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

Views and Opinions.

The Reign of Folly.

ONE is constantly getting illustrations of the truth that while one cannot hope to fool all the people all the time, one can fool some of the people all the time. Or, to make the truism scientifically applicable, one may go on fooling the same type of mind generation after generation with conspicuous success. Even that expansion of the old saying is not completely accurate, for it is not necessary for you to fool these naturally "foolables" all the time; they fool themselves in virtue of their inborn and indestructible capacity for folly. On this type education appears to have little real influence. Educate them and they express their foolishness in a more grammatical manner. Send them to Oxford and they remain unchanged save to speak a more barbarous English than would have been the case had they never got higher than a good elementary school. For education does not give capacity or provide understanding; it can only teach us to use in a better and more workmanlike manner whatever capacity or understanding we have. Some wise old fellow wrote a long time ago, "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him," and by some means that golden saying has got itself preserved in the Bible—which book also provides many illustrations of the truth of the saying. And the educated fool is the most hopeless kind of fool. The man who lacks academic education is apt to feel his deficiencies, and is ready to receive correction or instruction, even though he may not have the capacity for understanding the information when given. But the fool who has been "educated," particularly if it has taken place at some well-known public establishment, is instruction proof. His education serves to prevent instruction. You may bray him in your mortar of common sense, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. He is dedicated to the

service of folly from his cradle, and he will go down to his grave rejoicing in the livery he has so fittingly worn.

* * *

The Power of Jesus.

Apropos of what has been said. There happened some time ago at Oxford University one of those outbreaks of religion to which Oxford seems to be subject. The outbreak was decorous, even the Holy Ghost would not venture on anything of a rowdy religious character at Oxford, and is, I believe, of American origin. Somewhat of a Quietist nature the movement consists of a number of men meeting together and then acting as moved by the "Spirit." Perhaps this is not quite a full description of what occurs, but it will serve. And then we have the age-long—and pre-Christian—talk of the uplifting influence of the "Holy Spirit." There was something of the same kind attempted with the ancient Order of Froth-Blowers, but that seems to have died down. I wonder that some of the big whisky firms have not tried something similar with their wares. Properly run, I am quite sure that a select society of whisky drinkers might be able to describe their weekly gatherings and enthusiasms in the same terms of uplift and "spiritual" exhilaration.

A number of this Oxford group of representatives of the eternally foolish have taken root in Rodney Street, Liverpool, and the *Sunday Referee* promises weekly accounts of what happens. They meet in a "cellar"—one suspects it should read basement—and without set ceremony. The meeting has a talk, makes confessions of past failures, and decisions for new spiritual ventures. And there are, of course, the usual accounts of the wonderful results achieved, with, one suspects, the usual exaggerations, all of which may stand as a proof that the same type may be fooled—not by others so much as by themselves—generation after generation. Here it is Jesus that produces these remarkable results, there it is Allah, or Bacchus, or Mumbo-Jumbo. The phenomenon is as old as religion, any God, savage or civilized, ancient or modern, will serve. The man and the occasion is all that is required. Argument against this type of believer is almost fruitless. The fool may be brayed in the mortar with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. That sentence from the Bible should be written in letters of gold in every school-room and in every church in the country.

* * *

An Agnostic Philosopher.

The *Referee* heads its account with a line "Atheist Changed." In the text this Atheist turns out to be an Agnostic. The two terms might often be taken as interchangeable, but this Agnostic is a remarkable one. He is described as a lecturer in philosophy, and here is his own account of himself:—

I thought my intellectual objections to what I supposed was Christianity were what made me an Agnostic. I found that the real causes were sheer laziness and intellectual snobbery. The moment I honestly tried to pray, God worked such miracles in and around me that I could never doubt His existence again. The way to find God is to ask Him—if He is there at all—to take charge of your life; there is no need to be convinced of His existence first; He is quite capable of dealing with our doubts so long as we are willing to let Him deal with our sins first.

So much for this remarkable Atheist-Agnostic-philosopher. So soon as he prayed—to something that he did not believe existed, so soon as he asked someone whom he did not believe was there, to take charge of his life, such miracles—miracles, of course, not described—were at once worked as to remove all doubt. But as he already believed something or someone was there, it looks as though the belief preceded the miracles and did not follow them. Really, I should say the task of ringing the bell of a house that is not there is a one that this very intellectual philosopher would undertake at any moment. Quite evidently this gentleman came out of the mortar of Agnosticism with all his original qualities untouched.

More Converts.

There are three other cases given. Number one is a hairdresser—a lady. She used to think only of her holiday, now her life is one long holiday, and she has “developed decision of character in a marvellous way.” Number two is a typist whose father refused to have her in his office. Then the change came, and her father decided to offer her a post at once. Number three is a medical student, just about to qualify. All we know about him is that “Patients in the hospital cannot understand how I am always so happy—since I took Christ into my work there.” I am not quite sure what is meant by taking Christ into hospital work, but Christ’s medical practice is quite clearly laid down. In all cases of mental disease he conjured the devils out of the patients, and in others he supplied the cure by laying on of hands and prayer. Some devils went out by sheer conjuring, as when the devils left the man and went into the pigs, in others they went not out “save by fasting.” That medical student’s pharmacopea is very simple, but I would seriously advise him not to rely upon it when he goes up for examination. He will find that the examining doctors have rather strong opinions about what should be done with epilepsy or insanity or disease in general, and unless he leaves Christ out of the examination room he will probably remain a medical student. Of course, if he means only that Christ makes him happy, and so causes him to exert a cheerful influence on his patients, I am not inclined to disbelieve him, although I can assure him that other people achieve the same result without taking Jesus Christ along with them. On the whole, and without further details, I should be inclined to say that nature intended these specimen cases to believe in Jesus. If it hadn’t been Jesus it might have been Mumbo-Jumbo. See Proverbs chapter 27 verse 22.

The Strength of Stupidity.

I have dealt at length with the pathological and sociological significance of religious conversion in my *Religion and Sex*, and there is no need to enlarge upon it here. Man commences with a misunderstanding of his own nature as he misunderstands the nature of the world. The first guesses of primitive humanity are as wide of the truth in the one direction as in the

other. And by the time knowledge is gained these primitive misunderstandings are firmly established in institutions, modes of feeling and language, and are buttressed by the strongest of vested interests. The undecided typist, the holiday-loving hairdresser, the melancholy medical student, the troubled Agnostic praying to a God in whose existence he does not believe, all these are specimens of a type that is as old as the history of humanity. They have their equivalents in the savage fasting and chewing herbs to get into touch with tribal spirits, in the sex-starved monk and nun seeing visions of Jesus and Mary, in the visions of heaven seen by the Mohammedan dervish, or in the legendary animals that play before the mind of the confirmed alcoholic, on the one side, and in the misunderstanding of the influence of normal, social and domestic impulses on the other. And until understanding, real understanding comes, the student will take Christ into the hospital, the typist will thank Jesus that she is able to do with Christ what millions of others are able to do without him, and the lecturer on philosophy will be proving to the world that lecturing on philosophy does not prevent a man asking someone to help him even though he does not believe there is anyone to ask. And all will combine to prove that even though wisdom be justified of her children, folly will not be without glorification. For “Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.”

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Our Witch-Doctors.

“We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people’s superstitions.”—*G. W. Foote.*

“Religion everywhere present, as a warp running through the woof of human history.”—*Herbert Spencer.*

THE rumour that curates of the Established Church are endeavouring to form a trade union, or guild of employment, will provoke smiles. For curates, in spite of their alleged sacred calling, are usually regarded with amused tolerance. Dramatists and music-hall song-writers have made them the butt of their heavy satire, and the public never seem to tire of their jest. It is all very ironic, for these long-faced young men take themselves very seriously as heaven-sent individuals commissioned by a supernatural agency to reclaim a saucy world from naughty ways. Styling themselves “reverend,” these haughty youngsters have always endeavoured to keep their caste separate from the world of ordinary men and women. And now, fallen on evil days, these “sons of God” are playing, the sedulous ape to the members of the Lamplighter’s Union and the Magicians’ Guild.

Whether curates improve their financial position or not is a matter that concerns themselves, but it is really worth while to ask what the clerical profession itself is in reality, and apart from the patter of its professors. There are about fifty thousand men in this country alone who bear this title of “reverend,” and who form a caste apart from their fellow citizens. Who are these men? What do they actually do to entitle them to be revered? In what way are they different from other men who are simple “misters”? These are straightforward questions which require a plain answer.

It is pretended that this reverence is paid to these men because they have chosen as their business in life the supervision and direction of the religious habits of their fellow citizens. In reality they are simply modern witch-doctors engaged in actually similar work to their coloured prototypes in uncivil-

ized nations. Recall their teaching, and notice the close parallel with their savage rivals. They tell us of "gods" who get angry with us, of a dreadful "devil" who must be guarded against, and of "angels" who fly from heaven to earth. Fifty thousand men are engaged in this sorry business, to say nothing of their assistants and satellites. This, be it remembered, happens in a civilized country in the twentieth century. And this clerical profession is as honest as fortune-telling, but not more so. Many a poor, old, ignorant woman has been sent to prison for taking money from a servant-girl, after promising her a handsome husband and six children, but these "reverend gentlemen" are allowed to take all they can get for promises of good fortune in an alleged "beautiful land above."

These witch-doctors of ours have a good time on earth. They are not crucified. The average "reverend" enjoys a comfortable livelihood, and lives in a nice house, often better than his neighbours. He has just as much, or as little work as he likes to do, and if he likes to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting there is no one to say him nay. And the higher ecclesiastics have a better time than ordinary clergymen. The four hundred Anglican Bishops alone share three quarters of a million pounds yearly, ranging from the £15,000 of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the £2,000 of the ordinary "Father-in-God." The bachelor Bishop of London enjoys a salary of £10,000 yearly, with a palace and a town house, a sum sufficient to keep fifty working class families in comparative comfort.

Seeing that little merit attaches to the clerical profession, are we to assume that reverence is due to this exemplary lives led by those belonging to this specially favoured class of the community? Law Court proceedings show that the clerical character in no way differs from any other class. They may retort that there are black sheep in every fold. True, but people who are not professional religionists do not pretend to be a caste apart. They do not wear "dog-collars" and a special dress, and ask to be known as "reverend," or by any other title implying special respect. It is because the clergy expect people to look up to them that we are comparing their behaviour with their boasting. When they decide to come down from their altars and their pulpits we will make the same allowance for them that we make for ordinary people.

It appears also that many of the clergy are unashamed perjurers. Twenty thousand of them subscribe to the "Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion," as by law ordained. These articles make very curious reading to-day. They include the belief that a spirit can be at the same time a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost; that "Adam" was the father of the human race, and that the first woman was made from a man's rib; that "Adam" and "Eve" ate fruit, in consequence of which the human race is damned; that the monarch is the head of the Church of Christ; and that Roman Catholic doctrine is a vain invention; and the Christian Bible is true from cover to cover. To these Articles of Faith, among others, every priest of the Established Church subscribes in the most solemn manner. And we know that numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them, and that their real reason for remaining in their Church is "purple, palaces, patronage, profit and power," as a former cheerful dean of St. Paul's Cathedral wittily expressed it.

Unquestionably, the influence of the so-called Church of England in this country has been greatly impaired now that intelligent students realize its history during the last one hundred and fifty years, and the relentless manner in which it has opposed those

reforms which would have benefited the human race. Bishops voted against the great Reform Bill of 1832, they fought to keep little children in factories, they desired no liberty for Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers. Bishops opposed Free Education, and also opposed the admission of women to London Borough Councils. None voted for the abolition of the flogging of women in public, and beating women in prison. Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working-class have been opposed in the House of Lords by these "Fathers-in-God," and their record carries its own condemnation. The priest, in our country's history, has ever been the forbidding figure with the outstretched arm, and upon his lips has been the unchanging, "Thou shalt not?" And we have travelled far from those dark days in the Ages of Faith, when Kings trembled at the anathema from the altar, and heretics were burnt to death in the public streets. But how much longer the British Democracy is prepared to accept ecclesiastical pretensions remains to be seen. It is not a matter of a few high-brows, but of a vast responsible public who are beginning to question the value of Priestcraft in public affairs.

MIMNERMUS.

Brotherhood.

A Paper Read at the N.S.S. Conference, 1931.

WHEN the word brotherhood is mentioned, particularly as the title of an address, the impression is apt to be created that the speaker is going to indulge himself in an orgy of sentimentalism; and indeed there is justification for thinking this. Living as we do in a Christian community we have grown quite accustomed to the proverbial amount of cant and humbug which surround the name of brotherhood, and by which the sanctimonious are wont to veil feelings anything but brotherly. This afternoon, however, I have set out to make a point of a more or less philosophic kind, the treatment of which will naturally be more discursive than rhetorical; to display, as clearly as may be, this glaring irony: that Christianity, the religion of love, is inherently inimical to the development of true brotherhood, which, on the other hand, is implicit in the philosophy of Atheism, and has a natural foundation in the conditions and outlook of an Atheistic community. Let us proceed to discuss it.

The precise meaning of brotherhood is not so easy to define. The word is obviously taken from the family setting, and refers to features which we imagine to characterize fraternal relationships. But this alone is not a safe guide to a definition; we have, for instance, the example of the small boy, who when asked by an old lady, why he was soundly smacking the ear of a smaller boy, answered, "Well, he's my bruvver." But taking a general and not too captious view of the matter, brotherhood roughly signifies that condition of mutual harmony which we all consider desirable, and look for in a rightly constituted family. Now there are at least two ways of attempting to bring about harmony between yourself and someone else. One is to say, "All you have to do is to become like me, to fall into line with my ideas and habits, and our differences will disappear." The other is to say, "Let us set about finding what we have in common so that, by exploiting it to the full, we may submerge or altogether lose our differences." The first method I should call the aggressive, the second the co-operative. It so happens that, whether or not the Christian is conscious of it, his method is the first, and I wish to point out briefly why it must inevitably be so. The

Christian creed, however much sanctimonious camouflage is thrown over the fact, divides the world into the faithful and the other people. No amount of ecclesiastical chicanery, no amount of talk about honest doubt, sincere unbelief, reverent agnosticism and what not, will gloss over the fact that the unfaithful never were, are not and never can be in the same class as the faithful. If they could, then the whole dynamic of Christianity collapses. Thus it does not matter what natural characters exist in common between the faithful and the unfaithful, a great spiritual gulf separates them on this cardinal and crucial issue of belief. It is no use prevaricating about it; there is no compromise. The Christian is compelled to say, "If you will be as I am, you may come into the fold; if not you must stay outside, and there is an end of the matter." Thus by the very nature of his religion he is prevented from seeking the co-operative brotherhood, and is constrained to fall back upon the aggressive; yet, naively enough, he wonders why he seems to excite such hostility when hawking his brotherhood round foreign lands and among native folk unaccustomed to his arrogance. But the trouble goes deeper than this. What is at first a rift of a doctrinal nature, a division of men by creed alone, later takes on a personal force by the influence of belief on character. Let me explain myself. Setting aside the more obvious forms of hatred and intolerance that have arisen in the past, and still arise as a consequence of what Christians believe, we are left, even in the case of the more liberal and cultured of them, with a mental attitude essentially obstructive of brotherhood because it is essentially objectionable to decent folk. We cannot remain unaffected in our character and outlook by what we believe, and the Christian is no exception. He is taught that, through his acceptance of certain doctrines, he is elevated to a region of spirituality that is otherwise inaccessible. He is, so to speak, at one with God Almighty; he has gained sweetness and light, and the reward of everlasting life. It is inevitable that he should look upon faith as a sublime virtue, and the power to believe as a sublime trait, and that he should regard the unbeliever as lacking, through causes however obscure, in some higher quality possessed by himself. Equally inevitable is the consequence of these convictions; it is the development, in Christians, of that smug complacency by which we know them, sometimes expressed in an air of calm superiority, sometimes in one of indulgent condescension; sometimes in a mere looking down the nose, and sometimes in a sort of patronising heartiness that is perhaps most objectionable of all. Thus, while on their side the sense of another's inferiority prevents a real friendship, the nearest approach to which is a sort of amiable pity, on the secular side friendship is stifled by one's natural antipathy to a prig. Real brotherhood cannot exist for these people outside their own flock; they become superior, aloof, vindictive, or graciously compassionate as the case may be, but in any circumstances ill-fitted for that true companionship which is possible only to those who, even in their secret minds, approach each other on terms of genuine equality.

How different is the brotherhood of Atheism! Viewing the world from the standpoint of naturalism, we see men as fundamentally one fact, having only superficial, only apparent, but never essential differences between them. Commencing with a natural morality, our ethical discoveries reveal to us more and more the common denominator of human nature. Tackling the problem thus, by applying knowledge instead of tradition, reason instead of faith, we find ourselves engaged in the profitable work of shaping our outlook to fit the world, and not in the fruitless

attempt to mould a world to fit our outlook. In this way we are rather discovering a brotherhood in the world than imposing one on the world; our method is thus co-operative and not aggressive. It is co-operative because it works not by suppressing differences but by fostering affinities; it is non-aggressive because the movements of men towards each other are mutual. It does not cover festering wounds with plaster, leaving them to break out at some future time; it attends to the general health of the body, and then the wounds will heal. The method is sound, and the result therefore lasting.

But what is the significance of these things in philosophy? We ask this because no gathering of Freethinkers is content to leave the commonplaces of life at the stage of popular discussion. We feel always the desire to allot to everything its place in the larger scheme of philosophy, to see a meaning beneath the surface of events. In this instance, then, we see that naturalism, because it is founded upon knowledge and implies an understanding of world processes, is the best road to human welfare in its moral, no less than in its material aspect. The Church endeavours constantly to convince us that the sphere of science is limited, and talks of a world of moral values beyond, which she would claim as her own domain. But the lesson of life stands in contradiction. Experience and the growth of knowledge tell us more and more clearly that every side of our existence depends for its highest development and expression upon an understanding of the processes involved. This does not mean that we reduce the world of values to terms of the intellect, but rather that we use the intellect to explore and develop the world of values. And this new idea, at once an outlook and a method, is to-day crystallized in the conception of conscious evolution. Processes of development of whose nature and operation we were once ignorant, are being revealed to us through scientific and philosophic enquiry, with the result that we are able to impart to them the added impetus of deliberate intention and directive power. That is conscious evolution, and I should say that it marks a culture stage in social growth. Of course it has been going on all the time in lesser degree, but never before the present era has it become so clearly defined in cultivated thought, and so powerful an instrument of social advancement. The ideal of brotherhood, looked at from the standpoint of a naturalistic morality, lends itself admirably to conscious development in this way. For we discover, when we have rid ourselves of the obscuring haze of religious ethics, that the seeds of brotherhood already exist in the moral nature of things, and that the gulfs envisaged by a traditional theology are illusory. We abandon the shallow idea that religious belief can possibly be made a test of the deeper affinities of human nature, as also we relinquish the antiquated notion that these beliefs confer upon a man or indicate within him qualities superior to those of his fellows. We look beyond this for the common denominators of human character, and we do so the more keenly, and with renewed enthusiasm, knowing them to exist already in forms but faintly disguised. Moreover, we are able to proceed with a new strength and a new optimism when we realize that we are thinking and acting in the light of understanding, and therefore in harmony with actual moral facts and actual social processes.

C. H. ROSS CARMICHAEL.

Religious contention is the devil's harvest.
La Fontaine.

Let a man use great reverence and manners to himself.
Pythagoras.

Indecent Exposure.

ONE of the greatest and most injurious faults of Christianity consists in its having made evil a positive thing, while it is really only a negative thing. The clerics have always played and traded upon the power of suggestion. All theologians postulate that man is essentially depraved and bad. So they set simple human beings the exercise of repeating to themselves the words: "Every day I am growing worse—and worse"—until the feeble-minded wretches were driven to the depths of despondency and despair. Then the clerics came with the host elevated on the cross and their dramatic "Rock of Ages," and proclaimed that those who were lying depressed under heavy conviction of sin might be relieved of their terrible burden and be shot into the seventh heaven of glory and bliss by one glance at the Lamb that was slain:—

There is life in a look at the crucified one
There is life at this moment for thee.

One simple act of faith and no matter how debased and sordid a person was, he was transfigured and transformed in the twinkling of an eye!

That was the general psychological aspect of Christianity presented in the nineteenth century. But the atonement and the scheme of redemption are losing their strong colours. Only extreme ranters, illiterate evangelicals and ignorant fundamentalists adhere to the Victorian gospel story. As education, culture, and refinement advance and become more general possessions, there is a revolt against, or a shrinking from, the crude and vulgar blatancies of those who would tear out and hold up in their grimy fingers to the public gaze the innermost feelings of the most sensitive people.

The pagans of old had their hallowed and their sacred things—so have the pagans of the present. But in the blatancies of the evangelical missionary we find no regard for sensitiveness—nothing but voluble and insulting libels upon manhood and womanhood. The aesthetically minded Christians of our time are beginning to appreciate that this will not now do: that Christianity must revise not only creed but method. Indecent exposure must cease. We must have regard to the sacred feelings and hallowed things of every person who possesses such—no matter what his professed creed may be, and whether he professes a creed or not.

The saddening thing in these post-war days is that indecent exposures are passed so lightly by; and that some people—even titled people and successful business people—unconsciously perhaps in many cases—can flaunt their privacies in the pages of popular publications for the gratification of sordid and sensation-seeking eyes. For there is indecent exposure of the mind as well as of the body! Indeed the former may be worse than the latter.

On this topic one might preach a sermon on that text "The devils also believe and tremble." The devil-may-care may also believe but do not tremble—the gunmen, gangsters, racketeers, murderers, wholesale swindlers, seducers and thieves of virtue who are such a credit to 2,000 years teaching of Christian principles. Give a dog a bad name and you will hang him. Give man a bad name as the Christians give to the "natural man"; and in very many cases, if he has the strength and resource to do so, he will hang as many others as he can and defy convention and law and order. Unjust condemnation evokes resentment and hostility. This law of cause and effect is unchangeable. And it is sheer lunacy to hold an individual answerable for the defects of his ancestors and the viciousness of his own environment.

One is repeatedly coming across disgusting instances of indecent exposure in our daily, and especially our weekly press. The readers of twopenny cesspools get the publications they deserve. How they gobble their weekly dish of salacity goggle-eyed! And even large business firms which one would have supposed to be above such means of canvassing are regularly exhibiting in the advertising columns pictures of the human form which deserve nothing less than the description of "Indecent Exposure."

But the proprietors of those widely read journals that are clearly open to such a charge lie doggo. Some of them indeed become contributors on various topics—historical and philosophical—to more reputable papers, wherein they pose as paragons of correctitude and clean-mindedness. Their contributions may, of course, be much of the "scissors and paste" order. But a title or a big fortune goes a long way to secure admission to a place of honour even in periodicals which do not pander by base sensations and suggestive indecency (if not pornography) to the palates of the muck-rakers to be found in all classes.

Man, when informed and enlightened, has ever been struggling upwards from the depths of a benighted ancestry. His fictitious rebellion against "the Highest" and his fictitious descent to "depravity of heart" and "original sin," have done terrible execution in throwing man back in his ascent to full knowledge and emancipation. Yet in spite of the blight and bondage of supernaturalism he is ascending—not re-ascending—and just because he is ascending and not re-ascending; but attaining peaks of knowledge formerly unknown, and therefore entrancingly fresh and invigorating to him, he delights in bracing himself anew in the consciousness of increased self-won power, particularly in the region of science as the instrument of achieving and ascertaining truth, whose horizons are ever widening, and which scorns the myths and speculations, the conjectures and fears and morbid dreams of the childhood of humanity. Despite the grossness evidenced by examples of indecent exposure around us, man is becoming attuned to finer things than the things of the past—to artistic and helpful expression of himself in various departments of life, which super-induces sensitiveness to beauty, restraint, reticence and refinement.

IGNOTUS.

Rooftrees.

OFt when wandering the suburbs in a quiet and pensive mood, thankful after city turmoil for a breath of solitude, I have wondered why each portal showed so colourless a name?—Here were "Elm House," "Poplar Villa," "The Acacias," and "Belle Vue": any old phrase in these go-ahead days seemed to serve or do; and all looked just the same!

Yet what chances are presented for the dreaming passer-by to be thrilled and made romantic, as his keen expectant eye, falls upon each fleeting doorway: there to read, "Top o' The Hill," "Not Worrying Much," "Sad Soul's Need"; for the colourful word can never be absurd, if it speaks of the personal touch!

So there's guidance in the message read upon our lonely way: therefore dwellers in the suburbs should be mindful what they say—let their dwellings wave a signal straight to human thought: "Tiny Cottage of Contentment," "Troubles All Unsought"—something like that, simple yet pat; like my own (which none forgets): for I painted and re-claimed it, and then tenderly I named it, "Little House of No Regrets."

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

The Twelfth of July—And After.

THE public, which reads annually of riots or religious disturbances in Liverpool and Ulster coincidentally with the occurrence of the annual Orange Demonstrations in those places, on July 12, must often wonder who these "Orangemen" may be. They have heard of the hardy controversy between "the Orange and the Green," in its political aspect, and have, perhaps, some rough idea that what the Ancient Order of Hibernians is, or was, to Irish Catholics, the Orange Institution is to Irish, and affiliated English, Ulstermen and Protestants. As the Orange Institution is in this present year of "grace" gravely referred to in responsible Irish journals in Northern Ireland as "standing for great principles," and as a bulwark of Liberty, Freethinkers, who have no use for bigotry in any quarter, may be interested to hear something as to the history and operations of this Orange organization. They will also, we believe, find some useful illustrations of the fact that "intolerance is a part of all true religion," in some particulars which follow of the July 12 celebrations in Belfast this year. The present writer intended to be present at them, but was prevented as the boat by which he was to have sailed from Glasgow was held up at Belfast by the "no work" order which prevails, to the great disturbance of public and private business, on that day.

The first Orange Lodge met in Armagh in 1795. The Orangemen were "sworn in," the terms of their oath being as follows: "I (A.B.) do swear that I will be true to King and Government, and that I will exterminate the Catholics of Ireland as far as lies in my power." (Plowden. *History of Ireland*, Walpole, Madden, and other authorities). In 1835 the House of Commons set up a Committee on Orangeism. In their report they said: "In all the northern counties the houses of Catholics were wrecked, in 1795, and subsequent years, and the inhabitants driven into Connaught." Lord Gosford, Governor of the County Armagh, in his address to the Quarter Sessions in December of the same year said: "Neither age nor sex, nor even admitted innocence as to any guilt in connexion with the late disturbances is sufficient to excite mercy, much less to afford protection. The only crime which the objects of this ruthless persecution are charged with is simply a profession of the Roman Catholic religion. A lawless banditti have constituted themselves judges of this new species of delinquency. More than half the inhabitants of a populous country are deprived at one blow of the means, as well as of the fruits of their industry, and driven, in the midst of an inclement winter to seek a shelter for themselves and helpless families where chance may guide them."

Bigots of all creeds have much in common. Orangeism, like Popery, boasts that its creed is unchangeable. Humanism has clipped its claws, but, in a country in which, as John Morley once said, "the toleration of Protestantism is constantly overvaunted." (See his *Burke*) it is well to point out, as the late Mr. Spurgeon once told the assembled Baptists to their astonishment, that they had no record as persecutors—because they lived in days when it was not allowed! In Ulster it is still thriving, and we may add, if not with the same violence, is still unhappily prevalent elsewhere.

The Charter Toast of the Loyal Orange Institution is amusing reading, especially when we read in a recent issue of the Belfast papers that it is the champion of liberty of conscience. Here is this precious Toast. (I have before me a report of a Lodge meeting at which it was "enthusiastically honoured") :—

To the glorious, pious and immortal memory of the great and good King William (III.) who saved us all from Pope and Popery, knaves and knavery, brass money and wooden shoes. And all who will not drink this toast may they be rammed, stammed, crammed, and damned into the great gun of Athlone, to be blown over the hills to damnation. May their teeth be converted into paving stones to pave the way of the croppies into hell, and their blood into train oil to light their souls to damnation.

Yet (for we must give everyone, not to mention the person usually named in this connexion, his due) at the July 12 demonstration this year at Castlecaulfield, Viscount Charlemont, Minister of Education of the Government of Northern Ireland found it necessary to tell his fellow Orangemen something it must have taken some courage to tell them. Thus :—

The Government has to administer impartially. It must hold the scales of justice evenly between Roman Catholic and Protestant. To show partiality for one creed at the expense of the other would be the perversion of law and justice which would cause the downfall of any Government that attempted it . . .

Now, he proceeded, the clergy of the Protestant churches claim authority in secular as well as religious education. Is that the desire of the Protestant people . . . I cannot think that the Orange Order as a whole wish that an Ulster Government is to be dictated to by clergymen as to what it shall or shall not do. The Government is responsible to the people, and the people alone.

(*Belfast Weekly News*, July 16.)

That the strident and bigoted Protestant clergy of Ulster should be told at an Orange Demonstration that they were "attacking the principle of popular representation and the rights of the taxpayer," shows that there are at least some members of the Orange Order who are somewhat broader than its creed, or, perhaps, more sensitive as to the offensiveness of clericalism to a growingly educated and increasingly sceptical democracy. But the real spirit of the Orange Institution comes out in its greetings to the King, in which they affirm "the right of His Majesty King George to the throne, and the right of succession of the members of his illustrious House, being Protestant." This is a cautious and conditional loyalty, but can anyone be surprised that an Orangeman gets nervous when he finds the clerical head of the Established Protestant Religion rebuking one of its Bishops for denouncing what its own formularies declare to be idolatry and superstition?

The last word about Orangemen we have to say shall be borrowed from Firley Peter Dunne (Mr. Dooley), as well as a quotation of which the moral will be more clear to the readers of this journal than to those who still think that the only sort of bigotry is that of those to whom they are opposed. Mr. Dooley says: "Ivry Orangeman in th' shipyards dhropped his tools on the top iv his fellow workmin iv th true faith, an wint out to start th revolution. There've bin gran' ructions ivrywhere." And he adds (probably not with quite the same intention as we have in quoting him) "Freedom is like dhrink, Hinnessy. If ye tak anny at all ye might as well tak enough to make ye happy f'r while."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

What thin partitions sense from thought divide!
Popc.

Honour is unknown in despotic states.—Montesquieu.

I court not the votes of the fickle mob.—Horace.

Let us do what honour demands.—Racine.

On John Dryden—1631-1700.

It is just over 200 years since John Dryden died. He might be called a literary weather-cock, a poetical Vicar of Bray. These descriptions, although to some extent justified, are incomplete. Dryden left English poetry richer than he found it, and is, next to Milton, the best known of his contemporaries. Born in 1631; a Cromwellian, a Royalist, a Freethinker (at least according to himself), a Catholic, a Protestant, "everything by turns and nothing long," Dryden yet marked a turning point in our poetic annals, combining, as they have rarely been combined, versatility of thought and language with an exceptional precision of treatment and expression. What seems inconsistency is, it may well be, an essentially sceptical mind, given to balancing probabilities to a degree which it is to be feared is fatal to "continuing long in one stay." Thus in his *Religio Laici*, his apologia for the Church of England, and the Bible as the rule of faith, is accompanied by an assertion of the rights of reason, and, at the same time, by a refusal to face the implications of that assertion.

For example:—

Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe are few and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need,
And every man will make himself a creed,
In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say;
For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
In search of Heaven, than all the Church before:
Nor can we be deceived, unless we see
The Scriptures and the Fathers disagree.
If after all they stand suspected still
(For no man's faith depends upon his will),
'Tis some relief, that points not clearly known,
Without much hazard may be let alone:
And after hearing what our Church can say,
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb
Than by disputes the public peace disturb,
For points obscure are of small use to learn,
But common quiet is mankind's concern."

The last two lines must recall to every reader the anxious appeal just made to the Archbishop of Canterbury to make it up with Dr. Barnes. Dryden knew his Church of England, and in these lines, in the very act of commending it, has revealed its fundamental rottenness.

Even in the *Hind and the Panther*, in which he defends the Church of Rome, "the milk-white hind," reason will now and then break out. Thus:—

My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires,
My manhood, long mislead by wandering fires,
Follow'd false lights; and, when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am;
Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame:
Good life be now my task, my doubts are done:
What more could fright my faith, than three in one?
Can I believe eternal God can lie
Disguised in mortal mould and infancy?
That the great maker of the world could die?
And after that trust my imperfect sense,
Which calls in question his omnipotence?
Can I my reason to my faith compel,
And shall my sight and touch and taste rebel?
Superior faculties are set aside;
Shall their subservient organs be my guide?
Then let the moon usurp the break of day,
And winking tapers show the sun his way;
For what by sense I can myself perceive
I need no revelation to believe."

And in these last two lines, Dryden, while engaged in propping up the claim of Rome to supplant reason, lets out the truth about that preposterous claim.

We have here developed a theme which might, did space permit, be set forth with many more illustrations. We will content ourselves with having made a small contribution to the Dryden notices containing some reflections which are unlikely to appear elsewhere. Dryden is good reading, but, as you read him, have in mind his own words:—

"The literal sense is hard to flesh and blood,
And nonsense never can be understood."

A.H.

Acid Drops.

The *Methodist Times* has sent one of its staff "hiking in the footsteps of John Wesley," and he has paid a visit to one of the hostels of the Youth Hostel Association. After quoting the Association's Handbook thus: "It is to be hoped that the churches will not raise a cry of Sabbath-breaking (*i.e.*, re-Sunday rambles), but by their sympathy, will discover a new ally to true religion," he suggests that the church should enter the movement, before it is left out. "Sunday morning—or evening—prayers conducted by a willing local preacher, in the common-room of these hostels, where and whenever possible, would be a valuable witness, and perhaps lead to even more satisfactory arrangements." And the *Methodist Times* adds, "Why cannot Methodists in the neighbourhood of these hostels offer to supply an obvious need? If the churches ignore the movement, then the movement will go on without them." Of course, an attempt to insinuate religion into the Youth hostels was sure to be suggested sooner or later. The Youth Hostel Association will be well advised to keep religion out of the hostels, if it is anxious not to lose the patronage of large numbers of Sunday hikers. The Youth Movement will be doomed to failure, if it permits so controversial a thing as religion to enter into it.

What we have to suggest is that those who are seriously interested in "Hiking," and who do not wish to see it made an instrument of social dissension, should protest at once, and in an unmistakable manner whenever religious preaching is introduced. It is useless waiting till the evil is well established and then making an ineffective protest. That policy was followed with broadcasting and we see the result. Freethinkers should protest against it whenever. And if there is no other way start a discussion on Freethought. The parsons will soon find out then that it is better to keep religion out.

The Bishop of Blackburn distinguished himself the other day by going into the den of a lion, belonging to a travelling circus, and being photographed with his hand on the lion's head. We have no doubt that the dear ladies who look up to their Bishop will gaze at him with increased admiration after such an exhibition of clerical courage, and will think little of the feelings of the poor old lion. And we shall not be surprised if the bishop finds in the fact of the poor tame lion not going for him proof of the protecting hand of providence. Anyway the bishop has opened a new line of employment for the clergy. Let them all join a circus. They have certainly had plenty of practice in that line.

The "head of a well known firm of timber importers," who is "a Wesleyan of the fourth generation," has recently been on a non-conducted tour to Russia in the interests of the Timber Trade Federation of this country. Writing to the *Methodist Times*, on his return, he says: "The organized religion of Russia has now completely disappeared. It stood for an intolerant priesthood rather than for humanity. None of the many churches I visited have been despoiled or defaced in any way, exquisite paintings and priceless art treasures have been preserved." Further, he says, "No hindrances are placed in the way of those who worship as before, and there are two churches in Leningrad and others elsewhere, in which worship is permitted freely—provided the churches are entirely self-supporting, and that no political propaganda is indulged in." How many churches of the established religion in this country would thrive under the same conditions?

From the "Padre's Letter Box" in the same journal we cull a reply to a question on "the final seat of authority in religion." It would, he confesses, be futile to try to convince "the multitudes" of "the infallibility of either Church or Book." The Padre, whose only answer to this question is that we "must study the Bible, fallible though we know it to be," thinks that it is not possible that anyone who has thus "developed the spiritual side of his nature could palter with a temptation to become unfaithful with his wife, or could entertain the idea of sexual irregularities of the type advo-

cated by moderns." The multitudes "are prepared to flout" the Padre's standards, "if as a result of the querying process they think they have detected flaws." And we should think so, if the only answer to be got as to the seat of authority in religion is a suggestion that only religious people are moral.

The leading article in the same issue of the *Methodist Times*, August 6, is entitled "August: the Emancipator." The religious press must, like the rest of it, have something out of the ordinary for the "silly," or holiday, season. So, having said in an adjacent note, apropos of the "hiking" vogue (about which it seems "many good churchpeople are anxious"), that "we must seize every opportunity of showing the young people that the Church of Christ can enrich every phase and development of their lives," the aforesaid leader, tells the same readers and tells truly, that mankind "has travelled a long way, and every step of that toilsome evolutionary journey has been marked by curtailment of his liberty. Less and less is he allowed to do as he likes. "The natural man," says this writer, "is under sentence of penal servitude." There is a sense in which this is true; but the servitude that is mainly responsible is the servitude which the *Methodist Times*, in this very issue wants to impose on mankind in regard to its Sundays, and its entertainments, and its young people's holidays, and its domestic relations, namely the servitude to an outworn and dying creed.

Mr. Arthur Shepherd, M.P., who has done much to improve the Casual Wards in British workhouses, has been interviewed by a religious journal as to the improvements effected in recent years. After mentioning these and the need for further improvements, Mr. Shepherd asked the interviewer to make a personal appeal to readers in Mr. Shepherd's name as follows:—

On Sundays it would be a great boon in a great many Casual Wards if concert parties, gramophones, wireless sets, could be taken. I don't mean preaching services. The life is drab enough. Give them [the casuals] something to cheer them up, and take them out of themselves . . . You may take it from me that no man goes to a Casual Ward from choice. Conditions are far better in gaol.

We are inclined to fancy that the appeal will not receive much response to it. The truly pious don't believe in trying to make the unfortunate "down and outs" happy on Sunday by means of secular amusement.

This country is to be inflicted with a National Religious Book Week in October. The Committee responsible for it, which is composed of priests and parsons of various denominations, will work in conjunction with the National Book Council—which is an organization that exists to tell the unintelligent and half-educated what they "ought" to read. The avowed object of the Week is "to promote the reading of religious books"—a statement which implies that this recreation has fallen on evil times. For our part, we see no reason why the Week should not also be made an opportunity for increased circulation of Freethought literature—as an antidote to the religious poison.

A pious weekly says that persons interested in the cinema industry are striving to secure an unrestricted right to open on Sundays—that is, to open without having a compulsory levy for charities on their Sunday takings. Our godly friend thereupon points out the moral—"the only reason why London cinemas are opened on Sunday is that there is money in it—and plenty of it—for the cinema proprietors." How shocking it is that anyone should desire to be properly recompensed for services rendered on Sunday to the public! The horror of the pious, however, seems rather farcical in view of the fact that one of the chief, but undeclared, objections of the parsons to Sunday cinemas is that the cinemas may interfere with the parsons' Sunday profits.

In view of that national "religious revival" so confidently rumoured by some of the parsons, the following remarks on the state of British religion, by Mr. E. W. Price Evans, M.A., are very interesting:—

Beyond question, the hearts of many earnest and faithful men are fainting and fearful. There is a "defeatist" spirit abroad which is far more alarming and menacing than the causes or symptoms which have induced it. Some of these causes are: the "superior" hostility of much current literature to Christian faith and morals; the fallacious but frequently-taught antagonism between science and religion; the depressing effect of regularly-reported statistical declension; the oft-reiterated "failure of the churches"; the lukewarm comfort of the occasional pronouncements of "leaders"; the subtle, insidious, and persistent "pressure" of the Church-absenteeism of the majority of the people. And there are other causes . . . We need to be baptized into a new spirit of confidence.

No doubt; and this is where the rumour merchants have tried to be useful. They are attempting to create a spirit of confidence by means of suggestion. But confidence which is created by mere rumour and assertion and has no facts to buttress it, is not likely to live long. And the last state of the "earnest and faithful" will be worse than the first.

Those who have to select candidates for the Wesleyan ministry, says the Rev. W. H. Heap, are not at all content with the type and quality of many candidates who present themselves. Well, as God is supposed to "call" the candidates, Mr. Heap had better address a reproachful objection to God. On the other hand, these he hard times nowadays, and the attraction of a sheltered occupation, with a secure salary, a safe job, and easy work, might easily be mistaken for a divine call. Another explanation may be that there is nothing in the Wesleyan parson's job to attract the best class of educated intelligence.

As the tactics of our English cranks and killjoys are not unknown—they think "hiking" by young people of both sexes is full of danger; that the darkness in cinemas is of the devil, and many other prohibitive ideas—we will quote, as well describing the danger by which we are threatened by the same influences, although in different forms, the words of one of the most distinguished Irish men of letters (A.E.). He has written: "Sex in Ireland has come to have an obscene significance, a fact on which a Freudian psychologist would have much to say. Sexual sins are almost the only ones seriously regarded by our moralists. Men may perjure themselves, rob, commit murder, and these are but venial sins in comparison with any violation of the sex taboo . . . Science, philosophy, political theory are in danger, for any literature which can be regarded as lending to be detrimental to public morality can legally be denounced and suppressed." (Quoted from *The Poison of Prudery*, by W. M. Gallichan). Although the Irish Censorship is, for the moment more stringent and daring than that in England and Scotland, the end in view is the same, and the same influences are at work to the same end namely to save Christianity, threatened on every hand by every organ of culture and by every advance in knowledge. Where liberty of speech and thought and publication is concerned, there is not a pin to choose between Catholic and Protestant. If (to go back to the book that led us down this path) the Parnell tragedy would not be possible to-day it is only because, as least in England, freethought has clipped the claws of bigotry and oppression.

The Moderator of the United Church of Canada reports terrible conditions in Saskatchewan as a result of this year's drought. Having seen these things, the Moderator ought to have little difficulty in finding matter for a rousing sermon on the text, "He doeth all things well."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. MOSLEY.—We are always ready to send parcels of specimen copies for free distribution. Please say when required. Pleased you find our *Evolutionary Ethics* useful after thirty-five years. We do not know anything of Gyzychi beyond his book, which we have had on our shelves for many years, but we agree with you that it is a very useful little work. We agree also as to the quality of Mr. Taylor's work in these columns.

W. MORRIS.—Your idea of a pure Christianity that became corrupted might be all right if one only knew when and where this pure Christianity existed. We may return to the subject in a week or two.

S. LOW.—We are keeping in fair health, thanks. We hope to be able to take a few days holiday a little later in the year.

CINE CERE.—We know nothing more of the ridiculous incident of the Bishop of Blackburn entering a lion's den at a circus and being photographed, than has appeared in the paper. The incident is very characteristic of the present-day clergy. But you must remember that as a circus performer any bishop has had a good training. The lion was probably more frightened than the bishop. What we should like to see is a bishop who has the pluck to meet a Freethinker in a public discussion.

J. CLAYTON.—Pleased to hear of your successful meetings.

H. ANTHONY.—Next week.

C. MCKELVIE.—Very good. Nothing like sticking to it.

IGNOTUS.—Too late for this week. Will appear in next issue.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The case of the *Freethinker* and the Stockport Library again came before the Libraries Committee last week, and a proposal that the *Freethinker* should "be treated like other religious, denominational and sectarian periodicals" was defeated. Another amendment, with the same purpose in view, shared the same fate. So the *Freethinker* is not—for the present to be treated as other journals are treated. We appreciate the compliment. Decidedly the *Freethinker* is not to be placed on the same level as other journals. It stands by itself, and we are pleased to see that the majority of the local Council have at least intelligence enough to realize that if the public is encouraged to read the *Freethinker*, a great many of the current superstitions will suffer. The *Freethinker* is really a very dangerous paper. A lie, a humbug, an hypocrisy is never safe in its neighbourhood. The majority of the Stockport Council are wise in their generation.

But there are certain wicked people in Stockport who seem determined that the *Freethinker* shall be treated as are other papers. And they, in downright carelessness as to what shams or humbugs suffer as a consequence are doing what they can to circulate the *Freethinker* in the town. We don't like to discourage them, so we are sending them parcels of copies for free distribution, with the result that more people will see the paper than would have been the case had it been displayed in the Library. Mr. G. Burgess, of 98 Athens Street, Stockport, in sheer recklessness as to the ruined lives he may leave in his trail, will be glad to hear from all Freethinkers in the district who are willing to lend a hand, and also to form a Stockport Branch of the National Secular Society. We hope he will get a good response.

The Committee which is drawing up the proposals for the new Spanish Constitution advise the following with regard to the Church:—

The State to be completely dissociated from all religious bodies.

Religious orders to be dissolved and their property confiscated.

The Church to be recognized on the same lines as any other organization.

These suggestions are only what might have been expected, and they are expected to become law. If the Republic wishes to maintain itself it can hardly avoid acting on the lines suggested by the Committee.

Naturally the Church will be up in arms against the proposed regulations, indeed before they were proposed it was demanding a practical restoration of all its old powers and privileges. When a Church has drained the country as the Church in Spain has done for centuries, it can hardly be surprised if in Spain, as happened in this country, the State steps in and demands the use of the wealth it has acquired for the benefit of the whole of the people. As to the dissolution of the religions, that again follows the lines that have been found necessary elsewhere. At present they are active centres of agitation against the Government, and will remain such so long as they are tolerated. If the Church in Spain receives the same rights and privileges as any other organization it can have no reasonable ground for complaint.

We suggest that if Spain sets the example, we should follow suit as early as possible. The Churches in this country should have the same rights and privileges as an other organization, and no more. It should be subjected to the same taxation, and its ministers should have no greater privileges than do officials of other organizations. We should be done with the farcical spectacle of medicine-men saying prayers in the House of Commons, of giving Bishops seats in the House of Lords, and using religious formulas in public ceremonies. Religious opinion should be placed upon the same level as other forms of opinion, and sink or swim in terms of their own worth.

During 1930 one wedding out of every four was performed at a Registry Office. The number of Registry Office marriages is on the increase, and the parson's marriage fees are getting fewer. This is as it should be. Two other things are required. First, as the civil marriage is the only legal marriage, whether performed by a parson or by a Registrar, the State should insist on the civil marriage being performed by a Registrar, leaving it for those who wish for a religious ceremony to have it where and when they please; and, second, in every district a suitable hall, or suitable room in a public building should be provided so that the marriage ceremony should be performed amid conditions that are both pleasing and dignified. When we can loosen sufficiently the grip of the clergy on the State this will be done, and the sooner the better.

Mr. Cohen's *God and the Universe* has been taken by the American Freethought Book Club as its book of the month for August. A large sale is anticipated. The book continues to sell steadily here, in its second edition. It is the only work that thoroughly criticizes the apologies of Eddington, Jeans and Huxley, and evidently, to use a colloquialism, meets a much felt need.

The General Secretary of the N.S.S. is now taking a brief holiday, and only matters of urgency will be dealt with until his return on the 24th inst.

The Executive's Annual Report for 1931 is now ready for circulation, and most members of the N.S.S. will already have received a copy. The report surveys the work of the National Secular Society during the past year, and gives an outline of the general position of Freethought in the country to-day. Copies 1½d., which includes postage, may be had from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or from the General Secretary, N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Mr. G. Whitehead's month in Scotland is rapidly closing. Friday, August 21 being the last day. On August 23 and week following, he will be in Bolton, and from August 30 until September 11, he will be in Manchester. A week each for Birmingham, Plymouth, and Fulham follows, and closes what up to the present has been a very successful and useful tour.

Modern Christian Forgeries.

STUDENTS of ecclesiastical history are well aware of the large part that forgery has played in the history of Christianity. The learned, and pious Casaubon laments: "It greatly affects me to see how many there were in the earliest times of the Church, who considered it a holy task to lend to heavenly truth the help of their own inventions, in order that the new Revelation might be more readily admitted by the wise among the gentiles. These officious lies, they declared, were devised for a good end. From this source sprang up innumerable books published under the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹

Scarcely ever does a discussion arise in the popular, or the religious press, as to the personal appearance of Christ, than some simple-minded reader triumphantly contributes the forged letter of Publius Lentulus addressed to the Roman Senate, in which he gives a fabulous account of the appearance of Christ. Even the *Catholic Encyclopædia* (Vol. IX., p. 154) admits that this letter "was certainly apocryphal."

We are apt to think that forgery "for the greater glory of God" is a lost art, a thing of the past, which, like the rack and the stake, have had their day and ceased to exist. That no one to-day would attempt to impose such pious fakes on the world. A perusal, however, of a just published work by Professor Goodspeed, entitled *Strange New Gospels* (Cambridge University Press, 9s.), shows us that the art still flourishes, and pious forgeries are still being produced, but with little success, except among the unlearned and the uncritical.

Professor E. J. Goodspeed is one of the best known scholars in America of early Christian literature, and he tells us, in the preface of his book, that during the many years he has been engaged in the study of early Christian literature, "a field in which the genuineness of every document must be rigorously investigated." There has been brought to his attention, "from time to time, from obscure private sources, writings claiming to be genuine documents of Christian antiquity." Moreover, he further explains:—

I did not seek these curious pieces out; they were brought to me by students and others who had come across them and wished information about them. As time went on, I found myself possessed of a number of them larger than I, or I suppose anyone else, dreamed existed; so large a number in fact that it occurred to me that a useful service might be rendered by describing them together, and pointing out their failure to meet the simple and familiar test of antiquity and genuineness.

They form a strange netful, dredged up from obscure depths mostly beyond the ken of educated people, and of little interest to them. Yet the mere collecting and describing of them may be useful, for while many people are acquainted with one or another of them, no one seems to know them all; and since there are undoubtedly others unknown to me, to list and test these eight may prepare the way for a fuller collection later.

Few of them have been discussed by scholars; they have for the most part been judged unworthy of serious consideration. And in one sense they are. But when a book is declared, as one of these has been, to be "next in importance to the Bible," and increasing numbers of people are being misled by it, it is time to put our fastidiousness aside and state the facts. Moreover the very bulk and number of them merit some attention, and since in the study of ancient literature we constantly seek to distinguish

the genuine from the spurious, what is here gathered may at least serve as a footnote to the serious study of early Christian literature. (E. J. Goodspeed. *Strange New Gospels*. pp. vii to xi.)

In 1894 the newspapers announced the discovery of a hitherto unknown life of Christ, under the title of the *Life of Issa, Best of the Sons of Men*. According to this new Gospel, Jesus, rather than take a wife, leaves home at the age of thirteen to join a caravan of merchants to India, to study the laws of the Buddhas. After which he spends six years among Brahmins studying the Vedas. Quarrelling with the Brahmins over their caste and idolatry, they plan to put him to death, whereupon he fled to the Buddhists, spending six years among them, learning Pali and mastering their religious texts. He then visits Persia and preaches to the Zoroastrians. At twenty-nine Issa returns to Jerusalem and preaches for three years; the Jewish leaders finding no fault in him, but closely watched by Pilate's spies, by whom he is finally arrested, and at the instigation of Pilate, put to death. "The interest of this little book," says Prof. Goodspeed, "is evidently to fill in the silent years of Jesus' youth, from the visit to Jerusalem at twelve to the beginning of his ministry at about thirty."

A Russian war-correspondent, Nicolas Notovitch, produced this work and declared that the original was contained in two large manuscript volumes written in the Pali tongue. According to his account, he was laid up by an accident, with a broken leg, at the Lamassary, or Convent of Himis in Tibet. Here he prevailed upon the Chief Lama, who had told him of the existence of the work, to read to him, through an interpreter, the Tibetan version of the work which he then transcribed.

Upon its publication, in French, in 1894, it aroused the liveliest interest, it ran through several editions in that year; it enjoyed the widest publicity. It was translated into German, Spanish, and Italian. Three independent American translations appeared immediately, one by Marion Crawford, the novelist, "who was something of a Sanskrit scholar and had lived in India in his youth." A great controversy at once arose over the work, Professor Max Müller, the distinguished orientalist, discussed it at length in *The Nineteenth Century*, and came to the conclusion that either the monks had indulged in duping Notovitch, or he was guilty of a disgraceful fraud. While he was writing the article, he received a letter from an Englishwoman, visiting Tibet, to the following effect:—

Yesterday we were at the great Himis Monastery, the largest Buddhist monastery up here—800 lamas. Did you hear of a Russian who could not gain admittance to the monastery in any way, but at last broke his leg outside and was taken in? His object was to copy a Buddhist life of Christ which is there. He says he got it and has published it since in French. There is not a single word of truth in the whole story! There has been no Russian here. No one has been taken into the Seminary for the past fifty years with a broken leg! There is no life of Christ there at all.

Nevertheless, nearly forty years later, in 1926, it was republished by a New York publisher, and the newspapers, in America and abroad announced it as a new discovery!

Another impudent forgery consisted of the official report of the trial and death of Jesus, made directly to the Emperor Tiberius, by Pilate. This was the work of the Rev. W. D. Mahan, a Presbyterian minister, of Boonville, Missouri, U.S.A., who published it, in 1879, in a pamphlet of thirty-two pages, entitled *A Correct Transcript of Pilate's Court*. Mahan declared that the original manuscript of the work was in the Vatican Library at Rome, and that a German

¹ Cited by the Rev. Dr. Giles. *Christian Records*. Vol. II., p. 19.

scholar had obtained a transcript of the work from Father Peter Freelinhusen, the chief guardian of the Vatican for the price of sixty-two dollars and forty-two cents.

To back up this fiction he actually forged eight letters, the last being a letter from Father Freelinhusen to Mr. Whydaman—the apocryphal German scholar—certifying to the accuracy of his copy of the Latin manuscript! The pamphlet met with a gratifying success, and led the Rev. Mahan to further discoveries of the same kind, and five years later he published a considerable volume containing nine such works. "Like the *Report of Pilate*," says Prof. Goodspeed, "these bristle with childish blunders." (p. 50.) Of the *Report* itself, he says: "The whole work is a weak, crude fancy, a jumble of high-sounding but meaningless words, and hardly worth serious criticism. It is difficult to see how it could have deceived anyone. The strangest part of the story is that it did deceive a great many people." (p. 48.) Investigation proved that Father Freelinhusen was unknown at the Vatican, and the German scholar Whydaman was equally unknown.

Some of his material was bodily lifted from other works, whole pages were copied verbatim from *Ben Hur*, the novel by Lew Wallace, which is concerned with the Gospel story. This public exposure was so flagrant that his colleagues in the ministry found Mahan guilty of falsehood and of plagiarism, and suspended him from the ministry for one year. He promised to withdraw the book from circulation, but it was reprinted several times.

What a pity there were not a few critics, like Prof. Goodspeed, during the first and second centuries of our era. Christianity would never have made a start. It would have collapsed like a pricked air ball.

We hope that these eight examples will be followed by a fuller collection, later on.

W. MANN.

Knapsack John.

(Concluded from page 508.)

(The voice of the Almighty is heard in soliloquy).

The Voice: Ah, John, I know all thy doings, but yet is it my will that thou shalt have thy way, and not Death his, although verily Death has done many kindnesses in his life.

(Enter John).

John: Lord, Death asks what more Thou dost command? Be not offended but to tell the truth he is very impatient and arrogant; he sits as upon thorns, and demands a reply at once.

The Almighty: Reply to him, John, that I command that for three whole years only naughty children shall die.

John: Good Lord, I go to tell what Thou hast commanded.

(John goes, takes Death from the knapsack and).

John: The Lord has commanded thou that from now for three whole years tender branches, young shoots, suckers, osiers and such like shall be your food; the old forests you're not to touch, that's funny. And for three years you shall eat only young trees.

(Death swallowing his anger, goes away. Black out slowly. Fade in six years later. Death enters slowly).

Death: Thus have I tormented myself three whole years and then another three whole years yet must I return to God for further commands he might have. (Seeing John step forward). That knapsack of his. If only the flames would eat it up, I don't know what to say about it to the Almighty. Perhaps he has become childish, the Lord forgive me. It would be a good thing if the Almighty, great and mighty though He is, were to find Himself in John's knapsack one day, or even St. Peter, only then would they believe me.

(Seeing John step forward Death groans. John pretends not to hear or see him. They dally; finally Death says).

Death: Well, John, have you a mind to torment me again with your napsack?

John: Bah! If I had more power I tell you straight I'd scratch your eyes out like the devil, and roast you on a gridiron. For because of you much sorrow has overcome the world from Adam to this day. Into the knapsack, tottering fool! And from now on I'll not tell the Almighty about you, old fool that you are! You and the old witch in hell are a pair. I could tear you to pieces with my teeth for all the good you are. I must give you a thorough flogging. From now on your bones will rot in the knapsack. Ha! Ha!

(Death groans but John pretends not to notice. Finally the Almighty comes to the gate).

The Almighty: Well, John, what are you thinking about? Has Death happened along this way?

John: (hanging his head, stands silent and turns pale. Death speaks in a muffled voice from the sack). I . . . I . . .

Death: Here I am, Lord, put under arrest; Thou hast allowed a madman like John to mock me, woe is me!

(The Lord unties the knapsack, releases Death).

The Almighty: John, it is enough; thou hast lived thy life, and thou hast come to an end. As to compassion thou hast been compassionate; as to kindness, thou hast been kind of heart, there is no doubt, but for some time past, about the time that I blessed this knapsack, thou hast been rather . . . I know not what. With that nobleman's devils thou didst make such a commotion that news actually leaked out that thou wast something remarkable. With Death up to now I have allowed thee to follow any caprice thou hast desired, thou canst not deny it. But everything has its end, my son. Now thy turn is come to die; it cannot be avoided. To each one is given his due, even Death has his own account; it is not left to chance as thou didst think.

John repents, kneels before God and prays with tears in his eyes).

John: Lord, I beseech Thee, grant me yet three days in which to care for my soul, make a coffin with my feeble hand, and all alone place myself within it; after that let Death have his will with me, for I see plainly that I am near the end.

The Almighty: So be it, John. Let me take the knapsack. Remember Death that ye take John's soul after three days.

Death: I will come.

(They both leave).

(John sits reflecting).

John: When I sit and add up my account, I ask you, how did I distinguish myself while I lived in this world, eh? In the army it was nothing but torment; treated like a dog. And since then I've wandered about thus like a tramp. I went to Paradise and from Paradise to Hell, and from Hell back to Paradise. And at this moment I have no consolation whatever. What did I want with Paradise then? It is a pity to quarrel with the devil, there's great poverty here in Paradise; as the proverb says: Empty pride, light sack. One sits with one's money in the purse, and regrets everything. A greater punishment than that there cannot be! There is no vodka here, no tobacco, no musicians and no feast, no nothing! And now I have only three days to live and then John, you will have gone from the face of the earth! Is there no trick to play while there is still time?

(He jumps up).

Good! I've hit upon a trick! Anyhow what has been has been, but it must not have been in vain. I see clearly that it's all the same to me now.

(He brings his two silver roubles out and hurries off. Fade out slowly; then fade in same scene a few hours later. John is seen busy with tools finishing a coffin fit for a king).

John: Here's John's house everlasting. Three ells of earth, that's all one gets! That's what everything of any use in this world ends up in!

(Death comes up behind him).

Death: Well John are you ready?

John: I'm ready. (Smiles).

Death: If you're ready, let's go. Put yourself quickly

into the coffin for I've no time to lose. Perhaps others are waiting for me to give them their passport.

(John places himself face downward in the coffin).

Death: Not like that.

John: How then.

Death: Place yourself as a corpse should.

John: Well then? (he lays on his side letting his feet hang out).

Death: Really, John, talking is one thing, working is another; how long do you want to keep me? Place yourself, man, as you should.

(John turns over on his face with his head dangling, and feet outside).

Death: Bless me! Don't you even understand that much? One can see that you've been good for nothing but evil living in this world. Get out of that and I'll show you, fool that you are.

(John gets out of the coffin and stands humbly by. Death, having the kindness to instruct John, places himself in the coffin with his face uppermost, feet stretched out, hands on breast, and eyes closed, says)

Death: Look, John, that is how you do it.

(John loses no time . . . bang . . . on goes the lid. He puts on the cords, and with a prayer for the dead raises the coffin on to his shoulder, and goes off to throw it into a broad, flowing river).

John: Now, I've made an end of you. From now on you can float down the river to hell. You can get out of the coffin when your grandmother pulls you out of the grave. The Almighty took my knapsack away from me because of you, but all the same I've made you a good one.

(Fade out into the presence of the Lord. St. Peter approaches).

St. Peter: Well, well, O Lord, dost thou see what John has done? That man said well who said that, "Give then an inch and they'll take a yard."

The Almighty: John has boldness indeed; he has been bold to excess. Unfasten the coffin!

(Servants do so. Death steps out and stands behind John. John turns).

Death: Well, John so that was your little game, et? (John stands petrified, unable to utter a word).

You still pretend not to understand? Well, John, John! Only the boundless patience and goodness of God permitted you to exceed all laws. Long ago you would have become a laughing stock for the devils and been cast out if God, even more than his Son, had not interceded for you. So learn, John, that from now you will drag yourself in my footsteps beseeching me to take your soul, and I am to appear as though I have forgotten you, and I am to let you live on like the walls of Golia and Neantzu Castle that you may learn how insufferable is life in such extreme old age!

(Death goes quickly).

John: Well I cannot die! But am I going to trouble my head about him? Not at all. I'm not thinking about that. Let him trouble his own head if he wants to. Feast after Feast, John, or you'll go mad with boredom. What can a poor man do when Death turns a blind eye and will not see?

(Fade out slowly into the centuries innumerable. Faint bacchanalian music and sound of John's laughter. The Centuries roll on and on.)

Arranged by L. CORINNA.

God and the Universe.

Out of the mass of adulation showered upon their works it must come as a breath of fresh air to Profs. Eddington, Jeans, Huxley and Einstein to read the judgments of Mr. Chapman Cohen upon their pronouncements. At the same time, remembering that to the latter writer the word "religion" is like a red rag to a bull, they may feel that the arguments advanced against their theories need a more impartial presentment.

In *God and the Universe*, issued by the Secular Society Ltd., Mr. Cohen ruthlessly attacks the prevalent belief that there can be a real union between science and religion. He declares that the leaders of Christianity are

now glorying in the use of the names of great scientific men as proppers-up of the decaying Christian faith.

He attacks Prof. Eddington on the grounds that his interpretation of science is largely determined by pre-existing religious beliefs, Prof. Huxley is accused of keeping alive a type of mind essentially hostile to scientific development; Sir James Jeans is acclaimed as being a witness on behalf of God! and Prof. Einstein is known to believe in what he calls "Spinoza's God," who Mr. Cohen affirms is no God at all!

Whatever our own opinion on the scientists in question, we are compelled to admire the straightforward blows of Mr. Cohen. He is an excellent publicity agent for the books he attacks, for after reading his own book, some of which is reprinted from the *Freethinker*, our first reaction is to buy immediately the works he has criticized.

From "Armchair Science."

Area Song.

"The despair of an epoch would be expressed by the fact that it came to think it not worth while to occupy itself with the past."—Von Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

In a dense part of Soho there is a square surrounded on three sides by tenements. Into this square come musicians, singers, hawkers of vegetables, and the sound of their voices reverberates in the air that is only half-fresh even in the mornings. In the spring, a caged blackbird sings fiercely.

At six o'clock the beggarman walks by; he hears the notes of the imprisoned bird and pauses to remember. As a boy, he recalls the quiet country roads of Lincolnshire when he was a farm-hand before he left for London with hopes of a fortune. He had held his job in a big Dairy Company until he could no longer give the energy to it that he did not possess. His family had died out. He had never married, but he remembered the time, when Mary, a young country girl, had brought the ale to the field half-mown one early summer morning. She had rosy cheeks, dark curly hair, and she wore a print bonnet. He had nearly asked her to be his wife; a moment's hesitation, and she had gone. Mary, three weeks later, had fallen in love with a village lad who had returned on leave in the uniform of a "Cherry-Picker." At the fateful moment, a blackbird was singing on a twisted bough of an oak tree in the corner of the field. He shuffled along, making for the Embankment for a free breakfast to set him up for the day's haphazard jobs.

Sue, a fair-haired, big blue-eyed woman was well known in the district. She was on the books of the police. She was one of a thousand or so women of the town who take on their shoulders the burden of what shallow people called sin. It was one o'clock. Throwing defiance to a world, one half of which wanted her and the other half spurned her, she had sailed out of her two back rooms, dressed like a princess. Business had been good, and she was on her way to the shop where clever hands would dress her hair. As she passed the square, the blackbird's notes reached her ear, and instantly she forgot everything to remember the time when she was a little girl in a cottage garden. She could see her mother sitting in the porch of the cottage door trimming a tiny straw hat with pink roses. Her mother used to sing to her as she fell asleep at night. She remembered the song:—

"I saw a ship a-sailing,
A-sailing on the sea;
And, oh! it was all laden
With pretty things for thee!

There was no doubt that Sue's mother had only one person in mind when she sang. A big tear made a rivulet down Sue's cheek, and hung like a dew-drop on her chin that, to those who can read physiognomy, denoted the desire to be universally loved. She passed on, and with the characteristic aim of a woman, tried to throw a silver coin into the hat of a pavement artist. The coin rolled into the gutter, and the artist who picked it up never knew that a blackbird's song was the cause of money in that place.

Down the side-street passing the entrance of the square on a warm Spring morning, a luxurious motor-car turned majestically. Its progress was suddenly arrested by an altercation in the road between a shabby man pushing a cats-meat barrow and a boy on a tricycle. The chauffeur was impatient; the owner, a handsome looking man about fifty had an appointment with a firm of land agents. Lost in thought, the blackbird's song gave another turn to his meditations. At his old manor house down in Devonshire, he remembered the blackbird that had sung from the blossoming pear-tree near by. He was now on his way to negotiate the sale of his house, together with many acres of land including a village. Associations now quickly travelled through his mind; his traditional ownership, his responsibility to the sheep of his pastures, and his doubt, now clearly defined, as to the fate of land and villagers at the hands of the new buyers. The row had now subsided; the road was clear. Leaning forward to the driver he gave instructions to return to his hotel. He had realized his responsibilities.

Early one morning, the poet who had been carousing, paused to listen at the magic place. He thought of the imprisoned soul of England languishing amidst plenty, of the diabolical and second-hand methods that were used to give it the shadow for the substance. Machinery, like every other invention was used in the wrong way. Streets that were once pleasant places had become railroads; public nerves had gone to rags; every other person he met was a case for a pathologist, and money would not bring happiness to the rich, nor would it give peace to the poor. Again and again, the blackbird's song resounded in the miserable and drab-looking square, and each note pierced the poet's heart. He walked away slowly to his home; people who passed him thought that he was out of his mind, but in the deep stream of life to him, there were a thousand different currents. One of these had caught him, and taken him away to the land of the past, and in that, he knew he had his roots. He would write a poem. It would show that to the best of all that was gone, there could be better added to it.

And the blackbird sang; slowly the neighbourhood awoke. A thousand feet trod mechanically on the hot pavements; stench and noise filled the air. Dogs fought in the narrow alleys. Garbage was thrown on the pavements and in the gutters. Motor-cycles with robots on them clamoured and hooted. People jostled each other on the pathways as it was dangerous to be in the road. Bluebottles buzzed merrily round the cats-meat barrow. Another glorious Spring day had arrived.

C-DE-B.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

A STORY FOR FREETHINKERS.

SIR,—With reference to the letter from "Ignotus," in your issue of August 9, many of your readers will probably like to know the story in question by Mrs. Naomi Mitchison is included in *Boys and Girls and Gods*, to be published by us next month at 1s. 6d.

F. C. C. WATTS.

FREETHOUGHT AND FACTS.

SIR,—After the Sugar Plum (which I feel was more in the nature of an Acid Drop) in the *Freethinker* of July 19, on long letters, I hesitate to intrude again on your space, but some measure of thanks seems to be due to those Freethinkers who so quickly answered my S.O.S. I have little doubt that with the help of these letters and Mr. Frazer's extremely sympathetic article, my philosphic account will show in due course of time a large man of cash on the credit side.

There is one criticism I should like to draw exception to however, and that is the suggestion that I am not a Freethinker. Mr. Morris tells me I am not a Freethinker because I dislike facts. Freethinkers, he says, do not

dislike facts, they make the best of them. Now cancer is a fact (to take but one example), but to suppose that Freethinkers should not only make the best of cancer but also like it, is sheer nonsense. A Freethinker is a person who bases his views on life and the universe in general on reason and knowledge and not on the dictates of some superstitious orthodoxy. The views I put forward were based on both reason and knowledge. They were wrong because I had started from more than one false premise. I am therefore a Freethinker, though at the same time I may also be a "Stupidthinker."

I was not greatly surprised to find that my abominable handwriting had engendered, what is to me, the revolting name of SEZEL.

EDMUND L. SEYD.

WHAT IS "FREE"?

SIR,—Mr. Rees is incorrigible! "Am I a Free Man," he asks, and answers, "Yes"; yet a little later states that "no man is free"! Again, "Free State" is a fallacious term; yet Irish "Free State" is an exception! (And I could name a few more exceptions.) His plea of Not Guilty to confusion of meanings won't wash.

He is also guilty of carelessness. For I did not say that he accepts the Pope's ruling on all matters unconditionally; I said "in certain matters." Which is precisely what he admits in the sentence: "I do not accept the Pope's ruling unconditionally; but only in those things, etc." And hereby he concedes the main distinction between Roman Catholics and Freethinkers. For no Freethinker accepts unconditionally anyone's ruling; whereas every Roman Catholic accepts the Pope's ruling on matters of religion unconditionally—or else he is no true Roman Catholic.

As for the doctor (or solicitor)—if Mr. Rees has bound himself to accept unconditionally the opinion of his doctor (or solicitor) in all matters medical (or legal), then he has certainly stultified his reason.

And as for the remark: "Unless I am to claim a special revelation for myself, I must do so" (i.e., recognize special Authority in Religion), all that need be said is: either Mr. Rees claims special revelation for the Pope, or the Pope claims it for himself. If the first is true, there is a distinction without a difference between this claim for oneself and the same claim for another, whose ruling on religious matters one obeys unconditionally—for both are excuses for bigotry and dogmatism. If the second is true, Mr. Rees should recognize the Dalai Lama's authority in religious matters on a par with the Pope's—for both make the same claim. Indeed the Dalai Lama's claim is the stronger.

Finally, to say that the term "Freethinker" is fallacious is about as foolish as to say that the term "Roman Catholic" (or even "Catholic") is fallacious. Almost every such term is fallacious if one chooses to quibble. But in the meanings of these two terms as they are generally understood by those who use them, it is as absurd for a Roman Catholic to call himself a Freethinker, as it would be for a Freethinker to call himself a Roman Catholic.

C. S. FRASER.

A REMINDER.

SIR,—There are three things I should like to say about Mr. Dawson's letter in a recent issue, first, he says, to admit being a Roman Catholic is evidence of a warped mentality, by substituting the term Atheist for Roman Catholic, the Theist could just as easily reply—you're another.

Secondly, Socialism is an economic science and needs no vague adjective, either "real," "Christian," or "Atheist."

Thirdly, to discuss such terms as "Heaven," "Utopia," and "Free," whilst leaving out the basic material factors that gave them birth, is another example of the metaphysical Atheist and his Christian brother, shadow-chasing, in the "realm" of ideas.

E. CAIN.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road) : Saturday, at 7.30, Messrs. Barnes, Day and Bryant. *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature on sale.

PINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. H. S. Wishart—A Lecture.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Tuesday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road. Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture at Arlington Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, Sunday, at 7.15, Mrs. E. Grout; Wednesday, August 19, at Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, August 21, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Thursday, at 7.0, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and J. Darby; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith) : 3.30, Messrs. Bryant and C. Tuson.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Saturday, at 8.0, opposite the Open Market, inside the Level. Sunday, at 3.30, the Level, speakers, Messrs. Jackson, Legge, Keys, G. de Lacey and Bryne.

ASHINGTON.—Saturday, August 15, at 7.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

COLNE (Spring Lane).—Monday, August 17, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps).—Sunday, August 16, at 7.30 Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DURHAM (Market Place).—Tuesday, August 19, at 8.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW N.S.S.—Mr. George Whitehead will lecture on Friday and Saturday at West Regent Street.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—A meeting of Executive and members will be held in City Hall, Albion Street, on August 23, at 3.30.

HAPTON.—Tuesday, August 18, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, at Queen's Drive (opposite Baths), Messrs. Jackson, Shortt and Tissyman; Monday, at Beaumont Street, Messrs. Jackson and Wollen; Tuesday, at Edge Hill Lamp, Messrs. Little and Sherwin; Wednesday, at Waste Ground adjoining Old Swan Library, Messrs. Little and Shortt; Thursday, at corner of High Park Street and Park Road, Messrs. Jackson and Tissyman. All at 7.30. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market).—Wednesday, August 19, at 8.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.—Bigg Market, Sunday, August 16, at 7.30, Mr. J. C. Keast—A Lecture.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S.—Open-air Week commences on Sunday, August 16 at County Square, with Mr. Wingate of Perth at 4.0 p.m., and Mr. G. Whitehead at 7.0 p.m. During the week Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture at Dunn Square every evening, at 7.30 p.m. Local Freethinkers are asked to make a point of being present.

PRESTON (near Art Gallery).—Sunday, August 16, at 2.0 and 7.0 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

TRAWDEN (Post Office).—Friday, August 21, at 7.45 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, August 16, at 7.0 p.m. (prompt), at Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead, General Meeting, with address by Mr. F. Abel, on "Outlines of a New Satanism." Literature and current *Freethinkers* on sale. More members wanted. Roll up in your hundreds.

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