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Views and Opinions.

Ghosts.

As is only proper in the capital city of the Empire, there are all sorts of museums in London. Among the latest is the Psychic Museum, established by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in which are stored some of the wonders of the spiritual world. There are no preserved ghosts there, but there are portraits of them. And who would doubt the reality of ghosts after seeing their portraits! Still, there are many manifestations of spirit agency there, which are as impressive as the ink on the wall of the castle of Wurtzburg, caused by the ink-bottle which Martin Luther threw at the devil, and which for long served as indisputable evidence of the existence of Satan. Spiritualists, one may assume, travel from all parts of the country, even from all parts of the world, to see these "psychic" exhibits, and their faith is strengthened by such direct contact with the denizens of the "Summerland." Frankly, I believe the evidence of ghosts stored up in the Psychic Museum to be as convincing as any evidence that has ever been brought before the public.

On the afternoon of September 13, there were "doings" in the Psychic Museum. In a darkened basement Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, agent-in-chief for ghosts, fairies, and the like, sat by the side of a large picture, nine feet by four feet six inches, strongly illuminated by an electric lamp. The picture depicted spirits, good and bad, crossing the river Styx, and afterwards breaking into two groups, one taking its way to "the gloomy ravines of perdition," the other up the "rugged heights of eternal glory." To the people present Sir Arthur Conan Doyle explained:—

The picture was painted after a seance in which the artist received indubitable proof of the truth of Spiritualism. He worked for nine hours under strong psychic inspiration, and in that time completed the greater part of this wonderful composition.

One can imagine the delighted gasps of the assembled Spiritualists. How could anyone doubt the reality of the spirit world in the face of such evidence? If

only someone under "psychic inspiration" could be brought to paint the whole of my house from top to bottom in the same time, I should be tempted to say that I also believed in spirit influence.

* * *

Getting the Facts.

Fortunately, the painter of the picture, Mr. Longstaffe, is still alive. A less hasty man than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would have waited till the artist was dead, and then "revealed" the truth to the world. But the artist is still with us, and Spiritualism is not yet so well established, or wealthy enough, to prevent our newspapers criticizing it. So the *Daily Express* interviewed Mr. Longstaffe and, in its issue for September 14, reported what he said. Mr. Longstaffe "seemed surprised" at being interviewed, and when questioned about his spirit experience said:—

"There is nothing remarkable about it. It is quite true that I did attend a seance at Sir Arthur's flat, and I must say that I was impressed with what happened. Three days later, at Sir Arthur's suggestion, I painted 'The Eternal March.'

"Unless you can call the inspiration under which an artist always works psychic, there was nothing unusual in the way I painted this picture.

"It is quite true that I executed the work in nine hours. I worked on it all night, but there is nothing unusual in that. When I start on a picture I always continue working on it until it is finished. My picture of the Menin Gate took me a night and a day.

"The idea of the picture was suggested to me by Sir Arthur himself in several conversations. When it was finished, at his suggestion, I made some minor alterations.

"I regard it as an excellent composition, depicting the march of the human race, and nothing more."

* * *

This and That!

Now here is a very curious situation. Sir Arthur says the picture was painted after a seance at which the artist received "indubitable proof" of the truth of Spiritualism. Mr. Longstaffe says he was merely "impressed" by what he saw. The two things are hardly the same on earth, although they may be in "Summerland." Our advance agent for ghosts says that the picture was painted under "strong psychic inspiration." Mr. Longstaffe says there was nothing of the kind in operation, unless one can call the inspiration under which an artist works, "psychic." (Perhaps one should remind readers that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, as a "psychic expert," ought to know better than Mr. Longstaffe what influences are operating on him.) Mr. Longstaffe admits that he did the work in nine hours, but adds that this is his usual way of working, and when he starts a picture he

keeps on till he finishes it. But how are the poor spirits to know that; and who can wonder, if they see an artist working in this way, that they attribute such excessive speed to ghostly influence? But the most curious thing is that Sir Arthur sees "psychic influence" in the painting of the picture, directly after a seance in which Mr. Longstaffe was converted to Spiritualism (although Mr. Longstaffe says he wasn't and that it was not the spirits that suggested the picture, but Sir Arthur himself). In the course of conversation Sir Arthur also suggested some minor alterations. Finally, Mr. Longstaffe says that the picture has nothing to do with spirits. It merely depicts the march of the human race, and "nothing more." It is all very wonderful, and probably Sir Arthur will retort that the psychic influence came through him, and if Mr. Longstaffe does not recognize the ghostly "urge," it is because his mind is not attuned to the heavenly spheres.

* * *

The Reign of Credulity.

In such fantastical circumstances it is not easy to keep a straight face, but I will endeavour to treat the situation seriously. In the first place, let me say that I do not believe Sir Arthur was deliberately telling a falsehood. He evidently had convinced himself that the artist had been converted to Spiritualism, that "psychic" influence was responsible for the picture (he would protect himself from much of this kind of thing if, instead of using the quasi-scientific term "psychic," he used the plain word, "ghosts"), and he had probably forgotten his own suggestion to the artist as to painting the picture. When a man has worked his mind into a certain state he is ready to believe anything. And we must remember that Sir Arthur has made himself responsible for the accuracy of certain children's stories of having seen fairies sitting on leaves, and has been satisfied with portraits of them. One may recall the famous story of the Mons angels. Mr. Arthur Machen wrote a purely imaginary story of some British soldiers who, at a critical point in a certain battle saw some angels fighting on the side of the British, and thus turned the tide against the Germans. At once, men like the Bishop of London, Dr. Horton, and others began to cite the story as proof that Heaven was on our side. They even collected the testimony of soldiers, some of whom saw the angels, others of whom felt some mysterious influence. The tales in support began to accumulate so rapidly that Mr. Machen wrote stating that he never intended, and never expected, that his story would be taken literally. He said in the plainest possible language that from beginning to end the whole story was pure invention. But a lot of the parsons would not have it. They insisted that it was true, that Mr. Machen had written the story under "psychic" influence. It only required a little more for this tale to take its place as literal history, and to be handed down in the form of a new chapter in religious history.

* * *

Psychology for "Psychics."

Now I do not for a moment believe that *all* the men who testified to the reality of the angels were deliberately lying. Some were, but I am not concerned with the frank liar. It is the man who persuades himself that he has seen what is not there to see, the man who believes his own falsehood to be the truth, that presents the problem. Some of these angel-seeing soldiers thought they had seen the angels when the vision was suggested to them. Sir Arthur believed the artist painted his picture under

the influence of ghosts because he already believed in them and was ready to see ghostly agency everywhere. And under the mastery of this belief, the fact that he himself suggested the painting of the picture was, as every up-to-date psychologist will appreciate, quite forgotten, forced out of his consciousness to make room for the "psychic" action. For when a man is acting and living obsessed by an overmastering belief, he will see evidences of it everywhere, just as a man who is suffering from persecutory mania will see all sorts of plots against him in the most harmless movements of those around him. Given a mind in this state and it becomes credulous, on the lines of its obsession, to an almost unbelievable degree. It is this that accounts for men seeing visions of devils, of angels, of all kinds of spirits, so long as the frame of the individual mind or the social atmosphere is favourable to their being seen. Against such an obsession argument is almost useless. They are cases for psychological study; they are not cases for the most careful of logical demonstration. Against an obsession, logic is almost powerless.

* * *

The Force of an Obsession.

Often during my lectures up and down the country I am asked by some Spiritualist in the audience: "Can you explain —?" and then follows some wonderful experience for which an explanation is asked. I always refuse even to attempt to answer such inquiries. First, because the question as asked admits of only one answer, and that is the one the questioner wants. It is almost like asking, "Can you explain how the man who stole the watch was innocent of stealing?" Secondly, I do not reply because I have a very lively sense of the extreme fallibility of human testimony. The man who tells a story very nearly always dramatizes his narrative so as to produce a particular, a desired, effect. And by heightening the lights here and there, by darkening the shadows, by ignoring certain details, and by over-emphasizing others, he manages to produce a picture which, while not obviously false in any part, is false as a whole. Sir Arthur's stories of ghostly intercourse, personal and collected, mostly belong to this class. He accepts them under the dominance of the obsession that we are surrounded by myriads of ghosts. He is ready to see their action everywhere, and he finds it everywhere. I could give columns of statements from monks and nuns belonging to the golden age of Christian belief, in which the action of devils was detected in every ailment, in every pain, when even the attacks of vermin that kept the unwashed saint from sleeping at night were clear evidence of the action of the devil. Under the dominance of such obsessions logic loses its force, and reason becomes little more than an instrument in their service. There is nothing very puzzling in the case of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. And, unhappily, in some form or another, nothing in it that is strikingly unusual.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

COMPARISON AND OPINION.

Who'er thou beest that read'st this sullen writ
Which just so much courts thee, as thou dost it,
Let me arrest thy thoughts; wonder with me,
Why ploughing, building, ruling and the rest,
Or more of those arts, whence our lives are blest,
By cursèd Caïn's race invented be,
And blest Seth vex'd us with astronomy.
There's nothing simply good, nor ill alone;
Of every quality Comparison
The only measure is, and judge, Opinion.

JOHN DONNE, 1573-1631.

The Black Army in Britain.

"The State is founded on follies, the Church on sins."—*W. S. Landor.*

"The distance, and as it were the space around man, grows with his intellectual vision and insight; his world becomes profounder; new stars are ever coming into view."—*Nietzsche.*

A WEALTHY friend of mine, formerly a quarter-master-sergeant in the British Army, once confided in me sufficiently to mention that all foreigners were "napoo." Expanding, he said that the respectable ones worshipped dolls, and the other kind threw bombs as a pastime. Mind you, this man was not a disappointed back number. He had been a non-commissioned officer, and had told Foch and Haig how to win the war. This contempt for Continental folks was genuine. He never attempted to speak their languages, but made them talk in his. Being polite, they obliged him, but it never lessened his sense of superiority.

This attitude was provocative and provincial. But my wealthy friend, like so many plutocrats, is not a "high-brow." His reading is confined to the sporting columns of the daily newspaper, and, in lighter moods, to the novels of Nat Gould and Edgar Wallace. Intellectually, he belongs to the Feudal System, and his veneration for age is applied not only to moss-covered ruins of medievalism, but to moss-covered ruins of archbishops, bishops, and priests, and other things in authority.

From that point of view foreigners do have unsettling views. France has been one blaze of splendid scepticism from the days of Abelard to those of Anatole France. Teutonic professors, despite their immense erudition, are as restful as dynamite. Karl Marx's *Capital* is a text-book of modern Socialism. Henrik Ibsen arraigned our social system before the bar of Humanity. Was it not an ebony-coloured Zulu whose pointed remarks caused Bishop Colenso to write his famous critical examination of the Pentateuch? It is quaint that so many folks should tell us we are not civilized, when the average Briton flatters himself that he is the heir of all the ages.

There may be something too much of this. Britons are not all stupid, and we have always had an intellectual minority. For example, the precursors of the French Revolution owed much to the writings of the English Deists. Darwin was not narrow, nor Herbert Spencer provincial. But, speaking broadly, Britons are prone to compromise. A Republican Party turns Liberal. Socialism loses its colour, and becomes a parlour game. Our Democrats still talk of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but they believe the greatest number is "Number One."

In nothing is this weakness more marked than in the matter of religion. There are many Christian Churches in this country. Why should the Anglican Church alone be permitted no less than twenty-six votes in the House of Lords? All the Free Churches have not a single vote between them. In the realm of education the Anglican priest is still a predominant figure. The Universities, the Public Schools, the Army and Navy, are all handed to him for exploitation. In the national system of education the shortcomings of Church schools are treated with ridiculous leniency. Even in the State schools religious education is imparted, and public money is used to manufacture indifferent Christians instead of good citizens. Places of worship escape taxation, and religious houses avoid inspection. Labour Members of Parliament and Trade Union leaders are perfectly aware of these things, yet not one of them says a word in criticism. They know quite well that

these priests stand for Imperialism and Jingoism, Property and Jobbery, and Polynesian superstitions, yet not one raises so much as a finger to rebuke. If the Labourites stiffened their backs and pressed for an explanation there would, indeed, be a sensation. It would be almost as exciting as the arrival of the nice, bright, clean American soldiers in the last months of the Great War. One muddy, grimy, London soldier called out, "Who told you blokes there was a war on?"

The Black Army dominates England. Every inch of the entire country is parcelled out for their benefit, and every rectory and vicarage contains a recruiting sergeant for Feudalism. Including curates, there are 20,000 of these men. Their upkeep, and the cost of their churches, amounts to millions of money. Church rates are levied, mining royalties imposed, rents collected, for this purpose. All this is done with Parliamentary sanction. But do not forget that what Parliament makes it can also unmake, and the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Church would release many millions of money for worthier purposes than the bolstering of ancient ignorance.

This is not a counsel of perfection. During my lifetime the Irish and the Welsh Churches have both been disestablished. What has been done can be repeated. Fifty years ago the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Church was one of the principal planks of the Radical platform. A motion for Secular Education was a familiar feature at Trade Union Congresses. The Old Guard of Radicalism has passed away, the Old Guard which died but did not surrender their principles. Is it too much to hope that their sturdy independence and honesty of principle may reappear among present-day Democrats?

The civilization of ancient Greece was vitiated by those priest-made laws under which Socrates was put to death. Our civilization is spoiled by the State support of Priestcraft. The average citizen's conscience is cribbed, cabined, and confined by these petticoated despots. He is told to avoid hot meat on a Friday, and to eat cold meat on Sunday. He must not read this, and he must read that. He is told that Royalty is a divine institution, and that priests are sacred persons. He is chained to caste and custom, trammelled by taboo and tradition.

MIMNERMUS.

A GREAT CHANGE COMES TO MANKIND.

A change was coming upon the world, a change from era to era. The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up; old things were passing away, and the faith and life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream.

Chivalry was dying; the abbey and the castle were soon together to crumble into ruins; and all the forms, desires, beliefs, convictions of the old world were passing away, never to return. A new continent had risen up beyond the western sea. The floor of heaven, inlaid with stars, had sunk back into an infinite abyss of immeasurable space; and the firm earth itself, unfixed from its foundations, was seen to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe. In the fabric of habit in which they had so laboriously built for themselves, mankind were to remain no longer.

And now it is all gone, like an unsubstantial pageant faded, and between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imagination can but feebly penetrate to them. Only among the ashes of our cathedrals, only as we gaze upon their silent figures sleeping on their tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they were alive; and perhaps in the sound of church bells, like the echo of a vanished world.—*J. A. Froude.*

The Great Illusion.

ONE great illusion—we may say, the greatest of all illusions—is the illusion of religion. A book dealing with this illusion, by Professor Sigmund Freud, the founder of Psycho-analysis, and one of the most profound thinkers of our time, has just been translated into English, under the title: *The Future of an Illusion*. (The Hogarth Press. 6s.)

In the first chapters, the cause, or origin, of the religious delusion is dealt with. Primitive man lived amid forces that seemed to mock at all human control. The earthquake buried him and his works, the floods submerged him. The storm which drives all before it, with its rolling thunder and flashing lightning, terrified him. The mysterious diseases, and finally the painful riddle of death for which there was no remedy, all these inspired him with fear. The blind, pitiless, inexorable forces of nature, forced upon him a feeling of weakness and helplessness in the presence of the unknown.

How did primitive man react to these terrors? How did he defend himself against the supremacy of nature, of fate that threatened him with destruction? "Man's seriously menaced self-esteem," says Freud, "craves for consolation; life and the universe must be rid of their terrors." He continues:—

With the first step, which is the humanization of nature, much is already won. Nothing can be made of impersonal forces and fates; they remain eternally remote. But if the elements have passions that rage like those in our own souls, if death itself is not something spontaneous, but the violent act of an evil Will, if everywhere in nature we have about us beings who resemble those of our own environment, then, indeed, we can breathe freely, we can feel at home in face of the supernatural, and we can deal psychically with our frantic anxiety. We are, perhaps, still defenceless, but no longer helplessly paralysed; we can at least react; perhaps, indeed, we are not even defenceless, we can have recourse to the same methods against these violent supermen of the beyond that we make use of in our own community; we can try to exorcize them, to appease them, to bribe them, and so rob them of part of their power by thus influencing them. Such a substitution of psychology for natural science provides not merely immediate relief, it also points the way to a further mastery of the situation.*

The child in its helplessness needs protection, a protection it finds in its father. When the child becomes a man he finds he still needs a protector in his helplessness against the unknown and inimical powers behind nature. So, just as he looked to his father for protection when he was a child, when he is a man he creates a Father-god to watch over and protect him and generally fill the place of the earthly father.

To the argument that "we ought to believe because our forefathers believed," Freud replies: "But these ancestors of ours were far more ignorant than we; they believed in things we could not possibly accept to-day; . . . they are deposited in writings that themselves bear every trace of being untrustworthy. They are full of contradictions, revisions, and interpolations; where they speak of actual authentic proofs they are themselves of doubtful authenticity." (p. 46.)

Of the proofs provided by the Spiritualists for the immortality of the soul. He observes:—

Unfortunately they have not succeeded in disproving the fact that the appearances and utterances of their spirits are merely the productions of their own mental activity. They have called up the

spirits of the greatest of men, of the most eminent thinkers, but all their utterances and all the information they have received from them have been so foolish and so desperately insignificant that one could find nothing else to believe in but the capacity of the spirits for adapting themselves to the circle of people that had evoked them. (p. 48.)

The answers to the riddles of the universe reveal themselves slowly, to many of them science can as yet give no answer; but scientific research is our only way to knowledge of reality. But the truth of religion cannot be founded upon the ignorance of science; for, says Freud:—

Ignorance is ignorance; no right to believe anything is derived from it. No reasonable man will behave so frivolously in other matters or rest content with such feeble grounds for his opinions or for the attitude he adopts; it is only in the highest and holiest things that he allows this. In reality, these are only attempts to delude oneself or other people into the belief that one still holds fast to religion when one has long cut oneself loose from it. Where questions of religion are concerned people are guilty of every possible kind of insincerity and intellectual misdemeanour. Philosophers stretch the meaning of words until they retain scarcely anything of their original sense; by calling "God" some vague abstraction which they have created for themselves, they pose as deists, as believers, before the world; they may even pride themselves on having attained a higher and purer idea of God, although their God is nothing but an insubstantial shadow, and no longer the mighty personality of religious doctrine. (pp. 56-57.)

On the other hand, it would be a senseless proceeding to try and do away with religion by force, and even if it could be done it would be cruel, because, as he sardonically remarks, religion is a narcotic, and "A man who has for decades taken a sleeping draught is naturally unable to sleep if he is deprived of it." (p. 84.) Therefore, continues Freud:—

I disagree with you when you go on to argue that man cannot in general do without the religious illusion, that without it he would not endure the troubles of life, the cruelty of reality. Certainly this is true of the man into whom you have instilled the sweet—or bitter-sweet—poison from childhood on. But what of the other, who has been brought up soberly? Perhaps he, not suffering from neurosis, will need no intoxicant to deaden it. True, man will then find himself in a difficult situation. He will have to confess his utter helplessness and his insignificant part in the working of the universe; he will have to confess that he is no longer the centre of creation, no longer the object of the tender care of a benevolent providence. He will be in the same position as the child who has left the home where he was so warm and comfortable. But, after all, is it not the destiny of childishness to be overcome? Man cannot remain a child for ever; he must venture at last into the hostile world. This may be called "education to reality"; need I tell you that it is the sole aim of my book to draw attention to the necessity for this advance?

Freud concludes this chapter with the couplet:—

Let us leave the heavens
To the angels and the sparrows.

It is a pity that more of our English scientists do not speak out their mind in this vigorous fashion. The believers are vociferous enough in parading their religion in public, but, with a few notable exceptions, the great majority, like Brer Rabbit, "lie low and say nuffin."
W. MANN.

To pray is to flatter oneself that one will change entire nature with words.—*Voltaire*.

* S. Freud: *The Future of an Illusion*. pp. 28-29.

On the Other Side.

(HELL AND PARADISE.)

By P. MONTCLAIR. (Translation by P. H. MEYER.)

AFTER a time, the duration of which I cannot remember, I recovered from my torpor. I felt that an invisible power was dragging me through space, at an ever increasing speed. I comprehended that I was dead, and that I, in all probability, was about to appear before my Judge. At this thought I felt an inquietude, which was to be excused. I then tried to remember the consolations which the Christian religion offers to sinners. But my memory could only repeat what the priests had told me during my infancy with regard to hell, and the almost impossible chance of escape from the eternal flames. And I felt strongly that these boasted-of consolations, instead of consoling, inspired terror and despair. The remark made by our Saviour (?): "Many are called, few are chosen," recurred to my mind with an almost irritating persistence. And then another remark, formulated by our mother the Church (our Mother?): "Outside the Apostolic, Roman Catholic Church, there is no salvation." And this to me who had not been a Christian for a long time.

"Pish," I said at last, "it is of no use to anticipate evil. Let us wait the events with a bold heart." And the invisible power always dragged me on. At last (was it after an hour, a day, a month?) I found myself in a long avenue, bordered on one side with darkness, and on the other side with a prodigiously high wall. At hazard I turned to the left and started. Soon I saw a gate, and when I approached it, I was cheered by the sound of laughter. Through the narrow gate issued a light cloud, full of the stale smell of Turkish tobacco. "This is a good sign," I thought, "People that laugh and smoke can be neither unhappy nor ill."

Emboldened by this reflection, I knocked. Immediately the gate was opened, and a man, with a green turban on his head, and armed with a formidable Turkish sword, appeared on the threshold, "What do you want?" "I beg your pardon, sir, that I disturbed you. But I do not know where I am, and must ask you for a little hospitality, till I have recovered my senses."

"Are you a Mohametan?"

"I? Not at all, but . . ."

But without waiting for the end of the sentence my interlocutor banged the gate before my face, and whispered: "Surely a Jesuit, who comes to spy upon us." "It is regrettable," said I to myself, "that my parents have not educated me in the Mohametan religion, for in this paradise it seems there is no ennui." And sadly enough I continued my road.

Ah! A second gate. But how silent. Could there be anybody here? Let us knock. And I knocked.

Slowly, slowly, the gate opened. A man, whose beard and hairs were quite shaven off, and who was dressed in an old vestment of yellowish-orange, appeared.

"May I enter?"

"Are you a Buddhist?"

"Alas no!"

"Did you ever have any desires while you were on earth?"

"Hm! I had many desires, but they were all lawful. Now I have but one, and that is to rest here before continuing my journey."

"To be admitted here, there ought not to be a single desire. The desire to enter here being a desire, you are not allowed to enter."

To say the truth, this refusal did not seem very severe, for judging by the doorkeeper, there must be in Nivana some foolish mirth. So I went on. After the end of a stiff hour's marching, I found myself before a third gate. I was just going to knock, when I saw written the name of Jehovah. Not being a son of Abraham, I judged it to be useless to stop, and therefore continued my way, only sorry that I did not meet on this interminable road a single mechanical means of locomotion.

Ah! A sound of harps. Hymns sung by soft voices.

"This is doubtless the Christian Paradise. Might one enter here? Or should one have to remain outside? I hate all hymns, both words and music. To listen eternally to ordered praises, arranged to well-known tunes, does not seem to me the height of happiness. At the same time I could not for ever keep going this route. I must make up my mind. I did! The door on which the knocker fell gave a dismal sound.

Soon Saint Peter popped his head through the half-opened door. I recognized him at once, having often seen his linaments on his images. Therefore, to make him believe that we were old acquaintances, I said to him familiarly: "Good-day, Peterkin. How are you? I desire to pass some time in your Paradise, old chap, to see if it will please me, before engaging myself for all eternity."

"Pardon, you are mistaken. It is we who decide whether you merit or not to be admitted among the Blessed. Have you made confession before you died, and have you received absolution?"

"No, for I died quite simply. I demanded one of my friends to read me a page of Marcus Aurelius. And he read: 'What is it that passes from infancy to youth, and grows and becomes old and finds itself a man; makes to grow the teeth, the beard, the white hairs, and all the works of nature, which comport every season of life? The action that breaks us up is of the same sort. A wise man therefore should not show contempt for death, nor repugnance, nor disdain, but should expect it as one of nature's functions. Whosoever feels frightened at an operation of Nature, shows himself but a weakling. It is for our good that Nature is forced to act as she does. All that fits you, O Universe, fits me. Nothing is for me premature nor untimely, if it be in season for you. Everything comes from you; everything returns to you.' These words of Aurelius were sufficient for me, Saint Peter, so I did not feel the least need to call in a priest."

"Then I cannot receive you. You have to go to hell."

During this dialogue a crowd of saints (both male and female), had drawn near to follow better what we were saying (one has so few attractions in Heaven).

The contagious smell which was given off by all this dirt, began to nauseate me, for the holier one is, the dirtier one becomes; and the dirtier one is, the holier one becomes. And those that were here were certainly some great and famous saints, judging by the smell. There was certainly some comfort for me in the thought that I need not pass eternity in the company of such bad-smelling saints.

Saint Peter had hardly finished speaking, when I felt the ground under my feet sinking, shaking softly, just as a lift does, when one reaches the ground floor. I descended a long time, till my descent stopped rather suddenly. I got out of the lift, and found myself in a very dark place, notwithstanding a red lantern, which the wind moved to and fro above a door. I drew nearer and read, written in large letters, the words: "Enter without knocking."

One seems very welcome here, I thought. After a slight hesitation, I turned the knob, pushed open the door, and entered. Whilst the door turned on its hinges, it moved a bell, and immediately a servant appeared, who, by his livery, reminded me of the servants one sees so often in England, in the houses of the rich.

"What do you want, sir?"

"To rest."

"You are welcome to do so, sir. Would you like to take something?"

"To take something?"

"I may state that if you are thirsty, which generally is so after a journey, you will be served in the hall on the left."

To tell the truth, I was thirsty, as I admitted to the servant, who very obligingly conducted me to the hall he had mentioned. There I perceived a great number of small tables, surrounded by crowds of consumers. Timidly I stopped on the threshold, till I perceived a vacant place, where I sat down.

Soon a waiter of unapproachable neatness came up to hear what I wanted.

"What do people generally drink at this time of the day?"

"Since a little while people take nearly all, at this time of the day, iced coffee."

"Very well."

"It seems as if you are only shortly arrived, here. Perhaps you would like to have a guide?"

"Yes, please. But you are really intelligent."

And soon, after a short interval, my iced coffee and my guide arrived. The latter, freshly shaven, was dressed in a very neat, blue uniform, with a collar and cuffs dazzlingly white. His nails were well trimmed. He inspired confidence at once, and soon we were conversing together.

"St. Peter has consigned me to Hell. Is this far from here?"

"But you are there already. Hell is here."

"Really? But I do not perceive any odour of sulphur, and the heat is quite bearable. One would think that we were having the first days of summer."

"During many years we have received a great number of learned men and health reformers of very great influence, and these gentlemen have perfected our establishment most strikingly. The ventilation, which during many centuries was very defective, is now perfect. This has been carried so far, that new arrivals, who come just from the fresh air, as you *e.g.*, do not even perceive the slightest smell of sulphur."

"As to the primitive furnace, the learned men have transferred this in a hot air installation with innumerable pipes that spread a universal heat of pleasant warmth through the halls, the rooms, the passages and the staircases. This temperature, which we raise in our hothouses, enables us to have admirable flowers and delicious fruit the whole year round. Then every bedroom has its toilet room, with hot and cold water for the bath. In short, the learned men have done wonders. Even Jehovah himself would not recognize his hell. Jesus Christ, who passed but three days here, some two thousand years ago, would be tempted to stay longer if he could come back, so pleasant is it here now."

"But where are the devils then? Do they no longer torment the damned souls?"

"We have also to thank the learned men that the devils are so civilized, and have left off tormenting, because they have comprehended that to cause suffering without intermission, nor mercy, to unhappy people, was a cruelty belonging to another age. Is it not much better to understand this, in order to render this eternity, that they have to pass together, more supportable? This is what the scholars have made plain to us, and which we are now, for some time, putting into practice. And we have found ourselves very well by it. Our former discords have been replaced by union; the ferocious hatred by brotherly love; violent words by the politeness of good comradeship."

"In speaking of devils, you use 'us.' Are you then one of them?"

"Certainly. All my comrades and myself were formerly devils. But as I have explained to you, science has converted us for the better, and we are now very honest people. Far from being the tormentors of our guests, we consider ourselves at all times as their friends and even as their servants."

(To be continued.)

Man turns to religion for support when he grows old and weary, when his physical and intellectual powers fail him, when he can no longer either enjoy or reason. So many Freethinkers, you say, have been converted on their death-bed. But, at any rate, do not boast of this! Such stories belong, at best, to pathology, and are very bad evidence for your case. After all, they only prove that it was impossible for you to convert those Freethinkers so long as they went about in the enjoyment of their healthy senses and in full possession of their reasoning faculty.—Heine.

The civilization of one age is the barbarism of the next.—Canon Donaldson.

Acid Drops.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle threatens political action in order to get the laws which threaten the prosecution of Spiritualists as fortune tellers repealed. He says that Spiritualists are strong enough in many constituencies to turn the scales, and he evidently knows enough of our members of Parliament to feel certain that their opinions will usually coincide with what they think to be the larger number of votes. We quite sympathize with Sir Arthur's desire to get these laws repealed, or amended. There is no greater reason for prosecuting Spiritualists for telling fortunes than there is for prosecuting evangelists and parsons for telling us collectively what our lot in the next world will be. The cure for this kind of thing is not prosecution, but a better intelligence.

The general notion is that these laws against fortune telling exist for the purpose of protecting fools against rogues. That is quite wrong. The fundamental reason for the existence of laws against fortune telling is to prevent an unauthorized form of superstition being practised. Those really responsible for these laws had, in all probability, quite as much belief in fortune telling and divination as did those who practised it. But it was not the kind of "occultism" established by law, and so it was condemned. And we very much question whether in this connexion it is possible to protect the fool against the rogue by punishing the rogue. The only certain cure is the elimination of the fool. Above all, the weakening of superstition, upon which these things really live. But do Spiritualists really desire that? We fancy that if they succeed in weakening superstition in general they will discover they have committed suicide to save themselves being slaughtered.

All the same, it is curious that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle should decide that the only thing to be done is to resort to political action. What is the matter with the ghosts? We are, so he says, surrounded by myriads of these, particularly the ghosts of those who were related to us. Now one may reasonably assume (if anything reasonable is in place where Spiritualism is concerned) that none of these spirits want to see Spiritualists prosecuted for carrying on their researches. That being so, they have only to "influence" the minds of a sufficient number of members of parliament—and there are enough of them born superstitionists to be very easily influenced—for them to repeal the Acts without further ado. But to come down to mere, material, political action! That is, indeed a confession of lamentable weakness on the part of the spiritual world.

In connexion with the three pious Conferences held recently at Jerusalem, Stockholm and Lausanne for promoting Church unity, continuation committee meetings have been held at Prague. The "Faith and Order" committee states its conviction that the most hopeful way to unity lies in the continued affirmation of the common Christian faith and in fidelity to the principles affirmed at the Lausanne Conference. The Committee concludes by sending its greetings to the Churches and its request for continued prayer for the healing of Christian divisions and for steadfastness in the faith of the Gospel and in love one toward another. As regards affirmation of "the common Christian faith," that no doubt is easy enough, provided the affirmation deals with lazy generalities. But the divisions among the Churches are caused by the many various interpretations of Holy Writ by different groups of Christians. So long as each group claims the right of individual interpretation the divisions will continue, and the kind of Church unity so eloquently extolled by the Conference representatives will remain merely a pious hope.

Asked why the Church has not condemned war, the Rev. H. C. Carter, in reply, recalls the fact that the Church of England has among its Articles one that asserts that it is lawful for Christian men to bear arms.

That, he says, is as authoritative an expression as one could get from the Church in a contrary direction. The reverend gentleman thinks that the Church has not condemned war because at present there are not enough Christians who are convinced that to make war, or to take part in it, is in all circumstances wrong. If the Church's condemnation of all war must be waited for until a majority of Christians come to this conclusion, we fear that condemnation will be a long time arriving. The Bible can, as in the past, still furnish bellicose Christians with ample justification for any war. Bible in hand, it is so very easy to call a war righteous.

Says a Wesleyan journal:—

There have been times in the history of the Church when the false antithesis between matter and spirit has been pushed so far as to lead men to prefer ignorance to knowledge and bodily dirt to cleanliness. In Moorish Spain a Christian could be recognized by his dirt and ignorance, a Muslim by his cleanliness, science, and philosophy. Such Christianity deserved to sink.

As a matter of fact, Christians preferred dirt because from the New Testament they had gathered the notion that indifference to bodily health and comfort engendered spiritual loftiness. Christians mortified the body for the good of the soul. They preferred ignorance because they were satisfied that the Bible contained all the knowledge essential to a Christian. These nasty and vicious notions, thoroughly abhorrent to pagan Greece or Rome, were entirely Christian. And the followers of Christ paid an appallingly heavy price for them in death and disease. When we count up the blessings of the Christian religion, let us not forget to put down love of dirt and ignorance.

The *Methodist Recorder* thinks that Wesleyan candidates for the ministry should be given a good education, and that the present three years should be extended to four. The reasons for this appear to be that there has been a vast development of general information and reading, and the general education of congregations has been enormously raised. Many of the young people have attended the best schools, and working men became intelligent readers who are keen to detect flaws in imperfect education. Therefore, if the would-be parsons are to win intellectual respect in the pulpit, they ought to attain a certain standard of education before starting to preach. This seems the gist of the *Recorder's* contentions. Apparently, in former years, before the general public became more intelligent (and more critical mentally), a smattering of education served the purpose of the parson; any old tale would do for his audience. But it won't do now!

Our contemporary is good enough to give a rough outline of what kind of education would-be parsons are expected to acquire in the three years. They are given a good knowledge of the Greek Testament, with the history of the whole Bible, its philosophy and psychology, an outline of the Church history, and a careful training in theology. This occupies the whole of their time. It doesn't appear to spare much time for thinking and for training the intellect. But it is what the Wesleyan colleges call "education." No doubt it serves. After all, the parson has only to teach the Christian religion.

A bunch of Lord's Dayers, calling itself a "Commission," has been investigating Continental ways of spending Sunday. It visited Belgium, Holland, France, Switzerland, and Italy, and it now declares that the Continental Sunday: (1) does injustice to multitudes of our fellowmen in depriving them of their Sunday rest; (2) with its immoderate pleasure-seeking, encourages a materialistic and pagan idea of life; (3) with its gambling, drinking, and other revelries, is a cause of moral feebleness and laxity; (4) with all its excitement, secularism and restlessness, is a violation of God's commandment to keep the Sabbath Day holy. The Lord's Dayers could have saved themselves the expense of this Paul Pry excursion. What they say now they said before they went. All that they have done is to look for things that

could confirm their pre-conceived bigoted notions. Still, what these godly persons were after, no doubt, was a few good "talking points" for cadging shillings from the pockets of their ignorant and equally bigoted supporters.

Dr. Cyril Norwood told the British Association that the existing system of dual control in schools was a stumbling block to progress and re-organization. All denominational schools, he suggested, should be transferred to the Local Education Authorities on condition that the denominations should be permitted to give religious instruction weekly in the schools to children whose parents prefer this to the religious instruction provided by the authorities. But he thought that denominational instruction should be given in the Sunday schools. For our part, we think that religious instruction should be given only in the Sunday schools, and not in the State schools at the rate-payers' expense. We think, too that it is nearly time that the teachers protested against being made to play the part of the parson's lackeys. Knowing that three-quarters of the parents are indifferent to religion, and assuming that teachers as average men and women are indifferent in like proportion, we should have thought that the majority of teachers would before this have voiced their objection to teaching a subject to which they are indifferent, and which has not the remotest resemblance to education. That they have not done so raises the suspicion that they are too timid to state their real opinion in the matter. As regards the Churches, we wonder what the parsons imagine they gain by having religion taught in the State schools by teachers, the majority of whom are indifferent to religion. Obviously, all that such instruction can do is to impart a smattering of Biblical knowledge and facts. From the parson's point of view this is worse than useless. The average religious instruction in schools wouldn't convert a tom-cat.

A World Youth Peace Congress recently assembled in Holland. The Congress had a Religious and Moral Commission, which has issued a report. One thing this Commission emphasized was:—

That the Church should make clear, both in word and deed, its position in regard to war.

We thought the Church's position was fairly obvious. It has for centuries blessed war vessels and battle-flags, acted as unofficial recruiting agent, urged on the combatants, and prayed for victory. Clearly, then, the Church is not against war in practice, though it may air pacifist theories when no war is in progress. What this pious Commission really wants to know is, what is the Church's future position in regard to war? No doubt the Church is prepared, at long last, to take up a new position. Public opinion outside the Church has declared against war. So the Church will fall into line. Public opinion, you see, must be led. And the Church must carry on its tradition of leading public opinion—from the rear.

The Rev. Dr. Maldwyn Hughes has been visiting native villages in South Africa. Of one village he says that Methodism has been practically the established church there. But he regrets to hear that the Roman Catholics are about to enter the village. What a shame! Now the poor natives will discover that the infallible Word of God has more than one interpretation of it, and that the one true interpretation has just arrived. What this village wants next is a few more denominations to plant themselves there—each with the one and only interpretation of Holy Writ. That would impress the natives with the simplicity of the Christian religion.

Dr. Hughes says that the Methodist Church is carrying on magnificent work in education among the natives. The Church supplies the plant, and the Government pays the teachers. The natives are heavily taxed, he says, yet they have to pay school fees. Whereas the white population gets free elementary education. Apparently there is not much charity going around when the natives want some kind of education. But from missionary

tracts, one might fancy that the natives were being "educated" by the charitable of the English churches.

Holiday-keeping in Belgium, the Rev. George McNeal was thrilled at hearing the Wesleyan President broadcast an address the other Sunday. Moved to the very depths of his soul, the reverend gent. ejaculates:—

What a missionary agency the wireless may be! . . . The time is coming when the whole world will be able to hear the voice of one man speaking in any part of it. Surely this should mean, if we can capture these opportunities for Jesus Christ, a marvellous chance for his Gospel.

Quite so. But surely there is no "if" about the capturing part of the reverend gent.'s vision. In England, at anyrate, the Churches have nobbled the B.B.C., so that only the voice of the priest can be wirelessed on the subject of religion. The "marvellous chance" is actually within the parsons' grasp. But we hope the time is coming when, in the interest of fair play, the whole world will be able to hear the voices of various men speaking on any and every debatable subject, and particularly on religion. But no doubt our vision will not appeal to the Rev. George McNeal and his brothers in God.

Bishop Barnes thinks that if the Church of England does not reach "Unity" within thirty years there will be a sharp conflict between rational and magical religion. Rational religion! It sounds like reasonable foolishness. Really, "there ain't no sich thing."

The private opinion of some of the editors of newspapers as to the quality of the intelligence of their religious readers would be interesting reading, although it might be couched in language too lurid for publication. For instance, there was a big fire in South London the other day, close to Spurgeon's Tabernacle. So one of our London evening papers says that while the fire raged people knelt "and prayed that this famous London place of worship might be saved from destruction. Their prayer was answered." It is a pity they did not pray for the preservation of the other places. But we can imagine the writer saying to one of his co-workers, "That'll please the blank, blank fools." And what a contempt a writer must have for the intelligence of his readers to pen such stuff.

A telegram from Rome reports that as some pilgrims were on their way to the shrine of Our Lady of Oviato, singing hymns, a landslide overwhelmed them. Four women were killed and many injured. Perhaps the Lord was busy at that time putting out the fire in South London, or perhaps he did not like the hymns that were being sung, and lost his temper. One never can tell.

How the nose of wax, called Christianity, of any sort, could be twisted to suit the times, was demonstrated for all during the last war. Chaplain's sermons to the troops were several degrees below the zero mark of tribal religions, and their bestiality was on a level with the choice passages about slaughter in the Bible. Apparently churches, like newspapers, trust to the short memories of the people, and an announcement headed "Swords into Plowshares," in the *Daily News* for August 28. At St. Martin-in-the-Fields a thanksgiving service was held for the signing of the anti-war Pact. At Westminster Cathedral a solemn High Mass of thanksgiving was sung for the same object. We congratulate all concerned for "getting this over," and the events in themselves will go to prove that at present the nation is in no immediate danger of a rash of rationalism or a burst of atheism. The members of Huntingdon Town Council drank port wine to the success of the Peace Pact, and this is something like the action of men—not priests.

The attitude of the *Freethinker* on war trophies—tanks, guns, etc., is well known, and it has been defined years ago. It is therefore a pleasure to accuse the *Daily Express* of only being years behind intelligent

thought, and, as for the future, we must hope for the best. In a leading article, the *Daily Express*, in the following statement, copies almost word for word from this paper:—

Moreover, by their senseless parade they keep the war idea alive at a time when all sane peoples are striving desperately to ensue peace. War, like vice, is not a thing to be publicly displayed, least of all on this, its purely material, side.

Mr. S. Paul Tabb, a reviewer for the *Daily News*, must have been reading the newspapers. In one of his notices, it is stated: "Nearly all observers of modern life are agreed that there is abroad a spirit of dissatisfaction which is anxious for religion." We agree with this if "nearly all observers of modern life" are archbishops, bishops, priests, parsons, and everyone interested in commercial religion are meant.

If Miss Sybil Thorndike has any spare time she might, before making a bold declaration in favour of a bond between religion and the drama, read one or two passages in Lecky's *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*. This historian relates how the sacraments were denied to actors who refused to repudiate their profession, and in France they received the burial of a dog. Some wicked monster named Voltaire celebrated the death of a beautiful actress, Le Couvreur, in an Ode; she was buried in a field for cattle on the banks of the Seine. And this same wicked man, Voltaire, removed the stigma that rested on actors. There is more of this information if the gifted interpreter of St. Joan cares to study how one set of actors regarded another set of actors, but the late Sarah Bernhardt knew all this in her retort to Dr. Parker, when she told him, during a difference of opinion, that two of the same profession should not quarrel.

It is suggested that the League of Nations should take up and deal with the question of noise. In the same broad and generous outlook as that of the Irish politician in the House of Commons, who drew attention to the drainage of an obscure village in Ireland, the League of Nations is invited to come and listen to the bell in a Catholic Church on West Hill, Wandsworth. It is almost the biggest ever, and its booming to remind people to come to church is some rough and ready theological proof of the inborn religious craving of which we hear so much. The next move is with the League of Nations.

An admirer of the Presbyterian preacher, Dr. R. C. Gillic, says of his preaching: "Evidently the preacher is not ignorant of the doubts and difficulties, but he does not air them in the pulpit. The note of certainty is dominant." In other words, the preacher knows his trade. The job of the *Freethinker* and of Freethinkers is to supply the preacher's followers with that which the preacher discreetly omits to mention.

A pious weekly says greyhound racing is merely an excuse for a gamble; it is an "unholy business." The holy business carried on by the parsons is a gamble for its patrons. They tip their coppers or silver in the collection bag in the hope of a safe conduct to Heaven. But they stand the chance of winning their money back. They put their money on a "Great Perhaps."

OUR WEEKLY HINT.

There is a contagion of ideas as well as a contagion of disease. Test it by trying to inoculate a few of your friends with Freethinking ideas.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THOSE SUBSCRIBERS WHO RECEIVE THEIR COPY OF THE "FREETHINKER" IN A GREEN WRAPPER WILL PLEASE TAKE IT THAT A RENEWAL OF THEIR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE. THEY WILL ALSO OBLIGE, IF THEY DO NOT WANT US TO CONTINUE SENDING THE PAPER, BY NOTIFYING US TO THAT EFFECT.

W. J. HEWER.—Thanks. It is a real help to introduce the *Freethinker* to those who do not know of its existence or its quality. Your plan is certain to attract notice.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—As you say, very stupid, but it goes into our collection of religious stupidities. We are reminded that Montaigne discussed the belief of miracles under the heading of "Cripples."

B. W. FLINT.—Glad to know that the Bible in School gang have again been defeated—thanks, we imagine, to the wideawakeness of Freethinkers. But don't pride yourself on having a monopoly of the "Wayside Pulpit" inscriptions. Religious idiocy is universal, and we have the same kind of thing in this country.

R. V. DODD.—Very pleased to get your excellent letter, and to know that our writings have been of help to you. You will permit us to congratulate you on the letter as a mere piece of writing. It shows a felicity of expression that is far from common.

F.—Please send it on. It would, of course, be marked as a reprint.

R. ELCOR.—Justice has never been done in Christian countries to the influence of Mohammedan science and philosophy on Western civilization. It would probably have shown up the barbarism of contemporary Christian thought too much.

W.P.B.—In answering queries we have to keep an eye on the length replies would run to, and also their general interest. (1) Certainly a passage from Omar, or anyone else, would, other things equal, be suitable for this paper. (2) We have readers in the Isle of Man, and a distribution of copies of this paper would be bound to do good. (3) We do not supply all newsagents direct, and so cannot say what is the state of sales in any particular area. (4) The copyright of *Brimstone Ballads* is the property of the G. W. Poote Company.

H. BAYLISS.—Thanks for copy of letter; it is certainly interesting.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for congratulations. We hope we have many years of work before us. At least we feel as though we have, and that counts for a deal.

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

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

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

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

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.

A debate has been arranged between the Rev. J. Howard (of Liverpool) and Mr. Cohen. The subject for discussion is, "Has Christianity Hindered Progress?" and will take place in Pembroke Chapel, on Wednesday, October 10. The price of admission will be 1s., and

tickets can be obtained from the Secretary of the local Branch, Mr. A. Jackson, 7 Kirk Street, Bootle, Lancs.

Mr. George Whitehead commences a week's open air "Mission" at Plymouth, ranging from September 22 to September 28. We trust that all local friends will give their hearty support to these meetings. The Plymouth Branch has mapped out an ambitious programme for the winter, and these meetings might be taken as a starting point.

Mr. F. P. Corrigan will be lecturing in the Darlington district, under the auspices of the N.S.S., from September 23 to 29. Most of the time he will be speaking in Darlington and Chester-le-Street. Some very good work has already been done in the district, and Mr. Corrigan's campaign should arouse fresh interest in the work.

Messrs. Watts & Co., have added two new volumes to their *Forum* series; each, consisting of about 60 pages, and bound in cloth, gives excellent value at 1s. per vol. The first contains the recent Presidential Address of Sir William Bragg before the British Association, along with two or three other short papers. They are (with the exception of one passage, criticized in last week's "Acid Drops") good, journeyman kind of work, but somehow lack the poetic, the imaginative quality necessary to make them important contributions to science. His evidence of the *practical* would have delighted an unscientific mind such as that of the late W. E. Gladstone. He proves what should hardly need proving, how important is the application of science to handicrafts, how well it has given, and can give, to the development of our industrial life, a much desired and a much needed help.

The second of the two volumes is by Sir Arthur Keith. This contains the Ludwig Mond address on "Darwinism," with two supplementary essays replying to criticisms. Naturally, the tone of the book is controversial, but it is good controversy, and one's chief reflection is regret that so much that is scientifically obvious, and which must have been well known to every scientist for many years, should strike so many readers as startling. But the ignorance of the average man on matters scientific is great, and the ignorance of many scientific men on the more philosophic aspects of science is great also. Many of them appear to be quite unaware of the nature of the tools they use daily, and thus are apt to challenge conclusions that should be accepted as almost axiomatic in character.

If it were otherwise, we should not find Sir Arthur Keith defending himself against the criticism that his opinions are anti-religious. There are still large numbers of people who appear to think that quite a valid objection to anything. And this is based, not upon the evidence that religion is true, but that it is wrong to show that it is false. The large number of so-called educated men and women who are still in this mumbo-jumbo condition of mental development is staggering. To these Sir Arthur Keith well replies:—

I am accused of doing grievous injury to thousands who have found safe anchorage in the safe haven of Faith. What should we say of the mariner who, having found that a dangerous coast was wrongly charted, held his peace? Men like myself are engaged in charting the seas through which the ship of humanity sails; should we be silent when we find acts which run counter to cherished beliefs? Silence in such a case is cowardice.

Unfortunately there are large numbers of men who are guilty of such cowardice, and who are afraid to say what they know to be true as to the bearing of acquired knowledge on inherited beliefs.

There is only one word of criticism we have to make on Sir Arthur Keith's reply to his critics. A passage such as the following might certainly have been omitted:—

My friend, Sir Oliver Lodge, and I are of a like mind concerning Life after Death: we both believe in immortality. . . . For me, life is a web and is immortal.

In strict truth the two men are not of like mind at all on this subject. Sir Oliver advocates the primitive conception of a double animating the body during life and leaving it at death. Sir Arthur does not believe in immortality, and the phrase "life is a web and is immortal," only means to him that life will persist for milleniums, "long enough to be called immortal," and that "we survive, if we survive at all, only in the lives of our children and their descendants." Sir Arthur and Sir Oliver are using the same terms for two quite different things—or rather Sir Oliver uses the word in its proper sense, and Sir Arthur says he agrees with him, and does so by using the word in a quite different sense. The plain truth is that Sir Arthur Keith does not believe in immortality at all. Neither, we suspect, does he believe in a God. And we should like to see Sir Arthur set other scientific men an example in straightforward speech by saying as much in quite plain and unmistakable language. Men in humbler positions are saying these things boldly. They have said it for many years, and by this time have made it fairly safe for men well placed in science or literature to speak out with little danger. We suggest it is time they showed their appreciation of what has been done for them by speaking out. Otherwise they run the risk of being charged with the offence of issuing charts which they know to be false and misleading.

On September 25, the Pioneer Press will publish a booklet on *Buddha, the Atheist*, by "Upasaka." The work is a challenging one, and we think enough of it to advise every reader of this paper to secure a copy and to recommend it to their friends. Ignorance of Buddhism is so great that it will probably come as a surprise to a great many to learn that genuine Buddhism, as it was taught by Buddha, and as it is held by the more philosophic Buddhist, is essentially an Atheistic system. The work is issued by the Secular Society, Limited, it is handsomely produced and is sold at 1/-; by post, one penny extra.

It is very interesting to know that the B.B.C., which for so long kept up the hypocritical and obviously false pretence that it was neutral in religious matters, and only broadcast stupid sermons and wishy-washy Christian services because so many of their subscribers asked for it, has now confessed to a correspondent that "the B.B.C. definitely ranges itself on the side of the Christian faith." That is important. We know now where we are, and we may say that we have every reason for stating that this championing of the Christian faith is not a matter of conviction at all, but is purely a matter of business. If the protest of Freethinkers all over the country has had no other effect, it has at least made the B.B.C. come into the open with, not a confession of honest faith, but a confession that it intends to take the side that for the moment pays it the best.

We hope this confession will be enough to prove to every Freethinker that it is useless expecting fair play for Freethought until those who believe in it are in a position to demand it. Fairness, Justice, and Christianity are quite incompatible terms. We must go on making Freethinkers—not non-Christians who are content to keep their opinions to themselves, or to disguise their Freethought under some term agreeable to Christians, but Freethinkers who are proud of their Freethought and mean to make others respect it also. The need of to-day is not mere liberal opinion, but an opinion with some moral courage at the back of it.

Another attempt has been made in the House of Representatives in New Zealand to get Bible teaching re-established in the schools. The Bill shared the fate of last year's measure, and was rejected, but by a very narrow majority. The persistency of the Bible teaching section to get the existing law repealed is worthy of a better and juster cause, and it is only due to the watchfulness of another section, that these attempts have not been crowned with success. It is always true that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

A Small Boy Convinced of Sin.

I was about eleven years of age when my father told me that it was time I gave my heart to God. To the long family prayer was now added a petition that the youngest "now before Thee" might be "plucked as a brand from the burning."

I had no wish to be "converted," at least, not yet. Of course I knew that I should have to come to it, sooner or later, but the prospect was far from alluring. For one thing, I knew that I should lose the comradeship of the boys at my day school, not one of whom appeared to be aware that he had an immortal soul, and was in danger of Hell. I had been carefully nurtured in this ghastly creed, and firmly believed it all, but I wanted so much to have a little more "fun" before entering what appeared as a gloomy prison house.

I knew these thoughts were of the Devil. I knew that after my conversion I should see, as my father saw, that the world is a "vale of tears." My life thenceforth would be a pilgrimage along a thorny road, but its tribulations would appear as "less than nothing and vanity," in comparison with the glory awaiting me after I crossed the river of Death.

But the spirit of childhood held me. The blue sky, the hills, the singing birds, all seemed to call to me. I wanted to remain young. The sparkle of sunlight on the river that ran near our home appeared to be so real, so much more attractive than the gloomy banks of "Jordan"; even with the "sweet fields beyond," of which my father often spoke.

But the "prayer of the righteous man" prevailed, according to the Promise, and one fateful Sunday night, I was "saved."

It was at the prayer-meeting held in a little underground schoolroom. Above, in the Chapel, I had been impressed by a fiery appeal to "flee from the wrath to come." The terrible consequences which might follow from procrastination had been emphasized.

"'Too late,' 'Too late,' would be the cry,
Jesus of Nazareth has passed by."

Earnestly prayed the saints, in quick succession, and the burden of their prayers was that "the arrow of conviction" might enter the heart of any unsaved sinner there present.

It dawned upon me that probably I was the only unconverted person in the assembly, and that they must be praying for me. The thought made me hot and uncomfortable.

A hand was gently laid on my shoulder and a kindly voice whispered, "Wouldn't you like to give your heart to the Lord Jesus?" I murmured, "Yes." A loud "Hallelujah" rang through the room, followed by a prayer of thanksgiving that another soul had been led to seek salvation. I remember there followed a conversation, something as follows: "You know that you are a sinner?" "Yes." "Do you believe that Jesus died to save you?" "Yes." "Will you accept Him as your Saviour?" "Yes." "Then"—with emphasis—"you *are* saved, if you believe it. Do you believe it?" A tearful and bewildered "Yes" almost drowned in the shouts of "Glory be to God," and "Hallelujah," from the saints.

They came around me after the meeting, expressing their delight that, at such an early age, I had made the great decision. I felt very important. Walking home with my father I had almost a sense of equality. Was I not now *one of them*?

A human happy boy died that night—in his place lived, for some years, an unnatural and obnoxious little prig, a nuisance to his schoolmates and associates in "the world," except in so far as his other-worldly behaviour afforded them some amusement.

Dickens has well portrayed some of the sorrows of childhood, the cruelties inflicted by such as Murdstone, Fagin, and Squeers. I would that, in like manner, I could depict the horrors which follow when that accursed creed is deeply imbibed by a shy and a sensitive child.

Youth is consistent. Believing fully in the terrors of my religion, I took the matter seriously, as indeed it

should be taken, if true. The indifference exhibited by many professing Christians to the fate awaiting the bulk of mankind, and even some of their own friends, filled me with wonder. I did my best to break with all things "worldly." One incident stands out clearly in my memory: I had been reading (of course secretly, from fear of my father) a tale of adventure called *Frank Fairleigh*, and was intensely interested. I knew that I must read no more, and destroyed the book, tearing it up, page by page.

My unnatural and solemn manner aroused rough witticisms from my schoolmates, to me this was "persecution for righteousness sake," and I consoled myself with the Beatitude. And so I became, more and more, isolated from my fellows, self-centred, introspective. At times I had an exalted sense of my importance in the Universe—God was my Personal Friend—but alas, there were times of fearful depression and loneliness, times when I longed to die. It is a fact that as a child I have sobbed upon my knees, and prayed for death—to be with Christ in that "better land," where there would be no loneliness, no misunderstanding, where God would "wipe away all tears."

If, to-day, you visited that Methodist Chapel, you would hear less about "hell-fire." There are doubtless social activities in existence which would have scandalized the saints of a generation ago—whist-drives, and the like. There may be a scouts' organization.

Thanks mainly to the work of militant Freethinkers, religious people are becoming less and less "religious"; the churches approximate to social institutions, the sermons to moral platitudes in theological setting.

A friend says, "Why then write of these conditions of your boyhood, is it not a case of 'flogging a dead horse?'"

I do so for three reasons. The first is to point out the great debt which happy childhood owes to the spread of Freethought. Mine was an experience which, in a lesser degree, many have shared. We press back into the subconscious mind unpleasant memories of childhood, but they remain—and this brings me to my second point: I refer to them because, unconsciously, these childish experiences colour our adult thinking. Long after we have discarded, intellectually, the old dogmas they hold cloudy dominion over us. Madame de Stael said, "I do not believe in ghosts, but I am afraid of them."

We are afraid to be frankly pagan in our outlook or in our actions (I use the word, of course, in the modern sense). We still seek some "ghostly" explanation of life, and wander into the mazes of Spiritualism or Theosophy. We are afraid to be too happy, to say with old Khayyam:—

"Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday,
Why fret about them if To-day be sweet?"

And there is a third reason. I do not agree with my friend that the horse is *dead*. These doctrines are still taught, with more or less sincerity, while in many a little Bethel, they are *believed*. I wonder how many boys and girls in "merry England" are to-day being tortured as I was? I would that I could reach them all, and send them out to play. A.H.M.

The Final Loneliness.

If God be dead, and Man be left alone,
And no immortal golden towers be fair,
And nothing sweeter than earth's summer air
Can ever by our yearning hearts be known;
If every altar now be overthrown,
And the last mistiest hill-tops searched and bare
Of Deity—if Man's most urgent prayer
Is just a seed-tuft tossed about and blown—
If this be so, yet let the lonely deep
Of awful blue interminable sky
Thrill to Man's kingly unbefriended cry;
Let man the secret of his own heart keep
Sacred as ever—let his lone soul be
Strong like the lone winds and the lonelier sea.

GEORGE BARLOW.

American Notes.

SERMONS ON THE CARD.

A few brief, bright and brotherly announcements from American papers:—

Rev. Dr. Horace Cushing, at Inglewood, preaches on the subject: "Playing Golf With God."

Rev. Dr. Harper A. Hangstone, at Evanston Baptist Church, preaches from the text: "Every Moving Thing."

Rev. A. A. Hebert, at Baton Rouge, preaches a series of sermons on: "A Chicken With Four Legs."

Rev. Professor Dawborn, preaches at Christ Church, Walden, from the text: "Search Me! Oh God!"

But I might as well copy out the complete list of Sermons For Next Sunday—they are all equally comic in the truest sense of the word. The *Chicago Daily News*, which prints these facetious titles, refused, one week, to accept Percy Ward's perfectly proper announcement of his lecture, on the ground that it might offend Catholics! At least half the Protestant Church announcements could be rejected on similar grounds, if indeed, it is not a far worse offence to offer opposition *within* the church than to stand aloof from *all* churches.

THE MAN NOBODY USED TO KNOW.

Bruce Barton set the fashion. And now we begin really to know the Man Everybody Thought They Knew.

Lieut. Com. M. M. Witherspoon, Navy chaplain, believes the U.S. Marines are following in the footsteps of the Galilean. In a sermon on Sunday night, he said: "The men of the Marine Corps walk in the way first laid out by Christ. They are two-fisted fighting men, as He was. They have courage, as He had. They serve their fellowmen, as He did."

Rev. John Bernard Kelly, of the Catholic Writers' Guild, said, "Christ was the author and founder of big business . . . God was the wealthiest big business man of all time.—*New York Times*."

The Editor of the *Pennsylvania Weekly Advertiser*, says: "Jesus was the greatest caterer of all time. He served 5,000 people from five loaves and the catering went big. When Christ went into the teaching business his teaching went over big. His Golden Rule was the first slogan ever adopted in any business."

NO MORE JAZZ IN OUR HYMNS.

"Sunday school in the past has seen too much frivolity," is the unexpected verdict of the Annual Convention of Church and Sunday School Music Publishers Association. I can assure the A.C.O.C. & S.S.M.P.A. that all the Sunday schools I have known have been free from frivolity. And yet . . . I remember a wild-eyed curate pouncing down on our innocent Sunday school to present a wedding gift to the Superintendent. He announced "We will now sing that appropriate hymn, 'Here we Suffer Grief and Pain.'" I wonder if that was one of the frivolous hymns, with its rather jazzy chorus, "O that will be joyful, joyful, joyful." Jazz is to cease. The A.C.O.C. & S.S.M.P.A., has decided to take the "harm" out of "harmony." "Jollity (my God! jollity!!!) is to give place to that peace which the world cannot give." There is some consolation in the fact that the pious have no sense of humour: and accordingly, the A.C.O.C. & S.S.M.P.A. appropriately ends its Report with the wholly admirable text: "The Lord is in His Temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." Why on earth didn't they think of this solution centuries ago? "Shut Up" is the plain English of it!

STATISTICS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

The figures just made public by the Washington Census Officials show that there are 18½ million Catholics in the United States. There may be as many Protestants! Perhaps there are forty million people, including babies in arms, who can be counted (some of them twice or thrice) as having some kind of "nexus" with some kind of a church. These figures are certainly ultra-favourable to the churches through whose "aid" they were obtained. This leaves eighty millions who are decidedly non-Christians, if not Freethinkers. It would seem that the various Secular Societies have more

right to consider themselves representative of the citizens' religion than have the churches.

What, however, the Secularists do not yet possess is the enormous capital invested in these churches. Some day the Russian and Mexican examples will be followed in other countries. When the American churches have to pay the arrears of the taxes they have hitherto dodged, their capital values will shrink very materially.

Mr. Chapman Cohen's exposure of Salvation Army "charities," raises a different, but a most important financial question. All these churches distribute doles of various kinds in various ways. A recent calculation of the journal called *Current History*, estimates that in the City of New York there are over 1,200 agencies distributing doles, and mostly overlapping one another, and all independent of State or citizen control. These churches and so-called "Social Welfare and Uplift" organizations disburse £20,000,000 a year in one city alone, irrespective of the regular official citizen-controlled agencies payments and institutions. These figures do not include hospitals and similar hygienic media.

Doles of any kind have lately been criticized pretty freely, but State-doles whatever their faults, are publicly administered, and understood. Any conditions insisted upon to protect the taxpayer, and to save the recipient from needless degradation can be put into practice. The doles themselves can be conditioned or stopped by legislation.

In regard to the enormous "expenditures" of the churches, the first fact to bear in mind is that a vast proportion of it is necessarily (and generally extravagantly) diverted into the pockets of collectors, advertisers and administrators. What is left is used, often flagrantly, for denominational and proselytizing purposes. It is as much a bribe to create liars and "converts," as the food which has made a few poor Chinese into "rice-Christians."

A CONUNDRUM FROM THE PULPIT.

Points of view differ. I imagine that the vicar of a wealthy parish, and the minister of a rich congregation, are contented with the rule that makes churches the "flock" they regularly fleece. But there are "missionaries," "revivalists," and others, who have no regular "living": their attitude is not quite the same as that of the owner of the "living." Rev. S. J. Duncan Clark must be one of the "irregulars." And he has set the others a very cross-word puzzle in the pages of the *Chicago Post*. He has the tenacity to ask:—

"If Antioch had persuaded Paul to settle down and be its pastor: If Jerusalem had offered Jesus a fat living and He had accepted it: Where should we be today? What would have become of the rest of the world?"

The moral seems to be a root and branch condemnation of all regular parsons and ministers everywhere. It suggests also similar conundrums. Suppose Christ had been well paid for writing rubbish in the *Nazareth News*! If Jehovah had been made Archbishop of Canaan! And still better, suppose the Holy Ghost had inspired the Bible to tell Christians to talk common sense occasionally!

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

THE OLDEST SCIENCE.

A dispute arose between a group of University men as to which science was the oldest. A representative of the law declared that it was jurisprudence, for this science must have been known in paradise, seeing that Adam and Eve were evicted therefrom. "Why," said a graduate of medicine, "medicine is certainly of older date. Just think of the operation that Adam had to submit to in order that a rib should be obtained for Eve!" "No, no, gentlemen," retorted an electro-technician, "for before anything was created God said, 'Let there be light!'" Then came the theologian, who said, "I do not want to appear presumptuous, but I think that precedence belongs to theology, for before it was light it was—dark!"

An Atheist at Eighteen.

BROUGHT up a Roman Catholic—taught to believe that the people around me, poor benighted Protestants, were only to be pitied, I had doubts, or rather uneasy stirrings of reason, at an early age. My first passage-at-arms was with a priest at the Sunday school—a man I rather liked.

He was explaining that a priest's person is sacred, and that even if a priest struck a man for any reason, it would be sacrilege to hit back, and I, aged thirteen, argued that if a priest struck a man for an insufficient reason, or for no reason at all, such man had every right to retaliate!

That upset the school for that afternoon!

I think this priest kept an eye on me after this, for under his coaching I made good progress in religious studies, gaining two certificates.

One day, while reading the extracts from the Gospels that form part of the service of the Mass, the first tremor of the cataclysm that was to wreck my religious belief, occurred. There, in front of my eyes, were the words: "Amen, amen, I say unto you that this generation shall not pass away till these things be done!" Generation? Why that was written nearly 2,000 years ago—600 generations!

The priest kindly explained that when Christ said that He did not mean a generation, he meant something else—the priest could not say exactly what. "But you must not question these things, my son!"

Matters rested for a time, until one afternoon I happened to stray into a Christian Evidence meeting on Clapham Common. A Freethinker was disputing with the lecturer, and the hour spent there sent me into the libraries for such books as *Man's Place in the Universe*, Darwin's works, etc. Till that time I had never heard of evolution or of the story that geology tells, and now the creation of the world in six days began to worry me a bit. The priest's explanation of this was about as clear as in the first case, but he added that I had sinned in even listening to such heretics.

As time went on most of my old beliefs went overboard. Among the first to go were the better part of the Old Testament, the infallibility of the Pope, the inspiration of Holy Mother Church, and the belief in the eternal punishment of the heathen.

I still retained my belief in God, although He rather differed from my childish conception of a fierce old gentleman, who could nevertheless be placated and wheedled by promises and prayers.

When I was eighteen I discovered at home a book entitled *God and My Neighbour*. After eyeing it dubiously for some time, I read it at one sitting. That book did for me what the Bible is claimed to do at religious meetings. I felt free—free of the bogeys and fears that had always been with me—and life and the world were mine!

Whatever Robert Blatchford may think or say now, I am grateful to him for that book. It took me off my knees and stood me on my feet.

From *God and My Neighbour to The Age of Reason*, *The Golden Bough* and the *Freethinker* was but a step—a step that seemed to take me worlds away from and above priests and their hocus.

I have since come to the conclusion that the Golden Rule is Thomas Paine's wonderful lines:—

"The world is my country,
Mankind my brethren,
To do good my religion."

That is my religion now!

MICHAEL BLAKE.

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living, sound and hale,
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave care owre side!
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak' the tide.—Burns.

He that sits down a Philosopher, rises up an Atheist.
Quarles.

Bee in the Bonnet Conversations.

As a matter of fact they were not conversations, as the Man with the Bee in his Bonnet did all the talking. My portion of the conversations was limited to "Ahs," "Ohs," "indeeds" and occasional remarks which he either did not hear or chose to ignore.

When I annoyed him, he would peer at me through his glasses, remove them, peer at me without them, replace them on his nose and peer at me through them. When I annoyed him extremely he would waggle his glasses at me before replacing them.

I.

"THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PAIN."

I said, "Oh dear, my poor feet are so tired and sore!" He said, "It's just like a woman to wear small tight shoes, that pinch her toes and otherwise cripple her."

"But," I protested, "my shoes are not too small; I walked ten squares to save ten cents and my poor feet are aching."

"There is no such thing as pain."

"But, my good man, I'm feeling it."

"That's where you are wrong, you can't feel what isn't."

"But this pain is."

"No it isn't, you only think it is."

"Well that's just as bad, so far as I'm concerned."

"Of course it is, because thinking about a thing makes it real."

"Then my pain is real."

"It's real to you, because you think it is. What you've got to realize is, that you are really beautiful, pure, and good . . ."

"I am, I am, but most people don't appreciate me."

". . . and you've got to see yourself perfect as you really are."

"Ah."

"Now, the other day I upset some hot water—in fact it was nearly boiling—over my little finger, and my wife insisted upon putting oil on it. I said to her, 'My dear, you are setting about the healing of this finger in altogether the wrong spirit.' I went and sat down and read *Science and Health* to the finger, and I rang up a friend and asked her to give it absent treatment. Well, by the next morning it was healed, that is to say, practically healed."

"Wonderful!"

"Oh, it's quite easy to do a thing like that, you have only to see a wound perfectly healed, and it is so."

"If a man who had lost an arm could see himself whole, would the arm grow again?"

"Of course he could grow himself an arm, if he could."

"I agree, he could if he could."

"What I mean is, he could if he knew how."

"Yes, I suppose he could under those circumstances."

The Man with the Bee in his Bonnet waggled his glasses at me. "I think," he said, replacing them on his nose, "that your mother is looking for you, and that I had better return you to her." We walked towards her in silence; as we neared her he added: "The trouble with you is that you approach the matter from a totally wrong point of view, you try to see with the intellect what can only be known by the spirit." And, having got the last word, he beat a hasty retreat.

II.

"MRS. EDDY."

THE next time I met the Man with the Bee in his Bonnet I said, "I had a cold the other day, and I cured myself by your method. I said to myself, 'my mind is superior to my body, and I am going to make my body obey, I will just not have a cold, and my body can put that into its pipe and smoke it.' My body struggled for a bit, then it knuckled under and I was cured."

"You're quite wrong," said the Man with the Bee in his Bonnet, "that is not the right way to do it at all."

"But I thought . . ."

"That's where you were wrong, you've not got to think, you've got to know. If you use your mind, you may drive sickness (which is evil) . . ."

"But you said it didn't exist . . ."

"It only exists in your mind. As I was saying, you may drive it out of one part of you, but it returns ten-fold in another. It says so in the Bible. You remember the tale about the man who was possessed of the devil, and he drove it forth, and it went out into the wilderness and returned with ten other devils worse than itself. Now this story means, that is to say, in *Science and Health* it is explained by Mrs. Eddy as meaning . . ."

"And who," I asked with sweet girlish innocence, "is Mrs. Eddy?"

"She is the woman mentioned in Revelations, who is to appear with a book and make things clear."

"Ah," I said. Never having read Revelations, I was not prepared to argue that point, I had had a vague idea that the people mentioned in Revelations were, like the Four Horsemen of the What-do-you-call-him, extremely unpleasant, but I didn't like to say so as he evidently meant that Mrs. Eddy was divinely inspired.

"Mrs. Eddy," said the Man with the Bee in his Bonnet, "was a wonderful woman."

"Ah."

"She saw the Truth."

"Ah."

"She has given it forth to the World, as no one else would have the courage to."

"Ah."

"In her wonderful book, *Science and Health*, she explains exactly what Christ meant to say when he said something different."

"Ah."

"I will lend you my copy of *Science and Health*."

"Er . . . Thank you."

"You will read it."

"Mumph!"

"And next time I meet you, I will explain anything you may not have understood in it. Good-bye."

ETHEL BREE.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

LIBERTY IN IRELAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of September 16 a writer, referring to the Irish Censorship Bill, says: "If this is what 'Freedom' from English control has brought Ireland, the sooner it loses its freedom the better."

In reply, I beg to say that England is wholly responsible for the above condition of things in Ireland. As Bernard Shaw long since pointed out: "England is the Pope's policeman in Ireland." Seven hundred and fifty years ago the English went over and seized the land of the Irish people, and since then the whole life of Ireland has consisted in a struggle to get it back. They have succeeded at last, but at the cost of having to neglect many other things.

Ireland has never been able to take a critical attitude towards the Catholic Church, because of the fact that that Church has helped the people in their fight against an alien oppressor. A few months ago one of the most advanced Freethinkers in Dublin told me that even now it was difficult to say a word against the Church, because it was construed to mean disloyalty to Ireland.

The present Censorship Bill is a splendid example of the stupidity which has always stultified the zeal of the Catholic Church. That Church has never learnt to let sleeping dogs lie. Its Bill has stirred up the whole of literary Ireland, and for the first time there is a definite cleavage between the Church and the people who make public opinion.

Let me also say that Catholic countries are not as a rule one whit more bigoted than Protestant ones. A few weeks ago there was a Conference of women Socialists at Brussels, and the women of ten Continental countries supported a resolution demanding not merely birth control, but the legalization of abortion under cer-

tain conditions. Five of these countries were solidly Catholic, and three largely so. Needless to say the British women held up their hands in horror against the resolution, and one of them cried: "If they had known it would be raised, I doubt if our men would have let us come."

I venture the prediction that in fifty years Catholic Ireland will be considerably more emancipated than England. The Irish will learn to laugh at the priest before we learn to laugh at Mrs. Grundy.

R. B. KERR.

Society News.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD AT SALFORD.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S visit to Salford yielded eight very fine meetings. The two held in Stevenson Square were even better than those addressed on the previous Sunday. Close attention in spite of rival meetings, and good sales of literature, prove that the Manchester version of the Marble Arch has its uses. The six meetings at Salford provided an agreeable surprise. Previous visits to the same place were associated with a slight rowdiness, but on this occasion large crowds gathered each evening with every sign of appreciation. Not one interruption was heard all the week, and even the Catholic women, who on previous occasions were more lively than polite, remembered that we are now in 1928 and not in 1228. Many inquiries were received as to winter activities, and Mr. Cohen's opening meetings were well advertised. Many N.S.S. Application for Membership forms were demanded, and heavy sales of literature registered. Again the workers of the Manchester Branch rallied round in good style; in addition to those mentioned in the last report, Messrs. Bentley, Map and Bayford rendering valuable assistance, while our thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Monks for their kind hospitality. Altogether, the fortnight spent under the auspices of the Manchester Branch was one of the most satisfying of the present season. Commencing September 22, Mr. Whitehead will spend a week in Plymouth.

MR. J. CLAYTON'S LANCASHIRE MEETINGS.

TAKING advantage of the Indian Summer, Mr. Clayton addressed six meetings last week, speaking at Great Harwood, Padiham, Worsthorpe, Rawtenstall, Burnley, and Accrington. All the meetings were good, particularly at Padiham on Tuesday, and at Accrington on Sunday. The audiences have been most attentive, and Mr. Clayton is now receiving support from people living in the places he visits. N.S.S. Application for Membership forms are being asked for, and it is probable that at least one branch of the Society will be formed in a district Mr. Clayton has cultivated so sedulously. From every point of view it has been a very satisfactory week.

SOME PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS:

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Education in the Humanities."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S.—(Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.—A Lecture.

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.—A Lecture.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart.—A Lecture; 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine.—A Lecture; 6.30, Lecturers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hart, Hyatt, Maurice Maubrey and others. The *Freethinker* can be obtained at the corner of Bryanston Street during our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. Campbell-Everden.—A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—On Saturday, September 22 (weather permitting), in response to invitations, outdoor lecture at Willington, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, September 25, at Houghton-le-Spring, 7 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Brighton, Raine and Brown. Will local Freethinkers please note.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Mondays: Beaumont Street; Tuesdays: Greerson Street and Islington Square; Thursdays: High Park Street and Edge Hill Lamp. All at 8 p.m. Speakers: Messrs. Shortt and Sherwin.

NELSON BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. Clayton's Meetings: Todmorden (Market): 7.0; Great Harwood (Market): Monday, September 24, at 7.30.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Meetings, September 22 to September 28: Saturday at 7.30—the Octagon; Sunday at 11.0—North Quay; Sunday at 7.30—Market; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, at 8.0—Market; Thursday at 8.0—Fore Street, Devonport.

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