

The
FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN · · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

Vol. XLVIII.—No. 50

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1928

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

Leigh Hunt and Shelley.

MANY times I have had occasion to dwell upon the way in which a combination of religious bigotry and moral cowardice has managed to hide from the existing generation the work of dead Freethinkers, even to the extent of blotting out their names. Some have survived in spite of all that could be done to bury them. Thomas Paine is an example here, although even in his case there is not a single writer on the history of democratic opinion—outside the ranks of avowed Freethinkers—who does him justice. Generally he is passed over in a sentence or two, with a snobbish and ignorant reference to his want of education, and the reader receives a hint that no time need be wasted in either reading his works or studying his influence. Others have fared worse than Paine. Robert Owen, Francis Place, Richard Carlile, Hetherington, Patterson, Haslam, with scores of others that might be named, are to the present generation—even to those who consider themselves students of social and economic history—little more than names, and not always that. Religious bigotry commences this work of interment by ignoring them. Then historians and publicists, afraid to challenge the ill-feeling that will meet favourable mention of the work of notorious heretics, pass them by unnoticed. Students consulting accepted text-books find no mention of them. They are led to give honour where it is not due, and to withhold it from those who richly deserve it. So the world comes to hail as pioneers men who merely said what they did because others braver than themselves made it possible for them to say it with comparative safety.

* * *

Hiding the Facts.

An illustration of the truth of what has been said came to hand in the publication of a work a few months ago. The volume (*Shelley—Leigh Hunt. How Friendship Made History and Extended the Bounds of Human Freedom and Thought.* Ingram & Grant, 12s. 6d.) was issued under the general

editorship of Mr. R. Brimley Johnson, although the main task of preparation appears to have been the labour of love of Mr. R. H. Bath, an enthusiastic admirer of both Shelley and Hunt. On the appearance of the book some of the reviewers noted that the book gave to the world a new Shelley and a new Leigh Hunt. So it did—to the critics and to the general readers. But that it did so is only one more illustration of what I have already said. For the Shelley and Hunt of the book was only new because bigotry had long ago decided that the real Shelley and the real Leigh Hunt should not be known. As an essayist and literary critic the quality of Leigh Hunt could not be denied. Neither could the quality of Shelley as a poet. But Shelley and Hunt as ardent reformers, and—worse than that—Freethinking reformers, could not be tolerated for a moment. So Leigh Hunt, after being so liberally hated as a social reformer who would not be silenced, whom *Blackwood* complimented by denouncing as one who would not be quiet, and who “even on the Sabbath” denounced “every man of genius and virtue” (Freethinkers know what *that* means) was handed on as a writer of very pretty fireside essays, which young ladies might read with safety. But of Leigh Hunt the passionate reformer, not a word.

* * *

Shelley the Heretic.

So also with Shelley. Shelley's “indiscretions” in the form of fiery attacks on Christianity and on the belief in God, his burning indignation at the sufferings of the poor and the corruption of certain English institutions, were too well known to be hidden. What was to be done here? His contemporaries denounced him as an Atheist and a Revolutionist. A later generation hit on a new method. Shelley's writing a defence of Atheism, which led to his expulsion from Oxford, must be set down to a youthful indiscretion. Certainly it was an indiscretion—the kind of indiscretion of which not many who recognized that it might hinder their “getting on in the world” would have been guilty. His cry for reform must be attributed to the bad acquaintances he made before going abroad. Thus only a few weeks ago Professor Pinto, in a lecture on Shelley delivered at Southampton, spoke of Shelley as “a boy with religious genius of the highest kind” (which led him to write a defence of Atheism) and who afterwards was led to the advocacy of a number of ideas as a consequence of “drifting about in the society of some of the most foolish cranks in England,” and it was only when “he had escaped from these cranks and lived in Italy,” that he became a more sober and a more admirable individual. So the past is slurred over, and a legend created. It would not have suited Professor Pinto to have pointed out exactly who were the

"foolish cranks" Shelley consorted with, or to have pointed out that from Italy Shelley wrote over and over again on behalf of the ideas he advocated while in England, and sent offers of help to those who were carrying on the fight in his absence. As Shelley compelled recognition, the next best plan was to refer to all his social and religious opinions as the wild ebullition of youth, or to the evil influence of certain unnamed "cranks" from whom he happily escaped and led a more respectable life. Verily, there are more ways than one of telling a lie.

* * *

A Splendid Co-operation.

The value of *Shelley—Leigh Hunt* lies in the fact that it helps to break down this carefully built up myth concerning these two men. It shows them co-operating in a splendid partnership, fighting for the same reforms, and ventilating the same "disturbing" ideas. What Shelley was doing in his way, Hunt was doing week by week in the pages of the *Examiner*. The *Examiner* would have turned the hair of a Beaverbrook or a Northcliffe gray. No advertisements were permitted. No "stunts," sporting or otherwise, were allowed. No reviews of Hunt's own writings were printed. The *Examiner* was published for the benefit of the people, but that did not mean finding out what would tickle the ears of the largest—longest eared—number and then writing up to them. Several times there were threats of prosecutions; once or twice these actually happened; but eventually the prosecution was successful over the publication of an article on the Prince Regent. Allowing for difference of the times, the *Morning Post* of that date was the *Morning Post* of to-day, and it had written an article on the Prince Regent which was nauseating to any man of sense or decency. It referred to the Prince, notorious for his profligacy at a time when profligacy was the mark of a man about town—the only direction in which the Prince Regent seemed anxious to distinguish himself—as a protector of the arts, an inspirer of the Graces, a conqueror of hearts, an Adonis of loveliness, etc. It was too much, and Hunt published an article in which it was pointed out that this Adonis was a corpulent gentleman of fifty, and that:—

This delightful, blissful, wise, pleasurable, honourable, virtuous, true and immortal Prince, was a violator of his word, a libertine head over heels in debt and disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demi reps, one who had lived just half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity.

No reputable historian would dispute the truth of the picture, but Leigh Hunt and his brother John were brought before Lord Ellenborough, and condemned to a fine of £500 each, and to be imprisoned in separate gaols for a period of two years. There is no wonder that Shelley wrote—from abroad—that he was "boiling with indignation" at this "horrible injustice" to "a brave, a good, and enlightened man." He also offered financial help, which was refused, and the Hunts remained in prison until the last moment of their sentences had expired. It was indicative of the times, when the fangs of religion had not yet been drawn, when anti-combination laws were in force, when evangelical Christianity was in full swing, and the worst features of the factory were defended by those who regarded themselves as the pillars of Society.

* * *

An Old Slander.

Copies of the *Examiner* and the *Liberal* have been on my shelves for very many years, but the publica-

tion of the volume before me sent me once again browsing over their pages. And what rich and suggestive reading they furnish! They show us one of those brave spirits who, when freedom was at its lowest, and the outlook at its darkest, *would* be heard. One of whom Charles Dickens could write that he was "a man who in the midst of the sorest temptations maintained his honesty unblemished by a single stain—who in all public and private transactions was the very soul of truth and honour—who never bartered his opinion or betrayed his friend," and write it without a word of exaggeration. It is curious, by the way, to find the persistency with which, at first malice, afterwards ignorance, has identified Leigh Hunt with Harold Skimpole of Dickens' *Bleak House*. On the appearance of the book under notice, the *New Leader* remarked as quite a matter of course that Hunt served as the "original" of Skimpole. As a matter of fact Dickens more than once distinctly repudiated any such thing. But legends of this kind die hard. The *Sunday Times* was another paper that repeated the same story. And yet there are some people who doubt the possibility of Christianity being based on a myth. One would have thought that a man who could command the respect and affection of such as Lamb, Shelley and Byron, must have been a little above the ordinary, and when to that is added the hatred and vituperation of those who hated Leigh Hunt, the evidence would appear to be complete.

* * *

The "Examiner" and Reform.

I am chiefly concerned with Hunt in these notes because it is the character and work of Hunt that most needs bringing forward to this generation, and the chief value, to my mind, of *Shelley—Leigh Hunt* is that it does this. That the two worked well together, and for the same ends, is proven by the essays reprinted from the *Examiner*, with the sparse notes added from Shelley. And if the work does not send the reader looking up a volume of the *Examiner* in some public library I shall be greatly surprised. If he does, he will find this Freethinker pleading for Catholic Emancipation on the broad ground of social justice, instead of using his own opinions as a reason for denying justice to those who differed from him. He will find a strong plea for the education of the people as part of the duty of the State fifty years before there was an Elementary Education Act on our Statute Books. More than a century ago he raised his voice in favour of the abolition of flogging in the Army—one of the prosecutions of Leigh Hunt was for reprinting an article on the subject under the title of "One Thousand Lashes." Fortunately the prosecution failed of its object. On the question of child labour no one wrote more scathingly or with greater eloquence. Of the sufferings of children in factories he says:—

The fiery offerings to Moloch were less inhuman. The sacrificers, in that instance, though beguiled by a diabolical superstition, did not contemplate years of suffering for their infants, nor do it for the most paltry kind of gain . . . By the present system children are snatched from the healthy air and their recreations to be imprisoned all day long in a kind of hell on earth; their natural cheerfulness is checked, or turned into callous impudence; their bodies are blighted with unnatural warmth and inaction, their minds with equally unnatural thought or sullenness; their growth is either stunted or prematurely run up into weakness, their morals as well as health are spoilt from ignorant contact . . . instead of fresh air they breathe the deadly fumes of fires and metals; instead of the birds, they hear nothing but the click of combs or the grinding of

engines, or oaths or ribaldry . . . and all this lingering torture is called *habits of industry!* . . . they might as well call swearing a habit of piety, or habits of drinking temperance.

There is a strong plea for the emancipation of the negro, which contains things that are not without their application to the race question to-day, there is a scathing article on newspaper editors which might well have been written with many of those of the present time in view. Altogether the reprints contained in the present volume have an extraordinary freshness about them, probably because Hunt used passing incidents to illustrate permanent aspects of life.

* * *

A Great Partnership.

Shelley—Leigh Hunt discloses an extraordinary partnership of ideas, and one that must have had a far greater influence on British history than most are aware of. How close the spirit of the two men was the illustrative quotations from Shelley attached to the essays show. The friendship did indeed make history, and they who enjoy the larger freedom of thought and expression of to-day have for the most part little knowledge of how much they owe to the fighting Freethinkers of the early nineteenth century. So far religious bigotry has triumphed. By a policy of suppression, and by playing on the timidity of later writers, orthodoxy has managed to largely succeed in hiding from the world the names of those who "extended the bounds of human freedom of thought." But it could not prevent that broadening taking place. That is a heritage we have and, I trust, will hold. Nor do I think I can close these already too lengthy notes better than by summarizing the aims of the partnership in the words of Mr. Brimley Johnson:—

They were primarily moved by the love of Beauty and of Mankind; by visions of life not governed by a revengeful Deity and threats of eternal fire, not guided and ground down by the narrow rule of a worldly Pontificate, Medieval Church dogmas, hypocritical conventions, or the tyrannies of corrupt ministers of State. They would not bow the knee to many principalities or powers, however garlanded by birth or gold.

They stood, in fact, for everything fine and wise that had been the true Progressive spirit throughout the ages . . . always distrusting tradition, defying convention, pushing on to some new adventure of faith, in confidence and hope, and above all, trusting the instincts and opinions of humbler folk; demanding for all, equal rights to live, at least in decency and moderate comfort, in return for a reasonable amount of toil; to enjoy the full privileges and responsibilities of citizenship; to think and express their thoughts for themselves; to act in obedience to their own conscience.

Many times has the Christian Church, in pursuit of its own curious notions of the Brotherhood of Man, disinterred the body of the dead heretic and made its burning the centre piece of an entertainment for "good Christian folk." We profoundly hope that the disinterring of these two political and social reformers from their at least partial neglect—real reformers have never lost sight of them—will serve as a beacon by the light of which students may turn to the records of the struggle for freedom when the fight meant something more deadly than it does at the present moment.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Understand that well, it is the deep commandment, dimmer or clearer, of our whole being, to be *free*. Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings, in this Earth.—*Carlyle*.

Publishers and Piety.

"The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away like a northern iceberg floating into southern seas."

G. W. Foote.

"Who loveth not his brother at his side,
How can he love a dim dream deified?"

James Thomson.

MUCH is heard of the endless output of books, of the glut of the literary market; but with all the restless activity of authors and scribblers, there is one department of literature which shows a marked falling off. During the past two generations a great and continuous decline has taken place, not only in the production of theological works, but also in the publishing of popular works on religion. To what is this enormous decline due? There are several reasons, the first and the most potent being the growing indifference of the reading public to religion.

The tide of faith is now at the ebb. In his day, Macaulay noted the singular periodic manner in which the British public took up questions of religion and morality. John Bull is actually getting more philosophic. He no longer remembers that he has a soul to save. Indeed, he is becoming sceptical as to whether he has a soul at all, as distinct from his body. Meanwhile, he reads novels and newspapers, especially newspapers. Another reason is the lower mentality of the clergy. There are no longer any great ecclesiastics; and it most certainly cannot be said that the numerous Christian Churches show intellect in the production of religious books. Not for present-day clerics are the rolling harmonies of Jeremy Taylor, the subtle cadences of Milton, the austere utterances of Newman. They cannot even echo Baxter or Bunyan. There is not an original idea in their books. Everything is third-hand and thread-bare, and the paucity of the prose emphasizes the emptiness of their heads. Yet another cause of the decline of religious literature is the continuous growth of Freethought. The ordinary citizen is no longer content to sit at the foot of a priest, or even a pastor. Puritanism is as much a spent force as Papism. Neither any longer inspire, but merely appeal to a section of the nation.

The decline began in the "sixties" of the last century. About that time there was a real and unmistakable interest in devotional literature. The Rev. J. R. Macduff rivalled the best-selling novelists in popularity. The sale of his works was to be reckoned in hundreds of thousands. He was, in fact, the Dickens of Orthodoxy. For years Dean Goulburn's *Thoughts on Personal Religion* had an annual sale of many thousands, and Bishop Oxenden's books were equally popular. Newman Hall's publications ran into a sale of millions, and included American readers as well as British. Spurgeon's sermons sold like hot rolls for a whole generation, and Joseph Parker had hosts of admirers who bought his books eagerly. In looking through the old publishers' catalogues, one is genuinely surprised at the large number of works of a purely devotional nature. Familiar as household words in countless homes a generation or so ago, how many of these are known even by name to the present generation? The greater part of the Victorian era was, indeed, a golden age for religious books.

Not only was there a constant demand for the works of individual authors, but for such libraries as "The Biblical Cabinet," "Sacred Classics," "The Christian Family Library," and many another series. The taste for such books has gone for ever. Nor is it to be supposed that fresh life can be given to works such as Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, or Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, which served a temporary purpose,

and having served it, have passed from men's minds like the snows of yesteryear. In the many volumes on nineteenth century literature which have appeared, no mention is made of numberless religious or devotional books which were once thought indispensable in tens of thousands of sheltered homes. The circumstance is highly significant, and illustrates with startling clearness the changed attitude of the large reading public towards not only theology but towards religion itself.

The real meaning of this transformation is, in the last analysis, that the Christian religion is in the melting pot. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism as at the present time. Never in the history of the world have men attended places of worship so little; never have they attended philanthropic meetings so assiduously. The Christian religion is melting away, and Secularism is taking its place. The Christian Superstition no longer satisfies. No faith, however old, which is found wanting, can satisfy. Men nowadays no longer accept upon mere trust the religious misbeliefs of their remote and ill-informed ancestors. Over the pulpits of the half-empty places of worship is inscribed: "To the glory of God." That is the voice of the past. Secularism sounds the vibrant and triumphant note of the future: "To the service of man."

MIMNERMUS.

Irrationality in History and Medicine.

Most departments of real thought and practice have been greatly affected, and their progress impeded, by the mass of unreal (supernatural and preternatural) thought which for so long a period obsessed the human mind. One of these departments is that of History.

The stages in the development of this body of knowledge are now fairly known. Beginning in the early Orient, as in Egypt, with sporadic records, chiefly of wars and the like, advance was made to brief annals and chronicles. In Greece, writings appeared which may be called "historical"; and with Herodotus (fifth century B.C.) continuous or real history began. But this history, as might well be expected, was not by any means fully critical. It contained a good deal of legendary matter, and the fulfilment of oracles and the like were regarded as reasons for, or predisposing causes of, various events. A generation later, however, Thucydides wrote history of a more rational and critical kind, and he looked for natural, legitimate causes. His method was adopted by some other Greek and some Roman historians; and it is clear that man was well on the way toward the "scientific history" of our own day. But this desirable consummation did not appear until about twenty-two centuries later.

Following the fall of Rome and the establishment of Christianity, history became degraded to indiscriminate and partisan work such as the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, in which, as the author tells us, he confined himself to the things which "vindicate the providence of God," and Orosius' *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, the title of which sufficiently indicates the contents and the outlook of the work. There was then a general fall to chronicles, such as the Anglo-Saxon and those of Froissart. Some of these contain matter as childishly superstitious as the writings of ecclesiasts. Just as a bishop circumstantially relates that the body of a heretic burnt at the stake turned into toads, so Ekkehardt's (German) Chronicle tells us that, at the time of the First Crusade, signs in the sun and won-

ders in the sky appeared. The latter included a fight between two knights (in the air), which proceeded until one of them, who bore a great cross, smote the other and overcame him.

True and rational history, however, again arose in early modern times; and it slowly developed until, about the end of the eighteenth century, the last and highest stage was attained—that is, the method of full research, investigation and verification, followed by full and unbiassed statement of the results.

Recently, however, to history in the ordinary sense (that of action and event) the history of thought has been added, and is now being developed and systematized. This, in conjunction with general history, prehistory and anthropology, has become the final weapon in the armoury of the Freethinker. It shows clearly that all the old notions of revelation or inspiration as the source of religious and kindred beliefs are as baseless as the beliefs themselves, and that these beliefs arose before knowledge and thought had developed sufficiently to enable men to distinguish between fact and phantasy. It also clearly shows that the downfall of such beliefs, so far as it has gone, has proceeded step by step with the advance of knowledge and thought, and with the spread of education.

Another department of knowledge and practice which has been much affected and greatly impeded by unreal ideas is that of medicine. It is now well known that in the ancient East, during the early period of civilization, medicine was bound up with spiritism and magic. In Egypt, for example, as is briefly told in the British Museum Egyptian Guide, decoctions were administered which contained some substances which may have been useful, but also substances of the nastiest kind, such as the excrement of animals. It seems clear that the latter were put in in order to make the internal condition of the patient so objectionable as to drive out the spirits which caused the disease; and to render the effect of the medicine more certain, a magical formula was repeated (four times, according to the *Ebers Papyrus*) when the dose was given.

This sort of thing went on a good deal in Greece and Rome, including the fantastic "cures in dreams" at the Asclepian temples, of which the following example, described on a Greek inscription, may be given: "Aristagora of Troizen. She had a tapeworm, and while she slept in the Temple of Asclepius at Troizen, she saw a vision. She thought that, as the god was not present, but was away in Epidaurus, his sons cut off her head, but were unable to put it back again. Then they sent a messenger to Asclepius asking him to come to Troizen. Meanwhile day came, and the priest actually saw her head cut off from the body. The next night Aristagora had a dream. She thought the god came from Epidaurus and fastened her head on her neck. Then he cut open her belly, and stitched it up again. So she was cured."

But about 400 B.C., as a result of the work of the great Greek physician, Hippocrates, a natural system partly replaced the occult system; and thus man was on the high road of rationality in this department. But again we have to note, during the early centuries A.D., a great fall, the re-establishment of a basely superstitious system, and its continuance for some 1500 years. Dr. Singer, referring to this, says, "From Hippocrates the Great of Cos to Marcellus Empiricus of Bordeaux is 800 years. The difference of outlook is as the difference between the practice of Lister and the lowest type of magic."

However, the rational system again arose in early modern times. Up to the seventeenth century prescriptions essentially similar to those of ancient

Egypt appeared in medical works. But since then much progress has been made; and though we still have with us Roman Catholic priests, Christian Scientists and some other credulous people who believe in divine or other miraculous or magical healing, the belief is universally contemned by the medical profession of forward countries and by intelligent and informed persons in general.

One related feature of the Dark and Middle Ages may be specially mentioned. It is well known that during the "Ages of Faith" people believed that plagues were sent by God to punish the people for their sins. In Dr. Singer's lately published book, *A Short History of Medicine*, the depths of the medieval descent into the mire of ancient superstition is indicated by a picture he reproduces and describes as follows: "The Virgin sits enthroned on clouds, crowning a Crusader who kneels on her right hand. The Holy Child on her knee sends forth the plague of syphilis as a scourge on mankind. Two women, spotted with the rash of the disease, kneel in supplication on her left. In the foreground . . . is a corpse dead of the disease, the speckled ravages of which may be seen upon it."

J. REEVES.

Problems of Relativity.

(Concluded from page 773.)

UNFORTUNATELY, the new Fourth Dimension of Space, discovered—or invented—by the mathematician, soon became exploited by cranks and novelists, to say nothing of charlatans and humbugs. When a novelist began to talk about the Fourth Dimension, we knew that he was going to make his hero, or villain, invisible; or capable of passing through stone walls, or of other miraculous feats formerly attributed to the agency of celestial beings, but which the modern sceptical public would no longer stand.

To the Spiritualists also, the Fourth Dimension proved a veritable godsend. Professor Zollner, a professor of physical astronomy, in Germany, became a Spiritualist, and held a theory that the spirits lived in the Fourth Dimension of space. He held that in a four dimensional space, it would be possible to produce a knot in an endless cord, say a ring or circle of cord. Slade, the arch swindler, who arrived in Germany from England—whence he had fled to escape a warrant of arrest for fraudulent spirit-writing—offered his services as a spirit medium to Zollner, who gladly accepted them. Zollner proved to be veritable wax in the hands of the accomplished Slade, who produced four knots in an endless cord—which he had previously prepared and substituted for Zollner's cord—he also levitated furniture through the air and performed other well known spiritualistic marvels, all of which are recorded by the credulous Zollner (who, it has been hinted, was suffering from incipient mental derangement) in his book entitled *Transcendental Physics*. Rather a contradiction in terms, for transcendental means, beyond the bounds of knowledge—or unknowable.

All this, of course, tended to cast an air of unreality over the subject, and led the public, those who heard of it, to class it with the country of *Alice in Wonderland*. This, however, did not affect the mathematicians, who, like gods, carry out their researches supremely indifferent as to whether their results are good, or evil, or whether they favour optimism or pessimism.

Meanwhile, the Newtonian physics accounted for all the phenomena recorded of the heavenly bodies

in the most satisfactory manner. Its greatest triumph was recorded in the middle of the nineteenth century with the discovery of Neptune, the outermost planet of the solar system, which was discovered by calculation before it was seen.

This is the way it happened. It was found that the planet Uranus in its revolution round the Sun was not keeping time as it should have done according to the calculations of the Newtonian astronomy. It was then concluded that the force of attraction of some hitherto unknown planet was responsible for the divergence. Adams of Cambridge, and Leverrier of Paris, both made calculations, independent of one another, of the precise position of the unknown body. Galle, instructed by the calculations of Leverrier, found the planet Neptune on September 23, 1846, within half an hour of searching. This was the final vindication of the Newtonian astronomy.

Later on, the same kind of discrepancy was observed in the revolutions of the planet Mercury. It was very small, not more than 43 seconds of arc in a hundred years; less than half a second of arc in a year (a second of arc is the angle subtended by a thumbnail two miles away) but "near enough" will not do for the scientist, and it was suspected that it was another case of an unknown planet. Search was made, but without success, even the most sensitive photographic plates recorded nothing.

It was then that Einstein, in the year 1915, stated that if the calculation was made with the non-Euclidean geometry, or mathematics, it would give the exact correction needed to reconcile the discrepancy; that there was no need to seek for another planet which, indeed, did not exist. But it was his next feat that made his name world famous. Einstein predicted that the light of a star near the gravitational field of the sun would be bent out of its path. At the next total solar eclipse in 1919, Einstein's prediction was verified by two British expeditions sent out for the purpose. By this surprising feat the new principle of Relativity was firmly established.

"There is, then," says M. Maurice Maeterlinck, "a geometry of the fourth dimension whose theorems are as logical, as rigorously deduced and as well knit as those of Euclidean geometry, *but cannot be imagined.*"¹ The same writer, in his essay on the Fourth Dimension, which constitutes the greater part of his book, warns his readers: "Do not imagine that when you have read this essay you will know what the Fourth Dimension is. At most, you will have learned to distinguish what it is not." And he quotes Henri Poincaré, one of the greatest of living mathematicians, as saying: "Anyone who devoted his life to it might perhaps in the end form some idea of the Fourth Dimension." This new geometry has evolved a new vocabulary, almost a new language, in which to discuss its complicated and mysterious problems of space and time. Of this new vocabulary Maeterlinck gives some samples, he observes:—

Passing on from hypergeometry properly so-called, I will not linger amidst "these beings of hyperspace," as Poincaré calls them; amidst these inconceivable figures whose parent is hypervolume, and which bear fabulous names: hyperspheres, hyperquadrics, hyperquartics, hypercones, hyperpolyhedra or heperpolyhedroids, octahedroids, pentahedroids, hexacosihedroids, icosatetrahedroids and hectocosaedroids, which seem to be the offspring of a polytechnical nightmare, or of Father Ubu himself, and which conjure up a whole fauna of unimaginable monsters, linear, multi-triangular and polycubical; insects, dragons,

¹ Maeterlinck: *The Life of Space*. p. 33.

polypi, larvæ and lemurs; spectres which the unhappy geometers endeavour in vain to imagine as they pursue them through a space of whose very existence they had, until lately, not the faintest suspicion, into the geometrical infinity in which they pullulate, as ultra-spiritual entities which surround us on every side, and which must influence us in a way that will one day be defined, for it is probable that they participate in the fundamental laws of our being. (pp. 40-41.)

Not, of course, that these figments stand for living creatures, or even entities. That is only a poetic fancy.

The fact is that we are in the same position as the general public at the time when the new astronomical ideas of Copernicus and Galileo were being first expounded. People at that time must have been astounded when first told that the sun, which they plainly saw every day moving over the Earth, was in reality quite stationary in regard to our Earth which really travelled round it; and that the moon, which seemed so much larger than the sun, was an insignificant body compared even with the Earth, which in its turn, was only a mere fraction the size of the sun. These facts, which seemed to fly in the face of facts, and to contradict the evidence of the eyesight, must have been difficult for the ordinary man to realize. And so the new ideas of Relativity are very hard for us to realize because our minds are full of other ideas. Many generations passed before the new astronomical system of Copernicus and his followers became the popular belief, and doubtless it will be the same with the system of Relativity.

W. MANN.

Bramble Paths.

Now Autumn's splendid requiem scene is here,
It may be Winter ere those lines appear;
But memory then, yet solace for the mind;
And Winter here, can Spring be far behind?

LET me not to the freedom of true minds admit impediments. Let all its loves be free, its good and comfort, calm, its diet and its vital air, quiet. There is a great deal of good latent in the heart of man, many avenues of expression and enjoyment for its own pleasure or the happiness of others. Often it finds its noblest thrill in honouring and loving some worthy of its intimates, some modest, "social, honest, friendly man, where'er he be." Yea, or whom or what he be, discovering to the world the gem amongst its pebbles. How delightful also, ennobling, soothing, sustaining, in the merely personal and selfish sense, to find at last one's own true bent and genius, be it for great things, or just for "quoits, puttin' or jumpin'." I, for the most part, respect, but refer not at the moment, to those thrillers of our Stunt Age—in the air, on the motor track, in war and wild beast hunting, in Church and State, in legerdemain, in all the wiles and wriggles and heroisms of those who would get There—and where is that? I quote it once more:—

And more true joy Marcellus, exiled, feels,
Than Cæsar with a Senate at his heels.

Still we must resist the Cæsars, to conserve even the joys of exile. I pass these by in no "sour grapes" contempt, nor with "the snarl of the incompetent," but in search of the more solid things of life, more simple, near and dear. Sober are the thoughts in October, when the verdurous mantle (the robes of Pan) of woods and fields are passing in decay. Beautiful beyond words are the sad glories of the tangled sere in woodland nooks or the aspect from without of the forest trees in their mingling tints of melancholy splendour. Now nature seems to acquiesce in the serenity of old age, forbearing tooth and claw. The great painter, the sun, seeming to reserve his richest canvas to the last, which even now the frost nips and the winds scatter and destroy—and leave us pictures still and a more wistful atmosphere: I have just noted some denuded saplings in the angle of a grey wall, with

crinkled leafage on the grass below; pathetic, yet more pleasing scene, a poem without words, a nook idealized, a mecca and a dream! Leaves reserved for later fall have become in hue like summer flowers, if but the hectic of decay. One plucks a tri-leaved spray of golden-purple—what palette, what pigments here? All the sweets of seeming senseless evil, the eternal miracle of common earth! The long, flattened grasses are dank with jewelled rain-drops that glisten in the fitful sun through fretted forest roof, while the breeze sighs softly as the leaves "click" gently and fluttering fall:—

When lyart¹ leaves bestrew the yird,
Or wavering like the baukie² bird,
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast.

This for a later, austerer scene. I speak but of the "Indian Summer" of our isles. There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, or trackings round and amid the bramble thickets of elusive fruit. The more cunning brambler (myself) avoids the beaten way and finds hid treasures missed by those in greater hurry to be rich. Here is the lowermost bow of a spruce fir entangled in the herbage and under it a wren's nest of the Summer past, seen for the first time, and here some shining berries are also revealed. Bramble picking requires concentration, induces it, indeed, and a kind of miser greed grows upon the seeker, with, perhaps, thoughts of home and the good wife's smile, and the envy of the youngsters. The berry picking done, there is still time, if all too short, to revel in reverie and steep the charmed senses in the beauty all around. The elder (or bourtree bush) is here, luxuriant fresh and green. A fellow that will root anywhere, but here in green perfection of sapling, leafy pride, richly contrasting with mellowing plant and spray. In his *Ode to Autumn*, that serious humorist, Thomas Hood, stands easily with Keats and Shelley in such lines as these:—

Where are the blooms of Summer? in the West
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours.
Where is the pride of Summer—the green prime—
The many, many leaves all twinkling?—three
On the mossed elm; three on the naked lime
Trembling—and one upon the old oak tree!
Where is the Dryad's immortality?
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

And where, one reflects, is man's immortality? Robert Buchanan answers thus:—

All things that live are deathless—I and ye.
The Father could not slay us if he would;
The elements in all their multitude
Will rise against their Master terribly,
If but one hair upon a human head should perish,
Yet hear me Mountains! echo me, Oh Sea,
Murmur an answer Winds from out your caves,
Cry loudly Torrents, Mountains, Winds, and Waves,
Hark to my crying all, and echo me.

So nature denies and defies the gods; they perish, she remains. A burnie wimples through the glens bearing dead leaves away; anon it will be the nourisher of leafage in a reviving Spring. ANDREW MILLAR.

INCONSISTENCY.

Once in the chancel of a church austere,
Upon the illumined altar-steps I prayed,
While near me knelt, in sombre garb arrayed,
Hosts of repenting sinners thrilled with fear.
Without, the tempest swept by, swift and drear,
When suddenly a fiery livid blade
Of lightning struck the shining spire, and laid
Its Gothic beauty shattered far and near!
And then the germs of doubt dawned in my soul,
Why, if God lived within this house to know
That suppliants bowed and dared to Him aspire,
Did He, with wrath and wondrous uncontrol,
Strike it to dust with His infuriate blow,
And mar its majesty with avenging fire?

Francis S. Saltus.

¹ Vari-coloured. ² Bat.

Acid Drops.

Those dare-devils of "advanced" Christian clergymen have been at it again. A *New Commentary on Holy Scriptures* has just been issued, written by a number of clergymen, headed by Bishop Gore. These pioneers have, according to the press, cast a "bombshell" into the theological world. Here is the nature of the explosive material:—

The Creation: Genesis contains no account of the real beginnings of the earth or of man.

The Deluge: Cannot be historically true.

Noah's Ark: A manifest impossibility.

Methuselah's Age: Physiologically incompatible with the structure of the human body.

Fall of Manna: Its providential character is magnified.

Jonah and the Whale: No atom of history in it.

Belshazzar's Feast: No known King of Babylon called Belshazzar.

Fall of Jericho: "The wall fell down flat" is merely literary hyperbole.

David and Goliath: Critics are agreed it is most probable Goliath was slain by Elhanan, son of Jair, in David's reign.

One can only wonder at the state of religious intelligence existing when things of this kind can create a sensation. Really, the sensation ought to be to find grown-up men and women who can regard such childish fables as being even probably true. And this wonderful series of discoveries could have been purchased for a copper of two on any Freethought bookstall at any time this past hundred years. And these parsons consider themselves as educated and cultured men!

It is strange, but just as these dare-devils are discovering that the Genesiac story is pure myth, the actual site of the Garden of Eden has been discovered by Commander C. E. V. Crauford. It is at the bottom of the Persian Gulf. All that is required now is for some one to unearth Eve's housekeeping accounts, with letters that passed between Adam and Eve during the days of their courtship, to settle the matter. A discovery of the builder's contract for erecting the Tower of Babel would also be of interest. Why not? There is extant a copy of a letter which Jesus Christ wrote to Abgarus, and there is no reason why we should not one day come across the receipts for amounts which Mary paid the local chemists for teething powders for the infant Jesus. To faith everything is possible. And Mr. James Douglas would be quite ready to write up the discoveries.

The proverbial grain of salt will be useful in swallowing the following Christian statistics (taken from a religious weekly):—

According to the tabulated statistics the number of Church members in the United States in 1926 was 54,624,976. This was a gain of 12,698,122 in the decade since the last census—an average gain of 3 per cent. annually. The Roman Catholic membership is eighteen million. Jewish membership is four million. Of the remaining total, 30,640,000 (approximately) are Protestants. Exact numbers are difficult to obtain, because there are sects like Mormons, Spiritualists, and Christian Scientists, who are neither Protestants nor Catholics. . . . The Roman Catholic figures include all baptized persons; the Protestant figures refer only to communicant members. If the usual allowance for children and adherents (2.8) is made, it gives a total Protestant constituency of about 86,000,000.

We have no doubt that our American Freethought friends will provide their Christian brethren with a little critical analysis of these "facts."

In a religious weekly a question from a reader is:—

In the light of modern knowledge, what can we accept as historic fact in the first eleven chapters of Genesis without committing intellectual suicide?

The rev. gentleman entrusted with the job of answering this, supposes it means that, if we accept written statements as historically true when there is evidence available to us from other sources that they are historically

incorrect, we are in danger of blunting our faculties for arriving at the truth. He agrees that there is this danger. But he prefers to change the question thus: "How much that is written in these chapters is to be regarded as historical fact?" He then assumes: "For practical purposes *nothing at all.*" Nevertheless, he adds, the chapters have a great historical value as giving us an account of what was believed among the Hebrews as to the origin and early history of the world. The record of events, adds the rev. gentleman, with which these chapters deal can be shown to be at variance with the conclusions of geology, archæology, ethnology, physics, and biology. A quotation from Diver's Commentary on Genesis follows:—

These chapters . . . contain no account of the *real* beginnings, either of the earth itself, or of man and human civilization upon it.

The rev. gentleman adds: "All this is not to say a word in disparagement of the high religious and moral value of these chapters." Quite so! Let it not be forgotten that there is any amount of the same kind of value in other fairy tales, like "Jack and the Beanstalk," if only one brings to the reading of them the truly reverent spirit.

The Rev. Dr. W. Y. Fullerton says there is no need of ours which God is not able to supply. Lord Kelvin, says the rev. gentleman, was once faced with the failure of an experiment. Instead of betraying impatience or irritability, he commented to his students "Gentlemen, when you come face to face with a difficulty, remember that you are on the eve of a discovery." The moral Mr. Fullerton draws from this is that "when we have reached desperation point, and feel ourselves thrown back absolutely upon God, then is the time to look for a great blessing." In quoting the Lord Kelvin incident, Mr. Fullerton revealed the essential difference between the scientific and the Christian attitudes in dealing with a difficulty. The scientist musters up all his courage, knowledge, and ingenuity to get over the difficulty or solve the problem. The Christian loses heart, cries out he can do no more, and whines to his God for help. And if no help comes from Heaven, the Christian believes the problem is insoluble. That it inculcates a cowardly attitude towards the facts and problems of life is one of the most vicious results of the Christian creed.

A Wesleyan writer denies the repeated assertion that the youth of Britain has little or no interest in the message and mission of the Christian Church. Having visited some fifty Wesley Guilds and found their meetings well attended, he is prepared to refute the assertion. We are not prepared to accept his evidence as proving anything except that a certain percentage of Wesleyan youth is interested in religion. The fact remains that the majority of the youth of Britain is outside the Churches and has no interest in the religion expounded therein.

According to our Wesleyan friend, the Guild meetings allow discussion and encourage the asking of questions. That young Wesleyans take advantage of this is supposed to indicate "youth in search of knowledge." He adds:—

Preachers and speakers who deal with controversial subjects ought never to forget that young persons outside the Church regard the pulpit and the platform as entrenchments from which assaults may be delivered without risk. Guild members of to-day certainly do not accept the implication that their ministers and teachers occupy a "Coward's Castle"; but they are, nevertheless, not content to digest without amplification or questioning the arguments, facts and figures submitted by enthusiastic propagandists. . . . Especially is there a tendency in the mind of modern youth "to get down to brass-tacks," even in matters relating to theology and dogma. Many Guild members of to-day are living interrogation marks. They not only want to know, they want also to realize that the person who assumes the position of instructor knows, and is therefore able to impart accurate information to others.

It would seem that Wesleyan youth has become infected with the Freethought spirit of the age. That is all to

the good. But if this youth really desires full knowledge of matters religious, it had better start searching for it, not within the Church alone, but in other places also. Freethought analysis and criticism of religion is to be obtained cheaply enough. A study of this will supply Wesleyan young people with many answers to their questions, and will also furnish many new questions; and possibly, too, with some dissatisfaction with the glib replies of the ministers. By the way, has any young Wesleyan ever come across a minister who recommended his youthful clients to read Freethought books, on the principle of learning both sides of the religious controversy?

It is becoming quite a slogan! The latest to assure the world that the great enemy the Churches have to fight is Secularism is the Archbishop elect of York. It is too bad! After Secularism so conveniently dying many years ago, to find it is still very much alive, and the real enemy the Churches have to overcome, is quite disturbing. Why can't these things remain dead once they are dead? Dr. Temple is, nevertheless, quite convinced that Materialism is dead. These men must have a corpse of some kind on hand, or they are not comfortable. We advise Dr. Temple to try his hand at killing *Materialism Re-stated*.

"The Modern Parent and the Child's Religion," is the theme of an article in a Sunday School weekly. The writer, the Rev. K. A. Saunders, M.A., leads off with:

At the present time, when religious beliefs are in a state of flux, parents who have the welfare of their children at heart find themselves in constant doubt as to how to produce a religious outlook in the child.

We note Mr. Saunders' use of the words, "religious outlook." Once only in his three-column article does he refer to religious instincts. The words Mr. Saunders should have used were "religious bias." In the past, he says, the religious outlook was common to the community. It was enshrined in church-going customs. It might have been conventional and allied to accepted standards of respectability. Nevertheless, it was strong enough to impress the average child. Therefore, our grandparents were at least assured that their children would probably catch "the average religious outlook." To-day, however, parents have no such assurance. The old certainties have vanished; the child enters a world that is "spiritually uncertain"; and if parents trust to the spirit of the age they are "trusting to an uncertain, or even hostile influence." What is worse, family ritual—grace at meals, and family prayers—is disappearing in most religious families; and to attempt to revive them would probably be useless, says Mr. Saunders. All this is, of course, a very sad state of affairs for the parson. It does seem queer that with the disappearance of environmental influences towards religion, there is grave danger of the child not taking to religion. Mr. Saunders seems none too sure about the child having religious instincts. He puts his trust in parental and Sunday School instruction to furnish the necessary religious bias (or, as he calls it, religious outlook). Yet, if religion was as natural as drinking and eating, there should be no need of all this careful implanting of religious ideas in the child's mind.

Apropos of the recent High Court declaration that football competitions in newspapers are illegal, the *Methodist Recorder* says that, in suppressing these competitions, "the High Court has done something towards cleansing our social life from the evils both of speculative gambling and of public deception." Our contemporary's mention of "public deception" refers to the using of such, and similar, competitions to produce artificially inflated circulation figures, in order to induce advertisers to pay more for advertisements. This, as our friend says, is reprehensible. But why is the *Recorder* silent about another morally reprehensible newspaper practice—that of staging a discussion and giving only one side a hearing? For example, we instance the *Daily Express* stunt debate on "Prayer." This was pure and unadulterated "public deception." For the public was deluded into believing that little or nothing could be

argued against Prayer. But no pious journal has as yet condemned the deception. A possible explanation is that, where religion is concerned, the end always justifies the means.

The Bunyan Tercentenary is being well advertised by the professional Christians as a means of arousing interest in the almost forgotten *Pilgrim's Progress*, and in religion generally. Quite possibly, the advertisement may induce many people, religious and non-religious, to read the book. But we fancy the result will not be so satisfactory as the parsons anticipate. For one thing, in the *Pilgrim's Progress* is enshrined all the crude theological notions that better educated Christians now find repulsive. Such readers will, for the first time, realize what "pure and simple" Christian teaching really is; it is what Bunyan believed and taught, and what the Bible writers meant when they wrote the book, under the inspiration of the Lord God. After reading Bunyan, doubts may arise as to the acceptability of the glib interpretations of modern whitewashing parsons. In the second place, readers indifferent to religion will get the impression that, if Bunyan's religion is the Christian religion as taught by the Churches to-day—as it must be, they will think, since religious truth cannot alter—then they haven't lost much by staying out of the Churches. Altogether, the Bunyan boom seems likely to prove unprofitable rather than profitable to the parsons.

The following excerpt from *The New Chronicle* (of Christian education) helps to explain how the B.B.C. became a branch office of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel:—

Sir John Reith, Director-General of the B.B.C., is not only a Scot, but also a son of the Manse. He has always taken a special personal interest in the service that Broadcasting renders to the religious life of the country. The recent publication of a biography of his father, the late Dr. John Reith . . . contains a passage telling how the institution of the Epilogue on Sunday evening was inspired. One of the happiest and most abiding memories of Sir John is that of family worship in his father's house on Sunday evenings, and this is the secret of the Epilogue. The *B.B.C. Handbook* says that the Epilogue is the most popular item of the week.

With all due respect to Sir John's "most abiding memories," we don't quite see why they should influence the B.B.C. into not catering more fully on Sunday for non-pious listeners.

Mrs. Olive Johnson, a lady well known in connexion with Salvation Army work at Rayleigh, Essex, has been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for obtaining money under false pretences. Seventeen previous offences were proved against her from 1880 to 1912. Mrs. Johnson must be a very foolish woman to have gone to work in this way. She could have started a mission on her own and have made quite a comfortable income. With all the examples of success in this direction, to have risked imprisonment by attempting illegal methods of swindling the public! Really, such folly from one already connected with religious movements is almost unbelievable.

One result of being soaked in a religious atmosphere was mentioned by Miss Sharp, one of the speakers at a recent meeting of the Exeter Diocesan Committee for Preventive and Rescue Work. She said, referring to sexual offences between boys and girls, that she found that nearly always "the wrong had been done after leaving some Bible class or on leaving Church at night." And no one appears to have contradicted it. We wonder at the *Western Morning News and Mercury* publishing such a statement. We presume the remedy that will be tried will be more Bible classes and Church meetings. Otherwise, what are the parsons to do?

The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury says that the force of the evangelical appeal is weakened to-day because men have largely lost their fear of God. Many people are afraid of disease, but few are afraid of sin. Well, the only thing to be done is to stoke up hell-fire again, and take the modern sugar-coating off Jehovah.

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.

K.N.—Pleased that your first acquaintance with Freethought meetings was so pleasing. The course of lectures to which you listened at Leicester will be published early in January. We think it will make a good introduction to the general question of Freethought.

H. AVENELL.—Thanks for address. Copies of the paper are being sent.

J. M. STUART YOUNG.—We are afraid you are taking Mr. Millar's lines, "Still the spirit, heroic, transcending, persists, while the matter decays," too literally. The use of such a figure is quite permissible to a Materialist, as in the expression that the spirit of Bradlaugh is still with us.

J. R. HOLMES.—Thanks, shall appear. The B.B.C. will try as long as it can to play the game of Christian advocate, but if Freethinkers all over the country, by their protests, make it quite plain that they object to it, it will have its effect in time. There is very little conviction behind their efforts, it is simply that they have misjudged the strength of the opposition. And for this Freethinkers have themselves largely to blame. They remain quiet and leave the religious cranks to do the shouting.

A. C. HIGH.—Mr. Cohen is writing you.

J. MELROSE.—Not this side of the New Year. Mr. Cohen will not be lecturing at all, after to-day's date, until towards the end of January.

J. PEARSON.—Thanks for information that some of the Co-operative Societies vote sums of money to religious bodies. We agree with you that Freethinking members might look into this kind of thing. With regard to the other matter. It appears to us to be genuine. Have you any information to the contrary? If so, we shall be obliged if you will let us know.

ROOTER.—Thanks for interesting letter. It is full of good sense, but unfortunately too lengthy for reproduction.

T. O'NEIL.—We really do think that Freethinkers deserve congratulation on the manner in which their work has compelled Bishop Gore and the like to admit the truth of what we have been telling them for so many years. Of course, they are not likely to admit from whence the pressure has come, but it is fairly plain to those who impartially watch the course of events.

KERIDON.—Sorry your letter arrived too late for use in this issue, but it will appear next week.

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Sugar Plums.

To-day (December 9), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Stratford. His subject will be, "What Are We Fighting For?" and we should like every Freethinker to bring along a Christian friend with him. Bus or tram from any part of London, will put the visitor from afar down at the door of the Town Hall. This is the last lecture Mr. Cohen will be giving in London for some time.

Mr. Cohen had two very fine meetings at Gateshead on Sunday last. The large hall was comfortably filled on both occasions, and the lectures were listened to with evident appreciation. Mr. Cohen has a large circle of friends on Tyne and Wearside, and these were present from Blythe, Stanley, Sunderland, South Shields, Chester-le-Street and elsewhere. Our old friend, G. J. Bartram, who had been very busy organizing the meetings, was evidently delighted with the results of his efforts, although, naturally, wishing for more. From friends who were present from Chester-le-Street we learn that there are opportunities of opening several new Branches of the Society in the near future, and we know there are large numbers of Freethinkers in the district if only they can be organized. Mr. Keast occupied the chair both afternoon and evening, and made a strong appeal to the large number of young people present to join the Movement.

Freethinkers will be interested in the following from the Question Paper of the House of Commons for November 25:—

HOUSE OF COMMONS (CHARLES BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL).

57. Mr. Thurtle asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department as representing the First Commissioner of Works, if he will consider the possibility of giving a site within the precincts of the House for the erection of a tablet to the memory of the late Charles Bradlaugh, to whose efforts the freedom of Members to affirm when they become Members, instead of taking the oath, was largely due?

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Lieut.-Colonel Sir Vivian Henderson): The First Commissioner of Works is unaware of any considerable demand among Members of this House, for the erection of a tablet such as is proposed, which would lead him to assent to the suggestion.

Mr. Thurtle: Is the hon. and gallant Member not aware that many Members of this House who take an interest in Parliamentary history regard Charles Bradlaugh as a great Parliamentary figure?

Sir V. Henderson: I am quite aware of that fact, and, if it were shown to the First Commissioner that there was any great demand for this proposal, I have no doubt that he would be willing further to consider it. What the hon. Member does not perhaps appreciate is that there is no precedent for erecting a memorial to a private Member in this House who has died within living memory. I would point out that Daniell O'Connell and Baron Lionel de Rothschild and Alderman Salomons are as equally entitled to memorials for the attitude which they took up in regard to the oath as Charles Bradlaugh.

Freethinkers owe Mr. Thurtle their thanks for his action in this matter. Charles Bradlaugh was a great Parliamentary figure, and one who, in spite of the tremendous amount of prejudice he had to fight, forced and retained the respect of the better type of Member of the House of Commons. But the reply of the Under-Secretary for the Home Department is quite Joynson-Hicksy in its impertinence and want of knowledge. There is no serviceable parallel whatever in the cases named with that of Bradlaugh's. Bradlaugh's fight was a fight for, on the one hand, a vindication of the rights of conscience, the attempt to permit a man to be as honest and as sincere in politics as he is, say, in serving packets of groceries, and his enemies here were religious bigots led by one or two political adventurers. But far more than this Bradlaugh's case raised the great and important constitutional issue of the rights of constituencies. It was the right of Northampton to be represented by the man whom the electors had selected, and properly appointed, that was at issue. Bradlaugh fought for both his own legal rights and the constitutional rights of the British people. In the end he won, and won after such a fight as few men in British parliamentary history had put up. We presume that it was a recognition of this fact that led Mr. Thurtle to ask his question, and we charitably assume that it was the ignorance of "Jix's" representative that dictated the answer.

Mr. George Whitehead will lecture to-day (December 9) in the Engineers Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester, at 3.0 and 6.30 p.m. His two subjects are "Religion and Birth Control," and "The New View of Spiritualism." We hope to hear of good meetings.

At Plymouth, the speaker to-day will be Mr. F. Mann. He will be lecturing, afternoon and evening, in the Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street. This is Mr. Mann's first visit to the West of England, and Freethinkers should make an effort to be present, and to bring with them a Christian friend—if more than one, so much the better.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cardiff has advised his followers to drop all party political opinion at the next election, and to vote only for such candidates as will "relieve us of having to pay for Catholic schools." In other words, make the rest of the people pay for them. That, of course, is the aim of all the Christian sects, but the Roman Catholic Church, being the best organized, and having the most docile and least independent of religious followings, can afford to be a little more open in the declaration of their policy. Between Catholic and Protestant there is precious little difference where sectarian interests are concerned. There is only one way to end this squabble over the schools, and that is to leave religion entirely to the Churches and the State to its proper sphere of action.

A Heathen's Thoughts on Christianity.

(Continued from page 781.)

DATES OF THE MANUSCRIPTS.

THE dates when the books of the Old Testament are supposed to have been first written are pushed back as far as possible. The Song of Deborah and Barak (Judges v.) is said to be "probably" the oldest fragment, and "probably" of the eleventh century B.C.E., that is to say, more than 500 years after the date assigned for the birth of Moses. Parts of Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy are "thought" to have been written between the eleventh and eighth centuries; and the legends, as they are admitted to be, of the Creation, Flood, Patriarchs, Flight from Egypt, Wilderness Journey, Giving of the Law, and the Conquest of Canaan, in the eighth century B.C.E. "Two writers," it is said, "committed the more or less fabulous histories to manuscript." But it is not known who those writers were. And so it goes on, showing that the various documents were gradually accumulated from unknown sources, almost up to the first Christian century. But this is wholly conjectural. No one knows when, or by whom, these writings were put together, or through what hands they passed before they were "framed up" as a connected whole in the form we have them now.

The date of the earliest of these Hebrew MSS. is that of the Massoretic text, estimated as between the sixth and eighth Christian centuries. The earliest dated MS. is 916 C.E., more than 1000 years after the latest of the books included in it! Who wrote this MS., from what sources he obtained his material, and how many copies of copies intervened between it and the original, is not known.

The MSS. of the New Testament, written in Greek, are no better authenticated. It is not known that they were composed by their alleged authors, or whether these authors ever lived. The earliest MSS. of the New Testament are somewhat older than those of the Old Testament, but the dates of their composition are wholly conjectural. None can be pushed further back than the fourth Christian century, though there is one small scrap of papyrus contain-

ing a few verses of the Fourth Gospel, supposed to date from the third century.

There are six Codices, the dates of which are assigned as follows: (1) Codex Vaticanus, fourth century, in the Vatican at Rome; (2) Codex Sinaiticus, fourth century, discovered in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai; (3) Codex Alexandrinus, fifth century, brought from Alexandria in 1621, "said to have been written by Thecla, a noble lady of Egypt"; (4) Codex Ephraemi, fifth century, supposed to have been discovered in Egypt in the sixteenth century; (5) Codex Bezae, sixth century, found in the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons; (6) Codex Claromontanus, sixth century, found in the monastery of Clermont, near Beauvais.

Although these Greek MSS. do not present such formidable difficulties as the Hebrew, it is admitted that they differ in many important particulars, and have been corrected and altered in many places by different hands. They are all of unknown origin, copies of copies of—what? No one knows.

If, in a court of law, it were desired to prove that certain events had taken place, and the only evidence that could be adduced consisted of documents written long afterwards by unknown hands; and, if further, the documents produced were admittedly copies of copies of some unknown originals, how would they be treated by the judge? It is upon no better evidence than this that the extraordinary events, supposed to have happened in Palestine 1928 years ago, and earlier, are "proved." Suppose one were to sit down and write for the first time about something which he had heard had happened in England in the reign of King Henry VIII, would it be regarded as authentic and reliable history? This is exactly the case with the supposed life of Jesus Christ. The suggestion that the first record of it was written between seventy and eighty years after his death is no more than a conjecture.

Quite recently there were reports in the newspapers of the discovery of a "First Century Greek Codex," of which it was asserted that "the manuscript constitutes the principal source from which the Four Gospels were derived." It was discovered at Cerignola, in Southern Italy. The very next day it was announced that the Italian police had intervened and ordered a strict inquiry. Since then nothing more has been heard of this "find," which it was hoped would be "a cardinal contribution to the history of Christianity." Alas! this is a critical age! Had the "discovery" been made a century or two ago—?

Through whose hands had those MSS., which are accepted as the basis of the present translation of the Bible, passed before they came into the hands of modern scholars, who can now tell the truth about them without fear of the rack and the stake?—the priests of the Roman Catholic Church! This deepens the suspicion of those who know nothing of the history and the doings of that Church as to the authenticity of any of the MSS. of the Bible.

The "canon" of the Holy Bible is said to have been fixed between the years 325 and 450 by various councils, or committees, composed of priests who had already elaborated a body of theological doctrine for which it was necessary to find support. It is a curious circumstance that none of the MSS. now extant goes further back than these dates. That the committees did their work badly we shall see.

Concerning the New Testament, the following curious estimate is given in *Chambers' Encyclopedia*: Out of a total of 1,071 verses, Matthew has 387 in common with Mark and Luke, 130 with Mark, 184 with Luke, only 370 being peculiar to himself. Of Mark's 662 verses, 406 are common to all three.

145 to Mark and Matthew, 60 to Mark and Luke, and at most 51 peculiar to himself. Luke, out of 1,151 verses shares 390 with Matthew and Mark, 176 with Matthew, 41 with Mark, leaving 544 his own. In many instances all three use identical language." This points unmistakably to a common source of origin, of deliberate manipulation on the part of copyists, or of forgery.

E. UPASAKA.

(To be continued.)

Emile Zola.

I.—THE NOVELIST.

(Concluded from page 780.)

In Britain and America there was not at this period a single translation of Zola's works, and when a publisher, Henry Vizetelly, offered, in 1888, English translations of all books that Zola had then written, he was tried and, despite his impassioned plea of the manifold obscenities in the classics and in English literature from Shakespeare downwards surpassing Zola and without the justification of his deliberate moral tendency, imprisonment followed for the old man, resulting in his utter ruin. In view of the complete vindication of Zola's aims that is accepted now even in our pharisaical land, it is interesting to note that the signatories to the memorial praying for Vizetelly's release included those of George Moore, Thomas Hardy, T. P. O'Connor, Professor J. Arthur Thomson, Sir Edmund Gosse, Hall Caine, and of many other renowned men too numerous to cite. It is also pleasant to record that it was the prosecuted publisher's son who was to be chiefly instrumental in giving Zola the position he now occupies among reflecting people in Britain. So keenly did he feel his father's humiliation, that he made it his life-work to introduce the zealous reformer-novelist in English dress, and in this he was so successful that undoubtedly the best set of translations still bear the name of Ernest Vizetelly, himself one of the novelist's greatest friends and devotees.

But the first step towards general recognition in England came in 1893, when he was invited by the Institute of Journalists to attend one of its congresses in London. Zola decided to accept, and created a thoroughly favourable impression, being, indeed, the centre of attraction at every gathering he attended. It was typical of the man that, while in London, he did not omit the slums of the East-end from his round of sight-seeing. His presence in Britain, however, could not be expected to pass off without giving offence in many quarters. The English bishops assembled in conclave were notably displeased, and Zola was heavily maligned by them, though to the vague accusations of one of them so doughty an opponent as Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch was found to answer that he "had not so much evidence to back his insinuations and assertions as would wrap round a mustard seed."

In 1897 came the great adventure of Zola's career—his heroic espousal of the victim in the famous Dreyfus Affair. It is impossible to recapitulate here the details of this complicated case of absolute injustice. As everyone knows, it concerned a Captain Alfred Dreyfus who was arrested in 1894 on a charge of communicating military secrets to the German embassy. Like everyone else, Zola assumed that the convicted officer was guilty, and gave the matter little attention. It was not until 1897, consequent upon certain pieces of documentary evidence being shown him, that he was sufficiently impressed to determine to try to have the whole case reconsidered.

He began to stir public opinion by writing a number of newspaper articles on the subject; but it was his famous manifesto "J'Accuse," in which he powerfully declared his belief in the innocence of Captain Dreyfus, that created the first sensation—and directed official and popular attention to this new, notable champion of justice. Zola himself was at once put on trial and found guilty; but against this sentence he appealed, so that execution of his year's sentence did not immediately follow. At the new trial at Versailles application was made to prove the whole of "J'Accuse," instead of the three lines on which the charge was formulated—turning it thereby from any possible consideration of the Dreyfus Affair—but this was refused. Zola and his counsel thereupon quitted the court, allowing judgment to go by default. That same evening he left for England, as advised by friends, so that the sentence by default might not be signified to him personally and the Affair might be kept open. One of those present at the council of war that determined on this course, it is of interest to note, was "The Tiger," M. Clemenceau.

In England Zola stayed first in London, and then when the hue-and-cry was raised, in different places in the neighbourhood, finally at Upper Norwood. He soon settled down to his literary work, despite his anxiety about the fate of the negotiations for a revision of the Dreyfus Affair. For almost a year he remained in exile—until he received word that a fresh court-martial was to be held on Captain Dreyfus, then confined on Devil's Island. But again the verdict went against Dreyfus, a decision that was received with amazement throughout the world, and in Britain led to threats to boycott the forthcoming Exhibition in Paris. A few days later, however, the unhappy Dreyfus received a pardon from the President, M. Loubet, though Zola and his friends declared they would continue the battle until he should be fully rehabilitated.

This was the last great effort of his life. Reconsideration of the case was still pending, on account of a deliberate policy of procrastination, when Zola's death occurred in 1902 under tragic circumstances. After a summer spent at his residence at Médan, he moved to his town house, and on the morning after his installation there, was found dead through suffocation, due to a defective chimney. Professor Phelps describes the scene with somewhat brutal force and some inaccuracy: "It is a great pity that Zola could not have lived to describe his own death; for the manner of his death would not only have interested him, it would have made a splendid chapter in any one of his experimental novels. It will be remembered that he died of suffocation in his sleep; he was found, in the morning, lying half out of bed, his face on the floor buried in his own vomit."¹ As was shown, had Zola been able to relieve himself in the manner described, it is probable that his life would have been saved. But it was a death such as he who had looked so much on suffering had wished—quite sudden.

Even in death there were not wanting those who sought still to libel him, especially by the contemptible suggestion that he had committed suicide because he had discovered Dreyfus to be really guilty; while one paper declared with all solemnity that God has stifled Zola in punishment for his sins! And there was opposition to the proposal that he should be accorded a national funeral, but this was unavailing. Among those present in the great concourse that gathered at the famous Montmartre cemetery was Captain Dreyfus, a touching figure, so

¹ *The Advance of the English Novel*, p. 134.

nobly defended by the dead writer: The chief speech was delivered by Anatole France. One splendid passage epitomizes Zola's life: "He strove to divine, to foresee, a better social state. He desired that an ever increasing number of the human race might be called to happiness in the world. He set his hopes on the human mind, on science. He awaited from new powers of machinery the progressive enfranchisement of toiling humanity. A sincere realist, he was nevertheless an ardent idealist. In grandeur, his work can only be compared to that of Tolstoy. At the two extremities of European thought the lyre has raised two vast ideal cities. Both are generous and pacific; but whereas Tolstoy's is the city of resignation, Zola's is the city of work."

J.A.R.

Latter Day Saints.

A FEW weeks ago I started out on a journey through the most beautiful part of God's Own Country (to avoid mistakes let me say at once, I refer to the United States of America). I have been to the City of the Angles (Los Angeles the home of Aimee Semple McPherson), and to Salt Lake City, where Brigham Young, his twenty-nine wives and his fifty-two children lived.

The Angelus Temple was deserted. The fair briber of judges was absent. The lady who said she was kidnapped was not at home. The most successful female evangelist of all time was in England.

All California was excited about the Presidential election. Hoover the Quaker was being elected to a position which no conscientious Quaker could fill: he is now Commander-in-Chief of the American war forces. Throughout California I found every form of religious bigotry opposing the candidature of the Roman Catholic Al. Smith. It is a source of satisfaction to know that Hoover and his immediate circle refused to countenance the virulent Protestant anti-Smith crusade. The fact remains that every evangelical pulpit was a centre of anti-Smith political fighting throughout the land.

Utah supported Hoover. The "Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints" is apparently Protestant, but I did not observe any special Mormon propaganda on either side. I was in Salt Lake City a week before the election. A prominent Mormon was speaking in favour of Smith, but it was evidently an exceptional case. Still, it showed that the Mormons were not politically bigoted like most of the Christian sects.

I doubt if the "Latter Day Saints" are recognized by Christians as a really *Christian* sect. Their fellow-Christians are called "Gentiles" by the Mormons, so it would seem that honours are even. The Mormons graciously "believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly"; they make no similar qualification in regard to their own sacred book, but proclaim "we believe the Book of Mormons to be the Word of God."

To the Freethinker, Salt Lake City is quite as "sacred," dignified and interesting as any other centre of religious rule. Its secret rites are no more secret than the freemasonry which it is said to have copied. The Mormon headquarters are newer than the Vatican, or Lambeth Palace, but are no farther from God on that account. The Temple at Salt Lake City, architecturally, is no doubt inferior to St. Peters, or St. Pauls, but even architecturally it is not to be despised. It took forty years to build, its height is about 200 feet, its width 118 feet, and it occupies 21,850 area.

Christian symbols are conspicuously absent from

the Mormon Temple. Astronomical and agricultural representations appear, and instead of crosses and crucifixes, you see the Angel Moroni (the gentleman who brought the famous gold plates to the Mormon Saint Joseph Smith).

There is quite as much evidence to prove the "authenticity" and genuineness of the Book of Mormon as there is to prove the truth of the Holy Bible. The Book of Mormon is not so ancient as the latter, it lacks the splendid "padding" which makes the Bible fascinating, it has none of the resonant English of King James's Bible except where Mormon himself borrowed from the 1811 version.

Mormon was a bit of a plagiarist. His "plot" is said to have been taken wholesale from a contemporary romance. This is denied by Mormons and cannot be proved, any more than "Hiawatha" can be satisfactorily disposed of as a conscious copy of the Finnish epic. But the many passages which Mormon copied from Shakespeare, the Bible and the Westminster Confession suggest a reasonable doubt as to the hoary antiquity of the "gold plates." It was awkward too, to find the "mariner's compass" anticipated by centuries.

If any Christian thinks he can dispose of the Book of Mormon thus easily, he will find himself similarly compelled to throw away his own "impregnable rock of Holy Scripture."

The magnificent "Tabernacle," a building possessing the most perfect acoustics of any of its size anywhere, is well worth a visit. I heard a concert there, and afterwards enjoyed testing its acoustic properties. I stood in the pulpit so often occupied by Brigham Young.

The early history of Mormonism is a mixture of heroism, martyrdom and fanatical religious wickedness: quite a small-scale repetition of the history of other religions. Artemus Ward has made us acquainted with the amusing side of the early Mormon life. Joseph Smith's revelation was in 1820-1823, the Book of Mormon was published in 1829, in 1843 Smith had a new revelation, this time in favour of plural wives. In 1844 he was lynched by a mob, at the age of thirty-nine.

The subsequent history of Mormonism deserves study. Brigham Young was not only a powerful religious leader, he was a very far-seeing "statesman" of a sort. He designed a wonderful city which compares well with any modern city, he organized a State to be subservient to his Church, he created councils, buildings, societies and methods of government which prove him to have been a real genius.

The Mormons have had to face enormous opposition and criticism. It is rather natural to find that much of the criticism is very antiquated. Since the Mormons renounced polygamy (it is best to say "plurality of wives," for the Mormons never did believe in plurality of husbands) there is little that an outsider can see to differentiate Mormonism from Catholicism, Greek Churchism, or Methodism.

Polygamy, incest, the "spilling of blood," and other allegations against Mormons have no current applicability. The well-known "Mountain Meadows" massacre was no worse than the St. Bartholomew's Day and other classical Christian crimes.

There are 7,000,000 Mormons in the world to-day. Utah is still predominantly a Mormon State, although Salt Lake City is said to have only 30 per cent Mormon population. In Salt Lake City there is quite a large Roman Catholic colony as well as churches of all denominations.

If all the crimes of Mormons in early days were proved up to the hilt, every one of them could be defended from the Christian Bible and Christian

precedent—including polygamy and every act of persecution and exclusive dealing. To-day the Mormons have to justify their separation from the "Gentiles." They have copied and exaggerated primitive Christian doctrines and rites, and in so doing have once more emphasized the fact that all religions are religions of death rather than of life.

The "Dance of Death" was the keynote of Christianity in the Middle Ages, and the worship and study of, and preparation for death have always been the chief object, if not the origin, of all religions. Mormonism has made Death the important feature of its Secret Temple, its philosophy and its rites, ceremonies and ritual.

This costly "Temple" (to which admission is restricted to certain approved and recommended "Saints") is largely devoted to the affairs of the dead. There are many Mormons who have never been inside its walls. "Gentiles" are excluded from all its ceremonies. Even Mormons may be married elsewhere . . . for life. Within the sacred secret Temple, true believers may be married for the life beyond the grave—for eternity!

Nearly a million pounds sterling has been spent on this one building alone. In its "font," not only are believers immersed for their own salvation, but they can be immersed a hundred times (twice a day for life if they like) in the names of dead people who might otherwise remain in hell for ever.

The fact that "marriage by proxy" is also celebrated, opens the door to curious conjectures. I quote from the official guide-book, published by the Latter Day Saints, and readers must draw their own conclusions:—

The Latter Day Saints are made to rejoice in the ceremony of marriage performed in the Temples, by which, under the authority held by one officiating, the man and woman are married for time and for all eternity. The same ordinance is performed in behalf of men and women who are dead.

No marriages of living persons are nor can be, performed without licences duly issued therefor by county clerks of the State.

. . . The dead, however, cannot be baptized . . . consequently that ordinance is performed for them vicariously. Other essential ordinances have to be performed in like manner . . . Vicarious work is acceptable unto the Eternal Father.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Correspondence.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I ask a query with regard to the people who prayed for money to pay their Doctor's Bill; did the doctor get the cash? M.B.

SIR,—Apropos your article in the current issue of the *Freethinker*, on the undiluted bilge published by the *Daily Express*, are we to conclude from the extraordinary pains taken to keep Mr. James Douglas on the Earth, that the Lord hath no need of him?

SCRUTATOR.

It is wrong, always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence. If a man, holding a belief, which he was taught in childhood, or persuaded of afterwards, keeps down and pushes away any doubts which arise about it in his mind, purposely avoids the reading of books and the company of men that call in question or discuss it, and regards as impious those questions which cannot easily be asked without disturbing it—the life of that man is one long sin against mankind.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Obituary.

MR. EDWIN WILSON.

LONDON Freethought lost a familiar and respected figure in the person of Mr. Edwin Wilson, of Chenies Mews, W.C., on November 27. Mr. Wilson would have reached the age of eighty-seven had he lived but a few days longer, and was one of the oldest of London Freethinkers. He outgrew his religious beliefs at a very early age, and ever afterwards Freethought had in its ranks no more untiring advocate than he. There was hardly a meeting of any importance that he did not attend, and at the recent debate at the Caxton Hall he was present, his face alight with pleasure, following every point with the keenness and appreciation of a man half his age. He was a great admirer of the late G. W. Foote, and probably never missed one of his lectures in London. At the open air demonstrations that were given from time to time, he always undertook to supply, free of charge, the horses and wagonettes that served as a platform. There was no more assiduous distributor of literature than he, and if one were to calculate the quantities he distributed it would take a good sized wagon to accommodate the bulk.

A man of keen and inquiring intelligence, he allied with that a spirit of independence. Nature built him for a real Freethinker, and he lived up to the character. In addition he was dowered with a kindly disposition, which, while it might be taken advantage of occasionally, brought with it its own compensations. He secured and retained the respect of a very wide circle of friends and acquaintances, and all of these will, when the news becomes known, offer their tribute of sympathy to his family, and a tribute of respect and affection to so loyal a friend and follower of the Best of Causes.

The cremation took place at Golder's Green, on Friday, November 30, in the presence of a large number of mourners. Mr. E. C. Saphin delivered an impressive address in which, after giving a brief sketch of his career, he said, "Life to him was sweet, sweeter because death had lost its terrors. He viewed death as a part of nature—as natural as birth and growth and as necessary. Not a penalty for living, but the result of living. It came as rest after toil; as sleep after activity; but the sleep from which there is no waking.

"We are asked, 'What consolation can we offer?' We reply, all that is worth having. We offer no false hopes; but we entertain no false fears. To us one is as groundless as the other.

"An ancient legend illustrates our position. In a vast lake there were two islands. One the island of life, the other the island of death. Those living on the island of life could never die. Yet aged inhabitants as they grew weary of life were seen entering a boat and steering for the island of death, and as soon as their boat touched the shore they were at rest. To reason the lesson is plain and unanswerable: The individual dies—the race persists. The worker passes—the work goes on. The life and work of each is preserved in the memory of others. We live so long as those who knew us live—to ask for more is vanity.

"Our sorrow is sincere, but not stunned to helplessness.

"We mourn our loss, not his. His life is ended, ours is emptier. To his character and principles we pay the homage of loving remembrance and loyal adherence, is emptier. To his virtues and to his character, we say—Live on. To his physical remains we say—Farewell."

IMAGINATION AND REASON.

A quick and lively imagination every reformer must have, otherwise he could never be a reformer. A devotion to reasoning is not inconsistent with imagination—in its better aspects reasoning cannot go on in the absence of imagination; and the great imaginative minds of the world have built their ideals upon the most rigorous reasoning. To take any kind of fiction for truth is not readily exercising imagination; fiction is often accepted for truth because people have not imagination enough to grasp its nature as fiction.

National Secular Society.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1928.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Mrs. C. G. Quinton, Miss K. B. Kough, Messrs. J. G. Dobson, W. J. W. Easterbrook, C. G. Quinton, F. P. Corrigan, A. B. Moss, H. R. Clifton, R. H. Rosetti, H. Silvester, and F. Mann (Secretary).

Minutes of the last meeting of the Executive, held on October 26, were read, approved and signed.

A report of the death of Mr. S. Samuels was received. The Executive expressed its profound regret, and its high appreciation of Mr. Samuels' long and valuable service to the Freethought Movement, and to the Society as a member of the Executive.

A report was received of the death of Mr. E. Wilson.

Resolved: That the Executive learn with deep regret of the death of Mr. E. Wilson, and desires to place on record its high appreciation of his unremitting labour for the advancement of the Freethought Movement.

New members were received for the Birmingham, South London, and West London Branches, and for the Parent Society. Permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the Society at Houghton-le-Spring.

The monthly Financial Statement was presented and adopted.

Correspondence was received from the Darlington, Chester-le-Street, and Newcastle Branches, and from members of the Society.

Reports of lectures to outside bodies requesting visits from the Society lecturers were received, and matters in connexion therewith considered.

The Executive considered the arrangements for the Society's Annual Dinner at the Midland Hotel on January 19, 1929, and the Secretary was instructed.

The Executive decided to meet on Friday, December 21, at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting then terminated.

FREDERICK MANN,
Secretary.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

OWING to the sudden indisposition of Mr. Mann, for which regret was expressed, the Branch had to fall back on its own resources, which were considerably augmented by a lady visitor, who delivered some arguments on the Land Question with vigour, and evoked an interesting discussion, chiefly between Mr. Palmer and the Socialist section of the audience, which was conducted with the greatest good humour on both sides.

To-day (December 9), Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe will be the speaker. Opening a discussion on "Should Workers Have Equal Wages?"

Some Pioneer Press Publications—

THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH. By CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Future Life, with a Study of Spiritualism from the Standpoint of the New Psychology.

Paper Covers, 2s., postage 1½d.; Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d., postage 2d.

THE CASE AGAINST THEISM. By GEORGE WHITEHEAD. A Reasonable View of God.

Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATHIA. By M. M. MANGASARIAN. id., postage ½d.

THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES. By A. F. THORN. Portrait. 3d., postage 1d.

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. By W. MANN. With a Chapter on Infidel Death-Beds. 3d., postage 1d.

Can be obtained from:

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

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.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (Emerson Club, 1 Little George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in English, by Dr. Dhiren Sen.—"Psychology and Ethics." All are invited.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—"Should Workers Have Equal Wages?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. Edward Smith (National Council for Abolition of Capital Punishment)—"Should Capital Punishment be Abolished?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Moral Revolt of Youth."

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

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY ("The Orange Tree Hotel," Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Mr. Howell Smith, B.A.—"The Religious Outlook of the World To-day."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Eclipse Restaurant, 4 Mill Street, Conduit Street, W.1): 7.30, Maurice Maubrey—"The Kingdom of Man."

OUTDOOR.

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.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart; 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30. Various lecturers. The *Freethinker* is on sale outside Hyde Park during our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden.

WOOLWICH (Market Place): 7.30, Each Thursday—Mr. F. Mann—A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BELFAST (Proposed) Branch N.S.S. (I.L.P. Hall, 48 York Street): 3.30, Mr. A. Ellis—"Is Freethought Possible?"

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Stills' Restaurant, Bristol Street, Opposite Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. Charles Smith—A Lecture.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—7.15, Mr. W. Raine—"Physical Psychology." Chairman: Mr. F. Brown.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. D. I. Irvine—"Is Modern Spiritualism a Help to Human Progress?" Discussion Circle (The Hall, 83 Ingram Street): Thursday, December 6, at 8 p.m. Lecture on—"The Irish in Scotland," by "One of Them."

HOUGHTON (Proposed Branch): Tuesday, December 11, at 7.30, Mr. T. Brown—"The Solar System."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Norman Angell—"Our Economic Ignorance—Some Suggestions." Admission free. Collection. Questions and Discussion.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, E. E. Stafford—"Failure of Christianity."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): 3.0 and 6.30, Mr. Geo. Whitehead (London). Subjects: "Birth Control and Religion," and "The New View of Spiritualism." Questions and Discussion.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street): 3.0 and 7.0, Mr. F. Mann—Subjects: "Religion—the Enemy," and "Religion and Life." Admission Free. Questions and Discussion. Reserved seats, 6d. and 1s.

OUTDOOR.

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



PROCLAIMS THE MAN

“THE apparel oft proclaims the man.” So said Shakespeare—and it does; does it not? The tea you drink, the hair cream you use, and the books you read are all advertised in these pages, and in your service, or possession, proclaim you the Freethinker that you are. How about your clothes? If you saw our name tab on another man's suit, would you doubt for a minute what he was? Would you, yourself, be ashamed to be thus proclaimed? Proud, you say.

Very well then. You want good clothes, well-fitting clothes, and moderately-priced clothes. We guarantee to give you these—we guarantee absolute satisfaction. This Christmas, too, we want to do rather more than we have done for the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust. So if Freethinkers give us orders to the value of at least £20 in each of the next five weeks, we shall give £8 to the Endowment Trust Fund. We offered you five per cent for yourself, and you did not take it. Make thoroughly sure that the *Freethinker* gets it. Write for your patterns at once, either from those opposite, or B to E, suits from 57/-; F to H, suits from 79/-; or I to M, suits from 105/-.

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

- D & E Range, prices from 48/-
- F & G Range, prices from 60/-
- H & I Range, prices from 68/-
- J to L Range, prices from 77/-

Patterns are sent out on the understanding that they will be returned to us. We pay postages both ways to all inland and North Irish addresses.

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

SOME PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS:

- SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION, By ROBERT ARCH. A Commonsense View of Religion and its Influence on Social Life. 4d., postage ½d.
- RELIGION AND SEX. By CHAPMAN COHEN. Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development. 6s., postage 6d.
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