

ARE WE CIVILIZED?

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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

Are We Civilized?

THE other day one of the newspapers published a picture of an African witch doctor. He was depicted with mask and feathers and some kind of a robe, these being the insignia of his spiritual power. One can safely assume that many thousands of good Christians who saw that picture would smile at the idea of a man dressing himself in that way as an indication that he represented God. The educational value of the illustration would, however, have been greatly enhanced if it had been accompanied by a picture of a Roman Catholic bishop, another of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and some others of the lower orders of the clergy wearing their full ecclesiastical paraphernalia. Of course, even then one could not be certain that the right moral would have been drawn. The Archbishop and the Roman Cardinal in their Punchinello costumes would be described as solemn or picturesque, the poor African as merely a savage. Custom causes the Christian to look solemnly at the one; want of acquaintance makes him smile at the other. A visitor from another planet would be unable to distinguish between the two.

This facile distinction between savage and civilized finds little favour with Professor R. H. Lowie in his recent work *Are We Civilised* (Routledge & Sons, 12s. 6d.) As one might expect from the author of *Primitive Society*, he sees human society as a whole, and the growth of civilization as a discontinuous story, in which there are many eddies and curious, sometimes disgusting, survivals. Sometimes we progress in one direction while receding in another. For example, our advance in mere scientific knowledge has been very great, but it is humiliating to find that when the test of genuine culture is applied some strange things happen. Here is an example that gives one furiously to think. It has always been the boast of scientists that science was above the limitations of race, party, or country, and indeed, very

many illustrations of this might be given. But when the European war broke out Ostwald, the great German chemist, announced that Germany "must impose her efficiency" on less developed peoples. French scientists declared that Germans were mere uninspired plodders. In England Sir William Ramsay and Sir Ray Lankester expressed themselves in the same way. "Scientists for the most part no longer cared what they wrote so long as they could advertise that they were on the band-waggon of mob prejudice." It was, indeed, an exhibition to which every intelligent person must look back to with shame, but we may console ourselves, as Professor Lowie points out, with the reflection that this is because scientists are so often unequal to their task, and because, in spite of their knowledge some "have never risen above the level of savages." We have written so frequently on the way in which the savage still dominates part of the thinking of eminent scientific workers that we must confess to reading these passages with somewhat sorrowful satisfaction.

* * *

Ancient and Modern.

Christianity foisted upon the world the conception of human society as something established by divine authority, and therefore something that was modifiable only within certain very narrow limits. In the first throes of the revolt against this stupid conception, and under the influence of a dawning sense of evolution, there arose the idea of a law of development that conceived progress to be as inevitable and as regular as the revolution of a planet round a central sun. Professor Lowie will have none of this. In a series of chapters on dress, food, housing, sex, science, etc., he shows that progress begins in a casual, often an accidental manner, and is liable to all sorts of arrests, perversions, and even retrogressions. The facts show that man has the capacity for indefinite progress, but environmental accidents and opportunities will determine its rate and its persistence. And in any case, along with our advances we retain a number of customs, beliefs, and tendencies which give distinct point to the questions asked by the author of *Are We Civilised*?

In arts, crafts, and in ideas a study of human history shows a queer jumble of the primitive and the modern; while in putting ideas together from different departments the average "civilized" man shows not much greater capacity than does the savage. There are numerous illustrations given of this in the way in which uncivilized people seize and utilize civilized products, and also in the manner in which civilized people continue with primitive devices and implements while lying at their doors are better tools that sheer mental sluggishness leaves unused. Whichever way we turn Professor Lowie manages to bring out the fundamental identity of the savage and civilized

mind; and it is done with a lightness and a sureness of touch that makes the volume as entertaining as a novel.

* * *

Savages at Church.

Professor Lowie has a chapter on "Religion" which supplies some of his most telling illustrations of the persistence of the savage in civilization; and it is written without any of the clotted nonsense that one gets so often about "true" religion, as distinguished from superstition. Between the savage appealing to his gods for success in war and the modern believer praying to God for victory, the difference is one that only the "civilized" believer can detect. The savage blames his gods for an earthquake, "we do not blame demons, but declare that the ways of Providence are inscrutable . . . When scientists fail to understand a phenomenon in nature they speak of chance. This may sound better, but explains no more than the action of spirits." Professor Lowie passes in review a number of illustrative savage and medieval beliefs about magic and witchcraft and omens, and asks:—

Are we beyond that sort of thing to-day? It is true that witch trials are a thing of the past. But are they gone for ever? It is well not to be overconfident. Whenever popular excitement reaches a climax, legal forms and ideals go by the board. It was so in the Haymarket riots, in the Dreyfus case, in the recent war. So long as the *belief* in evil magic persists, favourable conditions might again give legal sanction to the prosecution of witches. Was not a French priest lynched less than five years ago for bewitching a peasant in his village. We may press electric buttons to switch on lights—and drive automobiles, but the supernatural that baffled the reindeer-hunters of France 20,000 years ago is still floating about. Who wants a hotel room numbered thirteen? Is there not an office building in New York with the fourteenth story directly above the twelfth? Are there not rain-makers in the United States to-day? Do not many of our friends knock on wood to preserve their boasted good luck?

Illustrations along this line might be indefinitely multiplied. Our civilization is honeycombed with the most stupid of superstitions from the priest turning bread and wine into flesh and blood, to the man carrying a potatoe round to cure rheumatism, or carrying round a mascot to secure good fortune. Every church and chapel in the country, every priest and parson walking the streets, every time the House of Commons' chaplain offers up prayers, we may, if we will, see proofs of the truth that so long as belief in magic lives the savage is still occupying a prominent, even a dignified position in our midst.

* * *

The Satire of Progress.

The satire of progress lies in the fact that man is all the time dogged and partly governed by the dead—by their beliefs, their thoughts, their customs and their institutions. Even the language we use was fashioned by the dead, and its exact terms have reference to an environment that has largely disappeared. A large proportion of the words we use, and without which thought would be impossible, carry animistic connotations, and mislead in the very attempt to enlighten. We inherit a number of institutions, and in every attempt to improve them by pruning away all that is outworn or even dangerous, we find our efforts obstructed by the ghosts of dead ancestors. Man overcomes with comparative ease the obstacles that physical nature places in his path. He contracts space, he harnesses electricity to his needs, he spans rivers, he bridges gulfs, he drains swamps and

roots out disease. In a thousand and one ways he overcomes the brute forces of nature, but his greatest enemy remains—the chains of custom, the harrasing influence of decrepit institutions and meaningless formulæ. Every one who fights for reform has to reckon on these things, and has to be always on the watch for these ghosts of the past lest they frighten his weaker brethren back to the shelter of a cowardly conformity. Friendless knowledge thus has to make headway against established and powerful ignorance: rights fighting for recognition must fight against privilege and power that can appeal to the mistaken actions of past generations; and as though to make the satire complete we have no guarantee but that the institutions which we create in the name of freedom and progress may not in time offer the same kind of obstruction as that against which we are fighting to-day.

Relatively the savage is always with us, and may always be with us. We can no more escape our past than we can be born free from physical traits which refer us back to our Simian ancestors. But there is still room for hope and courage and inspiration for all who take a reasoned view of the human race. Says Professor Lowie in the closing passages of his profoundly interesting volume:—

We are still savages, but the word loses its sting when we recall what savages have achieved. What a chasm, after all, yawns between the ape and the lowliest of men who made fire, chipped stone, and planned a game-drive! To say that we are savages is to say that we are human. Compared with that earliest man, or even with the later reindeer-hunter, we have gone far. At least in material culture and in sheer knowledge there has been a steady gain . . . Imperial Rome towered above the Middle Ages in her sanitary and engineering arrangements. In some ways the Greece of 500 B.C. was ahead of Europe in 500 A.D. Hence it is quite possible that a thousand years from now humanity will be in many respects on a lower level than to-day. But it is improbable that man will have slid back to the hunting stage of 10000 B.C.

We must find solace in compensations. It is something to have heard the glad tidings of a united humanity, something to hear the faith reaffirmed from time to time by solitary enthusiasts in the wilderness. That much we are ahead of chimpanzee and savage. It is something, too, to break a lance in the fight with smugness, with sadism, with know-nothing propaganda. Win or lose, the Miltonic phrase holds: "That strife was not inglorious, though the event was dire."

Much of our effort may be lost, but some little of it remains to swell the force that makes for better things, and to inspire others to carry on the fight against the dominance of the brute.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Maya.

He who abandons hope attains to peace,
And he who peace achieves begins to grow;
For hope abandoned means that now we know,
And knowing, we our stature can increase.
He who abandons hope will forthwith cease
To swim against the current of Life's flow,
But let it bear him whither he must go;
Yet, hope evicted, Life extends her lease.
Hope is Illusion, and illusion leads
To follies that Life's aim do set at naught;
Hope is the basis of religious creeds,
A comfort, maybe, to a mind distraught,
An anodyne, soothing a heart that bleeds,
But poison most destructive of clear thought.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Mr. "Yes" and Mr. "No."

"It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
Their saints, their—all they fear or hope
Are lies and lies."—Robert Browning.

"People swallow falsehood as a cat laps milk."
George Foote.

THE position of a member of the Church of England, which is the State religion of this country, is not an enviable one. Half of his ecclesiastic superiors seek to perpetuate practices which have affinities with the beliefs of Polynesians, and the other half is heading towards Unitarianism, which has been described as "a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian," and also as "the high road to Secularism."

The Broad Churchmen have simply played the sedulous ape to Freethinkers, and reiterated Free-thought arguments with the faithfulness of a gramophone record. Bishop Colenso helped to shatter the authenticity of the Pentateuch, and Canon Farrar sought to destroy the belief in eternal punishment. Since those far-off days their successors have, from their own curious point of view, continued to echo the ideas of Freethinkers. *Ecce Homo*, which caused pious squeaks years ago, has been followed by more iconoclastic works, and to-day Bishop Gore has been left behind, and Dr. Barnes and Dr. Inge preach sermons which further embody the views of the infidels of yesteryear. These Broad Churchmen, or Modernists as they are called, have now discarded the miracles of the Old and New Testaments, major and minor, and actually inform the poor believer that faith in them is no longer necessary.

The unfortunate Broad-Church believer in the pews must begin to wonder if he is sitting in an Unitarian Church, or whether his reason is tottering on its throne. His pastor and master stands at a lectern and recites Biblical passages, and promptly ascends the pulpit and asserts that what he has just recited is just fabulous nonsense. Even an Archbishop has implored the Modernists to cease their work of destruction, and to become constructive.

The High Churchmen, or Anglo-Catholics, from the Old Guard of Orthodoxy, and, according to Dr. Barnes, these "have affinities with the magico-religious beliefs of a lower cultural level than that of our present civilization." This is a very curious alternative to the Unitarianism of the Modernist, and the poor believer must find his dilemma a real one.

The position is that, as belief has waned in this country the English State Church has sought more and more to imitate the methods of the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglo-Catholics have taken part possession of the Church of England. Maybe they have not yet done all that was dreaded by timid Non-conformists, but they rule the ecclesiastical roost, and the two archbishops and bench of bishops are powerless. At this hour there are covered by the banner of the English State Church men who hold the extremist doctrine of the freedom of the individual, and creatures who are willing to submit to the utmost doctrine of priestly control. How long will this battle between Rome and Reason last?

That a large and increasing number of the clergy of the English State Church were coquetting with Rome caused, some years ago, attention in the Roman Catholic Church, and the then Pope had some idea of reconverting England, and of reimposing the yoke which our ancestors threw off. But even the holiest of Polynesians cannot force the clock back, and the English people still, as a nation, refuse to acknowledge Papal (and Italian) supremacy, and bear with the lesser evil of the Messrs. Facing-both-Ways of the Government Religion.

In darkened and superstitious times the power of the Roman Catholic Church was great, but it finished in this country with the glare of the fires at Smithfield. It was never at any time so unquestioned and unresisted as in Italy, Spain, France, or even Ireland. There is a wholesome obstinacy in British blood, which is cooler than that of the Latin races or the Celts. It shows itself whenever the whip is cracked too loudly, as Charles the First and James the Second knew to their bitter cost, and as the long contest for the freedom of speech also proves.

Priestcraft can never do its worst in England. We shall never again, as a people, permit the cesspool of the confessional. We shall never submit to the poisoned weapons of Priestcraft, its hypocritical affectations of celibacy, its tyranny in the home, its officiousness in public affairs, its menace and robbery at the death-bed. Priestcraft had not a safe seat on British shoulders in the Ages of Faith, even before the days of the Reformation. It is an impossible dream now that there is an organized national Free-thought Party.

But a thoughtful Churchman needs to be reminded of one thing. The question of questions is not whether old sepulchres can be whitewashed so as to give an appearance of newness; whether old outworn creeds can be explained away, but what is true? The matter requires urgent reconsideration. The matter cannot be evaded much longer by men who profess and call themselves Christians, who may even be ordained to the Christian ministry, but who most certainly have never been converted to civilization. The conscience of the race is rising superior to the Christian Superstition. The crux of the matter is what the poor, old Irish woman said to the parish priest, who had been telling her of the penalties of Purgatory. "Well, your reverence, said she, 'let's hope it isn't all true.'"

MIMNERMUS.

Clemenceau the Atheist.

(Concluded from page 779.)

THE second volume of Clemenceau's *In the Evening of My Thought*, deals with evolution. It commences with the Atom and finishes with civilized man. The atom, as we now know, consists of a central nucleus of positive electricity, the Proton, surrounded by particles of negative electricity. From the atom everything is built up, as the ancient Greek, Democritus, declared four hundred years before Christ, although, of course, his idea of the atom was very different from that of modern science.

With the conception of Matter as a dead inert substance, in and out of which energy moves, like the devil was said to do in the possessed—which our opponents, in spite of our protests, persist in attributing to us—Clemenceau, like all modern materialists, will have nothing to do. Matter and energy are one and indivisible. No matter without energy, no energy without matter; they are two aspects of a single element. "We should, therefore," he declares, "correct the fault of language which forces on us two names for the same thing." Can we conceive, he asks, "of motionless matter, and of an entity 'motion' which throws it into action." Can we "conceive movement as independent of something that moves? We cannot, the very idea is absurd.

In the economy of nature there is no beginning and no end. "Nothing begins; nothing ends; everything continues." We are told that according to the law

of Entropy, according to which heat is everywhere flowing from hot bodies to cold ones, the entropy of the universe is continually increasing. All the energy in the universe is being converted into heat, which will eventually stagnate at a uniform temperature, and evolution come to an end in the death of the universe.

But, it has been pointed out, if such a thing were possible it would already have happened during the past duration of infinite time. Clemenceau confesses that, "Although I may accept my personal death in good part, I resign myself less easily to the death of the universe, because, in contradiction to everything that we can conceive, to assume the death of the universe is to assume that cosmic evolution is to stop. This supposition every accepted assumption of our scientific knowledge disputes." (p. 27.) And, further on, he adds: "For my part, I hold with Berget: 'If there is atomic decomposition or disintegration, there must certainly exist a compensatory integration, which would assure perpetuity.'"¹ Arrhenius was of the same opinion. Maxwell suggested a method of compensation by which the process of degradation of energy might be reversed. Poincaré, says Clemenceau: "declares that he has never been 'at all disturbed' by entropy. For him, that formidable 'principle' is 'merely a concession to the fallibility of our senses.'" (p. 129.) Sir Oliver Lodge has also expressed his doubts as the deductions drawn from the law of entropy.

The law of entropy may be perfectly true so far as we can test it upon the earth, and yet it may not apply to the universe. We do not know enough about the laws of the Cosmos yet to dogmatize on the matter of its death. Planck's Quantum theory of Energy is accepted as scientifically true, yet there are discrepancies between the Quantum theory and Einstein's theory of Relativity, so that problems can be solved by the one that cannot be by the other. We are only making the first steps as yet in these matters. The fate of Lord Kelvin's calculation of the age of the Sun, according to the laws of thermodynamics, upon which he was the greatest living authority, should provide a warning to dogmatists in these matters, and, like entropy, it was concerned with heat.

The evolutionists taking into account the time taken to lay down the strata of the earth, and the evolution of plant and animal life, came to the conclusion that at the very least it must have taken one hundred million years. Lord Kelvin went to the trouble of calculating how long the light and heat of the sun had been available for that purpose. He made it only twenty million years. There was great joy in the religious camp over this patent contradiction, and it was considered to have given the death-blow to evolution. Kelvin was quite right in his calculations, based as they were on the laws of heat founded upon experiments in the laboratory, but he did not know anything about a substance called Radium. No one knew, for it had not been discovered then; when it was discovered, Kelvin's calculations went by the board. The Radium in the Sun provided sufficient light and heat to make Kelvin's twenty million years look insignificant, the evolutionists were presented with a blank cheque upon which they could write as many millions as they required, and we have no doubt the same will happen with regard to entropy and the death of the universe.

As Clemenceau remarks: "the origin and the end of things, two words which scientifically have no meaning, became one to the stupid true believer, who

sought a world made for the human race, and was condemned to think before he learned." (p. 47.) Our leading literary paper *The Times Literary Supplement*, for November 28, gives a long and sympathetic review of this book, which he describes as "This vast monument of labour and eloquence," from which we quote the following:—

We find ourselves thrust, says Clemenceau, into the very heart of the cosmic adventure. There is no plan, no finality. Abstract entities are verbiage, and metaphysics tautology. The deterministic philosophy with its postulate of co-ordinated energy is all we shall need or get. Life and death are merely the rhythms of cosmic activity. There is universal competition: a struggle for life that is too frightful for detailed description. But then good and evil are merely subjective . . . Having received everything from a coherent cosmos, we must not hope to impress upon that cosmos any of our incoherent dreams and wishes . . . Dreams, dreams! To dreams we owe all our gods and cosmogonies and empty metaphysics . . . The devotees of pure science, according to Clemenceau, are content with the secret joys of their interminable researches. He has said in this volume exactly what he wanted to say, and the thorough understanding of a man is not far removed from acceptance, sympathy, respect.

Yet any Sunday you may hear the purile falsehood bawled from the pulpit, that Materialism is dead and done for.

Anatole France, the acknowledged chief of French writers, and Clemenceau the great statesman, are one in their opposition to superstition. Nothing is more admirable than the way in which these two great leaders of the French nation have broadcast to the world their inmost opinions upon religion. That is not the way with our public men. In England it is only the *pious* who broadcast their opinions. We only learn about the opinions of the others about fifty years after they are dead; when their private letters and unofficial and uncensored lives are published.

Compared with the mocking wit and irony of Anatole France, and the righteous invective of Clemenceau, how mean and futile appear the sleight-of-hand tricks of a Chesterton, and the bluff and bounce of a Belloc in defence of an ancient and moribund superstition.

Since writing the above we have read an article by Mr. Sisley Huddleston, the author and journalist, formerly the Paris correspondent to the *Times*; contributed to *John O'London's Weekly* (December 14); entitled "Clemenceau's 'Balance Sheet' of Life," by which title he describes Clemenceau's book. While disclaiming any agreement with the ideas set forth, yet, he says, it is good

to listen to the voice of a sage who has read widely, reflected profoundly, and has arrived at conclusions which have their validity . . . "Look as you will," he cries, "where will you find the soul?" He denies our freedom of will. "If man were free," he quotes, "God would cease to exist—for there is no room for two simultaneous omnipotences." He traces the origins of thought and language, "the growth of myths, and the evolution of gods." But what one can really admire in this book is the man's courage. He stands for virile intelligence. We must not, he says in effect, tremble at our fate. The will to know is incompatible with fear; and death is no more than a serene night.

In the *New Statesman* (December 7), there is an equally fine review of Clemenceau's book by Mr. E. E. Kellett. Not so long ago, this book would have been received by a broadside of brickbats and mud; and still earlier, it would have been prosecuted for blasphemy, in place of these bouquets. The world does move.

W. MANN.

¹ Berget: *La Vie et la mort du globe*.

"Gloomy" November, 1928.

ON the morning of November 18, I sat writing in the summer house, the sun was shining brilliantly in a lovely blue sky, in which, low down in the south, were a few wisps of cloud. The lawn was a beautiful green, on which were blooming daisies, buttercups and (alas!) dandelions. A bunch of red roses crowned a rose-bush near by; there were white and blue violets, aubretia, primroses, marigolds and other flowers in bloom in the garden; "burning bushes" added a touch of colour, and the holly glistened in the sun-shine.

The air was soft, sweet and clear; a gentle breeze was moving the twigs, and small branches of the trees. My dog lay near my feet basking in the sun; the rooks, lazily croaking and cawing, floated along overhead; the starlings were chattering in the orchard opposite; a robin sang his plaintive song in an apple-tree; a cock was crowing in the distance; a tit was "chipping" and a thrush was filling the air with melody; whilst the "tweet" "tweet" of the "perky" sparrow added to the general charm.

I was moved to drop into poetry, and here is the result.

LINES COMPOSED ON A SUMMERLIKE MORNING IN
NOVEMBER, 1928.

Come out, though 'tis November!
The sky o'erhead is blue;
The gnats in the sun are dancing,
Why shouldn't I—and you?

Come out, though 'tis November
Not bare is every tree;
The thrush with joy most blithely sings
Why shouldn't I—and thee?

Come out, though 'tis November!
The garden's fair to see;
The flowers still bloom: the robin sings;
Then *why*, why shouldn't we?

Come out, though 'tis November!
Bask in the glorious sun;
The birds, the beasts, the insects do;
Why shouldn't everyone?

Come out, though 'tis November!
The air is calm and sweet;
The Elms are clothed in golden leaves;
'Tis grand: to sight a treat.

Come out, though 'tis November!
The month, they say, of gloom,
Fill up the day with work and play,
For sadness leave no room.

J. R. HOLMES.

IMAGINATION AND REASON.

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

I would as soon murder a man for his estate as prosecute him for his religious and speculative errors.—Lord Cheterfield.

Conversions to Rome.

WHENEVER the conversion to Roman Catholicism of anybody of consequence is reported in the newspapers, some people begin to wonder what it is all coming to, and see visions of the Catholic clergy setting up a branch of the Holy Inquisition in St. Paul's Churchyard. A single reflection, however, ought to dispel their fears. The geographical distribution of the main Christian persuasions in Europe to-day are practically what they were at the end of the counter-Reformation. What was Protestant then remains Protestant to-day, and what was then Catholic is Catholic still. This applies not only broadly to whole States like Holland and Belgium, but even to minor districts in each country. Gains by conversion during the past 250 years have been, geographically speaking, negligible, and there is nothing whatever to suggest that any great change in this respect is to be expected in the future. What is actually happening is something very different from a victory for either side. The Protestant Churches are being rapidly disrupted by the ferment of thought, which was an element in their constitution from their birth, and which has increased greatly in activity owing to the rise of Biblical criticism, the widespread acceptance of the evolutionary view of man's origin, and the utilitarian spirit of social life in the industrially progressive lands where Protestantism has most successfully flourished. That Roman Catholicism has not been immune from the same canker is sufficiently evident from the history of Modernism amongst the clergy as well as from the growth of disbelief and indifference in ostensibly Catholic countries such as Ireland and France.

There is, therefore, no need for alarm as the announcement that Miss Sheila Kay Smith, the well known novelist, and her husband, the Rev. Penrose Fry, have joined the Church of Rome, although their friends may well feel a certain anxiety as to their prospects of happiness in their new spiritual home. The omens are sinister for any one who makes this experiment after Newman and Tyrrell. After the first blowing of trumpets, converts to Rome are very apt to find that they are not so near in spirit to their new friends as they had hoped to be. You cannot shed in a day the spirit of comparative independence and self-respect that is engrained in most English Protestants, and adopt in its place the mentality of a Child of Mary or a worshipper of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. You cannot be the captain of your soul up to a certain date, and then submit without qualms to being told in detail what you have to believe and disbelieve and present your conscience for inspection by a priest whom you may know to be ignorant, coarse and stupid. You will soon discover that Catholics are horn, not made, and that unless you have been impressed in infancy with the mould of the only true Church, there is a depth of spiritual servility to which you can never descend, and a height of contempt for your fellow-Christians which you can never hope to attain.

The result is often serious disillusionment for the soul that, having burnt its boats, finds itself stranded on the Catholic shore. The real Church is so sadly different from the splendid vision projected by the rhetorical imagination of apologists! That vision did not reveal what common clay the average priest was made of, nor did it suggest that the average pious Catholic is much less concerned for the good of mankind than to keep out of hell and to get into heaven, and hopes to achieve this by means of dodges which do not differ essentially from the tricks of a savage medicine-man. The true-born Catholics, on their side, soon discover that the convert is not one of themselves and never will be. He is likely to be lacking especially in respect for the side-shows which make up nine tenths of popular Catholicism—devotions to Our Lady of Loretto, whose house was brought by angels from Nazareth to Italy; to St. Anthony, the lucky finder of lost property; to St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, who, although the earliest evangelist never heard of him, has recently blossomed out into a popular and influential Saint. In short, the convert is finicky and wants to pick and choose in the Protestant way, a habit which is naturally most offensive to the

clergy. "A lifelong Catholic," said Father John Buggy, of Halifax, preaching about the date when the latest conversion was announced, "cannot be beaten out of the Church with a black thorn stick, but fifteen out of twenty converts will find any excuse for falling away from the Church. I do not agree with high ecclesiastics that the converts are those who are carrying on the work of the Church, and ought to be specially looked after." No doubt the high ecclesiastics are well able to estimate the difference between a born Catholic and a convert, but they naturally have an eye to the advertisement value of, say, a converted journalist, which is rather enhanced by the curious fact that a high percentage of these are humorists by profession.

But is even the advertisement of any use? The stability of those geographical boundaries of the sects seems to show that much cannot be expected of it, and that the propaganda the converted humorists spatch-cock sometimes into the middle of their fun is equally futile. It may even be dangerous, like Newman's apologetics. It is notorious that the defenders of the faith have done more harm than good. M. Loisy has told how far the arguments of the *suspician vigouroux* went to undermine his faith. The Pope might, indeed, well say of his defenders what Wellington is supposed to have said of some of his troops: "I don't know what effect they have upon the enemy, but, by God, they frighten me!"

The prospect of mass conversions in these days is so vain, that some look to another factor to secure the victory of the Church. Father Woodlock, S.J., for example, writing in the *Sunday Times* of a few weeks ago, hoped the practice of birth control by non-Catholics, together with the unbridled fruitfulness of Catholics would in time so change the proportions of Catholic to non-Catholic children in England, as to ensure a victory for the Catholic Church. This hope is probably doomed to early disappointment, if only because of a high death rate, especially among children, is always associated with a high birth rate. The birth rate seems to be influenced, moreover, less by creed than by economic conditions. It is usually only in the poorer quarters of great cities and amongst the most wretched agricultural labourers that people practice the reckless improvidence which Father Woodlock mistakes for virtue. A Catholic who is capable of consideration for the health of his wife and the education of his children will usually not take the clerical propaganda about birth control very seriously.

But although Father Woodlock's suggestion is not a very sound basis of optimism for Jesuits, it takes us to the root of the whole question. No Christian denomination to-day survives in virtue of its intellectual or moral merits, but solely because it is imposed on the infants of each new generation. The manufacture of Christians by the exploitation on the part of the Churches, of the fears, the trustfulness and the simplicity of children is the most shocking instance of the subjection of men to machines. The Roman Catholic Church is in one aspect a big business firm, whose success depends on a constant supply of infants, just as an Insurance Company depends on a steady succession of policy holders. The average priest is only a cog on one of the wheels of the great machine. He has no individual opinion regarding the beliefs and practices which make up the stock in trade of the business, and is not permitted to have any. As long as the priest is allowed to seize the infant in his cradle, he need not trouble seriously about the effect of argument upon his victim in later years. ("You can't drive the lifelong Catholic out of the Church with a black thorn stick.") Logic and knowledge are useful only when free minds operate in disinterested contact. They are not calculated to eliminate superstition from those systematically infected with it in infancy.

The Churches will flourish in spite of common sense and science as long as this facility of access to infants is permitted to the clergy. It is not a question of free thought or of free discussion, as these things are usually understood. The question is far more fundamental. Has the State or the community the duty to protect its infants from the imposition upon them of a system of fixed ideas, with the avowed object of making them in-

capable of independent thought in certain directions for the rest of their lives? The Church can gain no new strength from the adhesion of a few depressed intellectuals, nor will it suffer so much as outsiders expect from the most damaging results of criticism or science. Its battleground is not "the free, broad field of thought," but the school, and it would perish in two generations if it could be made dependent on its capacity to convince free-minded adults.

JOHN MURPHY.

Acid Drops.

"Margery" the American medium is now in London and proposes introducing certain favoured friends to her pet spirits. (It is noticeable that each medium usually has his, or her, own spirit, just as a lady may have her own poodle or pekinese). Mr. Hannen Swaffer, who having declared Spiritualism to be true, goes about in a state of bewilderment that the rest of the world does not now accept it as such, says that scientists from all over the world have sat with Margery (in this kind of talk, almost anyone is a scientist, and all of them are on the same level). But Mr. Swaffer admits that some have jeered, some have been convinced, some have accused Margery." Anyone other than Mr. Swaffer might have reflected that a performance witnessed by a number of "scientists," which convinces some that it is genuine, some that it is pure fraud, while some laugh at the whole business, is hardly what educated people understand by a scientific performance. It is scientific to Mr. Swaffer, but then, again, one humbly enquires what are Mr. Swaffer's qualifications for knowing when an experiment complies with scientific conditions. Mr. Swaffer takes himself very seriously. And those who do not laugh at him may well be impressed by his cock-sureness on matters that he obviously does not understand.

If these Spiritualistic performances were conducted under genuinely scientific conditions, one of the first things would be to get a life history of the medium. In this one would be following the procedure of every medical man who understands his job. But this is never done. A medium appears out of the blue, a number of people attend a seance, who have no qualification for understanding what may be going on before their eyes, and with all the wonderment of a savage before a modern scientific marvel, they declare that they have had proof of intercourse with a spirit world. The testimony of men like Mr. Swaffer, and thousands of others who have, as they say, examined spiritualism and become convinced of spirit agency, is just about equal to the testimony of a witch-doctor who has examined a man in an epileptic fit and discovered proof of demoniac possession. Mr. Swaffer should stick to his dramatic criticism. On such a subject as Spiritualism he is an ill-equipped, and therefore an incompetent witness.

It is a curious thing that on a question of the nature of the atom, the size of the planets, the value of a picture, the quality of a piece of music, or the nature of stock exchange speculations, anyone would recognize the need for some preliminary knowledge or training. But where spirits are concerned nothing is needed but an open-mouthed credulity and a native disposition to see signs and wonders. We venture to say that in the whole of the British Isles there is not to-day a man, no matter how ignorant, who would consider himself unable to express a dogmatic opinion on religion.

Faith, says Dean Inge, is a way of walking, not of talking. Quite likely. Faith is a way of walking with the eyes of Reason tightly shut; a conducted tour on

which the priest, with one eye open, leads the blind into a kingdom of irrationality.

A collection of Christian imbecilities has been published under the title: *A Free Church Book of Common Prayer*. The Free Churches are not responsible for it. Indeed, a Nonconformist weekly objects to various items in the book and also to its title. Altogether, it is not hard to see that a united brotherhood of Christian believers will not be inflicted upon the world yet awhile. What a pity it is that the Bible was not so written that all believers would interpret it, and God's wishes, exactly alike!

The total number of children killed on the roads in four years was 934. To prevent this "slaughter of the innocents" God the Father did nothing. Nevertheless, the prayers of anxious Christian parents will still ascend to a "deaf heaven."

According to Mr. John Masfield: "Every soul sees a part of heaven that no other soul can see." Every believer imagines his own kind of heaven, is a better way of putting it.

"We are living in a world of new toys," says Mr. Gilbert Thomas. Few people nowadays want to play with the doll of religion—that ancient plaything of immature man; even though the clergy have modernized it with a short skirt and bobbed hair.

The Bishop of Kensington thinks the world would be better if all the diamonds were thrown into the sea. The world would be no worse off, but better, without the gems of the Bishop's religion. Mankind has done little else than squabble and fight over them for nineteen hundred years.

The Teachers' College of Columbia University has declared war against "fairy tales" for children, and is installing a library of child literature to displace books of fairy stories. To be consistent, the teachers should, we suggest, also ban the fairy tales of Holy Writ. These are particularly harmful to immature intelligence, mentally, morally and socially.

A bishop suggested at a girls' school that a prize for "gumption" would be more valuable as a test for a girl's chances of success in life than a prize for mathematics. Perhaps so. But the bishop should, for his creed's sake, beware of encouraging gumption. It is gumption's criticism of religious beliefs that has assisted the widespread rejection of religion.

Says Sir Ian Hamilton: "Thomas Atkins is a friendly lad." Still, the soldier has no particular liking for army chaplains, whom the War Office (and the Churches) forces him to listen to every Sunday. He wonders why religion should not be a private matter for the soldier as it is for the civilian.

Canon J. C. V. Darell exclaims, What can be done to stop the traffic in clerical livings? If he waits long enough, no remedy will be needed. Owing to the spread of indifference and unbelief, clerical livings will eventually be unwanted.

The Churches have gone too far on the line "our only hope is the young," declares the Rev. Dr. Maltby. For it looks with despair at the conversion of adults; and this is a surrender the Churches must never make and never need make. Still, as Dr. Maltby knows as well as we, "catching 'em young" is the Church's largest hope. But they need never quite despair of hooking a few adults, while the fact remains that most adults have suffered some kind of religious education during youth.

Maternity, says Mr. Arthur Greenwood, is the most dangerous occupation. Well, there's no harm in adding that the Christian God, in his loving-kindness, made it so, although the danger and the agony of maternity confer no possible advantage upon the human race.

Radio Times has been rather indiscreet. It has printed all the verses of "*Omar Khayyam*" as translated by Fitzgerald. Since the verses are packed with Free-thought notions, which to Christian eyes cannot but be other than blasphemous, we wonder what the B.B.C.'s committee of parsons will say about this indiscretion!

"Mother of Three" sends the following to *John Bull*:-

An invention we women could very well do with is one to enable painless confinements. We risk our lives bringing children into the world. Surely the "big brains" in the medical profession could invent something to make it at least a painless proceeding.

This mother, you will note, turns to the scientist, and not to religion and the priest, for aid. She probably realizes that the priest can merely tell her to bear her agonies with fortitude, and to trust and love the God who coupled confinement with pain.

Another reader of *John Bull* wants a contrivance invented to attract and destroy flies, insects, and other disease-carrying pests. Still another desires something for fogs, which hinder communication and endanger human lives on sea and land. Seemingly, we be living in irreligious times; else why this dissatisfaction with the various devices which the Creator, in his wisdom, appointed to harass and imperil the lives of his human children?

A woman reader of a Free-Church journal is in trouble concerning the implications of the "higher criticism." Also, as an ardent Feminist, she refuses to accept St. Paul's inspired findings on female subordination. These difficulties, it seems, have held up her spiritual activities. Our contemporary, to whom she applied for aid, tries to be helpful, in this wise:-

When Wesley was passing through an experience not unlike the dark night of the soul, his wise mentor advised him, "Preach faith in Christ until you have it, and you will preach faith in Christ because you have it."

Persistent auto-suggestion having implanted faith in Wesley, no doubt it will prove as successful in this case. When that happens, there can be no doubt that the spirit of God has dumped itself on board the soul!

The *Methodist Times* says:-

An even more insistent duty is the acceptance of each Church of the Christian obligation to train its youth in religious experience. In vital matters of religion the day-schools must always be secondary to the Sunday-school and the church.

The Churches may think it their duty to religiously train their own youth in their own schools. But when the Churches insist that religion shall be taught in the

State schools, that demand is simply Christian impertinence. We note that our friend talks of *guiding* children into a religious experience. We gather that to normal children a "religious experience" doesn't come naturally. It has to be taught—"suggested" is the psychological term that better fits the case.

Mr. E. Hayden Dimmock, is the Editor of a paper called the *Scout*, and an article by him in the *Daily News* is very illuminating. He writes:—

It is curious that after twenty-one years there are still some people who believe that the Scout Movement is military. There is nothing military about it. Scouting is a movement to train boys to be good citizens, and the first duty of a good citizen is his duty to God.

We should not like to take Mr. Dimmock as an authority on citizenship, and, proceeding a little further, we really find the milk in the cocoanut:—

The Church can help Scouting, and Scouting can help the Church.

So that all is grist that comes to the mill.

"War, if it cannot yet be said to be dead, is finally doomed," declares General Smuts. The hooligan settles his disputes with fists. War is the hooligan mode on a larger scale—stupid, brutal, uncivilized. War will be dead so soon as the nations—including people and statesmen—are civilized intellectually, and not merely, as they are at present, civilized materially.

Mr. Hugh Walpole, the novelist, advised some schoolboys to study the lives of two great novelists—Henry James and Joseph Conrad—both of whom, he says, combined a brilliant intellect with nobility of life. Freethinking fathers might take a hint from this advice. They might encourage their children to study the lives of Freethinkers who have been notable for mental courage, and for the sacrifices they have made in the cause of freedom of opinion. The child in whom is fostered admiration for such things will, in adulthood, hardly fail to discover something attractive in the Freethought Cause.

Miss Sparks, of Cheltenham Ladies' College, affirms that it is from highly trained minds that salvation will come. Not the Christian Salvation, of course. It is a trained credulity, not a trained mind, that assures one's entry into the Christian paradise. A visit to any church will furnish proof of this.

One way for a public speaker to achieve popularity is, to find out beforehand what his hearers favour or desire, and to say that he firmly believes in it. Thus the Archbishop of Canterbury has been assuring London teachers that he believes in "the fewest possible number of subjects, the best possible teachers, and the smallest possible classes." The inspiration of the Lord is very useful to bishops.

"Wanted—men who can pray," says a heading in a pious weekly. We gather that they are rather scarce in these days. The war generation of men appear not to have learnt the art in the trenches, if we can judge by their studied avoidance of religious institutions since they returned. And the latter generation simply can't see any sense in praying.

Says Professor Einstein, "Human beings seem to learn more slowly than insects." The fact that their thinking powers have been petrified for nineteen hun-

dred years by "Thus saith the Lord," may have much to do with their slowness of intake and insight.

People who keep singing are seldom ill, we are told. Still, some kind of singing is a symptom of mental malady. Just listen to the howling of our Salvationists! There's one consolation. God, who inspires it, hears it *en bloc*—how awful!

The *Morning Post's* concerns for religion in Russia is most touching, and it is bound to be disinterested; our noble English newspapers are all made like that. There is in some quarters, opposition to recognition of Russia; probably there are reasons of policy of some particular interest with which we are not concerned. Oblivious of the fact that Russia's business in her own business in the matter of religion, the *Morning Post* wishes to make the flesh creep with headlines "War Against God and Religion." It is supremely funny—as funny as declaring war against the fourth dimension. We shall be prepared to take it seriously when our own choice powerful blockheads at home can launch a crusade against the killing of four pedestrians a day, or deal intelligently with the thousand and one problems on our own doorstep. In the meantime, Freethinkers will be as pleased with the number of the non-religions manufactured in Russia by compulsion, as they are in the number of Christians made at home by the same methods. The method in both cases is equally adious and the negation of free thinking.

"In Russia," the *Morning Post* states "the fight goes on against the repugnant spectre of God." Evidently the leader writer has never heard of Shelley or Swinburne. Readers of Russian history can well understand how anxious the peasantry are to get back to the good old days of Czardom, and the merest dolt can see, that action in history brings re-action in history, and there must be young men in Russia who remember the sufferings of their parents. But to write this, is only to state that night follows day.

John Bull devotes two pages to explaining the life-preserving work done by light-houses, life-buoys, fog-signals, and life-boats. This is summed up by the heading: "The Job of Cheating Davy Jones." More honestly, the caption should have been "cheating God." For, as the controller of the world, the Christian God it is who put the obstacles in the way of the seafarer, and who organizes the tempests, etc., which endanger his life.

From a weekly paper:—

There is nothing like a cold spell says a doctor, to kill disease. It is so effective that sometimes it kills the patient as well.

No doubt Christian Evidence-mongers can explain why God should not be held responsible for the killing cold and the killing disease germs. The hypothesis of "God is Love" can no doubt be made to fit in somewhere.

Sir George Newman declares that this is a "golden age." The English people to-day, says he, are better clothed, better fed, better housed, and better educated than they have ever been in the history of the country. Strange, is it not? The English people are better off in all these ways than they were when the Christian religion and the Churches completely dominated them. Think, too, of the fact that the people—the large majority—ignore the Churches, refuse to pray or worship, laugh at most of the accepted Christian notions, and refuse to ask priests and parsons for guidance. The moral to be drawn is evidently that the Christian God appreciates honest doubt and disbelief, and he thinks it ought not to go unrewarded! We Atheists must revise our opinion of God.

Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

NINTH LIST OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £1,321 9s. 7d.; Bidy and Arthur Powell (S. Africa), £1; F. Marschal (S. Africa), £3; George Chapple, 5s. 1d.; J. L. Femister, £1 1s.; John Green, £1; Miss Florence Green, 10s.; Thos. W. Slater, 5s.; Mr. & Mrs. A. C. Rosetti, £1; A Flapper Voter, 5s.; Frank E. Porter, £2 2s.; S. Glading (N. Zealand), 5s.; P. G. Bamford (N. Zealand), £5; A. Bamford (N. Zealand), £5; I. Berkov, £1 1s.; Thomas Fox (Sheffield), £1; E. Kirton, 5s.; W. Milroy, £1; Aug. Danielsson, £1; W. P. S. Murray, 5s.; W. J. Lamb, £3; U. Shwe Tha (Burma), £1; Total to December 9, 1929, £1,350 13s. 8d.

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK,
Hon. Secretary,
"Hillfield," Burraton,
Saltash, Cornwall.

This Fund will close on December 31.

D. W. Kerr writes: "Hope to hear that a satisfactory amount is raised for the Testimonial. Mr. Chapman Cohen well deserves some substantial recognition of the great work he has done for the good cause, and I sincerely hope that he will enjoy good health to enable him to continue for many years in the great work of enlightenment."

T. W. Slater says: "I have not missed one article written by Mr. Cohen since he became Editor of the *Freethinker*."

A Flapper Voter writes: "Kindly accept enclosed as a 'wee' token of my esteem for 'one of the best.' Would that so small a sum were increased a hundred fold, but circumstances and our old friend, 'Mr. James Jesus,' have willed it otherwise."

Edward Snelling says:—"Those of us of small means are not able to do much; but it does enable us to show our appreciation of Mr. Cohen and his strenuous labours for Freethought."

A. I. Bell, sending his "gift to Mr. Cohen," says: "He's good."

Wm. Collins writes: "I feel that I owe him more than I can ever repay. He has been a very potent factor in moulding my life."

O. Melton says: "Freethinkers owe an incalculable debt of gratitude to Chapman Cohen which they can never repay."

F. E. Porter writes: "I can assure you, as one who was amongst the Plymouth Brethren for twenty years, it is one of the greatest pleasures of my life that through the means of your Society I have been delivered from all religious superstition."

[Why not revive the Derby Branch?]

Bidy and Arthur Powell say: "Bless him! May he have a long and happy life. We cannot adequately pay him for his great services to the 'best of causes,' but we can at least show our love and appreciation. We wish there were more of his sterling merit in our movement."

Thomas Fox writes: "As a schoolmaster I write in recognition of knowledge and truth gained by reading the *Freethinker*. Besides I admire outspoken Truth in these days of: (1) The prevalence of shame and cant, skimp and scamp; (2) The domination of ignorance; (3) The intolerance of authority."

P. G. Bamford, sending for himself and brother, says: "If the Fund does not come up to the Committee's expectations, I shall be pleased to send a further contribution, as I think it the most deserving one."

This is intensely practical and liberal, and other have said something similar. The Fund has not, up to date, reached our expectations, must less our hopes. We are not begging and will not do so. If our friends send what they can afford that is the utmost we expect of them. They alone can measure their means.

It is midnight as I write, and the "lord" is moving in a mysterious way"; he has planted 'his footsteps in the sea' and is "riding on the storm," utterly regardless of the sufferings and the lives of his children! When will this religious superstition end? Not until our Cause triumphs!

W.J.W.E.

National Secular Society

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

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

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

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. W. WALLACE.—*Upon Epicurus Gardens* is published by Blackie & Co.

H. BARTON.—We do not know the name of the author of *Mankind their Origin and Destiny*. We have seen it attributed to Sir Leslie Stephen, but we are rather doubtful about it.

F.H.—Mr. Cohen will be lecturing in Swansea on January 12.

E. ODDY (Manchester).—We are pleased to hear from you as one who is anxious to help on the Cause. The General Secretary is writing you.

C. WILLIAMSON.—We are neither an optimist nor a pessimist, but we are hopeful of a general and continuous improvement in the welfare of the race. If you go on with a lively sense of the stupidity of mankind, and of the weight of the forces making for stagnation or reaction, you will maintain a more cheerful frame of mind in your fight for what you believe to be right.

D.P.S.—There is no doubt whatever as to the fact that numbers of working journalists are compelled to either keep their mouths closed on matters of religion, or write with their tongues in their cheeks. Will attend to other matter.

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."

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

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

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.

Owing to the Christmas holidays the copy of the *Freethinker*, dated December 29, will have to be in the printer's hands on December 21. Anything intended for that issue of the paper must reach us not later than the first post of December 20.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings at Glasgow on Sunday last. The morning brought a gathering well up to the average of his meetings, and in the evening the hall was quite crowded. In the absence of the President of the Branch, Mr. Macewen, who was lecturing at Shotts, Mr. Hale took the chair at both meetings. We fancy there was a good sale of literature, and appreciation was expressed at the publication of the new volume of essays by G. W. Foote. In our opinion it is a selection of essays that should be in the hands of every *Freethinker* reader.

With reference to the visits of Provincial Freethinkers to the Society's Annual Dinner on Saturday, January 18, it has been suggested that if notice was sent in good time by those who are attending the dinner, a friendly meeting might be fixed up for the Friday or Sunday evening, at which Mr. Cohen could be present. Mr. Cohen would be very pleased to fall in with an arrangement of this kind, and it would certainly give more time and opportunity for conversation than is given on the more formal occasion of the dinner. Either Friday or Sunday evening would fall within the scope of the week-end ticket. But it would be necessary for notice to be sent in as soon as possible.

In spite of short notice and hurried arrangements Mr. Rosetti had a good meeting in Birmingham last Sunday. After the lecture the local members were met and Branch matters discussed. Mr. E. A. Sandys, 278 Brook Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham, was elected Secretary. That the choice was a happy one was very apparent. Arrangements will be made for lectures in the Bristol Street Schools in the New Year, and for Mr. Chapman Cohen to lecture in the Town Hall in March. The meeting closed with the conviction that the Branch had at last found the remedy for its little ailments.

G. E. Macdonald continues his "Fifty Years of Freethought" in the pages of the *Truthseeker*, and does not appear to miss much of moment in the history of American Freethinking, besides giving many sidelights on Freethought in other parts of the world. One volume of this history has already been issued, and we shall publish a review of it in the course of two or three weeks.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti lectures in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester on Sunday (December 15), afternoon and evening. Subjects, "Jesus Christ and Politics." "Where are the Gods?"

We have received the following from our occasional contributor, Mr. Corinna:—

On December 27, 1929, the radio station at Minsk, U.S.S.R., will give out an anti-religious talk. The speaker is to be D. Snejho, and the language Esperanto. The call at 20.25 to 20.55 o'clock, is "Allo, allo, parolus Minsko radio-stacio je la nomo de Sovnarkom de B.S.S.R." All Freethinkers tuning in should send a post card giving results to: Minsk, Universitetkjan 16, U.S.S.R.

One thing there is worth a great deal, to pass thy life in truth and justice, with abenevolent disposition even to liars and unjust men.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

The Canon Explodes.

"Truth is violated either by falsehood or by silence."
Amnianus.

SITUATED in the fashionable purlieus of Mayfair there is an institution whose activities must give the Devil—if he is aware of its existence—the devil of a lot to be thankful for. On the other hand God, who, for reasons which will appear subsequently, must be the chief patron of this institution, is probably scratching his hoary locks in bewilderment at the tactics adopted by its "director." Let me explain.

In the *Evening News* for October 5, there appeared an article entitled "Is Prayer Answered?" It was written by Canon Francis Underhill, Warden of Liddon House, Mayfair—an institution whose object, according to the same paper, is "to give intellectual and spiritual help to men."

As one who has but recently been driven to doubt the truth of religious teachings I felt that here, at any rate, I might expect to receive straightforward answers to straightforward questions. So I wrote to the Canon a long and perfectly serious letter pointing out certain inconsistencies in his remarks and requesting an answer to certain questions arising out of them. I received the following reply:—

"Your letter is too long, and raises too many points for me to answer in detail in writing. If you care to call and talk the matter over with me, I shall be glad to see you. At present I am in the middle of the process of having my teeth extracted. It should be over by the end of the month; and after that I hope you will arrange some time for an interview."

I then wrote a much shorter letter, regretting the inconvenient juncture at which my first had arrived, and expressing the hope that, if the Canon was too unwell to answer the one question it contained, someone else at Liddon House might do so for him. The question was:—

"How can an intelligent man indulge in petitions to God (prayer) when he is taught to believe (1) that God knows in advance all that is going to happen, and (2) that God's will is immutable?"

I added that the fact that a man may or may not be praying in accordance with that will could have no bearing upon the result. The Canon answered as follows:

"I told you I was unable to do much for the next few weeks. Further the questions you raise cannot be answered in a few lines; not indeed in a long letter. I still suggest that when I am better you might come and talk the matter over. Meanwhile I am having sent to you a copy of Dr. Bicknell's *In Defence of Christian Prayer*. Difficulties are well dealt with in the book—as they have been dealt with in much literature many times over far more effectively than I could do."

If the Canon could really know how many times I couned that book, there is little doubt that he, and possibly its author, would be flattered. But, alas, in no place was my question answered or even touched upon. Perhaps the nearest approach to contact was the following extract from pages 54 and 55:—

As Sir Oliver Lodge has said, as far as the infringement of laws is concerned, it is no more unscientific to pray to God for rain than to tell the gardener to water the garden.

I need not dwell upon the comic comparison between God and a hired man, who can be sacked if he disobeys orders. I did not even mention it to the Canon, for I had no desire to be led off the point—which is one of the many reasons why I refused his offer of an interview. I merely pointed out that the

book did not answer my question and referred again to points previously raised. My letter concluded thus:—

"Do preachers mean what they say when they declare that God's purpose is unchangeable—or do they not? If they do, then please explain what the use is of praying for something to happen when you know that everything is bound to happen as God wills it? I fully realize that I cannot force you to commit yourself to paper. But at the same time I am left with the conviction that it is not due to your inability to write, so much as your unwillingness to admit that you, personally, are ignorant of the proper answer to my question. If such is the case, will you frankly admit it? If such is not the case, may I expect a reply within a reasonable time—say ten days?"

Then the Canon exploded. This was his reply:—

"Your letter of yesterday is, as I anticipated, even more offensive than the two former ones. I am not going to be bullied into an interminable and acrimonious correspondence with you. I repeat that I am prepared to see you here at your convenience, and to discuss the questions you have raised."

I waited three weeks to give him time to recover from his—dental treatment. Then I gently pointed out that it was absurd to accuse me of "bullying" since written questions could bring no influence to bear upon him other than that which his own conscience imposed. It would be equally sensible of me to accuse him of trying to "bully" me into an interview. As regards his accusations of "offensiveness" and "acrimony," I was willing to let the public be judge.

I returned him the price of the book he had sent me and expressed the hope that he would accept it as proof that I bore no ill-feeling and was only anxious that truth should prevail.

The Canon replied by acknowledging receipt of my postal order—without thanks—and his last words were:—

"You are at liberty to publish my letters to you, if you think fit to do so: though I do not flatter myself that the general public will take any interest in our correspondence. You might try the *Freethinker!*"

Evidently the Canon is aware that Truth will not prevail when it emanates from Liddon House. He also seems to know in what quarters one is most likely to find it. So I have taken his advice.

But I wonder what God and the Devil think about it!

C. S. FRASER.

Materialism Restated.

FURTHER CRITICISM.

In his "Rejoinder," Mr. Chapman Cohen says that his chapter on "Causation" is really the pivot of his whole theory.

Mr. Cohen's conclusion is that cause and effect are coincident. Cause and effect form a sequence. There is a lag between them. The phenomena of existence are in sequences of cause and effect, each effect becoming in turn a cause for the next event (*i.e.*, effect). The lag, I take it, is the basis of the phenomenon we call time. To discuss cause and effect without taking into account the factor of time is to vitiate the argument. If, as Mr. Cohen says, cause and effect are coincident, then to-day would be coincident with yesterday and tomorrow. But it is *not*, and in order to explain *why* it is not, Mr. Cohen must revise his chapter.

Mr. Cohen says ("Rejoinder," p. 622) "Products

can never be explained in terms of their factors, and no scientist is fool enough to attempt it." Let us see. How would you explain to yourself or to others, a locomotive (*e.g.*) unless in terms of its factors, *i.e.*, its components? How would you "explain" a plum pudding fully, unless you told what it was made of? Mr. Cohen, with his penchant for "laws" would no doubt describe the "laws" of a plum pudding with reference to its niceness, to the taste and smell, the comfortable feeling it induced, etc. But suppose a certain pudding, though it had a normal taste and smell, induced—death. It would not be enough to say that "fatal result" was one of the "laws" of that particular pudding. You would want, not a "law," but an explanation, and to get it you would *analyse* that pudding into its factors (*i.e.*, components). And if you found that one of the factors was arsenic, then you would have "explained" the pudding. Mr. Cohen's statement that no fool of a scientist would attempt to explain products in terms of their factors is absolutely mistaken. How *are* scientists attempting to explain the universe? By *analysis*, *i.e.*, by finding out its factors. They are certainly not synthesising it!

Mr. Cohen says "A product of two colliding bodies is heat, but I should be greatly interested in seeing Mr. Freeman explain the sensation of heat in terms of the mechanics of moving bodies." If you examine it, the matter of the two colliding bodies has nothing to do with his question. He wants *me* to explain the *sensation* of heat in terms, etc. Heat itself can be and is explained as a mode of motion in the text books, but I am not called on to explain the *sensation* of heat. Mr. Cohen, however, *is* to be called on. He asserts, time and time again, that all natural phenomena are compositions of forces. Will you, *please*, Mr. Cohen, explain the sensation of heat as a composition of forces—what the forces are, how they are combined, etc. I challenge you, or anybody else, to show that the answer can be found in *Materialism Re-stated*, though it *ought* to be there. I challenge you further, to produce an answer to satisfy anybody unless you *analyse* the product ("sensation of heat") into its factors, *i.e.*, into its component "forces."

You do put another "poser" to me, which I will answer, or at any rate put you into the way of getting an answer. "He" (*i.e.*, Mr. Freeman) "might try and express the quality of wetness in terms of the qualities of oxygen and hydrogen." Now, do you really think that science has not gone a long way to solving this problem, or that it is something that science cannot do?

Wetness is a thing that is now fairly well understood—and in terms of oxygen and hydrogen; and it is only one example of many that cause me to be astounded that you should make the statement about no scientists being fool enough to try to explain products in terms of their factors. The explanation of wetness has been got by analysing substances into their factors (atoms) and then getting at the "factors" of the atoms (electrons). The laws of wetness (or anything else) do not *explain* wetness—they only state how it behaves (your statement that I seem to think that laws control things is gratuitous; no phrase nor sentence of mine can be brought to justify it). To explain wetness you must do it in terms of the factors of the substances concerned—at least two substances must be concerned. Water is not always "wet." It will wet a clean plate or glass. It will not wet a greasy plate. Why? The explanation is to be found in the molecules of the water the glass and the grease. And to explain the molecules, you must get at *their* factors—the atoms. And to explain the atoms you must get at *their*

factors—the electrons. Having done this, you can retrace your steps and explain the atoms in terms of electrons, the molecules in terms of the atoms, the wetness of the water in terms of the molecules of water and glass (or any other substance that water can wet.) You can also explain why water will not wet grease in terms of the oxygen and hydrogen that constitute water, and the oxygen, hydrogen and carbon that constitute grease. For more details consult Sir Wm. Braggs book *Concerning the Nature of Things*. You say no scientist would be fool enough to explain a product in terms of its factors. Sir Wm. Bragg does explain the product “wetness” in terms of its factors. He could not explain it otherwise.

Further now to Mr. Cohen's lack of clarity in *Materialism Re-stated*. It was not clear (to me) whether he believed in one primary force or more. His oft repeated expression is “composition of forces,” but he never gives the slightest hint of their number. I thought that orthodox Materialism would postulate one primary force, and that therefore the proper phrase should be “compositions of force.” The underlying idea is that this primary force arranges itself in different items or units varying in strength and direction, and that every phenomenon is a pattern or design built up of these items—the differences in phenomena being then explainable as differences in pattern or design. This idea is not so fantastic but that it has fascinated many great minds. I take it that something of the sort is really meant by the old Greek idea (was it Pythagoras who stated it?) very crudely translated that “number” was at the root of phenomena. Mr. Cohen himself writes with seeming approval—certainly without disapproval—of the statement of the problem as it appeared to the Greeks. “If all things were changing, what was the constant eternal thing which formed the substance of it all.” (p. 29.) “The assertion of a primitive substance out of which all things are formed, back to which all things go.” But his talk of “forces” left Mr. Cohen's own position lacking in clarity. So I asked him, “How many” forces enter into your “composition”? Do we get a clear straightforward answer? Here it is: “Perhaps I did not use this phrase (compositions of force) because I was unable to picture a single force forming a “composition.” Mr. Freeman appears to have taken the story of the British soldier who, single-handed, captured a score of German prisoners by surrounding them, too literally. The answer is not straightforward, but I ask every candid reader: Am I now justified in believing that Mr. Cohen believes in more than one (primary or elemental) force—and I think the answer would be yes. Very well then. As regards my previous lack of comprehension, Mr. Cohen says: “How much this lack of comprehension belongs to me, and how much to Mr. Freeman I will leave others to decide.” (“Rejoinder,” *Freethinker*, p. 621.) He says, on p. 622, “the book has been of very considerable help in clarifying the minds of Freethinkers.” As it happens, Mr. G. H. Taylor, one (I presume) of these clarified ones, had a flattering article on *Materialism Re-stated* in the *Freethinker*, August 18, 1929. This sentence occurs in it. “The trouble is, that a Materialist is a Singularist, recognising one basic principle at the root of existence.” The first three words of the sentence are rather *à propos*!

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

[The components of a locomotive are iron, steel and (as adventitious components) water, coal, and heat. We should much like to know how the locomotive, as a going concern can be described in terms of the qualities of any or all of these things. The information would be decidedly interesting.—C.C.]

Crank and Supercrank.

I MIGHT have been quite an ordinary citizen peacefully progressing towards an old age of complacency and moderation, had it not been for the writings of many provocative thinkers. Mr. Arnold Bennett, himself, for whose literary genius I have a profound admiration, contributed considerably to my philosophy of life. He taught me that intellectual honesty was the quality most to be esteemed in men, I caught a wonderful phrase of his about having the courage of one's passion, and I remember that his recipe for happiness and living on twenty-four hours a day was to get a hobby horse and ride it. I absorbed this teaching and am now a crank and a super-crank. But two men do I honour, he who is not afraid to think, and he who is ever prepared to express what he believes to be the truth. All others are humbugs, sycophants, and time-servers. I found that the things of the world of Paris and London, and the “palaces of opulence” gave no joy, and I went back to my hobby and my garden. But like a true crank I cannot rest content selfishly enjoying peace and tranquillity of mind and body, knowing that the times are so sadly out of joint; and so I come forth occasionally as a hot gospeller for one or other of the many crankisms to which I subscribe.

But what a sad sight is this! Surely this cannot be my dear old master Arnold now degenerated into a decrepit Pangloss? “No panacea except cheerfulness and moderation, drink a bit, smoke a bit, nothing peculiar, no hobby horse, always a sense of proportion, and no worry.” Such is now the ideal of the gifted author of “Piccadilly”! There is an old joke about a camel going days without drinking and the toper's comment on that fact. Well, what crank would want to be a centenarian at that price?

Mr. Bennett tells us that “The crank is usually a public and private nuisance and a destroyer of felicity. An imperious crank in a home can, and often does, turn heaven into hell . . .” Of course the sting is in the adjective “imperious.” Substitute the word genius for crank (or indeed any other person) and the platitude would smell as rank. My parents were not cranks but their “home life” was a tragedy. The happiest couples I have ever known have been those who were engrossed in some movement to which they devoted most of their lives regardless of a sense of proportion. And, oh, how profoundly unhappy and dreary have been most of those homes I have known where rule moderate discretion and discreet moderation, where no one dared have a thought that was not commonplace, where fools and their folly had to be spoken of with reverence, and the hall door barred at ten at night. No pestiferous cranks there, no passion, no hobby horse except wireless (but not on Sundays).

Mr. Bennett says that “Not many cranks are primarily interested in the disorders for which they have now found a remedy—disorders for instance of health, dress, religion, education, rearing of children,” but the argument and the subsequent suggestion of the crank's inordinate vanity resemble very much the attitude of the man in the crowd: “Yah, what are you getting out of it?”

Nearly every crank I have met has been forced to take an inordinate interest in one subject through very sad experiences and suffering. An expert on dieting who has helped me great, turned to the subject of food reform after the death of a child, an ex-inspector suffering for twenty years an injustice may be forgiven for an obsession which shows his great strength of character, and so on. But I can only speak for myself. I have thought very deeply about health, dress, religion, education, rearing of children. And now let me indicate my chief crankisms.

I believe that radiant health could be the possession of every creature. Of course, Mr. Bennett, and many others, not cranks believe that, but they mostly all get ill, go in for operations, treatments, drugging and doctoring. Take a look at the medical record of a crank and his family. My wife's people and my people ate a little, smoked a little, drank a little (let us be charitable), etc., they all had doctors and they are nearly all dead. My fiancée was a physical wreck before she

was twenty, and a famous specialist, by no means a crank, told her she had but three months to live! Not being a fool like this gynecologist, I made her a crank, also a mother. That was twenty-four years ago, and we have now eight children—birth control not being one of my fads. A doctor has never visited us professionally, we take no medicine, we are disgustingly healthy, my wife has the figure of a young woman, a schoolgirl complexion, and can run, jump and dance with anyone half her age. And for a man who is over fifty, I'm not to be sneezed at. But it didn't all happen by chance. Many a hard battle have I had to fight for my cranky ideas about health, about education, and the rearing of children.

I have thought deeply about spiritual matters, and that is why I disbelieve in every religion I have ever read about. Probably there is not a bit of difference between Mr. Bennett and me in this respect, only that, being a crank, I have the courage of my passion. A domiciled Irishman, and firmly convinced that religion is the greatest barrier to peace in that country, I took the lead in founding the first Secular Society in Ireland. "A clever crank can make thousands of cranks in no time," says Mr. Bennett. Well, I have not been clever in "speaking to scornful men at street corners" in Belfast.

I disbelieve in War. Oh, but we all do that, indeed it is quite the thing now to read *All Quiet*. Yes, but my pacifism started before seeing "Journey's End." I was a Peace crank away back in the Boer War days and later in 1914, and I am an out and outer. No boy scouts, no drill, no air-gun practice, no war work, no munition making, no touching the accursed thing in any form at any time. Needless to say the country that deemed me to be a potential murderer did not treat me kindly when I deemed to be a crank.

I disbelieve in all government. I don't wish to govern anybody, and I don't like them to govern me. I would do away with prisons, reformatories, and such like institutions and all law courts. Doctors are a scourge, vitamins a joke, and the germ theory of disease is a scream.

Says Mr. Bennett: "There are thousands of men apparently sane, going about the world to-day preaching that if everybody would drink two glasses of cold water on rising, the world would be changed and the millennium arrive in about a fortnight." I must just characterize this paragraph as grotesque and exaggerated nonsense.

I believe in pure blood. But then I am a crank, and will not allow the "apparently sane" medical officer to give disease to my children under the name of vaccination. Probably I know more than any other man in Ireland about this loathsome subject, and being a crank, I have taken every opportunity of enlightening the public as to the awful dangers of this filthy and deadly rite.

Vivisection has been described as "Man's greatest shame." I feel so deeply on this matter that any and every free night of my life I would give my services to the great cause of abolishing this cruel and futile practice. For I am a crank, and I have not the complacency of a successful author. My sense of proportion is all right. I take no milk in my tea. I never wear underclothing. I eat no breakfast, and my weekly food bill is about 7s. a week. I never ride when I have time to walk, and I find it impossible not to be bored by Edgar Wallace. But those are small things and I do not obtrude them, but Mr. Bennett's proportion is peculiar. To me, there are greater tragedies in life than being offered a cigarette instead of a cigar after a sumptuous meal, and it seems characteristic of the later Bennett that he had neither the intellectual honesty nor the courage to give his host the true reason for his leaving abruptly. I like to avoid worry but I cannot say, in effect "I've had my dinner, nobody's hungry." Unfortunately I am a crank, and while I have had all the best things of life—and still have them—my happiness is not complete when I see so much preventible misery and ignorance around me.

Yes, I may do little, but I am fortified by the knowledge that the crank has always led the way. After all, a crank is a little thing that makes revolutions.

J. EFFEL.

(Author of "The Nonconformist," etc.)

Extra!

I HAVE been specially notified of the exceptionally good fare to be given next week in the pages of the *Sunday Suppress*, so that I may warn readers and newcomers of a treat so near to hand. This will be the Anniversary Number, and will be amazingly full of that kind of good stuff with which readers of the *Sunday Suppress* are so well acquainted. I have seen proofs of the more important articles only, and have been supplied with a table of chief contents, so that I may inform the general public well in advance of the date of issue. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity of seeing a model of the completed number, nor have I been allowed to insert my own commentary, which I offered to do. In this connexion, the General Manager wrote me to the effect that he had only selected me as *introduceur* in recognition of my success in swimming from Shoeburyness to Southend, whilst preparing a test-piece for the *Sunday Suppress* All-England Month Organ Championship, and because of my alertness and equity as a witness in the Tooting Bee Girl-Wife Case. He pointed out that the proprietor employs a man specially to write commentaries and notices, and that it would be an act of professional discourtesy, of which the *Sunday Suppress* hoped that it was incapable, to take the commission out of the hand of a writer who had always been so faithful and reliable. The Manager thanked me warmly, but said that his staff would be delighted if I simply gave the Press notice of the honour of my name as sponsor. Therefore, the following list will only contain the *pièces de résistance*, readers being here notified that there will in all probability be a special stock also of criminal offence reports, petty thefts, Society paragraphs, sport records, Stock Exchange news, and those genial big, black headlines and unique photographs that delight the hearts of all regular readers. I have done nothing to the work, then, other than to correct obvious mistakes in punctuation and orthography, and to add a few words to make the construction clearer in some instances, or to complete the reference: and, what I think is a trifling detail, have here and there altered the original sequence of the items, merely for my own amusement. If I had made additions or deletions where I thought that the sense or truth had suffered somewhat, I am afraid that I could not have made good my promise to leave the manuscript uninterfered with:—

"HOW MY NEWSPAPER HAS HELPED CIVILISATION," by Lord Beaver. A heart-throbbing and convincing account of the work done by the *Sunday Suppress* since its inception written in a clear and charming manner by Lord Beaver, its founder and owner. The author's style is incisive and charged with quiet humour, whilst he gives us facts and figures about his paper that we would not even have dreamed about. There is also a brief account of the life and habit of the family mascot, the beaver.

"BRITISH DRAMA VERSUS THE WORLD!" by Hangan Snapper.—Our provoking dramatic critic, Hangan Snapper, is at his best in this highly stimulating article about the merits of British drama as compared with so-called "drama" of other countries. The way he endorses the opinion expressed by the *Sunday Suppress*, that to buy British is to buy Best, and how he proves it by comparing Henry Arthur Jones with Ibsen, Pinero with Æschylus, Lord Dunsany with Schiller, Sheridan with Goldoni, and A. P. Herbert with Sophocles, have to be read to be believed. Our dramatic critic has incurred the hatred and bitter laughter of all other critics, but the way he continues in his fearless and outspoken manner will give rise to serious reflection yet.

"BIG GAMBLERS I HAVE MADE," by Viscount Laffarose.—our regular contributor, whose bracing aristocratic articles have been so popular and have earned him the title of *The Discount*, reflects in his customary gay manner upon certain features of this most typically aristocratic pastime. It has been said that The Discount's light, racy style of writing has thrown new light on our upper classes, and has made The Discount's articles eagerly looked forward to by Baron and Bargee alike.

"ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY," by Douglas Bluffus.—A powerful article from the pen of

the editor of the *Sunday Suppress*, sometimes known as the Black Douglas. Like his namesake, Mr. Bluffus has earned by his courageous and able war on evil a title that is often enough to frighten disobedient children—and adults too—into submission to the right way of living and speaking. In his simple and unaffected manner Mr. Bluffus tells how we have all gone from the "straight and narrow path" of virtue, and how he himself found the way back to "plain living and high thinking" through God's "eternal grace and glory," given us by the precious "blood of the Lamb" to "set us free," that we might "live with Him evermore." This will do much to enhance Mr. Bluffus's reputation as a writer of religious charm and extreme simplicity.

OH I SAY!" by Speechcomber (of the *Daily Suppress*).—A sunny column of choice wit about things of interest. This weekly feature, which Mr. Bluffus has called "the cream of innocent fun and sage advice," is better than ever, Speechcomber poking fun at Ibsen, the London Hospitals, Flammarion, Browning, Old Age Pensions, the Late War, Psychology, and Atheism. He has also that "sage advice" to deliver on the topic of the beauty of advertising, and some fine sentiments on the occasion of the British Museum doorkeeper's return to good health.

"THE THANKS OF A NATION."—A full page article, by various writers, describing the nation's tribute to God upon the recovery of Charlie, the old attendant at the British Museum, who, it will be remembered, suffered from an illness for several weeks. During the anxious weeks of waiting endured by the whole nation, Charlie was supposed to be suffering from adenoids, goitre, rheumatic fever, arthritis, bubonic plague, King's Evil, and *coup de soleil*. This exhaustive article treats from the moment of first pain to Charlie's recovery, telling how God, who puts all things right at last, showed the medical men that Charlie was only suffering from mild indigestion. The rest of the article and the page of special photographs will make this Divine message to our loose age doubly compelling.

As well as the above astounding items, there will be a list of prize winners in the recent *Sunday Suppress* Biggest Groundsel Competition, which has created national interest; a vindication of our memorable war on the Blow Football and Stutter-Words Competition Press; particulars of our All-In Insurance Policy for Domestic Animals and Pet Cage-Birds, and a remarkable and full report of the *Oregon Quadruple Murder Case*, which has held this country spell-bound since we first received news of it. The special radio photographs of the actual murder scene and the blood-drops found ten yards distant, are the most important contribution to journalism this year. Our insets of the bloody axe and the wooden fence, showing the rupture caused by a misdirected blow, are striking examples of what can be done by British money and enterprise.

These and many other notable features are contained in next week's *Sunday Suppress*, obtainable from all newsagents, Price 2d. ORDER NOW.

THOMAS WILLIAM LAMONT.

Society News.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

DESPITE the very bad weather, a very good audience assembled on Sunday last to hear Mr. R. B. Kerr's lecture on "Should the Teaching of Hell-fire to Children be Prohibited by Law?" Mr. Kerr's reply to the question was an emphatic "Yes." He suggested that children should be protected from mental as well as physical injury, and advocated the infliction of certain penalties upon all persons found guilty of impregnating children with the brutal doctrine of Hell.

The lecturer's views, however, were not subscribed to by those taking part in the subsequent discussion, chiefly on the score of their opposition to any legislation savouring of religious persecution. The general consensus of opinion seemed to be that the only effective method of combating the evil was to go on making more Freethinkers, with particular emphasis upon the pressing need for secular education.—A.H.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (361 Brixton Road, near Gresham Road): 7.30, Mr. J. Payn—"The Romance of Science."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Lecture—"Religion and Sex," Mrs. Janet Chance.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. J. Hutton Hynd—"The Historic Jesus."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. T. E. Gregory—"The Economic Future of Great Britain."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Mr. Everett Reid, F.R.G.S., F.R.S.A., on "The Palestine Mandate."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): Thursday, December 19, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Dance and Social, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. J. Hart; Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Friday, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S.—A lecture will be held in the Elysium, High Street on Sunday, December 15, at 7.30. Speaker—Mr. George Whitehead, subject, "Who Made God?"

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Top Room, Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street) 7.30, Mr. W. J. Paul (Parkgate, Cheshire)—"Education in the Schools." There will be no meeting on December 22 and 29, the next meeting will be on January 5, 1930.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): Mr. R. H. Rosetti (London) Secretary, National Secular Society, will deliver two lectures—3.0, "Jesus Christ and Politics"; 6.30, "Where are the Gods."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Edward D. Saphin—"The Phallic Element in Religion."

"A Practical Religion for a Workaday World."

2nd Monthly Lecture, Monday, Dec. 16

7.30 p.m.

"Swedenborg's Doctrine of Use
:: and The Christian Life," ::

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Secretary: MR. R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1895 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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