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Views and Opinions.

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Man and the Race.

THIS week I want to deal very briefly with a very large subject. This is that the imperfection of man on earth, his desire for improvement, his inability to attain the greatest and the best, are all pointers to the continuance of life beyond the grave. This is a very familiar argument, most believers have used it, but at present I am concerned only with the presentation of it as given in the articles in the *Daily News*. Why, asks Mr. T. R. Glover, should the Creator "want to develop natures so rich and various, so wonderful as some I have known, if it is only to throw them into the wastepaper-basket?" and leaves the reader to draw the conclusion that the Creator intended them to be eternal. It is, of course, useless to point out to such men that on the face of it all natures are not rich and wonderful; some are very ugly indeed, and it is saying very little for the Creator's work, that only a minority of his creations should be worthy of preservation on even these lines. The Rev. T. Rhondda Williams is more elaborate:—

We demand something more of Him who made us than one short life in this world. Immortality is the prophecy of the nature of man. Something in him announces itself to be imperishable, something that demands a longer day for bringing out all that is implied in it. The fact is our endowment is absurd if this life is all, and real religion brings us an acute sense of that endowment . . . It is no answer to this to say we live in our influence in others' lives . . . The greatest gain, the intellectual and moral of the individual life can never be passed over to other lives in the form of influence . . . We have discovered the growing value of personality and demand eternity to work it out.

The Rev. H. S. Waterhouse weighs in with:—

Our personality . . . is built on a scale that this life cannot possibly exhaust. Most of us are 90 per cent possibility and 10 per cent actuality . . . It is difficult to believe that the latent and wholly undeveloped resources that lie so abundantly in every man's mind, and are never tapped in this life, do

not indicate that they are stored in us for development hereafter.

And this from the Editor of the series, whose appetite for fallacy, and even stupidity, is so touchingly illustrated in the way he endorses anything of the kind he comes across in the articles that have so astonished him by their brilliance:—

Man does not fulfil himself here. We can think of heights of knowledge, of wisdom, unattainable on earth. If man does not come to perfection here, he must come to it somewhere else. For is the soul of man to be the sole exception, in the whole of creation as we know it, to the system of evolution and perpetuity?

Other contributors have a shot at the same kind of thing, and they all leave one face to face with the question already asked. Do they ever attempt to *think* about evolution, instead of repeating the word with about as much understanding of it as might be shown by an educated parrot?

* * *

Capacity and Acquirement.

All that has been said by these writers was said many years ago with greater eloquence, and with greater force, by Dr. Martineau, and, bearing in mind the date at which he said it, with greater justification. But age does not destroy religious fallacies nor does repetition destroy their attractiveness. I will not dwell upon the absurdity of man formulating demands to the universe, which is about as justifiable as a rat demanding a heaven without terriers, so that it may live its life undisturbed. And I just express my pleasure in noting that Christians are beginning to get enough strength in their spinal columns to stand up to their God and formulate their demands. Of course, they usually accompany these with the assurance that they will be quite content with what he does, and that whatever he does will be for the best. But people in high places expect this kind of flattery, and the symptoms of awakening manhood in connexion with Christian belief is very gratifying. With Christians so plainly demanding certain things of God, we may live in hope that one day they will actually tell him what they think of what he has done, and when that day comes it will be good-bye to the gods.

It may be true, given suitable conditions, that man's powers are capable of further extension. But on the other hand, the statement is equally true of my cat, or my dog, or of an elephant, or a horse. There are not many animals whose powers do not admit of development, but no one has suggested that, therefore, every animal must go straight off to a future life. Besides, it is not true that the capacities, the powers, of every man are capable of *indefinite* development, which is the real point at issue. There is a very clear limit to the amount of develop-

ment of which an individual is capable. There is no discernible limit to the *knowledge* the race may acquire (which is not the same thing as the development of the individual for whom eternity is claimed), but the hopelessly confused manner in which race and individual are mixed up by these writers prevents their seeing this. One would have thought that the distinction between an unlimited capacity and an indefinite acquisition would have been plain to even the average parson. A man who has the capacity to acquire a million in the financial world does not require ten times the capacity to acquire ten millions.

* * *

The Question of Progress.

The fundamental fault in the argument cited is that it entirely mistakes the quality of human capacity, and has a quite wrong notion of the nature of human progress. The writers assume that individual capacity (and the whole question of survival is an individual one) is capable of indefinite expansion. And that is decidedly not the case. So far as our knowledge goes there is not a shred of evidence that the capacity of a single human being ever increases. His knowledge increases, his use of the capacity he has becomes better, but that is all. An increase in the capacity of the individuals now existing as compared with, say, the individuals in much earlier stages of human history does take place, but that is a question of an initial variation, and is an entirely different subject. We are, in many respects, greater than, say, the ancient Greeks, but the man would be a fool who would assert that this is because we have a greater mental capacity than the Greeks. Our superiority is greater solely in virtue of the knowledge that has been accumulated during the generations which divide us from them, just as the increased power of the modern "Tommy" in nowise proves that he is a greater soldier than one who fought at Thermopylæ. The statement that we are built on a scale that this life does not exhaust embodies the same fallacy. What capacity is not exhausted? The capacity of the race for indefinite improvement? But it is not the race that "demands" another life, but the individual. And, certainly he is exhausted. Old age shows us the capacity of the individual growing weaker and weaker, and after a certain period the growing difficulty of taking new views, or of acquiring new knowledge is notorious. In every case where a man reaches moderately old age a weakening of his capacity is observable. There is, indeed, sound physiological reasons for believing that if old age could be prolonged to a point where physiological exhaustion occurred, there could be no question of the complete exhaustion also of capacity or of even the desire for life. There is then no "latent and wholly undeveloped resources" in individual human nature, other than the ability to use more knowledge when it is acquired. The horse driver becomes the motor driver, the motor driver becomes the driver of an aeroplane, without any increase in capacity; there is simply an acquisition of greater knowledge which the same man is able to use.

* * *

Individual Species

There is another aspect of this question which, in order to avoid going over the same ground twice, I reserve until I deal with the Spiritualistic case. At present I would like my readers to observe the confusion that exists in the minds of these writers between man as an individual and man as a species. We speak of the great progress achieved by man, and

of the great progress that may yet be achieved by him. But it is evident that man considered as an individual does not and cannot make very great progress. Let us take the history of the human race as being made up of a million generations. What advance would the first generation make? Obviously very little. Imagine that each generation started from the same point as its predecessor, how much advance would generation number two make? No more than did the one before it. And at the end of the millionth generation man would be exactly where he was at the end of the first. This is practically the state of things in the animal world.

But it is obvious that progress has been made, and that the man of the millionth generation knows infinitely more and can do infinitely more than the man of the first generation. How has that progress been achieved? Solely because the individual of each generation inherits in virtue of language, beliefs, institutions, teaching, the advance made by the generations that went before him. Progress, then, is not an individual but a co-operative product. The aeroplane was not made by a man, but by all men who have been contributing to this end ever since man first fashioned a tool. The inexhaustible capacity for progress does not belong to the individual, but to the race—so long as the race persists. These parsons ask us to admire the progress made by the race, and claiming it for the individual, base a claim for immortality on something that the individual never did. It is a play upon the word "man," used first in one sense and then in another. I do not say that the confusion is intentional, because I do not believe there is enough solid thinking behind it. But the confusion is patent once one's attention is called to it.

* * *

What is Progress?

What then becomes of the statement that "the greatest gain, the intellectual and moral of the individual life can never be passed over to other lives in the form of influence." Why, that is precisely what does take place, and it is that which makes human progress possible. The intellectual influences that shaped language, and art, and science, the social influence that fashioned customs and institutions, made Shakespeare and Newton and Darwin possible. The modern steam engine and steam boat were not the inventions of *man* but of *men*. Without the possibility of handing on intellectual influences we should still be, at most, floating about shallow rivers on trees, using, at most, sticks for weapons, without a trace of all that we mean by culture and civilization.

We inherit all that the past has invented and discovered. But this heritage obviously has not been "stored in us for development hereafter," but for use here. Our knowledge of sailing is for use in a world where seas roll and rivers run. Our weapons of war and instruments of peace are invented for use on an earth where battles are fought and fields are tilled, and mines are dug, and goods are made. Our feelings of love and honour, and love of wife and children, and devotion to our fellows are for a society in which men and women—flesh and blood men and women—are born, and love and hate, and procreate and die. They are of no use in a world in which none of these things exist. If there is one thing certain about the whole subject, it is that man is fashioned to be a member of a group. His nature is without meaning if this is not so. To talk as does the Rev. Waterhouse of man's nature being fashioned for use hereafter is equal to talking of a man who is engaged in daily swims in the Channel as preparing to scale the Matterhorn or pilot an aeroplane.

The more we analyse the case for immortality as set out by the selected writers of the *Daily News*, the more apparent does the shoddy nature of their reasoning become. Fallacy is piled on fallacy; misunderstanding on misunderstanding; egotism and ignorance lean lovingly on each other; false premises are married to irrelevant conclusions; and as a consequence of this monumental mass of mental incoherencies we have—the only thing that could result from such a mixture—a theological proposition.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Passing of a Primate.

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp."—Burns.

"A throne is only a few pieces of wood, and a few yards of cloth."—Napoleon.

"Mummy has become merchandise."—Thos. Browne.

THE resignation of Dr. Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury, was the occasion of much lamentation in the newspapers. So tearful were some of the journalists that, for a fleeting moment, I thought that His Grace had forsaken the morocco seats of the House of Lords for the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. Those pressmen, for once, did earn their money. They gushed like the fountains in Trafalgar Square, and their remarks were as cloudy as the water at the base of Nelson's column.

Forgetting that England is paved with worthy people, the journalists insisted that His Grace was a "good" man. Some suggested that he was a "great" man, but, in their haste, forgot to mention his exact weight. Others wrote that he was a statesman, and, remembering some of the very familiar figures in Parliament, I am still wondering if this was a compliment or an insult.

Of course, His Grace is good. He can scarcely help that. Ninety-nine per cent of the people of this country are as good as gold. Their tombstones prove it. Nobody ever saw an inscription on the tomb of a man, woman, or child, which did not refer to a paragon of perfection. The unhappy one-per-cent of sinners never seem to die at all; at least they have no tombs. Like old soldiers they simply fade away, except a few choice specimens that Mme. Tussaud catches for her collection of celebrities.

Indeed, there seems slender foundation for the entire press of England to make a ring of roses around the retiring Archbishop and sing "My Hero." That they have done so is a proof that editors wouldn't know a saint if they saw one. For generations they have put haloes on murderers' heads, and their sense of real values has become slightly warped. But they do worship success, and big business which spells dollars.

To judge a man by his bank balance is really too drastic. It gives a false position to such persons as pugilists and policemen, and rules out Socrates. Yet it is done, and it would be unwise to ignore it. So let us look at His Grace once more, and see if he comes up to the standards of perfection required by Fleet Street, and acquiesced in by the foreign gentlemen who live in Park Lane.

I have a nodding acquaintance with high finance. Years ago, when I was quite young, I used to empty the wastepaper-basket in a merchant's office. So, here goes! The Archbishop's job is worth £15,000 yearly, or £300 weekly. This position has been held for twenty-six years, so His Grace has had £375,000 for acting as a descendant of the Apostles, who, it is said, were poor men. But this is not all. His

Grace has been a member of the House of Lords for thirty-four years, and prior to becoming Anglican Primate he was a bishop, so that there is a further £25,000 to add, which makes the grand total about £400,000. As the clergy profess to be entirely uninfluenced by financial motives, the result is distinctly pleasing. After looking at these figures, even a bookmaker, with his night's rest disturbed by dreams of a totalisator, might think of taking Holy Orders in preference to calling on the Relieving Officer.

Fleet Street penmen treat all bishops with tremendous respect. Let us look at the Right-Reverend-Fathers-in-God from a purely business angle. The English Bishops, excluding Suffragans and Colonial Prelates, number forty, and they share £182,700 yearly. During the time His Grace was getting his modest £400,000, the Bench of Bishops has absorbed about £6,000,000, which seems nicely calculated to keep them all out of the workhouse in the evening of their days, especially as the salaries carry cushy perquisites in the shape of palaces and palatial residences, to say nothing of slippers given by the faithful.

This is so interesting that it is worth while pursuing inquiries a little further. There are about 20,000 priests of the State Church. In spite of nonsense concerning the "starving clergy," they are not nearer the poverty line than millions of their countrymen. It is absurd to pretend otherwise. In many parishes, the parson with his big and expensive vicarage too often is a miniature reproduction of the bishop in a palace too large for him and for the times. Nor are these priests all anchorites. The late Judge Rentoul stated that at the annual banquet given to the clergy at the Mansion House, London, seventy-four bottles of champagne were drunk, costing about £40. He added that he actually saw those figures, and he was told that the amount was every year about the same.

Why the journalists treat this Church with such a show of respect is as plain as a pikestaff. The Anglican Church is one of the richest Churches in the whole of Christendom. At the top are purse-proud prelates with seats in the House of Lords, where they never have done any good service for the democracy; at the bottom are a multitude of holders of benefices better off than the ordinary man. For instance, within the narrow confines of the City of London £50,000 is spent each year in ministering to a very small resident population of caretakers, policemen, and Jewish people. The latter, who form a large proportion of the total, never trouble the pew-openers. Recently, empty City Churches were offered for sale at so much a dozen; but the Church rates are still levied. The £50,000 is paid to the priests, whether there are congregations or not. One advantage of a State Church is its close resemblance to the other branches of the Civil Service.

There does seem to be more of the stockbroker than the saint in these priests, especially the higher ecclesiastics. There is also more than a suggestion of Wilkins Micawber in their make-up. Whereas, the ordinary vicar seems indifferent as to the size of his congregation, so the Anglican Bishops map out the world into dioceses without so much as asking permission of the people concerned. One clerical optimist, for instance, is styled "Bishop of Northern and Central Europe," and the one certain thing about this arrogant piece of impudence is that the majority of the inhabitants of his diocese never heard of their Bishop. The cream of the jest is that Northern and Central Europe is not included in the British Empire, and is very unlikely to be so included. And the

same territory is already parcelled out by the Roman Catholic and other Churches.

Dr. Davidson resigns his position on account of old age, but his successor is carrying on the good work of marching his thousands of priests towards the Middle Ages. Eighty per cent of the Anglican priests are Romish in all but name, and ten out of forty bishops are celibate priests. Imitation of antiquity seems to be the order of the day, but if antiquity is the object, why stop at the Middle Ages? Why not go further to Ancient Egypt, the Motherland of Superstition? They were more whole-hearted in their credulity in those far-off days, and even included crocodiles among the objects of veneration. If worship is a good thing, you cannot have too much of it. Besides, there are plenty of crocodiles at the Zoological Gardens, and, as gods go, they would be cheap.

Something has got to be done to justify all these millions of money being spent on superstition, ancient and modern. You cannot for ever have an army of priests without congregations. Someone is sure to talk of disestablishment and disendowment. Certain industries are in a parlous condition, but the soul-saving business seems to be in an entirely different category. This is the more to be regretted, because many democrats roundly assert that the clergy are useless, and that priests form the tin can tied to the tail-end of our civilization.

I will conclude this article with a fable, not too deep for human nature's daily needs. The Bishop of Aurora Borealis lay dying, and his anxious family was gathered by the bedside. The dying prelate spoke a few words, and persisted in calling his wife Zozo, whereas her name was Sarah. The attendant physician, in his best bedside manner, soothed the Bishop's wife by saying that dying men often make such mistakes. In the ante-room the reporters were waiting for copy, and the eldest one turned to his colleagues and remarked: "Gentlemen, you will ignore Zozo, and please mention that His Lordship died singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers.'" There is a beautiful moral to this fable, little ones. Both bishops and journalists are men; but the one hands a halo to the other.

MIMNERMUS.

Apres une Nuit Blanche.

It is one hour ago
Since dawn came down these fields and woke the cock,
Who let the whole world know
That dawn came down these fields one hour ago.

The night is overpassed:
Forth from his ocean caves comes glorious day:
Long, long the night did last:
Oh, I am glad the night is overpassed!

Go, seek thy home blind bat!
Cease thy nocturnal hootings downy owl!
Needs it I tell thee that
The night is overpassed? Go, join the bat!

O, Herald of the Day,
Thou lack'st the music of the nightingale,
But what thou hast to say
Is balm to me, O, Herald of the Day.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The entire theory of the Church is antagonistic to any concentrated or consistent scheme for raising the earthly condition of the suffering masses.—*W. R. Greg.*

He that speaks against his own reason, speaks against his own conscience.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Strindberg as Student and Teacher.

THE intense interest aroused by the presentation in London of the poignant, if misogynistic, play, "The Father," appears to have generated a huge demand for enlightenment about August Strindberg, one of the master-minds and one of the most amazing personalities of the age. This powerful drama would serve to make him known in his most characteristic rôle of frenzied pessimist, but it would not of itself supply the self-revelatory intimacies of one who has been well called "the greatest subjectivist of all time." Strindberg's biographers even less than Tolstoy's supplement the storm-wracked evolution of his inner consciousness and the connected story of his troubled career; his 115 plays, novels, collections of stories, essays and poems require no real searching before they provide an unparalleled collection of autobiographical riches of a Scandinavian Voltaire, who mocked institutional religion and conventional morality and poured bitter scorn on the social order of last century and our own era. It is not at all difficult to repiece any phase of this tumultuous mentality from the four predominant sources of *The Son of a Servant*, *The Confessions of a Fool*, *The Inferno*, and *Legends*; in these books the aspirations and aberrations of genius are as fully documented as they are ever likely to be. It is perhaps not easy to picture Strindberg as pupil or student or teacher—what a shock he would administer in any of these capacities within our douce class-rooms and staid staff-rooms!—but it is in these successive rôles that we wish first to envisage him.

August Strindberg, born in Stockholm in 1849, began to attend the Klara School there when he was seven years old—his previous education having been of a somewhat intermittent kindergarten variety. Already he had embarked on psycho-pathological storms, the old church-yard of Klara being a constant dread to him as the symbol of gloom and of the joyless destiny from which there is no escape. As he had a long way to walk, his acutely sensitive mind was now paralysed with fright in anticipation of the headmaster's morning exercise on those who were unpunctual, for he listened to the screams of boys already in the throes. Despite his intellectual precocity, he was severely handicapped by the plebeian social circumstances of his family, on account of which he was unmercifully taunted. He writes of this unhappy period of his school-life that ". . . it was regarded as a preparation for hell and not for life; the teachers seemed to exist in order to torment, not to punish. All life weighed like an oppressive nightmare, in which it was of no avail to have known one's lessons when one left home. Life was a place for punishing crimes committed before one was born, and therefore the child walked about with a permanently bad conscience." In his novel *The Son of a Servant*, he further confesses that "in later years he skipped all passages in books which dealt with reminiscences of school-life, and avoided all books on that subject. When he grew up, his worst nightmare when he had eaten something indigestible at night, or had a specially troublesome day, was to dream that he was back at school," although he admits that "the relation between pupil and teacher is such, that the former gets as one-sided a view of the latter as a child of its parent."

Each year he returned with increased distaste to the Klara High School, where his self-opinionatedness began to revolt against the lessons. When this caused him to be placed lower in his class, however, he was removed to the Jacob School, attended by the poorer class of children, but where he was at least on confidential terms with his fellows. But he continued to

be critical of the mode of instruction, even writing bitterly of the moral teaching inculcated, that "he heard nothing of his rights, only of his duties. Everything he was taught to regard as a favour; he lived by favour, ate by favour, and went as a favour to school." His progress was again restricted, and, if anything, his revolt against the teaching imparted was augmented. Latin was the principal subject, but the teacher's confusing method of calling on him to analyse the "grammatical construction" of the sentence—a phrase never explained—developed in the youthful Strindberg "a kind of aphasia, and incapability or unwillingness to speak, which followed him for a long time through life."

Happily, he was taken in turn from the Jacob School, and his education entrusted to a private institution, where rational methods were employed: corporal punishment was forbidden, few lessons were set to be done at home, pupils were encouraged to express their thoughts, to ask questions, to defend themselves against unjust charges, and if a teacher happened to make a mistake in a matter of fact, the pupils were not obliged to echo him, and swear by his authority. Under this sensible *régime* his will and his thoughts obtained a measure of freedom, and as he met teachers from both of his former schools he forgot many previous injustices: he now changed some of his notions about teachers, for his old masters he perceived "cut quite a different figure here, and played quite another part. He understood now that they had been in the same hole as their victims, for they had had the headmaster and the School Board over them."

About this time, however, a complication arose at home; he refused to attend church—"possibly," as Strindberg himself says, "in consequence of an imprudent Bible exposition at school, which had touched upon freedom of spirit." Hereabouts his religious development became as irregular as his intellectual had previously been. Already he was a devotee of Darwin in the acceptance of a mechanistic view of the universe, and was the only one of his class to be elected a member of the Society of Friends of Science; his perspicacity indeed was such that the orthodox theological systems seemed to him "to have driven to the verge of absurdity." It was intended, however, that the young scion of the house of Strindberg—who only as a sexagenarian was to become a Swedenborgian mystic—should be a minister. Already this mere boy hedged on the Deity of Christ by insisting, in anticipation of Matthew Arnold and Middleton Murry, that "we are all God's sons." When he was fifteen he was called upon to preach his first sermon: it was also his last, for he got round the difficulty of his position too patently by asserting that "we are all God's sons, but Christ is His chosen and beloved Son, whose teaching we must obey." At school he also came into opposition with the headmaster for his attitude to prayers, and his theological lessons degenerated into arguments with his teacher, who—tolerant of objections at first—compelled him finally to answer according to the text-book. But none of his instructors seemed to know what to make of him, and it was a relief to them—as to himself—when the time arrived for him to advance to the historic University of Upsala. This was in 1867.

At Upsala he failed to attract attention as a promising student, for his attendance at lectures served chiefly as a stimulus to his critical faculties. He found the methods of teaching literature and philosophy tedious and ineffective, the professors ignorant and plebian. He came, therefore, to borrow books, and to pursue a course of reading for himself. Poverty added to his isolated lot, for his allowance

did not even permit him to purchase the regulation dress-coat. But, in any case, he seemed well-nigh incapable of sustaining personal friendships, for his caustic efforts to reach the centre of things did not strengthen bonds which depend on a certain amount of pleasant illusion and benign deception. At the end of one term he was obliged to return to Stockholm to seek remunerative work. This he found in a School Board appointment at £50 per year, which, at the moment, seemed opulence. At eighteen, therefore, the young critic was himself in the detestable position of pedagogical tyrant. He was expected to punish the lazy pupils, but so much did the children—ugly, stunted, pale, starved, sickly—appeal to his pity that his heart refused to accept the prevalent faith in flogging. The result of this contact with young and suffering humanity was that rebellious contempt of current morals and respectability rose as a mighty force in the mind of this extraordinary schoolmaster. As might be expected, he was not a success in his adopted profession. The prevailing system of teaching seemed to him a cruel parody, and, in addition, he had to make bargains with his conscience during scripture lessons. He came actually to shrink so much from the sights and sounds and smells of the herd of poor children that within a year ambition and intellectual hunger called him to seek experience elsewhere.

He decided on a medical career, and after some preliminary studies he returned to Upsala. But again his stay was short-lived, due this time to his own indiscreet flaunting of the University proprieties. At an examination, for which he arrived in a state of vinous exaltation, he demonstrated his independence of spirit over-much, and was promptly turned out. The æsthetic thesis he tendered shortly was also summarily rejected, although Strindberg gave to it the intensive preparation of his superb youthful genius. This unmerited rebuff kept him at home in Stockholm for a time, but in the autumn term he returned to Upsala, and renewed his battle with poverty and dejection. The creative urge now seized him in earnest, and one of his first plays, "The Freethinker," came under the favourable notice of the King, who granted him a yearly stipend. This royal patronage gave the hitherto despised and neglected student of the dreary attic room a place of distinction in the University. But the dramatist's open revolt against restraint and intellectual formalism, leading him in everything to think and not to copy, disturbed too flagrantly the well-ordered orbits of traditions and conventions in Upsala. Following upon a *contretemps* with a professor, his next instalment of the royal bounty was withheld, and he left the University never to return. Later, he was to satirize its life in his short stories, *From Fjärdingen and Svartbäcken*, but in the meantime he had to consider himself equipped for life's battle, in which finally it was to be said of the titanic spirit of this chronic rebel that he "patiently burnt his heart for the illumination of his people." J.A.R.

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride,
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

Wordsworth.

All speculative errors must be allowed to state themselves without hindrance, allowing for the special repression of the practical disturbances they would cause.

Auguste Comte.

Freethought in Chicago.

PERHAPS it would be more profitable to Freethought if we had only one Freethought organization here. Perhaps that might be said of England and the world at large. It is only a speculation. There is always the odd chance that union of principle does not make for strength where there are keen differences as to method.

The Freethinkers I have met in Chicago are doing their best in their own way to convert Chicago to Freethought. There are some brilliant workers amongst them, and there are very many rank and file Freethinkers who would be a credit to any organization anywhere.

Divisions amongst Chicago Freethinkers have been mostly accidental. Some are purely personal. Others represent the usual "distinction" between the agnostic and the atheist, a distinction unknown outside the English speaking peoples. There are so many Germans, French and Russians here that one can well imagine their perplexity at differences which they fail to see, separating a number of equally worthy societies.

The American Rationalist Association has its headquarters in Chicago. Its Vice-Presidents include Chapman Cohen, John M. Robertson and other famous Freethinkers. Its energetic and cultured Secretary is Mr. Franklin Steiner. This Society has a legalized status, being duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois (February, 1924) and it does a vast amount of work, by no means confining itself to the ordinary propaganda of lectures and literature, of which it seems to me to do less than might be expected. Under Mr. Steiner's very able and wide-awake management, and to a very great extent due to his single-handed labours, the American Rationalist Association has brought influence to bear on State and Federal Governments, and has amply justified its existence. Given greater support, I am certain this Society will show a constantly increasing usefulness. Its membership embraces all but five States of the Union, as well as Canada, Cuba, the Phillipines, and elsewhere. It has maintained a regular and often successful fight to keep the Bible out of the public schools, and to prevent the ignoramuses from penalizing the teaching of Evolution in the same schools. It is always fighting against Sabbath laws, and against all proclamations, legislative proposals and other attempts to get religion recognized, established, taught or subsidized by the citizens of a state theoretically opposed to all religious privilege.

The A.R.A. wants to cancel the present exemption of churches and other religious buildings from the taxation levied on all other property. It aims at the abolition of chaplaincies paid for by the public purse. It objects to the official observance of religious fast days, thanksgiving and similar sectarian "holy days." You can see that it has its hands full!

The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, and the American Secular Union, both with headquarters in New York, have representatives and occasional meetings here. Both Societies have done good work here from time to time. There is said to be also "The Atheist Society of Chicago," as I learn from a letter in *The People's Press*. The letter is signed "F. Spence," but no address is given. *The People's Press*, by the way, is a local Freethought journal, in its thirtieth year. It is owned, edited and printed by Mr. J. B. Lenau.

It is exceedingly difficult to learn the truth about any American institutions because of the characteristic exaggerations of all the Americans I have met. All public speakers are "famous," they all deliver "great orations," at any rate the announcements say they are going to do so. I have before me a tract of one of the societies. It is quite a good tract, equal to some of the old *Freethinker* tracts, and likely to lead casual readers to study their own superstitions a bit closer, and to make them more critical. On the fourth and last page of the tract is the simple statement: "This tract, distributed by millions will overthrow the church. It will stop Bible reading in the public schools and prevent revivals." This tract "kills Christianity." Well, let our friends continue to circulate it, it will certainly help the

ends they have in view. But these descriptions would kill any effort in England, or at least discredit a better tract than this.

There are many other workers for Freethought here besides the societies, journal and persons named.

Mr. Percy Ward, who has been for over sixteen years the lecturer of the Rationalist University Society, is a very old friend of mine. He has been President of the American Rationalist Association, and has more recently been running *The Open Forum*, in Milwaukee, the big city in Wisconsin. He and his wife, who is also an admirable worker in the Freethought cause, have returned to Chicago after a long absence. Percy Ward lectured, last Sunday, in the Chicago Masonic Temple, one of the best buildings in the centre of the city, on the topic which all Americans are discussing: "Shall We Elect a Catholic President?" Ward gets good audiences, and is a highly attractive orator. He is still very much like a first-rate English public speaker, witty, eloquent, and thoroughly well grounded in his subject. He aroused immense interest. Not only was the subsequent discussion well taken up, but a prominent city official has challenged Ward to a public debate, which will take place early in August.

Whatever the merits of the actual candidature (and Percy Ward is no partisan, talking against one candidate, in favour of another), in such competent hands as Ward's, the whole question is raised to the high level of a real education in what religion means in practical politics to-day.

Amongst minor Freethought activities in Chicago, I ought to include the Artists' Colony, where I have presided every Sunday since I came to this city. Every Sunday there is some sort of Freethought debate, lecture, or play. Another "cabaret" of similar character is the older "Dill Pickle" Forum, where next Sunday, William Lysaght, of the University of Kansas, is defending Atheism in a debate with Irwin Villeau, President of the Church of Freedom.

In Washington Park, a gigantic crowd, often 3,000 people, listen to Freethinkers lecturing. Percy Ward is speaking there next Sunday. Then there is the Trafalgar Square of Chicago, called by the awful name "Bug-house Square," where a dozen crowds gather, and there is always a Freethinker to be heard, often half a dozen.

Another time I will speak of the foreign Freethinkers here; they are well worthy of an article all to themselves.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Acid Drops.

The Vicar of Leyland, Lancs., is wroth with the holiday crowds of young men and women. He complains that the men are soft-headed and the women frothy, and it would take 500 of them stewed down to make a real man or woman. We regret to hear it, for if the stewing process is gone on with, and there are less than 500 on hand, it would probably mean an increase in the number of the clergy, and there are enough of them already.

The Rev. James M. Alley, a Methodist, living in Southern Ireland, says that there is no interference with religious freedom on the part of the Free State Government. Indeed, everything has been done to promote liberty of conscience. In the whole atmosphere of Southern Ireland there is a growing recognition of the fact that a man has a right to his own views, and the authorities appoint to responsible Civil Service posts the best men they can find, irrespective of their religion. Mr. Alley is, of course, talking about Roman Catholics and Protestants. We should be surprised to hear that Freethinkers who openly avow their irreligious views are treated as fairly. Romanist priests have still a considerable influence, and that is not likely to be used for encouraging real liberty of conscience for all men. We will add that, if it be true that there is a growing trend towards tolerance, the people of Southern Ireland must be getting less religious. For tolerance is a quality that

reveals itself only when people take their religion less seriously or else have become indifferent to it. The more ardent the religionist, the less tolerant he is. That is an axiom which few impartial students of Christian history would deny.

A little of the *Freethinker* seems to go a long way—so far indeed that it reaches the columns of the *Daily Express*. It has always been our contention that there is a very narrow dividing line between fortune-tellers and professional religionists, and it is gratifying to notice a letter on the subject from a correspondent to the *Daily Express*; we give an extract, which is as follows: "People have as much right to pay the fortune-tellers to predict their future in this life as they have to pay the parsons to predict it in the next." Evidently there are some people who do not take the fortune-tellers of the future life as seriously as they pretend to take themselves.

It would appear that Christians are becoming ashamed of the stories in their Bible. In a few more generations they may even venture to look at it in a critical light and wonder if it is really inspired. A letter of protest is published in the *Daily Mail*. The writer complains about the B.B.C. broadcasting the story of how Jael treacherously slew Sisera, and also asks if something more uplifting could not be found. And this is the book to be proudly put in the hands of children as the secret of England's greatness.

An Oxford undergraduate asserted, at a recent pious conference, that "Good men crucified Christ because they were not good enough." He is wrong. According to Christian teaching, "good men" murdered a bit of God in human form because God had fore-ordained they should do so, in order that mankind might be "saved." Besides, it was essential that the Salvation Army, in battling with the Devil, should have an impressive warfare. Since everything was according to divine plan, no stigma is to be attached to either good men or bad. We may add that to us moderns the plan may seem cruel for the parties directly concerned. It may seem silly and none too well conceived. But with the charitable-ness of our age, let us assume that the salvation scheme was the best God could manage in the few thousand years—from the Fall of Man to A.D. 1—at his disposal.

The *Times Literary Supplement*, in a review of a book on *Lenin*, by Valerin Mareu, makes the following extraordinary confession: "There was about Lenin a stiff and most remarkable intellectual honesty which gives meaning and occasional life to those interminable theses of his which are now beginning to appear in English." English life, and particularly English religious life, can do with a similar dose of intellectual honesty, and the *Daily News*, representing a public, might with advantage be the first to take it, after its recent handling of the "metaphysics of the poor."

Apropos of the mimic warfare in the air waged over London, we hope the parsons will have realized that exemption from military service will not be very advantageous in the next war.

A Sheffield Baptist lately returned from North America says that Canadian Sunday schools are very attractive. No expense is spared to make them so; and most churches have gymnasiums and institutes attached. It would appear from this that the simple gospel of Jesus has poor "pulling power" in these days. It has to be reinforced with secular inducements. But despite these latter attractions, many churches do no more than mark time as regards membership, while others definitely lose ground. This, of course, indicates that the masses are preparing for a revival of religion.

Next year the annual bombardment of the Celestial Headquarters, known as the Universal Week of Prayer, commences on January 6, and continues to January 12. The Heavenly Chief and his assistants ought to feel pretty limp after these millions of prayers have been received, docketed, and duly credited to the pious broadcasters.

The Canadian Bible Society is, we learn, indefatigable in distributing the Scriptures and tracts among the immigrants landing at the ports. We should say that the city scavengers have an extra lot of litter to clear away every time a vessel anchors in the ports.

A wireless listener thinks that it is a thing to be proud of in this country that whether or not one likes the B.B.C.'s programmes, one's sense of decency will never receive a jar. We beg leave to differ. Our sense of decency is jarred every time we note that the B.B.C. permits religion to be broadcast, but never allows the other side to have a hearing.

A writer deplors the fact that the language of the modern Englishman is poverty-stricken, that it is made up of dog-eared clichés and over-worked superlatives. Perhaps that writer should be grateful that matters are not worse than they are. Only fancy how terrible it would be if what was called the "language of Zion" had become universal among the English!

Apropos of the report of the Marseilles funeral, reported in last week's *Freethinker*, the *Jewish Chronicle*, says it would really like to know what the souls of the victims—"if souls do really exist after death"—thought of the proceedings. It thinks the proceedings savour more of the huckster shop than of the Cathedral, the Church, or the Synagogue. But looking at the manner in which the Church, the Cathedral, and the Synagogue cater for custom, and the advertising tricks in which they all indulge, one would like someone to indicate in what material way they differ from the huckster shop.

There is a split among the Christian Scientists. So many believers in Mrs. Eddy have died who have rejected medical assistance, that some of the leaders have now decided that doctors may be called in when the case is sufficiently serious. That is quite a good move, and reminds one of the saying of Voltaire, that prayer may cure sickness—if taken with the proper kind of medicine.

The Rector of Llwyngwrl, near Barmouth, complains that the example of the visitors to the district has diminished the Church attendance by one half. We are not surprised. Good examples are often as infectious as bad ones.

The cost of repairing the cruiser "Dauntless," which recently went aground off Nova Scotia, will equal the cost of the new cathedral to be built at Guildford. So says a weekly paper. We hope the day is not too far distant when a nation, purporting to be civilized, will refuse to spend money on either battleships or cathedrals. Both are relics of Christian barbarism.

The mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen paid 10,000 visits to fishing-vessels last year. We are willing to wager that the fishermen would have appreciated better 10,000 visits of singers and music-hall entertainers. Apparently it never strikes the pious supporters of this Mission that fishermen would appreciate such things to relieve the monotony of toil.

We sympathise with Miss Gloria Gay, who complains, in a daily paper, that at a famous seaside resort in Wales one is almost ostracised from "decent society" for daring to wear flannels and white shoes on the Sabbath." The best advice we can offer is, that she and others of like mind should patronize less godly seaside resorts, where society is less "decent" but broader minded.

It is a wholesome sign of the times that puritan critics of the tendency towards freedom from unnatural restrictions in dress and habits, should be getting plenty of criticism from writers for, and readers of, the daily and weekly press. A reader of the *Daily Express* draws attention to the fact that modern youth is fast losing the unhealthy sex-consciousness which was encouraged by the dress and furtive habits of last century. This, of course, is one of the great advantages resulting from the age being neo-pagan instead of old Christian.

Apropos of women being required to wear a hat in church, a reader of a daily paper reminds us that a woman's covered head is the "outward and visible" sign of her inferiority. This should be borne in mind when parsons wax eloquent about what the Christian religion and the Christian Churches have done towards raising the status of women. Emancipated women with a pious leaning might try searching the Scriptures to see if they can discover any assumption about women other than that they are inferior.

English history teaching, says Mr. W. Hughes Jones, is too sanguinary. We are afraid we cannot recommend, as a substitute, history relating the squabbles between the Christian sects.

On unreliable authority we learn that the lock-keepers of the Thames, when censoring women's dress, are to use anti-dazzle spectacles. From the same source we gather that the lock-keepers are petitioning for an increase in wages, owing to the moral risks they are exposed to as a result of the new duties.

Austria is said to be suffering from too many doctors. There are 7,300 in a population of 6,500,000. There might be a worse state of affairs—such as too many priests. But we shouldn't be surprised if a worse state is in evidence in Austria.

Dr. Henson is reported as saying: "Purity among girls is needed more to-day than anything else." Probably the girls will retort that needed still more are parsons with less impure imaginations. There might then be fewer slanderous charges floating around.

The greatest fact of our time, thinks a pious weekly, is the emergence of Jesus in the thought and life of the world. Our friend adds that, whatever may be said of the decline of organized Christianity, there is a widespread and cumulative interest taken in the ideals incorporated in the gospel of the founder of Christianity. As proof of this, one is invited to note that the great newspapers find that discussions on topics such as "If Christ Came to London," not only interest their readers, but increase circulations. This, we are told, proves that whatever is happening to the Churches, "Jesus is tightening his grip upon the minds of men." Our contemporary appears to be clutching at straws, in default of something more substantial. These pious newspaper discussions are merely stunts pandering to the taste of religious readers. The average man is still indifferent. If that were not the fact, if he had really become interested in religion, he would soon make his way to the churches for first-hand information about Jesus. But we have yet to hear of a marked increase in church attendance. Parsons are still bewailing the falling off of clients, are still racking their brains for schemes to entice the "outsider" into the Lord's praying-sheds.

A reader of *Radio Times* directs attention to the fact that nearly every farmhouse and tiny cottage in Wales has nowadays its wireless set. He thinks that "these people, with their restricted cultural opportunities, their prejudices and provincialisms," have "been brought into contact with the great world." Well, the people he describes are notoriously pious. Their kind of "culture" is chiefly got from Bible reading and prayer-

meetings. It is therefore all to the good that broadcasting should be able to broaden their minds, and to interest them in matters other than those centering in a little Bethel and village gossip.

The *Methodist Times* says that "If London came to Christ":—

We should sanctify the Sabbath by making it a day of worship and ennobling pleasure, taking care that we denied to no man the same opportunities for obtaining these that we asked for ourselves.

Very neatly put. What is really meant is that the pious would deny to the non-pious opportunities for seeking wholesome recreation and amusement. Only pious "pleasure" would be available. That is Sabbatarian tolerance of the very best vintage. We devoutly hope London will never get drunk on it. May the day when London comes to Christ be long deferred. Meanwhile, the *Freethinker* will get on with its job of making such an unwelcome event as unlikely as possible.

From a review of the contents of the *Hibbert Journal*, No. 4, July, 1928, we note that Mr. H. G. Dalway Turnbull has an article entitled "Hinduism and Christianity." The writer rather puts the brake on Western optimism concerning the hunger and thirst of Hindus for the teaching of Christianity, which promises eternal life—or eternal consciousness. As the reviewer states, eternal consciousness is a threat rather than a promise, and this is a nice critical point against the intense egotism evolved from the *humble* and *lowly* doctrines that are not required by the benighted Hindu.

Catholics should be grateful for an extra lump of sugar in their tea in the form of receiving permission to believe in evolution so long "as it does not lead to pantheism or other erroneous views of the Deity." In other words they have full and unqualified liberty to prance and gallop over the circumscribed area of Catholicism.

We presume that centuries of Christian teaching have given the ordinary Englishman a liking, or, to state it more charitably, a bent for preferring destruction to construction. There are, in all seriousness, Church dignitaries blessing battleships, and, as pointed out in this paper, they will now have to bless aeroplanes and poison-gas. Therefore, with such shepherds, what can we say of their sheep? Reviewing a book entitled *The War in the Air*, we notice the statement:—

The new volume has its faults, such as a lack of uniformity in rank titles, and in the names of ships, the disproportionate space given to individual action, and to a great readiness to accept official dispatches as reliable sources for historic fact. [Our italics.]

With this state of affairs, something similar to the inmates of Hanwell being instructed in trigonometry, we can only say—a truce to this sanguinary nonsense, which is a disgusting insult to the ordinary man's intelligence. Or must we take it that minds fuddled with Christian metaphysics are expected to believe anything?

Cumulative Propaganda.

When you have made a new reader of the *FREETHINKER*, it is probable that your time was not occupied more, altogether, than two or three hours. Yet the effect is a benefit to be enjoyed by that reader for the rest of his life, and you must not overlook that his freedom from superstition will promote a similar freedom in his family and amongst his friends and acquaintances.

National Secular Society.

THE FUNDS of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

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FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—W. J. Lamb, £1.

C. MARTIN.—You are not alone in finding how gladly many receive an introduction to the *Freethinker*. Of course, many do not welcome it gladly, but most of our new readers are gained by this method of personal introduction.

J. R. DUNCAN.—You will find plenty of information on the subject of child labour, and the relation of the Churches to it, in the series of books on *The Town Labourer*, etc., published by Messrs. Longman & Co.

A. J. FIELD.—Sorry we did not receive your letter in time to be present.

J. BRYCE.—Thanks for note. You will see the correction has been made.

D. VOSS AND OTHERS.—Sorry we were away from London when you called. We do not often take a holiday, but visitors from all over the world appear to have made up their minds to visit London during that time.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—Very pleased to see your fist again, and to learn that you are quite well. Your interest in things is evidently as keen and as catholic as ever, which is a good indication of mental, as well as physical health. Long may it continue.

J. JACOBS.—Thanks for cutting, the substance of which was the subject of comment in our last issue.

W. P. B.—Sorry for the error in the initials. Cuttings are always useful. In their absence we should miss many an interesting and even important item.

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

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

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

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, 15/-; half year 7/6; three months, 3/9.

Sugar Plums.

On Sunday next (September 2), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Birmingham. The chair will be taken at 7 o'clock, and admission will be free. The title of the lecture will be, "Some Things Christians Ought to Know"; and as there are some things that only Freethinkers will tell them, we hope that the local friends will see that as many Christians are there as can be induced to attend.

Mr. J. L. Vickery, whose death at the advanced age of ninety-four, was recently noted in these pages, has, by his will, left £500 to the Secular Society, Limited, and a similar amount to the Rationalist Press Association. Both Societies will also receive a third of the residue of the estate.

We are asked to announce that the West Ham Branch will hold one of its popular outings on Sunday, August 26. The party will meet at Stratford Station (L.N.E.R.), and travel to Broxbourne by the 10 a.m. train. A cheap ticket is issued at one shilling and elevenpence return. Members and friends are requested to carry lunch; tea will be at the Bull Inn at 4.30. Mr. F. C. Warner is to be guide, philosopher, and friend to the party, and a hearty invitation is extended to all Freethinkers to join the outing. If the weather is propitious, we are sure all will spend a most enjoyable day.

The eminent Egyptologist, Professor Sir Flinders Petrie recently had an article in *John O'London's Weekly*, entitled, "Fact and Fiction in the Old Testament." There is more in its implications than what is really written, and if the Professor's advice was taken, there would not be much left of the sacred book. In other words, he removes the "taboo." One good point is made; he writes: "Our idolatry is that of wealth"; we commend this to the followers of the gospel of "without money and without price."

A very cursory reading of the novels of the late Anatole France would reveal the author's humanity and deep interest in the suffering of individuals; a deeper acquaintance with his works would show that he was as near to the great problems of life as any other great writer of his age. As he did not, like some of our English writers, pay lip service to a church, high or low, it is taken for granted that he is deficient in some qualities, and the way to dispose of him is usually on the lines of the *John O'London's Weekly* critic, who writes in the following knock-kneed style: "A man who believes in nothing presents a difficult problem, particularly when he is a man of genius." Perhaps this critic knows the mentality of the readers of the paper for which he writes; he is an adept at packing nonsense in a few words, and if not already a member, should join the church, and give his literary work to the office boy.

The pickaxe is already laid to the foundation of the church tower.—Richard Jefferies.

Spiritualism and its Evidence.

(Continued from page 539.)

It may seem a matter for marvel that any sane man, much less a scientist accustomed to research and experiment, should be tricked by such apparently palpable means. In good truth it is not a marvel at all. The conditions of the seance favour fraud and deception. Either the darkness is complete or the light is so sketchy as to be negligible. As often as not any light at all is red—the one light most favourable to sensory deception. In addition, there is in evidence expectation or preparatory suggestion which, in conjunction with the ambiguous and vague sense impressions resulting through the dim light, leads to the distortion of the masks and bits of muslin into hands, faces and other simulcra of material objects. We have already seen how the percipient fills in the picture—the mere outline of a face is immediately recognized as the exact features of a dead relative. One doll, has, on occasion, been claimed by a score of different sitters as the spirit of as many different entities.⁹ Let the sitter, as a further contribution, bring with him to the seance room a sufficient fund of enthusiasm, and the task of the medium becomes mere child's play. It was, in point of fact, on this that Home largely relied: he opened his show with theurgic hymns, and before bringing out his dolls and concertinas had his sitters in such an emotional state that they would no more have dreamed of suspecting the whitewashed Home than they would have thought of scoffing at Jesus Christ himself. Stainton Moses played the same game. More crudely, Florrie Cook repeated the dodge, relying on her girlish charms to take the place of Home's thaumaturgic gifts and Moses's cap and gown. The risk of detection is not nearly so great as would appear. One can take pretty considerable chances in what approximates to pitch darkness with a batch of people, each of whom either permanently or temporarily is in a mental condition verging on positive amentia.

It is true we are assured again and again that the conditions were such as to absolutely prevent trickery. In the days of Home and Moses there were no searchings of the medium, nor was Florence Cook, according to the published accounts, ever subjected to this ordeal; but Eïva, on numerous occasions, undoubtedly was. She was even stripped and clad in tights. But little in the way of actual materials were required for such materializations as Eïva produced. Folded and compressed, the lot might easily be concealed in the mouth.

Queerly enough there is an idea that scientists are proof against the emotional stage. This is pure nonsense. As a demonstration of the utter futility of any such notion, one has only to take the commonest emotion of all: that of love. A scientist smitten with the *grande passion* talks just as much futile slosh, utters just as many inanities when in the presence of his fiancée or inamorata, as does the country yokel making callow love in the hayfields. He may, in the

University lecture hall, talk glibly enough of atoms, of molecules, of ether, of electrical energy, of the Newtonian laws, of the Einstein theory; but, released from the atmosphere of the laboratory, let him catch sight of a shapely silken-clad ankle of comely shape, let him intercept a roguish smile from a pretty face and the laws of gravity can go to eternal damnation. Moreover, the greater the savant the more likely and the more complete the fall when love gets its hold. He is altogether unversed in the tricks and antics of designing girlhood; he fails entirely to realize that the smile he gets is not specifically reserved for him, but is merely a broadcasted ray sent out promiscuously for anyone wearing well-pressed trousers to pick up. What to the man of experience is merely an opportunity for idle philandering becomes to the narrow-minded professor a vast and serious affair.

Sir Oliver Lodge is a case in point. A savant of unquestioned ability in his chosen lines of electricity and higher physics; a man who for the major portion of his life has stuck unreservedly to his own particular grindstone; mysticism in his later years has become a magnificently big and serious affair. The precise materialistic thinking of the scientist has succumbed to the feverish idealations and inspired glamour of the cabalistic poet. "There are facts relating to human nature," he says, in a burst of adoration, "and to the relation between man and the rest of the Universe, concerning which poets and prophets—*humanists*, in fact, in the widest sense—are the best and indeed almost the only guides. To them seem to come whisperings which have been likened to the murmur of a shell held to the ear of a child—reverberations and intensifications of sounds too faint for the unaided ear." (*Reason and Belief*, pp. 197-8.)

But with all his weaknesses, his crudities, his fatidical fancies, his reverberating credulism; he stands head and shoulders above all the rest of the Spiritualistic writers of his day; this ex-scientist, this pope of mysticism, this reformer of Christianity, this joyous chieftain of the avatars. In comparison, the efforts of his assistants and compatriots are those of clumsy empirics.

Now, in his earlier contributions to occult lore, notably in *The Survival of Man*, Sir Oliver wavers considerably between the rival hypotheses of telepathy and spiritualism. He barely troubles to conceal his very real dismay at the possibility of telepathy being a conceivable explanation of the best of which the redoubtable Mrs. Piper was capable. Hence, in his efforts to fasten on anything which appears inexplicable by the physical phenomena of so-called thought transference and therefore indicative of spiritual existence, he represents the evidence of cross-correspondences with much ingenuity. Indeed, there is more than a suspicion that with the sole aim of the provision of evidence inexplicable by telepathy were cross-correspondences devised; just as the survival of animal life was apparently an after-thought not only induced but plainly necessitated through the indisputable proofs brought forward by psychologists of the existence in lower forms of life of mind or soul. These cross-correspondences, in short, are the giving of a complete message through two or more mediums. Each medium receives a partial message or clue from spirit land which in itself is valueless and apparently little removed from mere gibberish. Linked together a complete message results. The idea is ingenious: it assuredly, in most instances, obviates any telepathic explanation. But the trouble is on the rare occasions when it does work at all, the successful reading of the hidden message depends far more upon the ingenuity of the reader than on the clarity and evidentiality of the

⁹ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle admits this very thing: "Colonel Olcott narrates many cases where the sitters recognized spirits, but too much stress should not be laid upon this, as with a dim light and an emotional condition it is easy for an honest observer to be mistaken. The author has had the opportunity of gazing into the faces of at least a hundred of these images, and he can only recall two cases in which he was absolutely certain in his recognition. In both these cases the faces were self-illuminated and he had not to depend upon the red lamp. There were two other occasions when with the red lamp he was morally certain, but in the vast majority of cases it was possible if one allowed one's imagination to work, to read anything into the vague moulds which rose before one." (*Light*, April 4, 1925.)

clues. It is the age-old story of seeing what is looked for, to which reference has been made again and again in these articles. To this is directly traceable nine-tenths of the delusions of mankind. Given the attitude of expectancy, and the merest suspicion of an idea blossoms into full and detailed profusion.

These psychic mediums of the Piper and Leonard brand are on infinitely safer ground than are those who rely upon the more spectacular conjuring tricks of Palladino, of Slade, of Eglinton, of the Fox sisters, of Eva. Little wonder that they have largely taken the place of the more primitive thaumaturgists. In truth, as I have already pointed out, it is manifestly impossible to differentiate between the genuine and the trickster. Nor am I concerned with any such distinction *per se*. The only question is whether the evidence presented by the medium is indicative of survival after death.

This evidence, such as it is, in sheer volume is truly stupendous. In the overpowering bulk (and this the Spiritualists do not dispute) it is incredibly puerile, feeble and un evidential. But here and there like oases in a desert are bits which are claimed to prove indisputably the fact of the existence of a disembodied spirit, which, through the physical body of the medium, is capable of communicating with the living. And the evidential value of these gems lies in the fact that they refer to matters of which the medium could have no possible knowledge. The only alternative explanation is that of telepathy, the falsity of which I have elsewhere demonstrated. (George Ryley Scott: "The Telepathic Myth," *The New Age*, October 21 and 28, 1926.)

Now the mere statement on the part of the medium that she does not know a thing, is comparatively worthless. Apart from the possibility of plain lying no one can state with any degree of precision the extent of his or her knowledge. The whole of one's knowledge is never available at any one moment. Memory is merely the reproduction of an old cerebral impression through the initiation of a homologous neural or cortical movement. We have seen what a confused and heterogeneous mass of impressions constitutes the average brain chamber: we have seen how this confusion and enfeebled mentality are coincident: we have seen how a genuine seer is one who parades a mentality of an extraordinary degree of dissociation, capable, under the stress of emotional disturbance, of visions or hallucinations which owe their content to suggestion acting upon and linking up homologous associations, which by virtue of their apparent novelty take on the texture of new and unknown perceptions. Thus, in the case of a genuine medium, the answers she gives are in their origin just as much hallucinatory in nature as are the visions which gain objective reality. In precisely similar fashion, the automatic writer, except in cases of sheer fraud (which are many), is hallucinated. In moments of ecstasy, out of the miscellany of ideas, thoughts, snacks of knowledge, tit-bits of information, which constitutes the normal state of cerebration, a number group themselves and are automatically transferred into writing apparently unconsciously, and because of the dissociated mentality are unrecognized as bits of previously acquired information or knowledge. The more feeble the intellect the less likely the detection of this self-deception.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be continued.)

Nothing good to man but man. Let man, then, leave his gods and lift up his ideal beyond them.

Richard Jefferies.

Jezebel, His Wife.

(1 Kings, Chap. xxi.)

SERMON BY A MODERNIST CURATE.

I WANT to speak to you tonight, brethren and sisters, of one of the most illustrious women in history; one of those outstanding figures whose name will live as long as time endures. The name of Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, one of the long line of kings of ancient Israel, has become the synonym—and as I shall try to show, unjustly—for all that is wicked and diabolical in female human nature. She was not one of those anæmic, hysterical and pathological subjects usually called "Saints," but a woman of like parts and passions with ourselves; and whatever failings she may have had, she, at least, did not add humbug and hypocrisy to her vices.

Jezebel was a woman of commanding appearance, standing six feet two in her stockinged feet. These stockings, I might remark, were of silk, and of that flesh-coloured tint so fashionable at the present day. She was every inch a queen, but, for some reason or other, the sacred writers forbear to give her the queenly title. They speak of Queen Esther, and also of the Queen of Sheba, but they only refer to Jezebel as the "wife of Ahab." This is all the more difficult to understand, as she not only ruled Ahab, but the kingdom of Israel as well.

You may remember that it was this Queen of Sheba, whom I have mentioned, to whom we are indebted for one of those pithy sayings which have so enriched Christian story and song. It was on the occasion of her visit to the court of King Solomon. The writer of the Proverbs and this female potentate were one day discussing the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The Queen was frankly sceptical as to the existence of such a person as Joseph. Solomon, then, in the playful way he had with women, began to tell her of the numerous tales he had heard, through his diplomatic representatives, of the queer doings at her own court, and the number of little "affairs of the heart" with which she was credited, and he suggested that if a tithe of the stories were true, she seemed a fit and proper person to act as the queen of the harem. Sheba's queen felt highly flattered, and with one of those captivating smiles, which few could resist, replied: "Ah, Solomon! I'm afraid the half has never been told."

Jezebel did not possess those warm, affectionate qualities of the Queen of Sheba, and Ahab did not look for any display of womanly sympathies. Indeed, he had intended to join the hen-pecked husbands' club, but one of Jezebel's spies had found it out, with the result that when he reached home, he had rather a bad quarter of an hour. Jezebel had the proposer and seconder convicted of "blaspheming against God and the King," and with two nether millstones tied round their necks, they were cast into the middle of the sea. The interests of her subjects and the affairs of the kingdom left her little time for the tender side of private life. It is to one of these little affairs of State that we are indebted for the record of Jezebel that has come down to us.

One of the King's subjects, a citizen named Naboth, possessed a beautiful vineyard and did an extensive export trade in the wines he manufactured. His particular brands were known and sought after all over the civilized world. They even found their way as far as Persia, and there can be no doubt that it was some of Naboth's famous vintages that inspired the delightful quatrains of Omar Khayyam. This vineyard of Naboth's was in Jezreel, not far from the King's palace, and Ahab's covetous eyes

longed to add it to his possessions. He offered to give Naboth a better one in exchange, or buy it outright for cash. The ostensible reason he gave for desiring it was that he wanted it to grow herbs.

It appears that Ahab was a great herbalist, having learned the art of mixing these mysterious compounds from his old nurse, whose recipes he still retained. This, of course, was before the days of Parkinson's Pills, and the King's remedy for piles was known far and wide for its healing virtues. Naboth, however, refused to bargain, and the King was very much upset in consequence. So much did he take the refusal to heart, that he began to act like a love-sick swain, refusing to take his food or say his prayers, and showing his kingly displeasure by taking to his bed, and turning his face to the wall. Jezebel divined that something was wrong, but thought at first that his indisposition was due to an overdose of some of his own vile concoctions. Jezebel had no sympathy with the herbal business, being of the opinion that if the people would eat more fruit, they would not be troubled with piles at all. Her first impulse was to destroy all his pots and pans and potions, and demolish the distillery. She looked upon the King's fad as a practice only suitable to old hags.

But when Jezebel learned the real cause of Ahab's sulking, her wrath knew no bounds. "You miserable nincompoop," she exclaimed, "to think that you have no more respect for the doctrine of the divine right of kings than to suffer such humiliation at the hands of a mere vine-grower! Turning your face to the wall! If you had your deserts you ought to be placed with your back to the wall, facing the muzzle of a soldier's rifle. Leave this business to me."

Ahab had always been a weak-kneed sort of creature. In the early part of his reign, before Jezebel became his Queen, the King of Samaria had sent him word that he was coming with his army to dispossess him of his land, his wives, and his cattle. Ahab's reply was characteristic of him. "Go back," he said to the messenger, "and tell the King that he may come and take the whole bally lot—and welcome. There will be no opposition." That was the sort of spineless creature that Jezebel had magnanimously taken, for better or for worse, and I suggest, as learned counsel is wont to say, that this much abused woman with all the troubles and difficulties of the kingdom upon her shoulders, had an arduous task in guiding the fortunes of the State. If Ahab had wanted the vineyard to grow tobacco, or cotton, or even rubber, she might have shown him some leniency—but herbs! Is it any wonder that her queenly dignity was outraged? Can we blame her if she usurped the reins of government?

This serious offence of the wine-grower's in refusing to comply with the wishes of the Crown and the requirements of the State, could not, of course, be condoned. And so Jezebel set the machinery in motion for his undoing. She purloined some of Ahab's note-paper and his private seal, and wrote to the nobles and elders of the city of Jezreel concerning this man Naboth. They were to hold a carnival in the city in aid of the charitable institutions, and Naboth was to be the chief jester. And when all was going merrily as a marriage bell, he was suddenly to be accused of "blasphemy against God and the King," and forthwith was to suffer the penalty for his crime. Blasphemy against God and the King! This was a master stroke of Jezebel's that would never have occurred to the witless brain of Ahab. When the nobles sent her word that Naboth was dead, she told Ahab to enter into possession at once.

And here the matter might have ended, had fate allowed things to run smoothly. But the course of vineyards, like that of true love, "gangs aft agley."

There were in those days a class of individuals who roamed the country in an unkempt condition, living chiefly upon locusts and Lyle's Syrup. They were called "men of God," but, happily, the species is now extinct. They seem to have divided their time between prophesying and cursing. Those were the days when men believed in the potency of curses, which were thrown about with the recklessness of confetti at a wedding. They were not priests in charge but a kind of stickit-minister, similar to those of our own day. On one occasion, when one of these men was going his rounds, he was sighted by a group of children at play. Evidently taking him for a tramp, they impertinently shouted after him, "Go up, thou bald head." And instead of putting his hand in his pocket for some sweeties or pennies to pacify the children, as any kind-hearted old gentleman of our own times would have done, he gave a weird kind of whistle, and two she-bears, at his call, rushed out of a wood and mauled in pieces no less than forty-two of those dear little children. This was this "man of God's" Gilbertian notion of making the punishment fit the crime. But, happily, as I have said, this species is now extinct. Time, also, has revenged the death of the children, as the only bears we now see are captives at the end of a chain, dancing for coppers at their masters' behests. It was one of these strange mortals who accosted Ahab as he was sitting in the vineyard admiring the luscious bunches of grapes. At the sight of him, Ahab's heart went into his boots; but when he heard the awful curses pronounced against Jezebel and himself by this pious fire-eater, he collapsed straight away, and had to be taken home in a police ambulance. What ultimately became of the vineyard there are no records left to show.

Now, I want to submit to you, brethren and sisters, that the writer of these ancient documents had a very distorted, one might even say a diseased, view of the moral problem and its bearings. To account a man who could ruthlessly destroy the lives of forty-two young children, as a servant of God, and, at the same time, heap calumny on the head of a noble woman who, at the worst, was only guilty of a political crime, you will agree is a serious miscarriage of ethical justice. I think the Christian Church owes more to Jezebel than it has been willing to acknowledge. Was it not the inventive brain of Jezebel that first conceived the idea of a persecution for blasphemy? There can be no doubt that it was from Jezebel that the Church took its cue in the policy it pursued in the treatment of heretics. I once heard a preacher grandiloquently declare that it was Jesus Christ who built Manchester Hospital. And, using the same manner of speech, may we not claim that it was Jezebel who lit the fires of Smithfield; who invented the rack and the thumbscrew of medieval history; who instigated the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the persecution of the Huguenots and the Waldenses; and harassed the Covenanters of Scotland over the wild hills of their native country? It may be that some of Jezebel's conduct is not morally defensible; but the actions of kings and queens and those in authority are not to be judged from a narrow-minded individualistic standpoint. There are higher considerations of national policy and social well-being which must inevitably overrule the interests of the mere individual. The Church herself, in the interests of true religion, and her own existence, has often had to resort to measures which could hardly be considered,

from any point of view, as ethically justifiable. If Jezebel had lived in a later age, it is probable that her name would have found its way into the calendar of the Christian Saints. The Church, as you know, is passing through a serious crisis, and is sadly in need of some Jezebel to place it once again on its authoritative feet, and restore its pristine beauty of former days. The Church has too long refused women a place in its ministry, and it seems to be paying a heavy penalty for its exclusive policy. Jezebel was not a woman to waste twenty years in the revision of an obsolete Prayer Book, while all the time the enemy was undermining the fortifications of the Christian citadel. I would not say one word of disrespect of our worthy bishops, but it must be confessed that they are a back number. What has the bishops' rule of the Church resulted in? Empty pews, widespread unbelief, heresy so rampant in the Church itself that one half does not know what the other half believes; and a flaunting indifference to all matters of serious or spiritual import. The Church has been misled and misguided by attaching too much significance to the sacred writers' prejudiced estimate of Jezebel's character and worth. Like the modern defenders of the famous John Calvin, we may say that her virtues were all her own; her sins were those of the age in which she lived. Let us, therefore, put aside all prejudice, and seek to restore Jezebel to that dignified position to which she is entitled by her queenly conduct and concern for the religious welfare of her subjects. If the pulpit is ever to regain its place and power in our midst, I feel sure that it will be due to the ministrations of women who will not fear to take Jezebel as their ideal in the defence of the faith.

JOSEPH BRUCE.

Correspondence.

PAINE AND THE GIRONDINS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I was greatly interested to read Mr. Mann's letter, but am afraid I am still unconvinced. I have read everything I could lay my hands on in connexion with the French Revolution (my friends regard it as somewhat of an obsession with me) and to my regret I had to come to the conclusion that Atheism had not nearly so much to do with it as I had been led to expect. I say "to my regret," for I am myself quite definitely Atheist "sans phrase." Of course some of the leading men were Atheists, including most of those Mr. Mann mentions; but not all of them were Girondins; and one who was a Girondin, I shall show conclusively, was not an Atheist. Héault de Sèchelles was not a Girondin but a Dantonist, and died with Danton. He it was who wanted to embrace his friend on the scaffold, but was prevented by the executioner. "Barbarian," said Danton to the latter, "you cannot prevent our heads from kissing in the basket." Danton was most probably an Atheist, though he did declare in 1793 that "we had not destroyed superstition in order to establish the reign of Atheism." His concern at the time was to keep the people united behind the Revolution.

Cloutz, that eccentric and wealthy German baron, with his dream of a Universal Republic, was not a Girondin, but rather a partisan of Hébert, with whom he died. He had published a pamphlet, *Ni Roland, ni Maret*, in which he accused the Girondin leaders of being federalists. André Chénier, I believe, was more of a Constitutionalist than a Girondin. As for Isnard, Aulard has the following, vol. 3, p. 44. "Isnard said in a speech in which he proposed to punish all factious persons, 'I say factious persons because I am determined to fight them all, because I am of no party. My God is the Law; I have no other.' He then recanted in a public letter saying that he had only spoken in a

political sense; that he was not an Atheist. 'I have contemplated Nature,' he said, 'and I am not an imbecile; I must perforce believe in God.'" This was the fiery gentleman who precipitated the rising of Paris against the Girondin deputies by the speech in which he threatened in the name of the whole of France, that if the national representation was attacked, Paris would be destroyed, and people would search the banks of the Seine to see if Paris had ever existed. A few days later, when it was attacked, he was the first to climb down. He survived the Revolution, and in 1800 published a pamphlet *De l'immortalité de l'âme*, in which he praised Catholicism.

And surely the fact that some of the Girondins did not believe in a future life, does not prove them Atheists. A quotation from Byron seems apposite here. In a letter to Gifford, he says, "I did not expect, because I doubted the immortality of man, I should be charged with denying the existence of God."

A. W. DAVIS.

P.S.—Having lately purchased a copy of Mr. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought* (from Mr. Lloyd's library, in fact), I turn to him and find the following: 'Voltaire and Rousseau had died in 1778, Helvetius in 1771, Turgot in 1781, d'Alembert in 1783. Diderot in 1784. After all their labours, only the educated minority, broadly speaking, had been made Freethinkers. And of these, despite the vogue of the "System of Nature," only a minority were Atheists. Deism prevailed, as we have seen, among the foremost revolutionists, but Atheism was relatively rare.' (Vol. 2, p. 273.)

"WHERE ARE THE DEAD?"

SIR,—In your issue of July 29, Mr. Cohen apparently thinks he disposes of Prof. Huxley with funny, sarcastic remarks, suggesting the lack of understanding, etc. No doubt, in his enthusiasm for the exposure of theological nonsense, he bespatters Huxley with the same cheap brush, quite oblivious of the fact that he is exposing his own short-comings.

Careful reading of Prof. Huxley's remarks will show that in no instance does he mention a "third reality," as Mr. Cohen makes out. Neither to my mind was any such stupidity intended. That is Mr. Cohen's clever interpretation.

Although I do not like the manner in which Prof. Huxley states it, yet it is as clear as daylight what he meant: *viz.*, Body and Mind are two aspects of one—the individual. The logic is quite hopeless to Mr. Cohen—well, he said it himself. It is a statement with which every materialist monist of the nineteenth century will agree, and I would be inclined to suggest it is the philosophy Prof. Huxley is striving to reach.

In the same way we may say: North and South poles are aspects of one—the world. If Mr. Cohen cannot see the logic now, then he must be remarkably blind and owes an apology to Prof. Huxley, for whom, by the way, I do not hold any particular brief.

A. S. S. PANTON.

. Obituary.

ELEANOR FRANCES FIELD.

It is with great regret that I have to announce the death of my sister, Eleanor Frances Field, which occurred at 1.40 a.m. on August 16, in hospital, after an illness from heart failure. The deceased passed away at the end of prolonged unconsciousness. The body was cremated at Golders Green, on Monday, August 20.

Miss Field was, in her day, an active worker in co-operative, humanitarian and pro-Oriental movements. She was Secretary of the Co-operative Photographers, and Photographer for some years to the Co-operative Congresses.

Of Irish descent, she started active life with religious convictions, but later became a Secularist. She was the personal friend of Eleanor Marx Aveling, daughter of Karl Marx, and of Holyoake, the Wattses and other Secularist leaders. A relation of the Kemps (one

of whom was imprisoned in connexion with the Secularist Movement) she came in touch with Annie Besant. That lady was then an enthusiast in short hair, vowed to Republicanism and Freethought.

During the war and after, her work for the No More War Movement, the Irish Republic, the proper treatment of soldiers and justice to the ex-servicemen, will be within the memory of most people.

She was an evening teacher under the London County Council, and drew up several syllabuses of technical instruction. She was my right hand in all my public work, which, without her co-operation could not have been carried out.—ARTHUR FIELD.

Society News.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD AT BLACKBURN.

MR. WHITEHEAD addressed eight meetings at Blackburn, and the mission excited more attention and larger crowds than on any previous visit. At the opening meeting, on the Sunday afternoon, a big audience was awaiting the speaker's arrival, and the evening meeting, in spite of other attractions on the Square, was exceptionally fine, in point of both numbers and enthusiasm. The keenness was maintained all the week, and even the opposition was free from the acrimony that is such an unfortunate feature of religious controversialists.

Blackburn is well worth cultivating as a centre of Freethought activity, although the local branch is badly in need of a young and energetic secretary. Mr. Glassbrook, whom we have to thank for local arrangements and assistance, being unable to do more than deputize until a suitable man appears.

Commencing Saturday, August 25, Mr. Whitehead will be in Liverpool for a week's propaganda.

BURNLEY BRANCH LECTURES.

MR. J. CLAYTON found a number of people waiting for him when he arrived to lecture at Higham on Monday, August 13, and a most successful meeting was held. The speaker left the larger part of his audience discussing the lecture, the controversy in the different groups being audible quite a distance from the pitch. There is certainly no lack of interest in criticism of religion, and the more discussion there is the more Freethinkers there will be. Mr. Clayton held a successful meeting at Padiham on Tuesday, and at Nelson on Wednesday, where Mr. Whitehead's forthcoming visit was announced. A report of Mr. Clayton's debate with Mr. I. Ransome at Burnley Market Ground, on Sunday afternoon, August 12, appeared in the local press.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. F. Mann—"Historic Christianity."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, Walham Green) : Every Saturday at 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Bryant, Mathie and others.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain) : 6.0, Mr. F. Mann—"Historic Christianity."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common) : 11.30, Mr. W. Sandford. (Brockwell Park) : 6.0, Mr. W. Sandford. Wednesday—(Clapham Old Town) : 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday—(Cooks Road, Kennington) : 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—Saturday-Sunday, August 25-26 : Midnight Walk, Box Hill to Holmbury Hill and Leith Hill. Breakfast at Coldharbour, 2s. each. Meet Waterloo 10.45 p.m. for 11.5 p.m. train to Box Hill. For a party of not less than twelve, cheap tickets can be obtained at 2s. 9d. each, but for this purpose names must be sent to the leader, Mr. F. M. Overy, not later than Tuesday, August 21.

WEST HAM BRANCH.—Branch Outing to Broxbourne. Meet at Stratford Station (L.N.E.R.). Train at 10 a.m. Cheap ticket issued at 1s. 11d., return. Guide—Mr. F. C. Warner. See "Sugar Plums" for full particulars.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12 noon, Mr. James Hart.—A Lecture. 3.30 p.m., Messrs. Hyatt and B. A. 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, Mr. Campbell-Everden.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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

BURNLEY BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. Clayton's Meetings : Friday, August 24, Rawtenstall (Bacup Road), 7.0; Sunday, August 26, Todmorden (Market), 7.0; Monday, August 27, Higham, 7.30; Tuesday, August 28, Padiham (Recreation Ground), 7.30; Sunday, September 2, Accrington (Market), 7.0.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Meetings : Saturday, Islington Square; Sunday, Queen's Drive, Walton; Monday, Beaumont Street; Tuesday and Wednesday, Islington Square; Thursday, High Park Street; Friday, Islington Square; all at 8 p.m.

VISITING Freethought Posterers, Mr. Macconnell, of MACCONNELL & MAHE, LTD., will be in the counties of Durham and Northumberland in the beginning of September, and may possibly continue into Scotland. He invites correspondence from any others who would like to be called on.

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