and its possibilities for profitable exploitation. On the contrary, the Church, whenever it has been called upon to decide any question concerning the world and human nature, has always been wrong. What does Professor Williams, or anyone else, know about "Divine assistance bestowed from without"? Nothing at all. It is about time that modern science, and the rationalism that is becoming more and more widespread, became also more articulate and less fearful of expressing itself on these questions. Then our clerical, Christian augurs, instead of being listened to in more or less respectful silence, will be greeted with roars of laughter.

E. J. LAMEL.

"In spite of centuries wasted in preaching God's omnipotence, his omnipotence is contradicted by every Christian judgment and every Christian prayer."

George Santayana ("The Life of Reason").

It is always, at the end of a war, the victors who are afraid.—J. A. Spender.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

WASHINGTON HOTEL, 14 LIME STREET, LIVERPOOL.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 27th 1928.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by Bethnal Green, Manchester, West Ham, South London, Fulham, and North London Branches :—
"That Mr. C. Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive, West Ham, South London and Fulham Branches :—
"That Mr. F. Mann be re-elected General Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by the Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches :—
"That Mr. C. G. Quinton be re-elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.
Motion by the Executive :—
"That Messrs. H. Theobald and Co. (Incorporated Accountants) be reappointed Auditors."
8. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. James Neate, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. T. Gorniot, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by Newcastle Branch.
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.
N.W. GROUP.—Mr. H. R. Clifton and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, nominated by Liverpool and Manchester Branches.
S.W. GROUP.—Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, nominated by Plymouth Branch.
MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. G. Quinton (Jnr.) and Mr. J. G. Dobson, nominated by Birmingham Branch.
SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. F. P. Corrigan, nominated by South London Branch.
NORTH LONDON.—Mr. S. Samuels, nominated by North London Branch.
EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silvester, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.
WEST LONDON.—Mr. G. Wood, nominated by Fulham Branch.
9. Motion by the Executive :—
"That in future all cards of membership be issued direct to members from headquarters, in place of the present practice of issuing those of Branch members through Branch Secretaries."
10. Motion by Fulham Branch :—
"That in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that the Society should gain possession, by lease or otherwise, of a hall in London suitable for public meetings and other purposes."
11. Motion by North London Branch :—
"That in view of the importance of the *Freethinker* to the Freethought movement, and of the way in which it places its columns at the service of the National Secular Society, this Conference takes the present opportunity of warmly congratulating the Editor on the splendid achievement of founding the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, whereby there is an opportunity of placing the paper on a sound financial basis, and desires to associate itself with any movement that may be initiated to mark approval of one of the most important steps taken in the history of Freethought journalism."

12. Motion by Mr. P. Sherwin :—
"That in view of the large number of Freethinkers connected with advanced movements in this country, this Conference is of opinion that advantage should be taken of this association to check the attempts made to exploit these movements in the interests of the Churches."
13. Motion by Bethnal Green Branch :—
"That in view of existing circumstances, the Executive be authorized to extend the practice of engaging regular speakers for open-air work during the summer months for both London and the provinces."
14. Motion by North London Branch :—
"That the Executive be asked to consider an alteration or amendment of the existing form of membership whereby some guarantee would be given of the good faith of individuals applying for membership of the society."
15. Motion by West Ham Branch :—
"That this Conference bearing in mind the continuous attempts of the Churches, Established and Nonconformist, to secure a larger measure of State support for religious instruction in elementary schools, and noting also the promise of the Government to facilitate the passing into law of a Bill which shall contain the 'agreed' views of the various Christian bodies, strongly protests against this bargaining between the Government and the Churches, and insists that the only just and statesmanlike settlement of the education question is the abolition of all theological teaching in State supported schools, and urges Freethinkers to make this question a test one whenever they are called upon to record their votes."
16. Motion by Mr. J. Pearson :—
"That this Conference is of opinion that pressure should be brought to bear upon Candidates for, and Members of, Parliament, in favour of an amendment of the Education Act, which shall provide that the official school time would commence after the time given for religious instruction, and cease with the end of the instruction defined as "Secular" in the Education Act."
17. Motion by Manchester Branch :—
"That this Conference protests against the time of Parliament being spent on theological discussions such as Prayer-Book revision, believing this to be the business of the churches themselves, and not that of a house of representatives elected on a non-religious basis, and composed of members of all shades of religious belief and of no religious belief at all, and thinks that advantage should be taken of the situation by making the subject of the disestablishment of the Church of England a leading question for parliamentary candidates at the next general election."
18. Motion by Plymouth and Fulham Branches :—
"That this Conference, bearing in mind the fact that the British Broadcasting Corporation is a monopoly which receives its charter from a Government which professes to hold itself impartial between all forms of religious opinion, strongly protests against the broadcasting of religious services and addresses, during which time no other programme is available; it protests also against an institution subsidized by public money, setting forth as one of its objects the prevention of any decay of Christianity, and also its refusal to permit any opinion contrary to Christianity to be heard."
19. Motion by West Ham Branch :—
"That this Conference deems it advisable and necessary to strongly reaffirm the central position of the Society, that self-government can be realized only by a people that has freed itself from superstitious creeds and religious authority."

The Conference will sit in the Washington Hotel, Lime Street, Liverpool: Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; Afternoon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the door; Members, the current card of membership. Only mem-

bers of the Society are entitled to be present. A public demonstration will be held at 7 p.m. in the Picton Hall. Luncheon for delegates and visitors at 1 p.m., at the Washington Hotel, price 3s. 6d. During the Afternoon Session, papers will be read on items of Freethought interest, followed by discussion.

By order of the Executive,
C. COHEN, *President.*
F. MANN, *Secretary.*

Musical Comedy.

THE spirit was in a querulous mood. What are you going to make of "Lumber Love" for the readers of the *Freethinker*? Everything, replied the optimist; and so, after listening to a learned discourse on phrenology by a young enthusiast who sought to explain everything in the world by bumps, we entered the spacious Lyceum Theatre, where John Southern, on behalf of British Musical Productions, Ltd., presents "Lumber Love" in three acts. A fine orchestra gave a sweet and tuneful introduction to the play, and in a jiffy we were in the throes of the plot where love, money, and timber gave us the raw material to set thought going as to how it would all end. Sings Homer, at the beginning of the Iliad, "Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles Peleus' son, the ruinous wrath that brought on the Achaeans woes innumerable, and hurled down into Hades many strong souls of heroes." Sings Virgil, "I sing of arms, and of the man who, being driven from his country by the decrees of Fate, first came from the coasts of Troy to Italy." Sings Milton:—

"Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste . . ."

And the author of "Lumber Love," like the illustrious great, quickly entangles us in his subject, the love of Jean MacDonald for her father, whom William Slack, a Lumber King, is attempting to ruin. With the assistance of broad comedy represented by Fred Kitchen as a Mountain Mail-man, Jean makes a sudden departure from Montreal to Fort George, B.C., on horseback, and arrives in time to buy up, with an open cheque (O spirit of prodigality!) vast forests, and thereby defeat the villain, William Slack. Evidently "breaking" one another in business is a pastime. Here the heroine looking very attractive in her riding habit that shows no sign of wear and tear *en route*, meets an old sweetheart, and the plot thickens into theological turgidity. She has already one fiancé—Tony—a millionaire's son. Tony, however, has followed Jean, and his journey has not been in pleasant places, according to the state of his torn clothes. He appears in the camp as a kind of wandering voice, and in the dual capacity of guardian angel and villain outwitted. At the right moment, helped by Wangle, the villain is prevented from stealing the cheque. A marriage is quickly arranged between Jean and Paul Levaux (her old sweetheart) but, on the point of celebrating the nuptials by Judge Thomson, Jean is denounced for using a worthless cheque, and the marriage does not take place. The last act is in the Italian Ball-Room at Jean's home. She returns from Fort George, B.C., in a travelling dress (condition—see riding habit). William Slack—the villain—arrives, Tony is there also, Wangle comes too—and he, in regard to wives, seems like the proverbial sailor at every port. After the plot has threatened to set up a nervous headache, it is nicely unravelled. Tony retires to the background, Jean's father and William Slack shake hands, and Paul Levaux and Jean decide to make a good job of their previous affair. The stage fills up and the comedy finishes in traditional style.

A criticism of life is frequently heard from the music-halls, and very often it is in broader terms than those used by newspaper reporters. In addition, music-hall criticism is more to the point. In the same way, "Lumber Love" gives us interesting comments on our times. Fred Kitchen amused the audience with a mock-heroic performance of a cave-man in his relations with a wife, and this was thoroughly appreciated. A playwright was described as a waste-paper merchant, and it is to be hoped that the fundamentalists were not present when Wangle went to look for Moses in the bullrushes.

A book by Marie Stopes entitled *The Imperfect Lover*, was mentioned, but this we feel sure was only published according to stage license. Straight to the heart of the young went Wangle in his cow-boy trousers that looked like a divided door-mat, and there was an interval fervid and excited, when he had forgotten which eye he had lost. Fred Kitchen was excellent in this part, for with Rabelais he shows us that:—

"One inch of joy surmounts a span;
Because to laugh is proper to the man."

To do this, the comedian does not sport with the dubious, and the wholesome standard of "Lumber Love" is maintained throughout. The songs were melodious, and the singing of Miss Joan Lockton was reminiscent of musical comedy of twenty years ago; its quality brought a real value to her part, and it was a delight to listen. In the camp there was singing of the old favourite songs, which earned applause and approbation, and the setting was beautiful.

Dear delightful days of Romance! who would move a finger to rob those of the pleasure which was once ours? Who would utter one discordant note, when song, music, light, and colour combine to create a picture, when leisure from the work-a-day world says "rest a little while": Youthful eyes in the audience glisten as the story unfolds; the harp in the orchestra sets thought vibrating—of minstrels, castles, knights and fair ladies—of adventure, of love and stories from old time. In this dream-world there are no threats of hell-fire and heaven is the knight's winning of the fair lady. Revues appear to have had their day; a Gilbert and Sullivan revival fills a theatre with a grey-haired and middle-aged audience, still held by the invisible hands of romance. Between the extremes of "Dracula," where, up to one point in its run, nurses had attended to 103 cases of individuals in the audience collapsing, and, say, "The Cocoanuts" there is a level, or a norm where such plays as "Lumber Love" provide relaxation for those with a taste for the simple pleasures of art that neither soars to the height of obscurity nor sinks to the banal. "Lumber Love" provides a pleasant evening's entertainment for those who do not want the moon, and incidentally by negation, know what they do want. Good, clean comedy, bright music, tasteful colour and both feet on the earth should give this play a deserving run, with stage presentations as with books, those writers in the homeliest language endure—with them we can cut and come again. And when the performance was over, we observed a young man at a corner of Trafalgar Square using his umbrella for a golf stick, and his bowler hat for a ball. This iconoclasm with one of the sacred institutions of England needs watching, or people might get it into their heads that life is not so serious as one might think. In a vale of tears even utility has a use for Charlie Chaplin, with whom, for popularity, most bishops would swap their gaiters.

WILLIAM REPTON.

More Ju-Ju Journalism.

(Continued from page 294.)

LAST week I had the pleasure of presenting to you Lesson I of my unique course of Ju-Ju Journalism, by which I tried to prove that anybody can make money in Fleet Street. Perhaps the Headlines and Holiness of Mr. James Douglas did not quite appeal to everybody as a style to cultivate, and in view of that I append Lesson II.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is known technically as the Spook and Sobstuff style, as practised with great success by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. Hannen Swaffer the distinguished egotist, and Mr. Dennis Bradley the famous dress suit designer.

In this particular style, one needs, above all things, a belief in spiritualism, a sad and pitying smile for sceptics, and a reverent agnosticism towards the "creeds and shibboleths" of the Christian Church. Heaven with a smattering of pseudo science, pay a compliment to the simple Carpenter of Nazareth, garnish with a packet of photographic plates, a ouija board, and a tin trumpet, and *voilà* you are equipped to write a message of Hope for Mankind. Just to make the matter clear, I will take

a simple nursery rhyme, as in the case of Mr. James Douglas, and show you how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would treat it in the Psychic Column of the *Sunday Express*. Photographs are essential, of course. Any good photographer would tell you how to fak— but I'm sorry, this is a journalistic lesson. Very well then:—

STARTLING CUPBOARD MYSTERY.

HUBBARD CRIME SOLVED BY SPIRITS.

By SIR DONALD HOYLE (The famous Spiritualist).

One of the most remarkable pieces of evidence on behalf of the super-normal—I will not say supernatural in case some of my Christian friends will confuse the issue—is the Hubbard case, some garbled version of which has already appeared in the press.

Briefly, an estimable widow named Hubbard, who has lived all her life in the village of F— [I omit names to avoid giving pain to the relatives] was engaged in some simple domestic duty when the spirits manifested themselves in an unmistakable fashion.

She had a pet dog named T— of which she was very fond, and she was just going to a cupboard to fetch the dog a bone, when three distinct raps or thumps sounded in the kitchen.

The good woman was naturally startled, but at first did not connect the manifestation with anything super-normal. *She was alone in the cottage but for the dog.* That is a point of great significance in view of what happened. She unhasped the cupboard door when, to use her own words—"I heard a thumpin' noise—and me being nervous loike—wot with me 'cart, I nearly dropped the platter. I felt meself go gashly white!"

Now it is a remarkable fact that in the case of the Sisters Hayseed of Boobville, Pa., in 1878, there was a similar occurrence. In her report to the Psychic Committee, Amelia Hayseed deposed, after hearing raps in her bedroom: "I guess I grew as white as old Cy. Gorble's goatee whiskers!"

Making allowance for the slight difference in idiom, there is a startling similarity in what we spiritualists term the "after effects" of super-normal phenomena. Now sceptics would call this coincidence. They must forgive me if I smile gently at their obstinacy, but really, I am getting tired of this incessant harping on coincidence, reflex action, subconscious mind, and other phrases that fall so glibly from their lips. How are they to explain this Hubbard case?

Here is the widow, alone in her cottage, but for her faithful dog, which, she herself admitted, showed signs of restlessness—and these raps occur. Here, much as I dislike criticizing such an illustrious scientist as Sir Ray Lancashire, I cannot but protest against his blunt dismissal of the whole evidence. Briefly, Sir Ray remarked that the dog was restless because it was hungry, and the thumps were caused by its tail wagging on the floor. Could scientific prejudice go further?

This is yet one more instance of what we Spiritualists have to put up with from our blindly obstinate men of science. In the teeth of all our evidence to the contrary, Sir Ray Lancashire dismisses it all in a crudely materialistic fashion. It is another case of how a brilliant brain, warped and narrowed by scientific pursuits, refuses obstinately to accept the message of Hope first given to us by the greatest medium of all—The Carpenter of Nazareth.

The Hubbard seance is one more additional proof of the case for survival—for mark the sequel. Nervous as she was, Mrs. Hubbard opened the door, peered within, and found nothing. It was quite bare. Now it is a well known scientific fact that abstention from food sharpens the spiritual sense to a marked degree. Though I myself am not a medium, my wife has often, after a rigid course of dieting, got into instant touch with those who "passed over." History proves that the ascetics and anchorites who fasted for long periods "saw visions and dreamed dreams," and the Medium of Galilee Himself, after a forty days fast, saw the angels face to face.

Now, will Sir Ray Lancashire or any of my unhappy sceptic friends explain the sequel to me? The dog was hungry. Its psychic sense was consequently hypersensitive. That is a scientific fact which brooks no

argument. Some there are, who doubt if animals have souls. I pity them. I myself have heard dogs barking and cats miaowing at Mrs. Gluckenstein's seance at Ponders End.

Though Mrs. Hubbard swore that the cupboard was bare, the dog—with its spiritual sense greatly magnified by hunger—used into the corner and found a skeleton! It was the skeleton of a rat. The unhappy creature had somehow got wedged in its hole and "passed over," after a fruitless struggle. I publish herewith, an untouched photograph of the rat's skeleton. In the right hand corner can be dimly seen a nebulous substance called "ectoplasm," which is, of course, the rat's astral body.

Now the Hubbard case, to my mind, offers a supreme example of survival. Every link in the chain of evidence is sound, despite the dogmatic, and if I may venture to suggest, bigoted opinion of Sir Ray Lancashire. Mrs. Hubbard swears she heard the thumps. She admitted to the Psychic Committee, who investigated the case, that she was not a spiritualist. To use her own words again: (See full reports in the Minutes of the Psych. Res. Comm., Chap. xlvii. pp. 483 et seq.) "No I h'aint meedjum. I be middlin' though, but for my bad legs!"

Naturally the good woman was not conscious of any spiritual impulse to open the cupboard. Some of us are, alas, not receptive to the spirits. But here was the dog T— admittedly hungry—I grant Sir Ray that—and in that state its clairaudient and clairvoyant powers were super sensitized. Surely none but a blind bigoted Atheist—if there be such people—would deny that the spirit of the rat wished to communicate with the dog T—?

Recall that in the official report Mother Hubbard went to get a dog a bone. She, poor woman, did not realize the cupboard was bare. The unseen but all-present spiritual world knew however, and the rat communicated, with a touching instance of self-sacrifice, the whereabouts of *its own bones* to the hungry dog.

That this is true I have myself no shadow of doubt. At Mrs. Gluckenstein's* that remarkable medium, we heard through Rodney—the name of the rat's "Control"—that this was actually the case. Truly touching evidence of the kindliness and loving interest of those that "pass over" in our daily lives. In the official report I see it stated, "So the poor dog had none." I would like here to amend that statement. Naturally, in view of the enormous Psychic interest attached, we could not let the dog T— devour the "earth shell" of Rodney the rat. It must be admitted, too, that the dog evinced little desire to eat the remains, probably because its spiritual powers were in the ascendant.

However, the skeleton was retrieved and now holds a place of honour in our Psychic Museum, along with the gramophone horn of Josiah Maggs, the suspender belt of Emmeline Gooch, and other priceless relics of the triumphant progress of our Movement, which has turned Despair into Delight, Vagueness into Certitude of the Happiness that awaits us Beyond the Veil.

*For those interested, Mrs. Gluckenstein, the famous medium of Ponders End, charges no fee for sittings. She does, however, make a small charge of Five Guineas for "Direct Control and Trumpet Talks," for those that can afford it.

* * *

There you are ladies and gentlemen. Lesson Number Two of Ju-Ju Journalism is now complete. Study it carefully and that Rolls Royce may yet be yours. Fame and Fortune are so easy in Fleet Street—provided you are not a wicked Freethinker. Gwyn Evans.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

THE SCOUT MOVEMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your "Acid Drop" referring to the Scout Movement, pointing out the necessity of scouts being educated by their leaders "to honour the brave of the mental realm, as well as the physical," is much to the

point and, obviously, sound advice. It would appear to me, however, that as the Scout Movement is in the tight grip of the Churches, it is hardly likely that your advice will be welcomed by the leaders, certainly not by the Chief Scout, who is an old, tried and trusted member of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Incidentally, one has to possess a vivid imagination to picture a scout-master expressing to his comrades, in the course of conversation, a disbelief in Christianity, without his being ostracized by his comrades, young and old: methinks, he would be relieved of his post at an early date, even if he had "twenty good turns per day" to his credit. Be not deceived, this movement has been captured, for sure, by the Churches. *If this is not so*, how is it that this organization is always eulogized and financially supported by the greatest reactionaries of the world who, automatically support priestcraft and militarism? Thus, the most important question arises: Ought the Scout Movement to be supported by Freethinkers, who, logically, should be opposed to this organization, one of its chief objects being to "foster the claims of Christianity"?

R. G. FORSTER.

The National Secular Society.

EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON MAY 3, 1928.

The President Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

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

Minutes for the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted. An apology for unavoidable absence was received from Mr. Wood.

New members were received for the Fulham and Chelsea, Manchester, Liverpool and West Ham Branches, and for the Parent Society.

Correspondence was received and the Secretary instructed. The arrangements for the Annual Conference were considered. An invitation from the Walthamstow Young Labour League to send a speaker to lecture on Secularism was accepted. The question of engaging additional lecturers for open-air work in the provinces was also discussed.

F. MANN,
General Secretary.

Society News.

MR. WHITEHEAD IN SOUTH LONDON.

On Sunday, April 29, Mr. George Whitehead opened his campaign with a fine meeting on Clapham Common, and during the remainder of the week lectured each night at Cooks Road, Kennington.

With one exception, the lectures were well attended, and it was significant of the times, that although many young men were attracted to the meetings, the greater part of the opposition met with appeared to come from people of more advanced years.

It included, of course, the inevitable economic quack; also the all too familiar "good Christian" of the female sex, who loudly aired her opinion that the lecturer should be shot; and a gentleman with a strong cockney accent, who was apparently ready to accept any view put forward, so long as he was suitably rewarded.

The mission was certainly a success, from all points of view, and in addition will help to draw attention to the future meetings held at that spot. Mr. F. P. Corrigan, the local Branch President, officiated as Chairman on most of the evenings, and the Branch should feel indebted to Messrs. R. and F. Keble for their very useful work at all the meetings.

Local Freethinkers will no doubt be pleased to know that Mr. Whitehead will be at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, during next week.—A.H.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lectures. 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"Some Contemporary Conceptions of Marriage."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"D. G. Rossetti: A Centenary Appreciation."

THE NON-POLITICAL, METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34 George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Miss Ettie A. Rout—"Birth Control and Trial Marriage."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. Mann, "Religion and Science."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, May 12, 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Hart, Bryant and Moister. (Putney Towpath): Sunday, May 13, 11 a.m.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. Mann—"Religion and Social Problems"; (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Mr. F. Mann—"Secularism and Human Behaviour." (Rushcroft Road, Brixton): Monday to Thursday (May 14 to 17) at 8 p.m. each evening, Mr. George Whitehead.

THE NON-POLITICAL, METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 3 and 7 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Hanson, Botting and Baker.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers—Mrs. H. Rosetti; Messrs. H. S. Wishart, F. C. Warner, A. C. High, H. C. White and R. H. Rosetti.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A Lecture. 3.30 p.m., Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine. 6.30 p.m., Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Maurice Maubrey. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30 p.m. Lecturers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hart, Darby, Le Maine and others.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Lecturers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden and F. Shaller.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (4 Swilly Street, Plymouth): Tuesday, May 15, at 8 p.m. Members' meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

GREAT YARMOUTH—Comfortable Apartments with full or part board; bed and breakfast; or rooms and attendance; 3 minutes sea. Terms moderate.—13 Beaconsfield Road.

BOOKS FOR SALE.—The library of the late J. Fothergill, Secretary of the South Shields Branch, in large or small lots. A good collection of Freethought works, with others by Gibbon, Laing, Fielding; Oracle Encyclopedia (five vols.), history of Greece, good collection of poets, etc. Many in cheap editions, all to be sold at half price or less. So far as possible will be made up into 2s. 6d. or 5s. parcels, postage extra. Section lists sent. Address: Mrs. J. FOTHERGILL, 2 Hut, Madras Street, South Shields, Co. Durham.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1½d. stamp to:—
J. R. HOLMES, East Hannay, Wantage, Berks.
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Tailors and Tellers

FREQUENTLY we are told by staunch supporters of this journal, that in the matter of providing garments which fit well, we are a long way ahead of a former advertiser in these columns. We know that this other gentleman was a really good tailor, and we wish you to take note of the fact. Why should we be able to serve our clients satisfactorily through the post and other good tailors altogether fail to do the same thing? Of course we cannot here give all the details, but, briefly, it is a question of custom and training. A man who habitually wears spectacles will be nearly blind without them. So with tailoring; a tailor, however expert and experienced, who has always depended upon fitting on, will be an absolute duffer when deprived of its end.

Now it is many years since we resolved to build up a tailoring business founded upon advertising in the *Freethinker*. You will see that to achieve this we would have to dispense with fitting on in the vast majority of our transactions. We determined there would be no exceptions, and that fitting on would be abolished absolutely. We searched for men who could carry this out—cutters who could cut garments to fit, and finishers who could make up clothes for people they were never permitted to see. These workers have been diligently trained to dispense with fitting on and they never miss it. We assure you you will not miss it either; we can make you garments quite as satisfactory without it. We assure you that wherever you go for fitting on you must pay for it, whilst by coming to us you inevitably save this cost and bother. You ask what about giving us our instructions? Just write to us to-day for patterns, and you will quickly realize how simple and certain we have made this also.

Send a postcard to-day for any of the following patterns:

B to E, suits from 57/-

F to H, suits from 79/-

I to M, suits from 105/-

IBORAC One-quality, suits from 69/-

B Serges, suits 63/- to 100/-

LADIES' Book, costumes from 62/-, frocks from 45/-

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