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Two Kinds of Truth.

WHEN the Christian Church was at its full strength it had a short and simple method of dealing with scientific teachings. If they agreed with Church teachings they were allowable. If they were not in agreement they were false and were suppressed. So far all was simple and clear. But at the close of the Dark Ages, Mohammedan science and the revival of the Greek philosophy were making inroads on the province of the Church; so a new and ingenious theory was evolved. It was decided that a statement might be false in theology, and yet true in science, or *vice-versa*. This was useful, and in the circumstances suited both parties. It gave students of nature greater freedom than they otherwise would have had, and it enabled the Church to "save its face" by permitting a teaching it could not altogether suppress.

From another point of view the accommodation was unfortunate. It led to the establishment of one kind of truth, or canon of truth, for the pulpit and another for the study, and we have still with us this practice of having one rule of intellectual guidance where religion is concerned and another for secular matters. The clergy will make statements concerning religion, or where religion is concerned which they would not dare to make in other connexions; while we have prominent laymen teaching sound science, and at the same time professing beliefs that would almost disgrace a Hottentot. They do not say that a thing may be true in theology and false in science, but they act as though they believe it. The two kinds of truth are still with us.

* * *

Fact and Fiction.

Professor Eddington's plea for religion in life is substantially a new form of this old vicious theory. He does not say that science supplies a basis for religion, neither does he say that statements that are false in science may be true in religion; what he does is to mark off a certain sphere of human experience, which he

says lies outside the scope of scientific method. There is a region in which scientific laws apply, but there is another region to which they have no application, and this region belongs to religion. Even this is not new. We already have Sir Oliver Lodge contrasting orthodox science, which will have nothing to do with his spook hunting, and an unorthodox science where spirits have full play. There is the twaddle of the ordinary preacher about the unique character of "religious experience," concerning which the most ignorant Salvationist is a greater authority than the most profound philosopher; and we have had Herbert Spencer who gave to religion all that is not known and must forever remain unknown, and to science all that is known or ever will be known. Professor Eddington carries on the sense of historic continuity in warning folk that if they want a religion they must have it outside the range of science.

Professor Eddington's plan is to assert the existence of a world where scientific laws apply, and another—a world of "values," where they have not and cannot have application. There is, he admits, "a kind of unity between the material and the spiritual worlds . . . but it is not the scheme of natural law which will provide the cement"; and "to those who have any intimate acquaintance with the laws of chemistry and physics, the suggestion that the spiritual world could be ruled by laws of allied character, is as preposterous as the suggestion that a nation could be ruled by the laws of grammar." The last sentence is from his lecture on "Science and the Unseen World." In his larger work, *The Nature of the Physical World*, there is the more cautious statement that, "I have generally identified the domain of physics with the domain of exact science. Strictly speaking the two are not synonymous. We can imagine a science arising which has no contact with the usual phenomena and laws of physics, which yet admits of the same kind of exact treatment."

Putting the statements together, we have as pretty a mass of confusion as one could wish. If there are really two kinds of worlds in which man lives—the physical and the spiritual, then unless there is some kind of unity between them man's living in both would be a sheer impossibility. If there is a unity, the existence of identical conditions—to some extent—is admitted; and the possibility of framing "Laws" is conceded. If the world outside the domain of physics is conceivable as admitting the same kind of exact treatment, then the legitimacy of applying the scientific method thereto is admitted. Finally, one can assume that Professor Eddington is quite unaware of the fact that the phenomena of the "spiritual world" have been analysed with tolerable completeness, and its phenomena reduced to the same kind of general laws that describe other aspects of human experience. Professor Eddington seems to be exhibiting the usual faults of a man who steps from a platform

on which he speaks with authority, to deal with matters that he does not appear to have effectively studied. If, for example, he will take up a work such as Professor Leuba's *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, he will see that it is possible to affiliate the religious states of mind to other mental states that are in no way connected with religion.

* * *

The Rabbit and Hat Trick.

Let me take a concrete example given by Professor Eddington, and which is offered as a decisive disproof of the assumption that scientific laws can be made to apply to things of the "spirit." Suppose, he says that on November 11—Armistice Day—a visitor from another planet is walking along the streets and is engaged in studying the phenomena of sound in a great city. Suddenly the noise ceases. The cessation may be accounted for on purely physical—or as Professor Eddington says, on scientific grounds. The noise of vehicles ceases because a brake is applied by the pressure of a foot, the pressure of a foot depends upon the movements of certain muscles, the contraction of the muscle by certain mechanical or electrical impulses travelling along a nerve. Each motion has its physical antecedent. But can anyone assume that therefore they have a complete and satisfactory explanation of the two minutes silence on Armistice Day? The visitor has apprehended the reality underlying the silence so far as it is a matter of atoms and electrons. But is that enough? Of course it is not enough, and Professor Eddington has so stated the question as to leave room for only one answer. There is really nothing clever in getting the rabbit out of the hat, although that is the part that creates astonishment. The really clever thing is to get the rabbit into the hat. Anyone can pull it out.

Only it must be put in so that no one can see how it is done. But in the case of Professor Eddington, the rabbit is put into the hat in full view of the audience—at least to such of the audience as keep their eyes open. To put the matter quite plainly, he has suppressed some of the factors in order to show that the sum does not work properly. Quite certainly, if an observer of the two minutes silence were to consider only the physical factors which lead to the cessation of noise at that particular moment, he would not reach a full explanation of what was before him. But in this case the physical factors are subordinate. So, giving our visitor the credit of common sense, and not as merely being animated by the desire to provide room for a religion, he might argue that some cause must have led to all these people standing still at a given moment, a cause that was consciously recognized by all. On inquiry he would find that November 11 marked the official close of a deadly war that had lasted four years; that to stand silent and uncovered was a quite common method of showing great respect to the dead, and that the mere pressure of public opinion was enough to secure conformity of action in this respect once it had been decided on. Pursuing his inquiries along these lines, the visitor would have little to marvel at in the two minutes silence. But he would certainly never have been so foolish as to look for the cause of the concerted movements of millions of living beings in the operations of purely physical causes. Only anti-materialists are foolish enough to attempt such things. Materialists are far more sensible and far more scientific in their investigations.

* * *

What is Science?

The fundamental fallacy of Professor Eddington is his restriction of "science" to physics, because that happens to be the direction in which what one may

call mass measurement is possible. It is true he often qualifies this by the expression "exact science," but whether the subjects with which we are dealing allow our calculations to be exact or only approximately so does not seriously matter. I will deal with what Professor Eddington considers to be the fundamental dividing line between the world of science and—I suppose one must say non-science—next week. At present I want to challenge, very emphatically, the practice by such men as Professor Eddington of restricting "Science" to things that can be measured with a foot-rule or weighed with a pair of scales. That involves a very serious misunderstanding of the meaning of science, and a serious misdirection of popular scientific education. Science is not merely—as is so often assumed to be the case—the acquisition of knowledge, neither is it, as we have been authoritatively informed, ordered knowledge. All the knowledge in the world does not make a man scientific, and all possible arrangement or organization of knowledge, will not make a man scientific. Knowledge is the raw material of science, as it is the raw material of everything, but science begins—as the Greeks long ago saw—when we have framed "laws" which correctly describe the movements or behaviour of things.

Now I emphatically deny that the methods of science, the principle of scientific investigation, can be applied only in terms of measurement or weight, or velocity. It can be applied everywhere, in every direction. There is no aspect of human experience, whether it is watching a stone roll down a hill-side, or a "mystic" mouthing the inherited interpretation of his distorted mind, that cannot become the subject of scientific inquiry, or which we can understand in its absence. Professor Eddington says, "We all know there are regions of human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics." Well, in its literal form that is simply not true. No man with a knowledge of the nature of human quality will assert that a man's feelings and thoughts are independent of his physical structure, the condition of his secretory organs, or the influence of his social heredity. In the second place, let us assume that the world of spirit—the world of mental life and aspiration—lies absolutely apart from the physical world. Does that prove they are outside the region of positive science? Not in the least. You cannot, of course, apply a foot rule to an emotion or a thought, you cannot weigh a feeling. But this means only that one must frame another "law," one which will do for the world of thought and feeling what physical laws have done for the world of mass and momentum.

Space prevents my dealing in detail with this point now. As I have pointed out in my *Materialism Re-stated*, the world which gives science its material is the world of human experience. It is the task of science to classify and arrange that world of experience and frame laws that describe its "behaviour" in such a way that will help us to understand what is going on around us, and to confidently anticipate what—in general outline—the future will look like. Of course, we cannot explain everything in terms of physics; of course, there are regions where the laws of physics are not wholly applicable. But this means only that different aspects of human experience must be explained in different terms. It is this necessity that creates the need for new scientific laws, and for the modification of accepted ones. Once again, I have to express my surprise that a layman should have to point out to a leading scientist an elementary truth of scientific method, and to explain that things that are different are not the same, and therefore cannot be described in identical terms. Professor Eddington would have been saved a deal of trouble had he borne these two things in mind.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Mr. Smith Takes a Hand.

"But for the Pilgrim Fathers, where would Montmartre be to-day?"—D. B. W. Lewis.

"The negation of God is the beginning of wisdom."
Schopenhauer.

"Public opinion is too often publicans' opinion."
Thos. Huxley.

WHEN I was in Fleet Street it used to be a joke that when the football correspondent was out of work he was given employment in writing articles on theology. There appears to have been some truth in this jest, for recently a London newspaper featured an article on religion by Mr. R. Cove-Smith, the England Rugby International. So pleased was the editor with this piece of work that, in addition to the boldest type headlines, he published a large portrait of the footballer. To inspire confidence, Mr. Smith was attired in his "Sunday best," and looked like a bank clerk rather than a sportsman.

This was a clever stroke, for in an article on Christian apologetics, it would never do to stress unduly the superiority of brawn over brains. Editors, however, are used to this sort of thing. Whenever a clergyman runs off with a barmaid, or has a difficulty in adjusting his church's finance, the wily editors describe the offender as a plain "mister," or else uses the time-honoured tag, "said to be in holy orders." Of course, Mr. Smith is above all sorts of reproach, and is he not one of the champions of Christendom?

Mr. Smith is a religious optimist, and looks at the world through a stained-glass window. He is brave, too, for he is not in the least afraid of broad and sweeping generalizations. This is how a sportsman goes over the top in defence of Orthodoxy:—

"None of us are primarily irreligious; we are incurably religious."

Mr. Smith is himself religious from the spats upwards, but the world is a bigger thing than he seems to imagine. There are other people in it beside footballers, Rugby and otherwise. So I glance a second time at Mr. Smith's pontifical utterance: "None of us are primarily irreligious."

What is all this but "mouthing and coxcombry?" Children are not born in a Salvation Army uniform, or in a Scout's "rig-out." The germ-plasm itself cannot be labelled: "Church of England," "Catholic," "Swedenborgian," or "Muggletonian." The exceptional anxiety of priests of all denominations for "religious education" is due to the fact that theological ideas can be imparted to children. So much is this the case that if a large number of the scholars in a Hard-shell Baptist Sunday School joined the Latter Day Saints, or became Secularists, the subscribers would ask for their money back, and use heated language in the process.

"Mankind," declares Mr. Smith the footballer, "must have a god of some sort." It is a terrible necessity. A brass deity made in Birmingham is better than none at all. La! La! An insanitary barbarian praying to a carved cocoanut is, therefore; superior to Herbert Spencer or Schopenhauer. Which, as old Euclid puts it, "is absurd."

According to Mr. Smith, the religious man selects a God because he desires "something helpful." When a Christian prays, "Our Father," he agrees with the witty Frenchman who described a father as a banker provided by Nature." The Christian desires so many things beside money, and regards his deity as a magnified Santa Claus, who showers material benefits on the faithful. "Give us this day our daily bread," is a most earthly aspiration for a believer who is supposed to have his heart set on

celestial things "in a beautiful land above," and whose faith is assumed to be without money and without price.

In a flamboyant passage, Mr. Smith shows that footballers extend their reading beyond the pages of *The Sporting Times* and *Comic Cuts*:—

"The teachings of Confucius, and the Buddha, and of Islam are in themselves testimonies of man's age-long need for religion, and for something of abiding value."

If this argument is worth a straw it should apply also to the *Book of Mormon*, *The Writings of Joanna Southcott*, and even *Old Moore's Almanac*, although which one of the six editions is "authorized," I have never been able to discover. Besides, *The Analects of Confucius* is not exactly like the teachings of Mohammed; and the Buddhist Scriptures are as different from the others as chalk is unlike cheese. Mr. Smith is as obliging as a sugar-daddy in matters of religion, and seems to think that the ethics of Epictetus, and the want of ethics of the beachcombers of the South Sea Islands equally prove the "abiding value" of the State organized religion in this country, and the saintliness of its sixteen thousand clergy.

Science is not Mr. Smith's strong point, although he likes to use a scientific vocabulary. Listen! It sounds like a fox-trot by Ma Eddy:—

The whole process of evolution is an aspiration towards the Ideal, and man's half-conscious groping after beauty, wisdom, truth and goodness is everywhere evidence of His Presence."

This shines out like a half-a-crown in a collection plate, but I have serious doubts as to its truth. If a pious cannibal clubs an unfortunate missionary of another faith, his ideal is not beauty, wisdom, truth, and goodness, but the prospect of a good dinner, and a further claim on the deceased's personal property.

Mr. Smith is like one of Shakespeare's characters. He protests too much. This persistent insistence on the necessity of belief in a god, or gods, is simply the professional patter of the priests. Gods are far more necessary to priests than to laymen, for they pose as their representatives, and make a fat living in the process. One needs to be no more than an instructed citizen in a civilized country to perceive that Priestcraft is a nuisance. It absorbs umpteen millions of money which could be devoted to far better purposes, and it also wastes man-power. Even priests could be far more usefully employed than in playing the fool for a living, and not doing it honestly. A man who grins through a horse collar and makes you laugh is doing you a service, but a man who pretends to powers neither he nor anyone else possesses and makes a collection afterwards is a humbug and a nuisance.

Football is a delightful and invigorating game, and Mr. Smith would do well to stick to it, and leave theology to the professional champions of Christendom. He knows more about sport than the Pope of Rome and the General of the Salvation Army put together. Why should he not be content? Footballers are at least men. If Mr. Smith observes closely, he will find that the large majority of the priests of the world are neither men nor women, but only mules. Indeed, there are more things in heaven and earth than are known to the holders of championship belts, and the owners of sports' medals and trophies. If Mr. Smith must preach, let him do it at home. "Did you ever hear me preach Charles?" asked Coleridge of Lamb. "My dear fellow, I never heard you do anything else," was the reply. And the great Coleridge was worth listening to, which is more than can be said for Mr. Smith the footballer.

MIMNERMUS.

Leo Tolstoy.

(Continued from page 516.)

Tolstoy's mother died when he was two years old, his father dying seven years later. His aunt, Tatiana, then undertook his care and training, and thanks to her, Tolstoy always looked back on his childhood as the happiest period of his life.

Tourgenef, Tolstoy's great literary rival, declared of Tolstoy: "This man never loved anybody." But Tolstoy always spoke of Tatiana with love and gratitude. She was probably the only woman he ever sincerely loved, for she stood apart from that sensuality with which Tolstoy connected women in the mass, and which, while, or because, it so violently attracted him, also aroused his fear and hatred. His aunt was never troubled, she was always: "peaceful, sweet, submissive and loving," which Tolstoy never was at any time. She trained him up in the Christian faith, and it is only natural that it was to that faith he turns in the crisis of his life, although by that time he had disemboweled it of all its doctrines, dogmas, and supernaturalism, and accepted only its moral teachings.

No man has left behind such a mass of material from which we can judge of his life and character as Tolstoy has done. There are his private diaries, reaching back to his boyhood. There is the voluminous life, written by his friend and translator, Aylmer Maude. There are also a multitude of letters, and, above all his novels, where, under one character or another, he has portrayed the inward conflicts in which he himself was the sufferer. As Stefan Zweig observes: "during sixty years of stupendous labour, he produces no work which does not contain a portrait of himself, nor one in which this portrait is adequate to his complexity. We study them all, novels and tales and diaries and letters, if we are to get a veracious likeness. In the mass they give the most many-sided and most carefully elaborated, the most vigilant and continuous example of self-portraiture achieved by any one in our century."¹²

He appears in the character of "Olenin," in *The Cossacks*. As Levin, in *Anna Karenina*. As Nekhlyudov in *Resurrection*. As Pozdnyshev in *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Of this latter character, Mr. Fausset observes:—

Only a man who had experienced himself the hatred, the stark alienation, inherent in animal passion could have created a Pozdnyshev. And so *The Kreutzer Sonata* is in essence a self-indictment and a confession. It was of himself that Tolstoy wrote: "As soon as a man approaches a woman he succumbs to her stupefying influence and becomes intoxicated and crazy. I used formerly to feel uncomfortable and uneasy when I saw a lady dressed up for a ball, but now I am simply frightened, and I plainly see her as something dangerous and illicit."¹³

Tolstoy was all his life obsessed with this fear of woman. His fear was in proportion to the attraction which women had for him: "as he himself acknowledges," says Janko Lavrin, "he succumbed to the temptations of the 'flesh' only too often. Hence his consistent hatred of woman even after his marriage, in which he had thirteen children. Like every fanatical Puritan, Tolstoy hated in woman his own suppressed sensuality, of which he was continually afraid."¹⁴ He also hated and condemned

music because of its power to arouse sensual feelings:—

he was afraid of music, which stirred too readily the waves of feeling, aroused too forcibly the blooded passions. "Music has a terribly powerful effect on me," he declared. . . . For this anti-Hellene, this Christian extremist, this monkish zealot, woman and music were instinct with evil, because, by awakening sensuality, they tended to turn men away "from the inborn qualities of courage, resolution, reasonableness, justice"; because, as Father Tolstoy preached in later days, they provoked us "to the sin of fleshiness." . . . Music was a charm which lulled the master's will, and the "beast" thereupon was ready to seize opportunity. Let a woman appear, and the whole pack of the bloodthirsty passions began to bay, to rage against the iron bars of their prison. Tolstoy's rabidly monkish anxiety concerning matters of sex, his fanatical detestation of even the most cheerful natural sensuality, warrant the inference that within a fierce virility, a passion like that of a rutting stag, lay hid. We know that in youth, passion led him into the wildest excesses, so that he described himself to Chekoff as having been "an indefatigable whoremonger"; that thereafter, for fifty years, the beast was kept in the cage, walled in there, but alive. His writings, characteristically puritanical, show in one thing only that the exuberant sensuality of youth remained exuberant throughout his prime and far on into old age. His acute anxiety concerning matters of sex betrays him; his attitude of the hermit who has fled into the wilderness to escape the promptings of the flesh, the ultra-Christian ascetic, quaking with terror as he forcibly turns away his eyes from "Woman," from the temptress who is in very truth nothing more than the phantom form assumed by his own immeasurable lusts, reveal the story of his inward struggle.¹⁵

Again, the aristocratic society in which he moved, revolted him, with its cynical indifference to the sufferings of the multitude from whom it drew the wealth which it so lavishly squandered on extravagant luxuries. Moreover, all this vast expenditure brought no satisfaction in the end, and he raised the cry of Rousseau, that civilization is a fraud and a curse, which must be discarded. The old cry of the disillusioned and disappointed, "Back to Nature." Back to the primitive life of the peasant. These theories, says Zweig: "are nothing more than an attack upon the joy of life, are the expression of an ascetic desire to lapse from civilization into an impossible primitive Christianity, as conceived by the imagination of a man who was no longer a Christian and had therefore transcended Christianity." Who believes, he asks, that "abstinence is the very essence of life," and that "we should burden ourselves with duties, and regulate our conduct by Bible texts in a way that would drain all the blood from our veins? We live for this world, not for another, and we do not put our trust in an interpreter who knows naught of the procreative and invigorating power of joy." And least of all, he continues: "at the bidding of one who preaches a reactionary and depressing doctrine, who counsels us to withdraw from the town into the steppe, to exchange a life of intellectual activity for one of spiritual dullness. No promise of heavenly bliss will induce us to barter away the bewildering plenitude of our earthly existence for a narrow simplicity. We would rather be 'sinful' than primitive, would rather enjoy our passions than become stupid and biblically devout.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

¹² Zweig: *Adepts in Self-Portraiture*. pp. 261-262.

¹³ Fausset: *Tolstoy: The Inner Drama*.

¹⁴ Janko Lavrin: *Tolstoy: A Psycho-Critical Study*. p. 185.

¹⁵ Zweig: *Adepts in Self-Portraiture*. pp. 227-228.

The Parson and The Parable.

THE one is a study in stupidity, the other in barbarity. A local R.C. clergyman was advertised to preach on "Is there a Hell?" and curious to hear what the average minister had to say on this great question, as recently discussed by great writers in a great daily, I attended the service. There was the usual thin attendance in the large church. I admired the fine organ and the human gains of its construction. I noted two lifeless stained-glass windows. The preacher seemed boyishly naïve, and was eloquent, extempore, dramatic. What majesty of the hand in the wide lawn sleeve. The "bib" kept looking like baby's what-name. One felt almost ashamed to take advantage of so much simplicity. Certainly I had not come to scoff, though as surely not to pray. Indeed, it was a dull wet day, and I was in quite a dull and humble mood, willing to give pulpit and pew the benefit of a doubtful good. But, alas, as the subject unfolded itself, the spirit of the visitor resumed its full stature. So the Church always inspires me, as it would say, in the negative, but, in this instance most positive way. Freethought, the *Freethinker*, was justified of its deicide. The text was from the well-known Dives-Lazarus parable, Luke 16. To me the climax of cruelty here was the pitious plea of the rich man—his only recorded crime that of being rich—"being in torments," for a drop of water shaken from a beggar's finger; this beautiful story was followed by the usual, May God bless the reading of his holy word, and to his name be praise. The preacher went on to affirm his own belief in post-mortem punishment. As a Christian minister he must accept the foundation teaching of Jesus—and, one adds, as a Christian, any other absurdity, and teach it. But as the poorest human being he would revolt at the implication of the parable; this poor "capitalist's" request—being "tormented in this flame"—not for a cup of cold water, but a drop from a beggar's dirty finger, might have melted the heart of the most hardened sinner, much less that of the much vaunted, all-merciful God. C. H. Spurgeon and the Hell-obsessed priests of the Catholic Church could paint nothing more brutal and degrading than this extract from God's holy word—this good Book set apart and high among men as the supreme wisdom of the world outlives a growing humanity and reason, not on its merits, but only by having the way prepared for it in advance from an ancient date. Ignorance and fear were first in the field; solemn pomp and circumstance, in spite of other learning, have awed the people ever since; they were assured they were, and are, and always will be, miserable sinners; many of them are, but most, the great majority, as in the sample parson and Church referred to, but mentally atrophied, stunted, by centuries of religious teaching. The awful doom of Dives, which God said might be theirs, seemed to distress them very little, or the reality of Hell, as for the parson his earnestness and eloquence, etc., were college-bred, the vainglorious varnish of a very little learning. How he would pause, following a platitudinal, as who should say, What a great man am I! as in the one gleam of sense in his sermon, he referred to the hell of conscience suggested by some of the great writers aforesaid, but operative only in the finest natures, a commonplace of philosophy, but uttered with all the precision of a profound reflection. Freethinkers, he said, would be shocked to find that none of the great (adjective always his, not mine) writers denied the reality of a hell—oh, *sancta simplicitas!* but they were not even surprised, being certain beforehand that the writers selected by the great daily would be "safe" regarding this awful stupidity. Certain, also, that no eminent Freethinker would be asked to contribute to the symposium—oh, the sly, but sorry trade!

When the pulpit performance was over—this ancient mystery, fallen on evil days, being found out even by the fools—the final invocation uttered and forgotten, no one was terrified, and only the Atheist edified: yet was there a mysterious uplift, a calming and ennobling of the heart; a mystery to the simple, yet of simple explanation: Church attendance, like similar Secular functions, imposes for the time a certain discipline, order, decorum, restraint, irksomeness which, apart from dogma, induces

a corresponding sense of freedom out of doors: Children know the feeling let loose from school:—

"Away they sped with gamesome minds and souls untouched by sin,"

leaving the moody Eugene Arams to lament their own and other's wickedness. Sin, sin, sin, herein is the burden of the Church's cry, its sole justification; sin, personally committed, or a perpetual legacy for broken laws—"Six thousand years 'fore my creation, through Adam's cause." Sin, saturated in sin the human race, the only antidote the Church and Christ. The preacher modestly confessing himself no superior person—which was all too evident—said if he lived a hundred years he would still be a sinner; but there was always the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ! Sin, sin, sin, and the cheerful message:—

Vain are the hopes the sons of men upon their works have built;

Their hearts by nature are unclean, their actions full of guilt.

But the sublime stupidity of the sermon was the assertion that when a man wanted to commit a crime, or do some ugly or cruel thing, he first "threw away God," just, one supposes, as a lunatic in order to prove a flat earth would throw away the Equator. You cannot throw away God, you can only learn "there ain't no sich person," or at most remain a "reverent agnostic" . . . but I am back amongst the dead, where I was about to consider the living: The rain had ceased, soft lights glowed in the South-West, over-sea. Nature and theology, reason and superstition, the contrast ever disproving the "divine." Crowds on the esplanade, both sexes, all ages, many just let loose from church; all cheerful, the ghostly and minatory all forgot, or seeming quite willing to take their chances in a world to come; meantime, very pleased with this—why will those medicine-men meddlers continue to sow sin and misery, where most only wish to be good and happy? Venial sinners many may be, but in the great bulk heinous criminals are few and far between. And then there are Leopardi's calamities of nature, acts of God, making victims not villains. There is that imaginary, unimaginable, final ferocity of God, the parson's hell, a wholly useless and gratuitous addition to the inevitable terrors and calamities of life and nature.

ANDREW MILLAR.

THE TRAGEDY OF RUSKIN.

Ruskin's parents dedicated themselves to their only son. He was unusually intelligent and precocious. They were wealthy, pious, and cultured. They disapproved of toys and frivolity, and were quite sure their admirable child ought to be a bishop. So little Ruskin had no toys, plenty of education and Bible-reading, any amount of austere admiration for his moral and intellectual qualities, and no playmates. Very naturally, he grew up to be rather a prig. His difficulty was that his parents kept him in a kind of padded cell of mental and material well-being. Moral austerity, mental adulation, material comfort, that was his world. And he never escaped. They held him to the bitter end, an idol, but a victim.

Now a time comes for everyone . . . when they must think and act for themselves. If they do not, the results are apt to be disastrous. For Ruskin, they were doubly disastrous, for he was a great man.

Unfortunately, though Ruskin genuinely believed that he did say and do exactly what he choose, what he *knew*, he never really did so. He never tore down the opinions he had been taught, and build them up again as convictions. He never really searched for the truth—he thought he had it. In spite of all his later doubts and torments, he did not escape from the morality he had learnt at his mother's knee, any more than he escaped from her home. What he really thought is too often moulded by what he had learnt to believe.

Flora Grierson.

A talent may be cultivated in solitude, but a character needs the whirl of the world.—Goethe.

A "Pastoral" Letter.

A PERUSAL of the first Pastoral Letter emanating from the two newly-appointed Archbishops of Canterbury and York furnishes a brilliant illustration of the employment of some 1,200 words without saying anything to the point or committing the writers to doubtful issues, at the same time maintaining an atmosphere suggesting solutions to vital and important problems. We are told the Letter was read from the pulpits of churches throughout the country on July 28.

"We are enclosed by a material civilization great in its achievements, confident in its self-sufficiency, in which no place is found for God, or even for the spiritual life of man"—wail the Archbishops in unison.

Need that surprise us? Surely the rise and establishment of a scientific "material civilization" is precisely the reason why "no place is found for God." Mankind having learned to control many of the blind forces of Nature, is inclined to dispense with an ultra-mundane Being "who moves in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform." (Hymn No. 373 A. & M.)

We read "that through new light thrown upon the Bible and new discoveries of science rightly understood, we are reaching a new knowledge of God, and of His ways of revealing Himself. We can conclude from this that the Archbishops are fully alive to the advantages to be derived from knowledge—"rightly understood," of course. Here I think they should have added the further qualification that knowledge should be "rightly applied" in view of their remarks deploring the results accompanying our "material civilization" bearing in mind the fact that our civilization is founded on that knowledge. This later remark, that "we are reaching a new knowledge of God" (be it noted in a gross materialistic age) would appear to contradict the former assertion that "no place is found for God."

That "The Holy Spirit of God is worshipped and glorified when men are willing to be guided by Him into all truth"—is a statement as vague in its meaning, and so inconclusive in its purport, that I leave the reader the task of interpreting it for himself. Since all thinking men from time immemorial have endeavoured to reach "all truth" and still continue to do so, with such contradictory conclusions, it is difficult to appreciate the use of glorification in this connexion.

A more interesting remark to those outside the Church is, that "in many of our congregations there is a dulness of spirit, a languor of worship . . ." which must be rather dismal reading for the faithful. This opinion is strangely at variance with that expressed by the retiring Primate, who, in his farewell sermon in Canterbury Cathedral, on November 5 last, said: "I say to you to-night as my firm conviction that the Church of England to-day, whatever her difficulties, is far stronger, far more zealous, has a truer vision of God's purpose, and has more unity—Yes, unity in effort and in prayer—than before, when my working years began." Also: "I am persuaded that our Church has been growing from strength to strength." Events are supposed to move more rapidly in the Secular world nowadays, but in spiritual circles they must develop at an alarming rate. In a period of only nine months the note of optimism ends in the key of pessimism. And yet no one seems to have taken note of this sudden anticlimax. However, the Archbishop ought to know.

To return to the Pastoral Letter, the joint signers exhort their followers to "make some continuous study of the Gospel's of God's revelation of Himself in Christ, of the Bible and the Creeds . . ." which is precisely what seekers after "all truth" have been doing for a score of centuries with an industry which is only comparable to their lack of unanimity. One result of "continuous study" appears to be "dulness of spirit," and "languor of worship"!

As I am not familiar with the customary limitations of a Pastoral Letter, perhaps I am not justified in alluding to what might appear to be a significant omission in this particular Letter. If the reader expects to find therein any reference to the real problems of life, he will be disappointed. In no single line is there any

mention of the multitudinous and pressing questions that beset our social and political life, except a dozen lines about "the difficulties in the ordering of our Common Prayer." No, to search the Scriptures and pray are the only panaceas offered to deliver us from the evils of a "material civilization."
M. COLVIX.

Sheep as Symbols.

THE most affecting story in history is the account of the death of Julius Cæsar. When a boy I had a book given me called *The Lives of the Twelve Cæsars*, and as I was too young to read it, a sister older than myself used to read it to me. In that book Cæsar's death is described very pathetically, I used to cry when my sister came to the part where Cæsar saw his dearest friend Brutus amongst those armed to take his life. "And thou, too, Brutus," Cæsar said, and then quietly submitted to his fate. But I cried no more when I noticed other members of the family hiding to watch the exhibition of my tears, for I knew then that my sister had "given me away."

The second most touching story of ancient times, although not of history, is, I think, that of the death of Jesus. As his death drew near, he felt the need of sympathy, and said to his disciple Peter, "Simon, Peter, lovest thou me?" This he asked three times, and then said, "Feed my sheep." It is remarkable that throughout the Bible sheep are always referred to as pet animals and not as animals merely fattened for the purpose of killing and eating. Jesus himself is spoken of as "The lamb of God," and, to carry out the analogy, Christians preferred to eat him. In this connexion, I suggest to the Bishops who are now wasting their talents in disputing the exact mode and manner of eating him, that they should do so with green peas. *Revenons à nos moutons*, let us return to our sheep, as the French say. Poor deluded Jesus! It is sad beyond words to think of him on the Cross when he discovered that he was only a man, and nothing greater than a man, crying out in mortal anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." How can Christians enjoy their ghastly repast of his pretended flesh and blood when they think of his awful suffering, mental as well as physical, believing that God, whose son he had thought himself, had abandoned him. They are truly the stupidest of sheep utterly devoid of imagination. There are no more foolish animals than sheep, whose only idea is to follow one another. Jesus, who spoke in parables, made the truest comparison of his life when he called his followers sheep. This alone is sufficient to immortalize him.
J. E. ROOSE.

Kafue, N. Rhodesia.

A Love Song.

THERE'S a cottage all covered with creepers,
The roses peep in at the door,
A blossoming orchard's behind it,
A garden's before.

There abides in this creeper-clad cottage,
And keeps it so pretty and neat.
A maiden, as fair as the lily,
As pure and as sweet.

She's the fairest of England's fair daughters,
As graceful and wise as she's fair;
The joys of a kingship I'd barter,
To toy with her hair.

Say, where standeth this creeper-clad cottage?
That secret I cannot declare;
But kingdom I'd give if I had them,
That cottage to share.

J. R. HOLMES.

I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils.—*Bacon*.

The aim of life is life itself.—*Goethe*.

Acid Drops.

There is a Church at Wealdstone that is run entirely by children. There is, however, nothing very unusual in this. All churches are run mainly by children—not necessarily by young children, but by those who, no matter how many years they have been in the world, have never outgrown childhood. And a church run by children is the only church that one can treat gravely. It is the only reasonable excuse a church can offer for its existence.

The Duke and Duchess of York went to Forfar, and there they witnessed an ambulance demonstration and distributed medals. But they did these things on Sunday, and in the land of John Knox! So the Free Church of Scotland discussed the outrage before its Commission of Assembly, and solemnly protested against this attack on public decency, and sent a message to the Duke and Duchess, that "such an insult to Scotland should not take place," and hoped that those in high places would set a proper example to the people. We do not know what will happen to the Duke and Duchess, but it is painful to know that such an insult has been offered to Scotland. It can stand slums, and drink, and almost anything, but an outrage to the Sabbath! Well, there are limits.

The *Daily Express* reproves the Free Church of Scotland, and asks whether it would be regarded as a desecration of the Sabbath to be taken home on Sunday in an ambulance. The *Express* ought to know that in that case it would not be a desecration, but a judgment. It then asks if it is right to inspect ambulances on a week-day, why is it wrong to do so on Sunday? That is treading on dangerous grounds. It is an argument that goes much further than Ambulances. It extends to everything, particularly to Sunday games and entertainments, which contribute as much to national health and sanity as ambulances do towards helping the injured and the sick. But we have not noticed any great desire on the part of the *Express* to educate the public in this direction. It might interfere with circulation.

After twenty-seven years in Poplar as a superintendent of a Wesleyan Mission, the Rev. William H. Lax has written a book entitled *Let's go to Poplar*. We are indebted to a heroic reviewer of it for the following sample of English "uplift," which is about on the same level as Roman Catholic fervour from its ignorant masses:—

One day Lax saw a poor fellow who had been a member of the Mission Church, reeling along the street. "I know what you'll say, sir!" he cried. "You'll say that Gawd will send me to hell for gettin' drunk! But 'E won't!—at least Jesus won't. 'E knows 'ow I've 'ad my whack of hell down 'ere! An' Jesus, 'E's a gentleman, 'E is!" "Yes, he was right," adds Mr. Lax.

From this it will be seen that Churches catch the stragglers of evolution, and, as all public men dare not express their real opinions of religion, all's right with the world for the medicine-men of the religious drug shops.

Mr. Lax is optimistic. He recognises (should this be *thinks*?) that there exists a persistent conviction in the minds of multitudes that they are not wanted in the Church, and that it must be the business of the Church to prove to them that they are mistaken—there is to be no question of class distinction, wealth or prejudice. It is a big world, and Mr. Lax might try to find, for a start, an episcopalian who values the patronage of a miner as much as that of a squire, or the elderly maiden-lady with money and one foot in the grave. When Mr. Lax has done this, we will tackle the subject again. But imagine England without a caste system; hang it all you couldn't have a Billingsgate porter shooting grouse in Scotland—or a bricklayer wearing spats.

It appears to be a very important matter when an individual exchanges one form of superstition for another.

It is surely—for the *Daily News* gives half a column to the announcement that the Rev. W. Sullivan, formerly senior curate of St. Kentigeru's Roman Catholic Church, Blackpool, and director of studies to the Catholic Evidence Guild, has been received into the Church of England. As it were, a little fish from a big sea has swum into a small stream. The Vatican will tremble accordingly, but there still remains the problem of those whom the Rev. W. Sullivan has mis-directed during his conduct of the office of a director of studies to the Catholic Evidence Guild. There is, of course, Catholic truth, and Catholic evidence, and we shudder to think of the consequences of the Rev. W. Sullivan swapping horses whilst crossing the muddy stream of theology—plain or fancy, with or without music.

The Rev. H. G. Hatch, Ph.D., reviews in *Everyman*, a book entitled *A Century of Anglo-Catholicism*, by Herbert Leslie Stewart. The cat comes out of the bag at both ends in the extract:—

They mean by it that in the creed she is to hold, in the forms of her worship, in the spiritual guidance she is to give to her members, the Church shall never be subject to any earthly authority. Her privilege and her obligation are to interpret to the world what she believes to be the mind and will of her Lord. [*Our italics.*]

In doing so, mankind has been given a hell of a time; any English Government that taxed Churches the same as any other buildings would get our vote. And anyone possessing even mule sense must see the pretentious impudence of "never being subject to any earthly authority." That is where the rabbit goes into the theological hat.

There are a good number of pious members on the "Drink Commission," and this body is symptomatic of a great deal of activity in England that is chiefly concerned in what people shall not do. Probably this is caused through a thorough puritanical soaking of the biblical "thou shalt not," which was largely the phrase covering up the power of the priest over the people. It may be some crack-brained idea of the pious, that if they close the "pubs" the church and chapel attendance will increase. So far as we are concerned it would not matter if alcoholic drink disappeared altogether from the country. All the same, we object to a Commission setting forth what, in its opinion, other people should be permitted to drink or eat, or when they should do it, if they are graciously permitted to exercise a choice in the matter.

A book, *The Christ of the English Road*, makes the claim that the life of Christ has been the central influence in the history of Britain, and that without it the English-speaking race could not be what it is. A bold claim—and it may be true! Without Christ, there would have been no burning and torturing of Protestants. Without Christ, the Covenanters might never have been hunted to death. Without Christ, the discoveries and seminal thoughts of great pagan thinkers might have reached Britain intact—not fragmentarily—and also sooner. Without Christ, the State might never have been burdened with a parasitic priesthood. Without Christ, the advance of science would not have been hindered. Without Christ, fearless inquiry might have been esteemed a virtue. Yes, the life of Christ has been a great influence in the history of Britain—what a pity! what a pity! But let us not dwell on the errors of the past. There is much to be done towards shaping a better history without Christ, for the British race of the future to read with fewer regrets.

Sir Philip Gibbs thinks that the Scout Jamboree was "the salute of youth to a new world." There seems to be one fly in this optimistic ointment. When religion was introduced into the arena, Scout unity and co-operation had for a while to take a back seat. This suggests that in Sir Philip's "new world," the old-world notion of disunity promoted by religion is to be continued. If so, the new world would appear to be decidedly less promising than it might be. When, the youthful builders of a new world grow to physical and mental maturity,

perhaps they may appreciate our kindness in revealing the worse source of disunity the civilized world of the past has ever known. We hasten to add that we don't require any thanks for doing this "good turn."

Despite what the International Famine Relief Commission has done, there are still 35 million people in North-West China suffering from famine. In the Kansu province, the wheat-growing lands are now a desert, no rain having fallen there for four years. Disease has followed famine; in one city the population has dwindled from 60,000 to 3,000. The all-loving and merciful Father of the Christians could have prevented all this terrible suffering, but he did nothing. Perhaps he was too busy encouraging re-union among the squabbling Christian sects. Now that the Commission has reported the above facts, quite likely the Churches will ask God to graciously attend to the matter. Christians see nothing incongruous in asking God to mitigate suffering that results from a calamity he could have prevented, nor in appealing to a God who waits to be asked. They are content to affirm that God is a loving and merciful Father to all mankind—even though he appears to lack the common humanity of an ordinary human being! This speaks well for the efficacy of the mind-doping properties of Christian teaching.

Lord Daryngton declares that the man who is happy is the man who is not too critical. And we daresay most priests and parsons, in these days of critical and doubting congregations, wish that their flocks would take the statement to heart! Still, no doubt the uncritical man—which means the unreflective man—can achieve a certain kind of happiness. Nevertheless, happiness purchased at the price of mental torpidity is a poor bargain to an intelligent man. Many thousands of happy Christians, however, appear quite satisfied with it.

A religious weekly agrees with the Rev. Basil Bourchier, that "the nation that does not keep its Sunday will lose its soul." This is a very ancient tale. And all it means is that the nation which refuses to keep Sunday will lose the priests. Or rather, perhaps we ought to say, the priests will get "left." Priests are fond of metaphors. They soak in them from training colleges to full ordination. And "lose its soul" merely means in clear language, "lose its priests." What a pity priests are averse to using the language of matter of fact!

Reviewing a recent volume entitled *Victorian Working Women*, Beatrice Kane Seymour says:—

How many young women of to-day, with a vote and a large degree of freedom in their twenties, realize the measure of their sex's emancipation from vile conditions of labour that must be read to be believed? The early-Victorians were sanctimonious, but they were seldom squeamish in their use of human material, and the stories here told of the slavish conditions of women in mines and factories and workshops wring the heart even at this distance of time.

And how many young women realize what a little they owe to the Churches and parsons for the freedom now enjoyed? You see, neither the Bible nor Christ advocated the emancipation of women. And it is really un-Christian to emancipate women at all; otherwise dear old St. Paul would have been inspired to advocate such emancipation, instead of encouraging the opposite. As regards the Early-Victorians' sanctimoniousness, observers long before Mrs. Seymour have noted how sanctimoniousness and lack of squeamishness flourish in the same Christian soil. It has usually been Freethought humanists who played the part of conscience to harsh and brutal Christians.

We are indebted to the *Christian World* for the following excerpts from an American religious magazine, *The Christian Union Quarterly*:—

The same forces that are opposing Christianity in America are opposing Hinduism in India and the religion of Islam in Egypt, Turkey and Persia; Confucian-

ism in China; Buddhism in Burma; and Shintoism in Japan. Every religion is being challenged. Materialism and a mechanistic conception of the world are battering at the walls of every religious ideal and establishment. One hears on every hand from thoughtful men in India the statement that the present miserable condition of the country is the result of religion. "It has served as a narcotic lulling the minds of the people to sleep." "What we need in India," said a young student to me, "is the complete destruction of all religion. Until this is accomplished there can be no independence and no progress for the nation and the people." "What will you put in its place?" I asked him. "Self-assurance, courage, hope instead of despair, buoyancy instead of depression, independence instead of servility. Why should a nation like ours be bowed down from one end to the other by fear of the gods and the wrath of the gods when every thinking individual knows there are no gods; that they are simply bogeys manufactured by the priests and played upon by masters and governments to keep the people in a state of submission?" Were this simply the opinion of one man it would be of no particular importance. In every city I visited the book-stores and asked what books the people were reading, and learned that it is the writers who have abandoned religion whose books are in greatest demand. This is no time for any religion to attempt to set itself over against the others. It is not a question of whether one religious system shall survive. The question is, will any survive?

We don't know what will be done to the Rev. A. Atkinson for blurring out the truth in this way. The article was written after a visit to the East. There is much the same position in Europe and America, but the clergy will still continue to write about the revival of interest in religion. It fools those who supply the funds, even if the facts are all in the direction of proving the decay of religious belief.

The Home Secretary, Mr. J. R. Clynes, has sanctioned the addition of fifty detectives to the Criminal Investigation Department. The next move should be to cut down the official representatives of religion by one half, on the ground that they are not giving value for money.

The *Daily News* is running Bishop Barnes very close in talking belated commonsense. With the air of a Fleet Street Columbus it asks:—

What will posterity say of a civilization which can fly the Atlantic and girdle the whole earth with its railway systems and travel on the ocean or under it at its pleasure, but yet experiences such extraordinary difficulty in providing, in the midst of its enormous cities, a little space where poor children may play in safety and comfort?

We will supply the answer. These things were so because the cowardly newspapers led public opinion from the rear, and were more or less under the thumb of a body of medievalists representing a silly superstition.

The Bishop of Southwell always has a cold dinner on Sundays, he tells the world. That is to save Sunday labour. He may be cheered to know that thousands of ordinary mortals follow his good example, for similar reasons. It enables them also to spend more time on Pleasure—motoring, motor-coach travelling, cycling or tramping, far from the dismal houses of God.

Mr. Duff Cooper says: "So long as we have weapons of war, let them be cheap and nasty." After the terribly painful lessons the late war impressed upon the peoples of the world, one would have thought that they would determine to dispense with any kind of weapons and war, whatsoever. Still, fools, it appears, can't learn. That wouldn't matter much, if wars caused by fools obliterated fools. Unfortunately, wars leave Kings, cunning diplomats, and dull politicians unharmed. If only it were otherwise, the last war might indeed have been "a war to end war."

The Nottingham pilgrims to Lourdes have returned "all happy and well." We presume the "happy and well," must refer to those who went for an outing, since "there are no cures to report." But they will have another pilgrimage next year all the same. It keeps things moving all the same.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TOWARDS ADVERTISING THE "FREETHINKER."—H. J. Minion, 10s. 6d.

H. J. MINION.—The article by A. A. Milne, in the *Daily News*, on Birth Control was quite good, but it is useless arguing with a man like the Rev. J. P. Arendzen—that is, if one hopes to convince him. A Roman Catholic believes what he is ordered to believe, and is not quite sure what he believes before he consults his marching orders.

W. DUNCAN.—See "Sugar Plums."

F. BREININGER.—Thanks for cutting. People who are silly enough to pray for rain are probably too stupid to detect the obvious inference from what follows.

ALAN TYNDAL.—Received. Shall appear soon.

J. PLIDEMER.—Thanks for note of replies to questions. An exposure of the Salvation Army and its methods was made some years back by Mr. J. Manson, under the title *The Salvation Army and the Public*. It was a scathing exposure, and the Army never ventured on a reply. The book is now out of print, but second hand copies might be obtained. Almost any kind of a fraud may be worked in this country if it is done under cover of religion.

D.P.S.—Substantially true. Bradlaugh asked to affirm, and when refused offered to take the oath, stating that it would be as binding as an affirmation, although the religious phraseology was meaningless to him. The House refused the oath, and after a long struggle accepted the oath from him, on his own terms. His Oaths Amendment Act gave every one the legal right to affirm in all cases where an oath is usually required.

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

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Appropos of the editorial request to prolix correspondents to observe brevity, the following excerpts may serve to reinforce exhortation:—

It is easy to warn you against the most common faults by which force is lost. The worst of them is by the use of unnecessary words. It is scarcely too much to say that thirty per cent of the words in college essays can be struck through without loss. They add nothing to the meaning; they clog it instead, like barnacles on a ship's hull—these long, trailing relative clauses, which boil down to a single adjective; these advertorial modifiers which can be replaced by a single adverb; these long noun clauses for which one noun is enough; these tedious predicates, when one verb will tell the story—(H. S. Canby, Ph.D.)

Verbosity, tautology, and redundancy are as esthetically displeasing as they are economically wasteful. To make one word serve where you are tempted to use two is in the interest of all good qualities of composition. "Brevity is the soul of wit"; it is more, it is the secret of effectiveness in all writing and speaking. "Be brief, be brief, but not too brief," is another good maxim. Be concise as clearness will permit. Avoid a "fatal fluency" . . . Remember that economy means not too few and not too many words, but just enough.—(C. H. Rhodes, A.M.)

Simply to retrench one word from each sentence, one superfluous epithet, for example, would probably in-

crease the disposable time of the public by one twelfth part . . . A mechanical operation would effect *that* change; but, by cultivating a closer logic and more severe habits of thinking, perhaps two sentences out of each three might be pruned away, and the amount of possible publication might be thus increased in a three-fold degree.—(De Quincey.)

But we shan't be surprised if someone sends us a three-column letter endorsing what has been said above.

The Chester-le-Street Branch of the N.S.S., thanks largely to the efforts of Messrs. Brighton and Price continues to make things lively in its district. It reports good meetings although they are receiving marked opposition from the Catholic section. There is no mistaking the growth of Roman Catholicism in this country, and as it works its will in an underground manner it is always an element to be carefully watched. We also note a lengthy correspondence in *The Miner*, a local paper, in which the gentlemen above-named figure.

Mr. George Whitehead will, beginning from August 24, hold a series of open-air meetings in Manchester and district. Full particulars will be found in our Lecture Guide column, and the local Branch asks that all friends will do their best to help make these meetings a success by their presence. They will not merely add to the number of those present, but a good sprinkling of support helps to insure that the meetings shall pass off in an orderly manner.

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a sketch of Charles Bradlaugh, taken from the *Glasgow Evening News*, and written by "A Minister." We think that most of our readers will be pleased to see it, stating as it does what is now, we imagine, the general Christian attitude. Of course, the pretence that Bradlaugh's atheism was "crude" must be kept up, and for most unthinking Christians—that is for most Christians—to call a thing crude is to say it is untrue, although the two statements have no necessary relation. The true Christian note comes out in the statement "It may not only charitably, but not unreasonably be supposed, that he had come a good deal nearer the theistic position ere he died." That lie has been so often corrected that one need only mention it in passing. One simply cannot keep Christians from lying where their religion is concerned.

There are a number of errors in the article "The Fruits of Philosophy" was not a work by Bradlaugh, but was published solely to vindicate the rights of publication: the "split" between Mrs. Besant and Bradlaugh arose over Theosophy, not Socialism. Mackay's book was not suppressed because it was unfair, but because it was villainously libellous. Other corrections might be made, but one cannot expect a Christian to be quite fair to an Atheist.

The interesting thing about the article is that Bradlaugh's greatness comes out even in the act of depreciating him. But it would be far nearer the truth to say that Christians have, thanks to Bradlaugh, now come much nearer his position than when he commenced his work. Many of the ideas against which he fought are now being disowned and denounced by highly-placed Christians. They owe this to Bradlaugh, and to those who worked with him. Bradlaugh not merely educated Christians, he made it possible for non-Christians to speak out more than they would have done otherwise. It is certain that men like Huxley and other highly-placed public men in this country would never have dared to say what they did say concerning religion had Bradlaugh not prepared the public mind for its reception. He made the world a little more fit for freedom. And we are proud to know that the chief instrument with which he did this was the National Secular Society, which is still carrying on the work. As we have before said, it is not its aim or our aim to make it possible for Christians and Freethinkers to live amicably together, so that a Christian may come occasionally to a Freethought meeting, and Freethinkers may go regularly to a Christian Church. While there are Christians and Freethinkers, we hope they will live together as amicably as is possible. But we are working and hoping for a world in which there are no Christians left to live with.

The Genesis of Land Flora.

For countless ages, prior to the period when organic remains left their impressions on the rocks, our planet was the theatre of life and death. Probably the chief reason why our knowledge of the floral life of the Cambrian, Ordovician and Silurian Periods is so scanty, resides in the circumstance that most of the sedimentary deposits of these prolonged ages were laid down in sea water, and were little likely to preserve the impressions of plants which grew on land.

The only forms of vegetation so far known to have existed in Cambrian, Ordovician and Silurian times were sea-weeds or algae. Nearly one hundred species of these plants have been described by palæobotanists. Other petrified remains have been so transformed by the subsequent changes undergone by the rocks in which these fossils repose that they cannot be with certainty determined.

The Silurian Period was succeeded by the Devonian, and in the deposits of that period abundant remains of land plants are found. The pre-Devonian stages of the earth's history embrace a far greater time than that which has rolled by since. And, so far as the fossil records guide us, we are driven to assume that in early Devonian ages the floral realm underwent a revolutionary change. For the plants forsook the streams and seas, and commenced a career on land which was destined to lead to their conquest of the surface of the globe.

Microscopic single-celled plants have left their marks in earlier formations. These apparently evolved into chains of cells, and these again developed into seaweeds of enormous dimensions. Some of these adapted themselves to terrestrial conditions in Devonian times, or even earlier, but of this science cannot as yet furnish positive proof.

Dr. Frank Hall Knowlton, in his splendid volume, *Plants of the Past*, states that "Early Devonian time was a period of flat land surfaces and low coasts, whose bays were bordered by broad marshes, which were covered and uncovered at regular intervals by the tides. Some of the algae are known to have developed thin, flat, somewhat leaf-like organs, which were not able to stand up when removed from the water. As they were exposed to the air when left by the outgoing tides, these minute leaf-like organs were rolled up, but if not killed by too long exposure to the air, they would be restored to their normal form when again covered by the water. Gradually, some of them were less and less affected by the absence of water, and became more and more able to live for longer and longer periods of time in the air, until finally they were able to live altogether on the land."

As a result of further modifications, these originally aquatic plants became more or less adapted to terrestrial life. Their progress then appears to have been extraordinarily rapid, and they soon established several of the leading groups which have persisted till our own times. These ancient Devonian land plants proclaim their close affinity with water-inhabiting ancestors inasmuch that certain of their reproductive processes necessitated the contiguity of water, and this feature survives in many of their still living descendants.

The landscape of these dim and distant ages was bleak and barren. Pine-like trees grew on the uplands, but the vegetation as a whole was very monotonous. No flowers decked the earth, and no birds had yet appeared to fill the air with song. Various corals erected their reefs in the warm seas. Echinoderms abounded, especially crinoids; but the Trilobites which swarmed in the Silurian seas had passed their meridian. Insects existed, including ancestral

forms of the May-fly. The fishes from the Old Red Sandstone were of a primitive type, but embraced the forerunners of the sharks.

The plant petrifications which have descended to us from the Devonian indicate a botanical kingdom unadorned with flowers or foliage, and entirely represented by types of vegetation ugly and grotesque to a degree. Nor, judging from the remains, were the plants far advanced towards their luxuriance in the coming Carboniferous Period.

One remarkable Devonian plant was the Psilophyton, the "naked plant" whose stems were leafless. Canada yielded its first fossil, but other remains have since been traced in Devonian strata in Germany, Bohemia, Scotland and elsewhere. This strange plant reproduced itself by means of spores, and seems to have been entirely destitute of leaves.

The Rhynia is another group of similar plants. These were named after the district in Scotland, where they were discovered. The fossils were found in an ancient peat-bog which was almost entirely composed of their remains. Two species of these naked plants are known, whose reproductive organs were spores of typical fern appearance.

The deposit which contained Rhynia had also revealed a curious plant termed *Asteroxylon*. This plant was taller than Rhynia, and possessed a stout stem "completely covered with small narrow leaves, and suggests some of the living club-mosses." This plant stood higher in the evolutionary scale than its relative Rhynia, and was perhaps the ancestral form of the club-mosses and ferns.

In the Rhynia formation occurs another quaint plant. This, the *Hornea*, is similar in appearance to Rhynia, and its reproductive structures are noteworthy, as instead of possessing a distinct spore-case, the tips of its bare branches are enlarged to contain the spores. In the weighty judgment of Prof. Scott this more than suggests that "in these old and simple plants the sporangium (spore-case) was not a distinct organ, but just the end of a branch modified for spore-bearing purposes."

Other spiny plants have been discovered, although many are very imperfectly preserved. Taken as a whole, the fossil land flora of Devonian times constitutes the most archaic plants possessing a vascular system. This was important, as it laid a firm foundation for future advance. And in addition to the remains of vascular flora in the Rhynie bed, there were the impressions of various lowlier plants such as small algae, bacteria, and as many as fifteen separate forms of fungi. These last seemingly derived their nutriment from decaying vegetable matter much as numerous species of fungi do to-day. This saprophytic aptitude has therefore persisted throughout vast geological epochs.

In upper Devonian times the floral realm made marked advances, and faintly foreshadowed the vegetation of the modern world. Many new forms arose and heralded the impending opulence of plant life which distinguished the coming Carboniferous Epoch, when the mighty coal-measures were deposited.

Primitive foliage-bearing plants were now in evidence, and tree-ferns had made their appearance. A wonderful tree which combined the features that distinguished in later Carboniferous ages, two quite distinct floral groups was found fossilized in upper Devonian strata. This tree is regarded as the tallest plant evolved before Carboniferous times. It bears the imposing botanical title of *Protolæpidodendron primarium*, and its remains have been preserved both in Europe and America. Both the *Sigillaria* and *Lepidodendron* of the Carboniferous seem descended from this generalized plant.

Fifty odd years ago several fossil tree-trunks were disclosed in Devonian deposits in New York State. Fossil fragments came to light subsequently, until in 1920, trunks were uncovered in numbers so large that the deposit has been described as "a veritable fossil forest." These hoary trunks were mostly standing as they stood, when living, untold ages ago. In the strata encircling the fossil trunks their leaves and fruits had been preserved. One of these extinct trees has been beautifully restored by Miss Winifred Goldring. This displays "the curious bulging base and the slender tapering trunk, with its furrowed or checked bark and its crown of huge spreading leaves, some of them six feet long, made up of innumerable little leaflets. But, strangest of all, it was found that this tree actually bore seeds, thus placing it with the seed-ferns which became such an important element in the Carboniferous flora."

These remarkable trees are entitled *Eospermatopteris*—the dawn-seed fern—and their discovery establishes the soundness of the surmise that they flourished in Devonian times.

Many other remains of this primitive flora are now known to science. One fantastic form, whose fossil remains were uncovered in Canada in deposits of Devonian date, was regarded by Dawson as a cone-bearing tree. Later discovery and research, however, impelled Carruthers and other experts to classify the supposed conifer as a colossal seaweed. Dawson was misled by the great size of its trunk.

Further discovery is essential before the problem of the genesis and development of the Devonian land flora can be completely solved. It has been suggested that the transitory stages in the evolution of terrestrial vegetation may have occurred in North America, where the primitive land plants of Devonian times are most richly represented. Some authorities favour the lands of the Arctic as their birthplace, from which they spread southwards. The distribution of their petrified remains includes northern areas such as Greenland and Spitzbergen. The fossiliferous rocks of Canada, the United States, Russia, Scandinavia, Scotland and Ireland, as well as those of Australia have yielded their remains.

The practical uniformity of Devonian fossil plants throughout an area so vast, confirms the opinion that the climate varied little in what are now the Arctic, Tropical, and Temperate regions. The evidence furnished by the fauna and flora alike suggests that a warm or at least mild climate prevailed during the vast stretches of time embraced by the Devonian Period. Moreover, the rainfall was apparently abundant, and it is stated that none of the deposits bears witness of the presence of frosts.

T. F. PALMER.

Bradlaugh in a Scottish Setting.

The name of Charles Bradlaugh is now fast sinking into oblivion. But fifty years ago it was a name that aroused both loathing and alarm far and wide, among politicians from Gladstone to Beaconsfield, and among lovers of religion from Lord Shaftesbury to Dr. Begg. Even Queen Victoria, in her diary, April 18, 1880, takes note that "some dreadful people like Bradlaugh had been elected." There are few men who have seen greater change in public opinion and estimate than did the once notorious member for Northampton. But such memory of him as still survives inclines, one imagines, to the side of contempt, so that it may do good to the staunchest and most devout among us to be reminded for a moment of "the other side."

Bradlaugh started life as a London office-boy and coal-merchant's clerk. By the callow age of sixteen he had already attained to such outspoken doubts in theology that he was actually cast out of his father's house, and next year, in despair of employment, he was forced to

enlist in the Army. He was not there long, and, by the time he was nineteen, he was already famed as a fluent, open-air, Freethought orator in the London parks. Thereafter he became a sort of messenger in more than one solicitor's office, and thus picked up a wonderful knowledge of the crooks and quirks of the English Law, which afterwards he turned to such baffling advantage in his own defence. Hard, indeed, was the battle he had to fight on his own behalf; and, of course, many would say, with much to back them up, he richly deserved it all.

A NOTORIOUS BROCHURE.

He first contested Northampton in 1868, and again in 1874, but only to be defeated. What made him even more notorious at that time was his brochure, published in 1877, called *The Fruits of Philosophy*. It was furiously denounced then as an obscene publication; and no doubt, by many who have seen it, it is thought so still. But its author vehemently and vigorously defended his little book through many a law court, and as the records will show, succeeded in extorting the verdict, that there was nothing indecent or obscene in any word which he had written. To-day *The Fruits of Philosophy* would pass as an ordinary specimen of the books on Birth-Control, which—however much some of us may object to them—are now boldly advertised in the most reputable of our weekly papers. It is impossible to speak as tenderly about Bradlaugh's Atheism, which caused him to go by the sobriquet "Iconoclast." It was of the crudest and most outspoken type, a type now fortunately dead and buried, unless perhaps in the bitterest and most ignorant quarters. But, as the years rolled by, he steadily mellowed, the Freethinker's soap-box was abandoned, and though he never publicly recanted, it may, not only charitably but not unreasonably be supposed, that he had come a good deal nearer to the theistic position ere he died.

A CAUSE OF ANGER.

It was on May 3, 1880, he first appeared triumphant, to take the oath in the House of Commons. We cannot now go into the hot and lengthy combats which this infidel's attempts to take a sacred oath thereafter led. But few events caused more of excitement and angry heat at the time.

Bradlaugh got his way in the end in the House of Commons, and, by his zeal, eloquence, and power of debate, his conspicuous though narrow earnestness and his unselfish honesty, he slowly and steadily won his way into the respect of the House, if not into its positive favour. In the Spring of 1891, the year he died, the House actually resolved to expunge from its journals all the resolutions against him. Already, in 1885, he had split off from his still surviving and no less eloquent and challenging comrade-in-arms, Mrs. Besant, because he could not follow her in her Socialism.

The better side in the man, which had brought about such revulsion in the popular estimate, was strikingly illustrated by the one glimpse which the present writer ever had of Charles Bradlaugh. He has consulted a good many sketches of his career—one of them was compiled when Bradlaugh was only twenty-seven, and another, by Charles Mackay, was suppressed because it was so unfair to its subject—but none of those which he has seen refer at all to the fact that, for several years in his later life, he came regularly to reside for a little on Loch Long.

TALL AND HANDSOME.

To be exact, on August 26, 1890—it must have been Bradlaugh's last visit—the writer was sailing up to Arrochar, and found the steamer held as passenger the redoubtable "Iconoclast." His figure, tall, handsome, striking, and his face not nearly so ugly as often sketched, were quite unmistakable, as he paced the deck, his hands behind his back, aloof, dignified, conversing with none. But, when we halted off Portincaple, there was waiting for him a little boat, manned by several douce fishermen. Him they eagerly hailed, and greeted with warmest effusion, as one who was a most welcome guest; and their greetings were most cordially returned. We saw and heard no more; and within but a few months he was dead. But one could not help reflecting how good and how necessary, *audire alteram partem*.

A MINISTER.

Glasgow Evening News Saturday Supplement August 10, 1929.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

A BISHOP'S HISTORICAL BLUNDER

SIR,—If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. In a small book upon a political subject—even though written by a bishop as a charge to his clergy—the reader ought to be able safely to assume that the author has himself perused the few Acts of Parliament which he cites, and has ascertained for himself, that they really support the historical statement for which he quotes them. The Bishop of Durham, however, in his new book, apparently has not thought fit to follow this method.

The sacramental test was imposed as a qualification for office in municipal corporations by the Corporation Act of 1661, and for civil, military and naval office under the Crown by the Test Act of 1673. These two Acts remained in force till 1828.

It is a fashionable error in recent years amongst the upper ranks of Anglicans, to assert that the Test Act of 1673 excluded all non-Anglicans from Parliament. To this inaccuracy the Bishop of Durham gives further currency on page 102 of his charge on Disestablishment.

But the Test Act had nothing at all to do with qualification for Parliament. It related to civil, military, or naval office under the Crown. Every person holding such office must receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the usage of the Church of England, within three months after admittance to office, on a Sunday in some public church, and produce a certificate of having received the sacrament, and must take certain oaths. Anyone executing any of these offices after neglect or refusal to take the oaths or the sacrament, shall on conviction be incapable of holding office, and shall forfeit £500, and shall be subject to certain disabilities.

Neither the Test Act nor its repeal in any way affected the qualification for membership of Parliament. Exclusion from Parliament were effected by other instruments which had a far less extensive operation than the sacramental test.

Roman Catholics were barred from Parliament by the Path of Supremacy and the Declaration against transubstantiation, invocation of the Virgin, and the Mass.

Persons of the Jewish religion were barred by the words "upon the true faith of a Christian," in the Parliamentary oath: Quakers, Moravians, Separatists and Mr. Bradlaugh, by the necessity of taking any oath at all.

But a careful search through the Statutes at Large fails to reveal any Act which barred from Parliament, either Unitarians or Protestant Trinitarian Nonconformists who had no religious objection to taking an oath.

And it is noticeable that among the half-dozen or more remedial Acts from the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 onwards, there is no Act in any way assisting Presbyterians, Unitarians, Baptists, Congregationalists or Methodists to sit in Parliament. Never having been barred they needed no removal of barriers.

The idea that there ever was a time when all non-Anglicans were of legal necessity excluded from Parliament appears to be destitute of foundation. Most certainly the Test Act had no such effect.

T. BENNETT.

MATERIALISM AND PHRENOLOGY.

SIR,—I was very interested in G. H. Taylor's article, "Materialism, Old and New," in the *Freethinker* for July 28.

The authors he quotes show the usual confusion that arises in discussions on "Materialism." If writers would only give up the popular fashion of ignoring the work of Gall and Spurzheim, the great cerebral physiologists, they would learn much to their advantage.

They would be supplied with facts based upon very comprehensive research, instead of with mere meta-

physical speculations, which are only of value as far as they indicate the prepossessions and prejudices of the speculator.

Gall, Spurzheim and George Combe made minute observations on the relations between the functions of the brain, character and environment.

When carefully studied, their works dispel, once and for all, that metaphysical confusion already mentioned, especially if personal observations be added to the study. I need hardly add that the cruel and useless method of vivisection was never used by these men, and that the experiments of Ferrier, for example, simply confirm what Gall discovered nearly 130 years ago.

An excellent book on the subject is, *A Vindication of Phrenology*, by W. Mattieu Williams, F.C.S., F.R.A.S. (of the "Williams Secular School"). He emphasises the need for distinguishing between the phrenological charlatan and the true scientific phrenologist.

E. C. ASHWORTH.

"THE POPE'S GREEN ISLAND."

SIR,—Comparatively few articles that I have read in the *Freethinker* this last forty-three years have given me so much interest and pleasure as that by Mr. P. Murphy, in your current issue.

I hope for further articles from his invigorating pen. He is great, and strikes at the real position under "Home Rule."

He mentions O'Donnell's, *The Ruin of Catholic Education in Ireland* (1902), a book that I am proud to possess, but I wish he could give us a condensed article from Michal McCarthy's, *Priests and People in Ireland* (also 1903), and that brave Catholic writer's other book: *Five Years in Ireland*.

These two books should be in every *Freethinker's* library. Catholicism is making bold attempts to capture Britain and its colonies, but largely on lines of bluff and lies. *Freethinkers* and Protestants cannot be too often warned of the millions of young Catholic women out to catch unsuspecting Protestant and Non-Ingarian youths, and thus "save thine own souls" into the bargain, when they have tricked them into marriage in the Catholic Church. These scheming women easily catch ignorant youths at the numerous Catholic and other dancing halls and work on their generosity—and toleration.

I have asked many Catholic women why they do not go after Catholic young men, and the answer usually is: "we have nothing there to gain."

Catholicism seems to be spreading if newspaper support can be taken as proof. The hidden hand of the cunning priest is there nevertheless, and the young male "mugs" caught by the she-fisher of men accounts for many dud "Converts."

It would be of interest to many readers if Mr. Murphy could enlighten us concerning Messrs. O'Donnell and McCarthy, and if these honest scribes were silenced or banished?

J. TULLIN.

IS SCIENCE RELIABLE?

SIR,—Keridon's attempt to distinguish between the reliability of science and the unreliability of scientists is a hopeless one. "Science is verified or verifiable knowledge," he tells us. Verifiable by whom? Certainly not by the general public, except in a few simple cases, like an eclipse of the sun. At best it is verifiable by a few experts, and experiments are often accepted by the world on the sole authority of the man who made them. We accept science because we believe that scientists are accurate and careful men. The moment we doubt that, we begin to doubt their results.

For example, Professor Gregory of Glasgow, is an eminent authority on geology, of which I know nothing. He is also, however, an authority on geography, of which I do know something. Last year he published a book called *Human Migration and the Future*, and on page 180 he said:—

"The urban population in the United States is 51.4 per cent, and in Australia, 43.8 per cent and these rates are much higher in proportion to the rural population than is the case in Europe. The highest European rate

is in Denmark, where the urban population is 20.25 per cent, owing, in part, as in some of the Australian States, to the relatively great size of the capital. In England the urban population is 11.83 per cent, and in Belgium, 8.9 per cent."

I believe that there are five mistakes in the above paragraph, but I will name the three I am absolutely sure of. 1. It is not true that Denmark has the highest rate of urban population in Europe. 2. It is ludicrous to say that in England the urban population is only 11.83 per cent. London alone far exceeds that. The urban population of England is almost exactly 80 per cent. 3. It is equally absurd to say that the urban population of Belgium is only 8.9 per cent. It is really at least 70 per cent.

Having discovered that Professor Gregory can make serious mistakes in geography, should I be wise to take for gospel truth every thing he says about geology?

I have yet to discover an eminent scientist who does not make serious mistakes on subjects with which I am acquainted. Why, then, should I trust their conclusions on subjects about which I know nothing?

R. B. KERR.

SIR,—I frankly apologise to Mr. R. B. Kerr for having inadvertently misquoted him in the August 4 *Freethinker*, concerning the pound equivalent of the metric. Had Mr. Kerr made use of the word "Tonne," as is customary when the metric weight is alluded to, in order to differentiate it from the Statute avoirdupois "ton," and the Wine and Beer-merchant's "Tun," I should not have fallen into the error of assuming he meant the ton of 2,240 lbs. value. Mr. Kerr is, of course, perfectly correct in this particular connexion, and I regret having misunderstood him to the extent of having made it appear he had mis-written 2,204 for 2,240 lbs. However, my error but accentuates the point raised, viz., the urgent need for the general adoption of a standardized system of weights and measures such as is presented by the metric, for here we have this single word representing a great many different weights including, for example, to mention but a few, the Statute ton of 2,240 lbs., the metric, of 2,204, the U.S. of 2,000, and the ale and beer tun of 1,920 lbs. Small wonder the dictionary gives us yet another equivalent of the word Ton or Tun, a "low drunken, and disorderly fellow!"

CHARLES M. BEADNELL.

A MEREDITH MEMORY.

SIR,—Casually opening my *Freethinker* for August 4, even my jaded appetite found your own article was very good, Mr. Mann's also excellent, all the rest useful, read with discipline and discernment. The small uncontexted quotation from Meredith caught my eye like a flash of intellectual lightning, and I saw why our late George William Foote, his own a disciplined master mind, called Meredith his Master—a tremendous compliment coming from such a man.

May I repeat the text?—
"The wandering ship of the drunken pilot, the mutinous crew and the angry captain, called Human Nature."

Come to my arms, also, the beloved Robert Burns and the later, greater, more learned Leopardi, and many more. What purest, truest, clearest thinking and expression, even happiness, in the undiluted pessimism of the last named sage!

ANDREW MILLAR.

THE PASSING OF A PIONEER.

SIR,—In brief and—so far as I am concerned—final reply to Mr. Aldred, please allow me to state: firstly, that Owen was as much opposed to Imperialism as any human being can be opposed to anything whatever. This is provable a thousand times over from his writings; secondly, that I object to all religious graveside ceremony as much as Mr. Aldred can possibly do; but that, as I was not Owen's executor, the funeral arrangements were not in my hands; thirdly, that *The Sanctuary* is not a paper, but a place, as my penultimate paragraph might have made clear. I may add that I

wrote "Mr. and Mrs. Aldred of *The Sanctuary*," in order that no confusion as to persons should arise; fourthly, that Mr. Aldred's principles about obsequies are his own concern, nothing to do with the matter, and of no public interest.

I have written to Mr. Aldred privately about his attitude towards my late beloved Friend; rather rudely, I fear; but he wrote me a gratuitously-disparaging letter about Owen, and, not unnaturally, I was angry.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

SIR,—Arising from Mr. Higgs' contribution under the above heading in your issue of August 18, I have often thought how annoying it must be to our modern "medicine-men" to know:—

That millions of head-phones are hung up each Sunday as the religious service is about to be broadcast.

That those desirous of hearing a religious service can now gratify their peculiar taste in the comfort of their own homes without contributing towards the collection.

That there is hardly a philosopher or scientist worthy of the name in England to-day, who subscribes wholeheartedly to the Christian faith.

That while scholars in the State elementary schools are compelled to attend ordinary lessons, they may be withdrawn during religious instruction; thus evidently demonstrating that the State places more importance upon the three Rs.

That the *News of the World* has a circulation of over two millions, and unlike the Bible, does not have to be given away.

That despite the King's example in attending divine service, and despite the esteem in which he is generally held, where the observance of Sunday is concerned the overwhelming majority of the people prefer to follow the ordinary Freethinker.

Of course, it is possible that none of these things will seriously disturb the equanimity of the average medicine-man in his pulpit, so long as his stipend is not imperilled, but now that Freethought principles are being so widely accepted, it may not be long before even this contingency arises.

A. HEATH.

Obituary.

DEATH OF MR. A. J. FINCKEN.

THE older generation of London Freethinkers will learn with deep regret, and a sense of personal loss of the death of Mr. A. J. Fincken. For some years Mr. Fincken has been living in the country, but up till 1914 he was well known at all London gatherings of Freethinkers. In his seventieth year, A. J. Fincken had been a devoted and unselfish supporter of the Freethought Movement since youth. He was acquainted with Charles Bradlaugh, a close friend of G. W. Foote, and a warm friend of the present President of the N.S.S. He was a man whom anyone might have been proud to call friend.

Mr. Fincken's acquaintance with Freethought work began at a time when in their advocacy Freethinkers had often to face the brute force of Christian crowds, and in the "eighties" he took part in many a contest of this description at London open-air meetings. His presence, and his purse was always at the command of any movement with which he had sympathy. How broad and human that sympathy was, only those who knew him intimately could properly appreciate.

Tall and straight, with a high colour and a cheery smile his years sat lightly upon him, and none would have guessed his age from either his bearing or his conversation. He was devoted to his family and they to him. They will have the deepest sympathy of all in their present bereavement.

Mr. Fincken was taken seriously ill about a month ago with some complaint of the intestines. He had borne great pain for some time without letting those near him know anything about it. When it became no longer possible to disguise it an operation was found necessary, and then a second one. The shock of the second operation was too much for him to stand, and he passed away on August 13. Among his last words to his wife were, "Whatever happens, be strong." He faced

death with the same high courage and cheery smile with which he had faced life.

The cremation took place at Golders Green on August 19, and at the request of the family Mr. Cohen delivered an address. There was a large gathering of personal friends. The family have lost a kind parent and husband, Freethought a devoted and loyal follower, and the world a good man.

Society News.

THE second week of Mr. Whitehead's visit to Swansea encountered a deal of rain. The weather prevented a meeting which had been announced for Neath, a new district, which keenly disappointed the local enthusiasts who with the speaker hung about for an hour and a half hoping the rain would cease. By the time this appears in print another attempt will have been made. But the six meetings held during the week at Swansea were excellent, the one on the Sunday evening being one of the most successful ever held in the town, yielding among other phenomena, over a hundred halfpennies in the collection! Supporters who have apparently emptied the baby's money-box must be keen—or else a word which rhymes with it! Among the events of the week have appeared our old friend the sceptic, who recanted, a touch of novelty being imparted however, by the inclusion of Herbert Spencer in the list. Another feature has been the activities of a bad-mannered fanatic, who always pitches on the edge of our meeting, where he plays a concertina, and yells out impertinences at our speaker, one of whose major crimes it appears is that he is unmarried. But there is in Swansea a great body of sympathy supporting our propaganda, and scores of people are usually awaiting the start of each outdoor meeting.

On August 24, Mr. Whitehead commences a fortnight's lecturing in Manchester and Salford.

REPORT OF LECTURES IN N.E. LANCASHIRE.

OUR lectures still arouse much feeling at Higham. Opposition of a crude kind was rampant after the lecture there last Monday.

The crowd at Padiham, on Tuesday, was exceptionally big. Many questions were dealt with, and we were opposed by a Theosophist.

A very successful first meeting was held at Oswaldtwistel, on Thursday. We had the unusual experience of being invited to speak, on the next visit, from a more convenient pitch, by the owner of the land.

Gave an indoor address this morning, Sunday, at the S.D.F., to a big audience, whilst the evening meeting has been at Rawtenstall.—J.C.

Ye seek for happiness—alas, the day!
Ye find it not in luxury, nor in gold,
Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
Severe task mistress! ye your hearts have sold.
Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream
No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold
And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

Fear not the future, weep not for the past,
O, could I win your ears to dare be now
Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast
Into the dust those symbols of your woe,
Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go
Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,
That Want—Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;
And that mankind is free, and that the shame
Of royalty—faith is lost in freedom's fame.

Shelley.

True equality is the only true morality or true wisdom.—*Ilazlitt.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.5, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): August 22, at 101, Tottenham Court Road, Social and Dance, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. J. Hart; 3.30, Mr. E. Betts and Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 6.30, Mr. A. H. Hyatt and Mr. B. A. Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and J. Hart. Every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gate, Bayswater Road.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.30, Mr. C. Tuson and Mr. J. Hart.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S., 11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

STREATHAM COMMON BRANCH N.S.S., 6.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. E. C. Saphin—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury; Brockwell Park, 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury; Wednesday, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. F. C. Warner—A Lecture.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shortlands Road, North End Road): Saturday, 8.0; Effie Road, Waltham Green Station, Sunday, 8.0—Various Speakers.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture as follows: Saturday, August 24, Alexandra Park Gates, 7.30; Sunday, 25, Stephenson Square, 3 and 6.30; Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Devonshire Street, All Saint's, 7.30; Tuesday and Thursday, Corner of Langworthy Road, and Liverpool Street, Salford.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—Friday, August 23, 7.30, Spennymoor, Mr. J. T. Brighton; Saturday, August 24, Anthony Street, West Stanley, 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton, "Spiritualism"; Wednesday, White Lion, Houghton, 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S. (Beaumont Street): Monday, August 26, 7.30, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7.0, Mr. J. C. Keast—A Lecture.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Ballaguch. Meet at Clarkston Car Terminus at 12 o'clock prompt.

MR. J. CLAYTON will lecture at the following places: Sunday, August 25, Blackburn Market, 7.0; Wednesday, August 28, Nelson (Chapel Street), 7.45; Friday, August 30, Cliviger, 7.30.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

A BUSINESS MAN writes: "Some years ago I engaged an Accountant to write up my annual accounts, and send the Returns for Income Tax purposes to the Inspector of Taxes. I had been greatly bothered in previous years but, since then, I have had no worry or trouble of any kind with this matter. I believe it is an advantage in every way for anyone in business, whether large or small, to pay an Accountant to deal with the authorities, as the fee is more than saved by securing all, and full, allowances and deductions due under the Income Tax Acts."—Write to ACCOUNTANT, 11 Salisbury Road, Forest Gate, E.7, if you need help with your business accounts.

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