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Views and Opinions.

The Vicar of Stiffkey.

THE trial of the Rev. Harold Davidson, Vicar of Stiffkey, has reached the stage of a verdict of guilty on all counts. While it lasted it gave excellent copy for the newspapers—that is, as the newspapers count copy as good. Judging from the space given it was of vital import that the British public should be acquainted with all the details of the vicar's adventures, far more important than that it should understand events that are of real value to the welfare of the world. And the British public with an appetite for licking up details of this character that is surpassed by no other public in the world, settled down to the feast that God—or at least, one of God's representatives on earth—had provided. Some of the papers with characteristic hypocrisy published full reports accompanied by one of those office-boy scrawls which nowadays pass for leading articles, regretting that such trials should be held in public. But there is no harm in giving such cases a public trial; there is every reason why all trials should be in public. But a full-length report, with portraits of everybody concerned, is quite another matter. The "leader" was to retain the traditions of Christian purity; the report was to cater to the salacious appetite of a Christian public, and so to promote sales. As usual piety and profit were running amicably together.

Many of the religious papers regretted the publication of these reports, mainly on the ground of the discredit it brought on the church. It was pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church does not so wash its dirty linen in public. Neither do the Non-conformist Churches. An enquiry is conducted in private, and if found guilty the offender is invited to retire, or he is removed, and the general public is none the wiser. The sacred cause of religion is thus left unsmirched. It is protected in the usual way in which religion is safeguarded, by the prevalence of general ignorance. We are left with the interested

tradition of the clergy as good and holy men whose conduct lifts them above the level of ordinary individuals, and justifies their being looked up to as our moral guides. In this way the superstition of the superiority of the parson and the parsonic profession is kept alive.

* * *

Vice and Virtue.

Now I am not writing to attack the character of Mr. Davidson, not even to attack the character of the clergy in general. I do not say that Mr. Davidson is a disgrace to his profession, because I believe that, however, admirable some men may be who wear a parson's uniform, the *profession* of a priest is one that cannot easily be disgraced. Neither do I denounce those who appointed him. The responsibility for his being where he is does not—if the Church theory be correct—rest with whoever placed him where he is. Theoretically the Lord "called" him, and he ought to have known what he was or what he was likely to become. The responsibility rests with God, and students of history should be too well acquainted with the kind of people he has so often called to his service to be greatly surprised at a vicar of Stiffkey turning up every now and then. With regard to the really finer type of character it is to-day a case of "The Lord calls, but few listen," and so he must rest content with what he can get.

To be just to the vicar it should be said that his type, if not created by Christianity, is at least encouraged by it. No religion has ever so surrounded all that pertains to sex with such an atmosphere of furtive indecency and moral cowardice as Christianity has done. Its exaltation of the moral and spiritual superiority of virginity, male and female, is evidence of this. The obsession of certain well-known clergymen and Christian reformers with sexual objects is to the psychologist actual demonstration of the sexual aberrations and obsessions encouraged by the Christian religion. Many of these pious reformers live the mental experiences through which others pass in a grosser form. They are not really cleaner than others, but their uncleanness is cast in a form that a Christian society has learned to accept as evidence of purity. I recall such cases as the present Bishop of London some years ago denouncing living statues, after seeing them, as exhibitions of "warm, living, human flesh," when the whole point of the exhibition was that the men and women should not look as though they were alive. But all the powder and plaster used were not proof against the Bishop's Christian imagination. Or there was the case of the nude statues outside the British Medical Association's building, in which for months no one saw anything particularly bad until the secretary of a certain Christian organization denounced them as unfit for decent men and women to look at—and then Christians went in crowds to see them.

The history of Christianity is studded with the sex-abberations and extravagances engendered by its own teaching.

* * *

Ringing the Changes.

Being what I am, I am neither surprised nor disgusted when I find a Christian clergyman behaving as many who are not Christians behave. I am not astonished because I do not really regard parsons as being different from other men. That anyone should feel otherwise is proof that they have not completely outgrown the primitive superstition concerning the priest. They *expect* the parson to be different from other men, and they confuse this difference with moral superiority. But the difference which people believed separated the priest from the ordinary man did not arise from any assumed moral superiority. It was entirely due to his influence with the supernatural beings on whose good will everybody's welfare depended. And that has remained the root idea with all the great religions of the world, primitive and less primitive. The Catholic Church endows its priests with the power to bind and loose, and it is only through them that initiation, marriage, and safety after death can be secured. With other Churches this power is not directly claimed, but it is implied. The parson is set aside for a peculiar duty. He is "called" to his work, his distinctive dress, his peculiar mannerisms, his claim to special treatment by the State, are all indications of this primitive conception of the priestly functions.

But time "which doth antiquate all things," robs the parsonry of its original quality. Doubt is felt, not merely of the value of the priestly influence with the gods, but also whether there are any gods to influence. Still, the priest was there, he had become an established institution, and as the king, from being an incarnation of a god ultimately becomes a mere leader of fashion, or a mere decorative appendage to a public assembly, so the existence and the power of the priest is justified on grounds quite different from the original ones. He becomes—in theory—a teacher of morals, and the deference paid him because of his alleged power with the gods is transformed into a deference because of his moral superiority. It is in this way that there has been established the popular belief in the parson as not merely a "holy" man, but also as necessarily a good one to at least a degree that goodness cannot be predicated of the ordinary citizen. It is a survival of the original superstition that established the priesthood and gave it its power.

* * *

Fair Play for Parsons.

So I do not see any particular necessity for fulminating against the Rev. Harold Davidson, or even holding him up to reprobation, except as a reply to those who hold that the parson, in virtue of his profession, ought to be better than other people. He is not better than others, and there is no reason why he should be. He is not selected because of his moral superiority (and certainly not because of his intellectual qualities) but solely on religious grounds. It is true that being a parson he has greater opportunities to gratify his—shall we say vicarious salacity?—and the atmosphere in which he moves tends to prevent the growth of a really healthy moral sense, but other men in other walks of life also commit offences of the nature of those with which the vicar of Stiffkey is charged, and I feel much the same with regard to them all. But I, being an Atheist, and, I hope, a sensible one, do not cry when a parson is charged with an offence, "Is that fitting conduct for a clergyman?" Nor do I when I see or hear of

Christians being untruthful, or malicious, or brutal, cry out "Where is the Christianity of these people?" as though it were not in existence in the very things that are selected for reprobation. The Vicar of Stiffkey may be as the Chancellor of the Diocese of Norwich either stated or implied, a liar, a sex-mad person, and a blackguard, but so have many other Christian priests been in the history of their church. I do not say that their religion made them liars, or blackguards or even sex-maniacs, but it is quite certain that their religion encouraged all these qualities. Sex-mania has laid the foundation of many a saintship, lying and blackguardism has stood many in good stead as defenders of the faith. And a public feeling on Christian teaching has been well prepared to dwell with enjoyment upon the columns of slush that has been printed during the Stiffkey case. And the only thing that religious leaders have to say on the matter is that there ought not to be public reports of such trials. The lie of the moral superiority of the clergy is to be maintained by seeing that the truth concerning them does not leak out. The *suggestio falsi* is to be maintained by the *suppressio veri*.

Yes, there are many morals to be drawn from the Stiffkey case. But they are not exactly those which have been drawn by the religious and the general press.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Dean's Defence.

"Fear is the basis of all puritanism. The kill-joy kills joy because he is afraid of it. Fear kills happiness."—*Ethel Mannin*.

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."
Tennyson, "Ulysses."

DEAN INGE is a popular entertainer. He supplies paradoxical fireworks to the decorous pages of the *London Evening Standard*, and sometimes adds to the gaiety of its very numerous and respectable readers. He takes haughty-cultural views of everything, but nothing ever tempts him to disappoint the fine expectations of the church-wardens, lay-preachers, Sunday-school teachers, and district visitors, who buy this daily newspaper as the best intellectual answer they are able to find to the urgent prayer for "grace, wisdom, and understanding." In pursuit of his self-imposed mission as an apostle of haughty-culture, the Dean has lately penned an apologia of the Christian Religion which reads like the deadliest irony, and this is how he skates over the thin ice of a dangerous literary subject (*Evening Standard*, June 27):—

Organized religion has in history helped to suppress gladiatorial combats in the arena, the slave trade, and slavery itself. It has invoked the criminal law to punish sexual offences against children. In these matters it has represented the best conscience of the community, and has brought public opinion round to its side.

These words appeared in a two column article entitled "What is the Clergy's Business?" and was a reply to a journalist who had roundly accused the present-day Christian clergy of being nothing less than Nosey Parkers, and of butting into other people's business with extreme unction and extreme rudeness and ignorance.

It is interesting to note that the period of time intervening between the gladiatorial shows of Ancient Rome and the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act by the British Parliament is a period of nearly two thousand years, and yet Dean Inge can point to nothing else to the credit of the Christian Religion during the intervening centuries than the

matter of slavery and the slave-trade, which he appears to imagine is abolished the world over.

The slave-trade is by no means abolished, and the principal offender to-day is Abyssinia, a country which has been enjoying the full benefits of the Christian Religion for a much longer period than Britain. So, in this instance, it is quite clear that the religion of Christ is not the factor for promoting humanism. As for the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, this particular crusade was initiated by William T. Stead, a Spiritualist, and one of the foremost journalists of the nineteenth century. And as Spiritualists are anathema to all the Churches of Christendom, the credit belongs to a heretic and not to organized Orthodoxy. Concerning the gladiatorial shows of Ancient Rome, it is very doubtful if the Christian priests objected to these exhibitions on the grounds of humanity. If so, where was that tenderness of heart when they themselves permitted the awful torturing and burning of heretics and witches. The gladiators of old Rome had at least a fighting chance, but heretics had none at all, and witches were usually the most helpless of their sex. Macaulay said sarcastically that the old Puritans did not object to bear-baiting because it gave pain to the bear, but because it caused pleasure to the onlookers. It may be that the fanatical priests of the early Christian Church were like-minded. Crocodiles and alligators are much alike.

Dean Inge, in spite of his parade of culture, appears to be quite unaware of the activities of organized religion in this country. Yet there are Christian Bishops in the House of Lords, and a record of their votes in the Upper House supplies an answer. In the long struggle of Roman Catholics, Jews, Nonconformists, and Freethinkers for civil liberty; in the humanitarian crusade for amending and revising the old, ferocious penal code which enforced the death-penalty for trifling offences; in the building up of national education; these bishops were antagonistic to progress, and took their stand with the peers and against the people.

Talk of Christian charity! These pious, but perverse bishops would not see that it was wrong to hang people for stealing goods over the value of five shillings. It was the juries who refused to convict, and not the clergy who protested. These bishops actually thought that if people did not attend and subscribe to their Church that they did not deserve to vote, or sit in Parliament, or to enjoy the use of the Universities.

The records of the official Parliamentary Reports show that time after time these Christian Bishops lagged behind the humanitarian spirit of the age, and were a hindrance and not a help in national politics. The leopard has not changed its spots. The churches and chapels to-day are half empty, and the clergy of all denominations are endeavouring to restrict the relaxations of the ordinary citizen on the one day of the week when he is at liberty. They are all jealous of the cinema and the restaurant, feeling that the money spent in those places should be placed in their own collection boxes. Why should the public be subjected to such dragooning at the hands of these religious racketeers? All over the Continent of Europe people really enjoy themselves on Sundays. From Moscow to Madrid adult citizens are not treated like naughty children on their weekly holiday. Common sense suggests that if grown-up people wish to see a picture-show they should do so. If they wish to attend a theatre, or the opera, or a restaurant, they should be at liberty to do so. Denials and qualifications of these very reasonable suggestions are, in a democratic country, just giving hostages to barbarism and nothing else. Why should

40,000 religious racketeers hold forty-five millions of people to ransom on the weekly holiday, and use every artifice and stratagem to turn every town into a city of dreadful night. Has no prominent present-day politician the courage of old Lord Melbourne, who protested against the priestly Nosey Parkers of his day by remarking: "things have come to a pretty pass if religion is to be allowed to invade the sphere of our private lives."

The clergy plead for a day of rest, but they are aiming at a day of restraint. To place an embargo upon simple social pleasures upon the weekly holiday is to act in the very spirit of tyranny, rather than in that of Liberty. To permit priests to act as they please concerning Sunday would be to establish a precedent fraught with the gravest possibilities. For their next step would be to stop seven-day journalism, and the battle for a free press would have to be fought all over again. Give Priestcraft its full fling, and the liberty of the nation cannot but suffer.

MIMNERMUS.

Criticism and the Bible.

(Concluded from page 437.)

II.

CERTAIN as it is that the Hebrews had at one time their old hero-legends, it is just as certain that in the course of the evolution of new economic forms of life, these more original legends became in relatively early times buried under a substantial part of the folk-lore of Canaan. In the old patriarchal stories about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc., very little of the early heroism is left. The only exception is provided by an episode in the life of Jacob. According to the legend, Jacob fought with the gods and men, and acquired on that account the surname Israel (Isra-el), which means the contending god.⁶ But how different to the old and honoured heroic achievements is the conduct of an Abraham, who for "sheep and oxen and men servants and women servants" hands over, *pro tem.*, his wife, under the pretence that she is his sister, to Abimelech;⁶ or of a Jacob who defrauds his own brother and steals other peoples' cattle. In these accounts there now appears clearly the fact that a new psychology has developed—that of greedily acquisitive herdsmen who, besides the pursuits of cattle-raising, trade and plunder, seek to acquire wealth, not like the old-warrior-heroes, but through imposture, cheating, fraud and prostitution.

But it is thoroughly false to interpret those legends as some critics are inclined to do, not as ideological reflexes of social phenomena but of certain processes of Nature. If certain trees are sacred in the eyes of a people that is not, originally, because the tree as a purely natural phenomenon has awakened among men a conception of its sacredness, but because this natural phenomenon is already also a social thing, that is to say, plays an important rôle within the circle of their social life. Where the sea is venerated, that is because of its social importance for men, for what it supplies them. If a hole in a cliff

⁶ It seems probable that Abraham, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, etc., were old Canaanite local gods, the legends about which were taken over by the incoming Israelites and gradually adapted to their own circle of ideas. They thought of those old tribal fathers in terms of their own life and needs.

⁷ Genesis xxxii. 24-32.

⁸ Genesis xx. Compare also Genesis xii. 10-20. In the text, the original is interpolated, as may easily be seen, in order to make the prostitution episode appear less effective to the standpoint of the contemporary religious outlook.

or a burrow in the earth appears in the outlook of a people as a sacred place, that is only because the people themselves live there, or it is within recollection that their fathers lived there. When men began to live in houses, they built houses for their gods.

In the book of the prophet Isaiah, there are some verses of a consolatory Judaic song which runs:—

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you.⁹

If we bear in mind how, according to the legends of many peoples and as already mentioned, the god and the half-god ancestors of the totem groups or gentes had emerged out of rock caverns, craters, seas, rivers, pools and the like, and that they were thought to dwell in stones and trees, then this cited passage is also clear. It is simply a reminiscence of an old local myth concerning the rise of a gens, according to which Abraham and Sarah had emerged out of a rock cavern and out of a well or water-hole. It is related that Abraham and Sarah were buried in the cave of Machpelah—a later holy place of the Israelites.¹⁰

The conceptions contained in those legends do not belong to the stage of Natural religion so-called, but to that of ancestor-worship, then in process of development out of still earlier and still cruder forms. In this stage, rocks, trees, rivers are not holy in themselves, but only in as far as the ancestor gods of social men are thought to associate with those natural phenomena. Those men of Palestine did not throw themselves down on the ground before every rock and aged tree in reverent awe and supplication because those things had awakened in them feelings of fear or hope or reverence, but because they believed that their ancestor-gods and half-gods were present in those rocks and trees. The order of thought was not one in which, first, the rock inspired them with notions of some superhuman powers, then, coming to be convinced it was a god received a name, and finally became promoted by them to the rank of founder and protector of the tribe; but, rather, conversely. Abraham was not a rock-god but a god *in* the rock, a superhuman being who dwelt in an inanimate thing. In all those conceptions of sacred trees, sacred mountains, sacred animals, etc., the social-human element is the active force, the dynamic factor. Just as in money—and we hear it said of some people that money is their god—it is not the metal, as such, that constitutes “the supreme being” of the economic world—in which world, too, there are plenty of superstitions—but the power that, so to speak, has been conferred on the metal and now seems to be inherent in it, the social power with which men through their relations as commodity producers have endowed it.¹¹

The legend of the rock-dwelling Abraham is thus inseparably bound up with the ancestor-worship of the Hebrews. That it was for long in widespread vogue among them, is evidenced by the verses we cited from the so-called book of Isaiah and which belong to the later Isaiah, that is, some two centuries after the other parts of the work. The unknown author of this chapter did not himself invent those expressions. The first half of this chapter consists, in large measure, of an old Hebrew song of

eulogy and honour which had arisen long before the time of this writer, and which he has reproduced doubtless with some amendment to suit his own purpose. It is a song which clearly indicates a period when the Hebrew tribes had already united into a firmly-established national union, an Israelitish nation. At the time, therefore, for otherwise one would not have made this poetical use of it, when the opinion still prevailed that the spirit of the ancestor Abraham dwelt in the sacred stone. Further, at the time of the unknown author of this chapter this idea must have been still current. If it had appeared as offensive to the belief in Yahwe, the zealous Yahwe-worshipper and propagandist would surely have omitted it. Therefore, in the sixth century before our era, the belief that the ancestor gods resided in wood and stone, must have been still in general currency among the Israelites. For the rest, this fact is confirmed by the declamations of the other new prophets against the worship of standing images (god-stones) and the Aschera (holy columns) and the already mentioned sacred trees (groves); and, as we have already seen, Jeremiah still reproaches the inhabitants of Judah for calling wood and stones their fathers, and saying to them: “Thou hast brought me forth.”

In the same category of ancestor-worship as the rock of Abraham, stands the stone of Bethel. Bethel signifies nothing other than the “house of God.” The designation given in Genesis to the god worshipped in Bethel, is God (El) of Bethel. God of the House of God (El of Beth-el) may seem an impossible name. But actually a designation of this sort, as the example of the Phœnicians shows, was in general usage. Among the Phœnicians the Baal was generally named after its chief place of worship, e.g., Baal of Tyre, Baal of Sidon, etc.,¹² and the name Bethel, if it originally referred only, as is probable, to this monumental stone which Jacob set up, was later applied to the entire holy place which, so to speak, grew up around the stone.

But there is another and still more important question. How did this El of Bethel look in the eyes of the worshippers? In what form and with what attributes did they think of him? In later times, this god, El of Bethel (as also the other original Hebrew Elohim), the same god who was wrestled and overcome by Jacob,¹³ by the brook Jab-bok, was identified with Yahwe. After the exile, and to the greater honour of Yahwe, not only cults of the stone and trees but also the teraphim cult as a special form of worship of Yahwe, are represented as having been put down.¹⁴ But originally the El of Bethel had just as little to do with Yahwe as had the different Elohim of Tabor, and of Dan, and of Mahanaim. What sort of a god, then, was he? We find the answer in a tribal hymn of praise which was inserted into the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis under the title of “the Blessings of Jacob.” It consists, for the greater part, of fragments of an older jubilation, which may have partly arisen already in the twelfth century, and partly in the time of David. In this song, in which the tribes of Manassch and

⁹ Genesis xxxi. 13 : xxxv. 7.

¹³ Biblical Criticism has known now for a long time that, according to the original conception, it was Jacob who triumphed and dislocated the hip of the strange El or god who wrestled with him. This is confirmed by Hosea xii. 3-5. But after this El had later on been identified with Yahwe, it appeared to the priestly compilers of Judah that the myth as they found it was inimical to a respect for Yahwe; so they turned the decision of the wrestling bout from one in favour of Jacob into a decision in favour of Yahwe. Thus it is that in the text it is Jacob and not Yahwe who gets his hip wrenched out!

¹⁴ Compare Judges x. 13.

⁹ Isaiah li. 1, 2.

¹⁰ Genesis xxiii. 8, 20; xxv. 9, 10.

¹¹ Men have made money in the same unconscious way and with the same fetish logic, as they have made their gods. And they have been fooled by both, that is, fooled by their own folly.

Ephraim are not regarded as separate tribes but united in the tribe of Joseph, it says of this tribe of Joseph, which at that time lived between the Jordan and the mountains of Ephraim and had in their possession the holy places (sanctuaries) of Bethel and Shechem:—

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.

The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.

But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.¹⁵

By the power of the steer of Jacob; by the herdsmen of the stone of Israel; by the God (El) of thy father—who shall help thee, by the Almighty (El-Shaddai) who shall bless thee.

Therefore, the El of the stone of Israel, or, as it is also called, the stone of Jacob, on which Jacob sacrificed in supplication at Bethel, bears the name Shaddai and this El Jacob had the form of a steer or bull.

This statement does not stand alone, but is confirmed by other passages in the Old Testament. In the first Book of Kings xii. 25-32, it says, for example, that after the separation of the northern kingdom of Israel from Judah the old steer-worship became rampant again. And the prophet Hosea writes:—

The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves (young steer) of Beth-aven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.¹⁶

Thus El Shaddai was thought of and worshipped in the form of a steer.

W. CRAIK.

¹⁵ Genesis xlix. 22-25.

¹⁶ Hosca x. 5.

Ectoplasmic Spirits.

[Some time ago we noticed an account of an exposure of a "materializing medium," Mrs. Duncan, by Mr. Harry Price at the "National Laboratory of Psychical Research." Mrs. Duncan specialized in "Ectoplasmic" spirits, and Mr. Price had little difficulty in showing that the ectoplasm consisted of a fine substance swallowed and concealed in an esophageal pouch, to be regurgitated and produced as a spirit form. Since the appearance of the book Mr. Price has issued, as an appendix, a sworn statement by a servant of Mrs. Duncan, which puts the finishing touch to this silly fraud. We print the larger part of this appendix. We hasten to add that this will not prevent Mr. Hannen Swaffer and others still communicating with ectoplasmic spirit forms. Their belief defies disproof.]

I, MARY MCGINLAY, of 210, Hilltown, Dundee, Angus, N.B., Domestic Servant, a spinster, solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:

... When Mrs Duncan came to London she had three pieces of butter muslin with her. They were not the same length. In one piece were more than five yards; the other two pieces were about three and a half yards in length. They were very worn and frayed at the edges, and this being so, she sent me out to get seven yards of butter muslin. This I purchased at a shop in Beulah Road, Thornton Heath. It cost, as far as I can remember, 2s. 8½d. She sent me for this butter muslin and told me to say nothing to Mr. Duncan about it. Mr. Duncan often asked me if I saw anything suspicious and I always said that I had not.

I have examined the Report issued by the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, on a series of sittings which it had with Mrs. Duncan in London. I have carefully examined the photographs reproduced in this Report, and I have also seen the original photographs, and the pieces of cheese cloth reproduced in those photographs appear to be the identical pieces which Mrs.

Duncan brought to London with her, or which I purchased for her. I recognized the tears in the pieces that Mrs. Duncan brought from Scotland.

After a seance Mrs. Duncan used to get me to wash out a length of this muslin. The muslin had a rotten smell. It put me in mind of the smell of urine; it had a sour smell.

In the National Laboratory Report are photographs of rubber gloves. I never saw any rubber gloves at Dundee, but I saw them occasionally in London. Once I found a pair right at the top of a high shelf in a cupboard and I told Mrs. Duncan about them. She said they were used to examine her at the sittings, but I did not let Mr. Duncan know about this. Rubber gloves were never used for any purpose in our house at Thornton Heath. The gloves I found appeared identical to the pictures of the rubber gloves in the National Laboratory Report on Mrs. Duncan's mediumship. One day I was looking out of the bedroom window and saw Bella (Mrs. Duncan's eldest girl) bury a pair of rubber gloves in the garden.

... Referring to the muslin again, which I had to wash sometimes, I noticed that occasionally it would only be stained a little as if it had been washed beforehand. At other times she would give it to me just as she had used it, and then it would be much stained and slimy.

On one occasion I was asked to mix up the whites of two eggs. This I did, and was too frightened to ask her what the muslin and eggs were for. She volunteered the information that the white of egg had been recommended to her by a woman to put on an abscess on her arm in order to whiten the mark of the sore. She put a little on the sore, but of course it did not whiten it. I never saw what happened afterwards to the white of egg.

Just before leaving home for a sitting, Mrs. Duncan used to retire to a potting house or outhouse just outside the kitchen door and remained there for about five minutes. I do not know what she did there. She always had a bath before each sitting. Mrs. Duncan did not have a big meal before going to a sitting. She would have a cup of tea and a biscuit or two and would then go up to the bathroom and have a bath. . . .

A friend of the Duncan family, Mrs. McCleod, used to attend Mrs. Duncan's sittings and her (Mrs. McCleod's) daughter was supposed to materialize during the seances. This effigy of a child always wore a luminous star on her head or on her dress. Mrs. Duncan used to tell me about this star. One evening I was sent down to the drawing-room to look for some insurance books, and as I was rummaging about in a drawer I saw a white envelope. The room was rather dark, and when I held out the envelope a luminous star could be seen shining through the envelope, and I recognized this star as being identical to the one that Mrs. Duncan had told me about as having been seen when Mrs. McCleod's child materialized. At a seance in Edinburgh at which this star was also seen, after the seance the lady of the house where the sitting was held found some particles of luminous paint in the cabinet and drew my attention to this fact. I was convinced that it had come off the luminous star I had seen in the envelope.

One thing I noticed was that Mrs. Duncan was very subject to vomiting. She was nearly always sick in the mornings, and sometimes she would be sick in the evenings too. On one of the lengths of muslin (which Mrs. Duncan always kept in her room) I noticed that it had been folded lengthwise and sewn at the top along half of its width, leaving a hole through which Mrs. Duncan could have put her head. During the latter period of my stay with Mrs. Duncan in London, I formed the opinion that the lengths of cheese cloth which I had sometimes washed for Mrs. Duncan had been swallowed by her. The conclusion was forced upon me that the cheese cloth was swallowed by her and then brought up again during a seance. I afterwards found that this same theory had been formed by the officials of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, and was afterwards published in their Report on Mrs. Duncan's mediumship.

I voluntarily and on my own initiative wrote to the National Laboratory of Psychical Research and offered

to impart to the Officers of the Society the foregoing information.

And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act, 1835.

DECLARED at 106 Fulham Road in the County of London this 22nd day of February, 1932. (Signed) MARY MCGINLAY.

Before me (Signed)
EDWARD A. POOLE,
A Commissioner for
Oaths.

Acid Drops.

We are not quite sure who is responsible for the control of the courts during murder trials, but from the proceedings in the Barney case we suggest that in the future the matter be placed in the hands of a business-like committee. We gather that long before the trial all the seats were allotted by ticket to more or less distinguished people, and just enough of the general public were permitted to enter to preserve the character of a public trial. But why not do the thing properly? Once again we might learn from America, and a committee from Holywood could show us how to do the thing well. For instance, no one should be allowed to attend a society murder trial unless he or she had been presented at court, possessed a title, or enjoyed an income of £5,000. A stiff charge could be made for seats, and between whiles famous singers could be engaged to give a recital. While the jury was absent the judge could give an address on "Some murder trials I have conducted," and the whole might end with a luncheon, speeches and musical turns in the main hall of the Old Bailey. If murder trials are to be turned into social functions, with the seats in a public court reserved for "distinguished" visitors, it should be done properly and in a business-like manner.

Meanwhile our delightful press has been giving us a "Mrs. Barney day by day" series, and instead of pictures of the Queen entering a flower show, or the King looking at a cattle show, or the Prince of Wales wearing a new hat, we have Mrs. Barney entering her motor car, Mrs. Barney smoking a cigarette, Mrs. Barney goes shopping, etc., etc. We daresay the apology for the papers would be that they have the same public to deal with in both cases. That is, of course, quite true, but it is also true that appetite grows by what it feeds on.

The *Christian World* is angry with the Under-Secretary for the Home Office for saying that chapel and church bazaars have raffles which are really lotteries. We note the indignation, but we should like to see the same indignation displayed over another of Mr. Stanley's statements, repeated by many parsonic supporters of Sunday cinemas, namely that the reason for supporting Sunday cinemas is that they offer a relief from over-crowded and insanitary homes. That is simply a lie. Cinemas on Sunday and other days are filled with just the same people as normally fill theatres and other places of entertainment. Why is it that even when a professional Christian finds himself doing something sensible he feels bound to lie about it?

Perhaps this overcrowded home lie is just another form of the wicked infidel story. For many generations Christian preachers held that Freethinkers were naturally wicked men, and were afraid to accept Christianity

because it prevented them indulging in their wickedness. There is enough of that still going to surround unbelief—in the minds of believers—with an aura of evil living. This cinema-over-crowded-home is evidently another version of the same story. Those who go to cinemas on Sunday are poor-depressed and degraded creatures who find in the film some relief from the terrible conditions in which they live. This manages to surround the attendance at Sunday performances with the impression that it is only the "lower" types who attend them. Meanwhile the Archbishop of Canterbury who believes in the cinema as offering a relief from over-crowded homes, does not protest against getting a salary which is partly derived from slum dwellings.

The Bishop of Accra has discovered that ninety per cent of the people in his diocese believe in witchcraft. The Bishop is naturally horrified at such gross superstition. So he asks them to believe in a book which is a one hundred per cent in favour of witchcraft. And no British Christian will tell the Bishop of Accra what a humbug it all is.

Sir Josiah Stamp says that in his opinion true education should inspire the habit of asking questions. We agree that this is one of the aims of a sound education. But there is little of real education about; what exists is instruction. Youngsters are told what they ought to believe, and this is so strongly impressed upon them that when they grow up they are still ready to receive instruction from this or that leader, or this or that party, without recognizing that mere instruction is never of any great help. And of all forms of training that does most to create this readiness to receive instruction and ask no questions religious training is the worst.

From an Irish Roman Catholic paper, sent us by a Dublin reader, we get the answer to a very important and pressing question. It is from the "Answers to Correspondents" column:—

Country Reader. Sometimes we run short of Holy Water. A friend tells me she always adds ordinary water to her supply of Holy Water when it is running short. Is this allowed?

Yes! provided the amount added is not greater than the amount of Holy Water.

Now our minds are at rest. It is terrible to think of people running short of Holy Water and having nothing to take its place.

In another case a shortage of sacramental wine took place, according to a Lancashire paper, in a chapel in the Burnley district. In this case the person in charge of the wine tried to make good the deficiency by melting some strawberry jelly and mixing it with as much of the "sacred" wine as he had. The glasses were ready filled, but unfortunately for the official, the mixture "jellied" and could not be poured out. There was a fine opportunity here for miracle on a small scale. Instead of which everything acted just as it would have acted in any other place and on any other situation. These are trying times for the religious.

The Lausanne Conference appears to have been so far successful that it has formally placed an end to the folly of huge "reparations" after plain facts have made the payment of such a sheer impossibility. But congratulations have to be mixed with amazement that the rulers of the nations could ever have been foolish enough to think that these could have been paid, and only after thirteen years of persistence in a course both criminal and foolish have brought the whole of Europe and America to the verge of ruin have these political and financial geniuses been forced to admit that trade cannot be carried on in the absence of exchange, nor one

country hand over to another huge consignments of goods without ruining all concerned. These results were foreseen at the end of the war; they were written about and spoken about, but not by professional politicians and financiers. And now we shall be called upon to lavish praise upon the wisdom of men who have by sheer necessity been driven to recognize the plainest of facts.

It is worth recalling the fact that these financial geniuses originally placed the amount that Germany should pay at about twenty thousand millions. They might have as well placed at ten times that amount. Then it was gradually scaled down to about eighteen hundred millions. Now it has been reduced to one hundred and fifty millions, and the likelihood that even this will not be paid. Nations can only live by serving each other and by receiving legitimate payment for service. Only fools can think, and only rogues can claim otherwise.

There still remains the question of armaments, and that is largely in the hands of the same type of men—men who think of the world in terms of two or three centuries ago, instead of in the terms of to-day. Each country, partly under the influence of such ideas as just indicated, and partly under the influence of huge armament rings, is willing to give up such armaments as they can best do without, while asking the other fellow to give up the arms which he feels he most needs. None of them have courage enough to say or sense enough to see that huge armaments are themselves incitements to war, and are still governed by the thrice exploded rule that the way to keep peace is to prepare for war. So we shall have another series of expensive Conferences, until such time as the peoples of the world say very definitely that it shall stop. The abolition of the huge armies and navies of the world ultimately depend upon the education of the people.

"Our Father," whose speciality, according to Holy Writ, is that of tenderly watching over the birds of the air appears to have been dozing. A *Times* correspondent says that between Brighton and Eastbourne the beach is strewn with the dead bodies of sea-birds killed by the oily waste afloat on the water. Probably "Our Father" is not keeping abreast with modern inventions, and so cannot be expected to take steps against the effects of oil driven boats. Things were different "down in Judee."

The Bishop of Durham (Dr. Hensley Henson) not, we hope, inspired by the Pope's recent tirade against Atheism, has discovered that there has been "a prodigious development of secular civilization." Naturally his Lordship had to bring in Russia; but he might more fairly have brought in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which ineffective as it is as at present constituted and worked, is unique among such instruments in containing no reference to the Almighty. Its position in the forefront of the lamentable Treaty of Versailles was at least a triumph for secular idealism and realism. And, in fact, in the common affairs of nations, as in the common affairs of men, there never was a time when less attention was paid to supernatural sanctions or authorities. "We are," said the Bishop, "as far from the Secularist's millennium as ever," but "it must be admitted that the prevailing mood of our generation is that of resentful disillusion." Exactly, disillusion with Dr. Henson's god, and so called "Christian" civilization, and disillusion is, at least in persons of courage and intelligence, the first step to enlightenment. We wish we were as hopeful as the Bishop of its extension and progress.

Commenting on Dr. Henson's sermon the *News-Chronicle* doubts "whether, in fact, men have often been more ready than they are to-day to listen to a religious appeal based not on theory, but on fact." We should

be extremely interested to listen to such an appeal; but where, outside the pious mind and glib vocabulary of this writer, is there a religion which can or does base itself upon fact? Does Capt. Heath, we wonder, ever consult with other than human oracles in order to Beat the Book? And Dogberry—how few of his clever rhymes and catches smack of religion? Mr. Stanley Baron encourages young people to go hiking on the Lord's Day, and Mr. Thomas in his Merry-go-Round never by any chance gets outside his three kingdoms—animals, minerals and vegetables. And even one of the London Police Magistrates, who writes a Lay Sermon on Saturday—it appears next to the Merry-go-Round—manages to tell the story of the Prodigal Son dressed up in modern clothes, and without a single reference to the Deity.

A good many people and a large number of papers have confidently predicted a tremendous revival of religion as the direct result of the Dublin Eucharistic Congress. It is, perhaps, the 8,564th time that such a revival has been expected since the late war, and so far the expectations have fizzled out. Still even if a revival will not eventuate, we are given to understand that such a wonderful coming together of real believers—the only genuine ones, of course—must result in the Gospel of Love being spread all over the world.

Well, a very piquant correspondence between the Governor-General of the Irish Free State and its Prime Minister has just been published, and we find that Mr. J. McNeill accuses Mr. de Valera and his Ministers of the grossest discourtesy towards him, and demands a full apology. In addition, it seems, Mr. de Valera deliberately refrained from inviting Mr. McNeill to the great State reception given in honour of the Papal Legate at Dublin Castle. Considering that one of the great objects of religious Congresses is to propagate the beautiful Gospel of Love to all mankind, the correspondence is a delightful commentary on Christian precept and practice. When it comes to "politics," even the most religious Irishman will say "to Hell with the Pope." When it comes to "religion," Irishmen and Englishmen will grovel in the mud far more abjectedly than even the most superstitious of savages. What a game is this religion!

Mr. G. K. Chesterton was sent to the Dublin Congress by the *Universe*, and his first article shows how extremely trying it is for a genuine Englishman—as he always claims to be—to reconcile his patriotism with Roman Catholicism. He devotes nearly four columns of small print to the question of tearing down the Union Jack by the gallant Sinn Feiners. Only a man with the "gift of tongues"—whether moved by the Holy Ghost or not is a side issue—could so deftly write round this particular piece of childish spite, and he echoes heartily the dictum of a Dublin newspaper that "the Union Jack is not the national flag of England." To that the weary onlooker can only ask, "Then why was it torn down?" We hope in his next articles Mr. Chesterton will give us some evidence that the words Christian Congress and Love are really synonymous.

A Roman Catholic procession was taking place the other Sunday in Dockland in East London. A picture of St. Francis Xavier was carried reverently by some seamen, and later a most striking incident took place. After "the silence which followed the singing of the *Tantum Ergo*, a band sounded the great salute," we are told by the *Universe*, "and at once a great flock of gulls rose into the clear air, circling gracefully over the crowd of worshippers." We hope this striking proof of true Christianity will be duly noted by ignorant unbelievers; and if any hopeless infidel fails to see its relevancy, we ask him bluntly whether he seriously means to assert that those gulls didn't know the Procession

was in direct communication with God? What other explanation could be given of their presence?

Commenting on the report of the British Medical Council's Committee on Mental Deficiency, the *Methodist Recorder* remarks:—

The Committee does not, of course, go into the question of the influence of the grace of God upon the mentally and socially deficient. Readers of the *Wesley Journals* will remember that the Wesleys were brought up against the problem. Their evidence was not exactly scientific, but their experience proved:—

"Poor idiots He teaches,

To show forth His praise,

And tell of the riches of Jesus's grace."

That is really the kind of person we should expect to be able to dilate on the "riches of Jesus' grace."

Some London churches have issued a "call to prayer" for the world in view of the plight it is in. This, of course, is the old dodge of the parsons for trying to make profit from the world's misfortunes. The primary notion is to keep the parsons, the churches, and religion before the public. Incidentally it is hoped that a few new clients may be roped in or a few old ones reclaimed. The "world" might as well take note of the fact that all the brains of the Churches can suggest is nothing but a few vague and pious sentiments, or some pious threats disguised as warnings against the "wrath of God," or a number of hoary platitudes. The ecclesiastical intelligence has nothing really practical to assist the world to overcome its difficulties. Has it ever had?

The Bishop of Coventry, Dr. Haigh, in his *Diocesan Gazette* observes that "the clergy should adopt a friendly attitude" to hikers, and "not be too great sticklers for custom in the matter of dress." Then, in a passage worthy of any advertising agent for secular business, his Lordship says:—

Where a country church not far from a big town is of historic or architectural interest, or is near or on the way to some "beauty spot," it is possible to covet and to win the reputation of being a friendly place for hikers to call at. *The right sort of notices in the right places, a rota of lay folk ready to be at the church, facilities for parking, the opening of a garden, the provision of a simple tea, plus a game or two, the offer of a simple and informal Service, have given such a reputation to several country churches.*

Antiquarian and historical fame, and even the natural beauty spot, which we are constantly told must not be profaned by advertisement, are thus to be turned into "jam" for the pill—"a simple and informal service" and "a good reputation" for the church.

A good example of the usefulness of correspondence in local newspapers is afforded by the following. In the *Bucks Free Press* (High Wycombe) of June 3 appeared a statement by the Vicar of that place that "the Church (of England) does not receive grants from rates and taxes." In the next issue (June 10) Mr. Alan Handsacre, who lives in that neighbourhood, challenged this statement. The paper of June 17 contained a reply, not from the Vicar, but from Mr. E. W. I. Peterson, Secretary of the Churchman's Defence Union. The following week (June 24) Mr. Handsacre retorted with a detailed and devastating answer. The readers of the *Bucks Free Press*, which covers a large area in that County, looked in vain in the last issue (July 1) for Mr. Peterson's defence. That gentleman thought discretion the better part of valour. What the Vicar, whose champion he was, or the Churchman's Defence Union, whose Secretary he is, think of his disappearance after the first round of the controversy need not trouble us. The secularist case, in this matter, and as a whole, is unanswerable; but it is encouraging to find it admitted to

be so. Freethinkers in country districts might well initiate similar useful action.

We are glad to learn from Mr. B. G. Bourchier that a clergyman is a man as other men, receiving no more divine help than any other man who prays fervently. We have always suspected that, but we are glad to have our opinion verified by one who knows. But there are men and men, and the fact of a parson being as other men does not prevent his being a curious sort of a man.

The Rev. Clarence May says that prayer is "the language of the soul in voiceless language with the unseen." Now we know all about it! Now if we could only have a treatise on the sightless language of the ears or the audible experiences of the eyes, we should feel that our knowledge of things had been advanced considerably. We suggest that the *Daily Express* runs a series of articles on parsonic contributions to human knowledge. The Rev. Clarence May could lead off, and James Douglas could finish with a couple of columns of his soulful outpourings and stereotyped religious slush.

Dr. Campbell Morgan, who has just been visiting this country, declares that "it is a degradation of the word to call any existing nation 'Christian.'" Not only so, "if the individual units composing the nation are considered, the larger proportion of people are not even avowedly Christians." This was written in *The Presbyterian* (Philadelphia), and no doubt applies to our cousins across the herring pond. It is the habit of preachers to be the "candid friends" of the community. Dr. Morgan has as poor an opinion of Christians as he has of the general run. He says, "it is very questionable whether a large number of them can be properly so described," they are Christians "only because they are not Mohammedans or Hebrews." The "awful truth" is, he concludes, "that the line of demarcation between the Church and the world has been almost obliterated." This must be why the few exceptions are so noticeable, and, apparently, mostly so unworthy of notice. Very sad indeed.

Fifty Years Ago.

PROSECUTION OF THE "FREETHINKER."

We are in for it at last. Harcourt stood solid as Jumbo, and refused to move, although Freshfield and Redmond prodded him with sharp questions. The Bigots looked glum, and asked despairingly if no one would try to suppress that dreadful *Freethinker*. They prayed for help, but the Lord sent no legend of angels. Yet there are always certain persons ready to rush in where angels fear to tread, and at length Sir Henry Tyler came forward to do the deed. Messrs. Dodson and Fogg were set to work in the interest of the outraged Mrs. Bardell of piety, and the Honest Mr. Pickwick of Freethought was treated like a designing criminal.

Sir Henry Tyler has tried in vain to put down the Science Classes conducted by Dr. Aveling, Mrs. Besant, and the Misses Bradlaugh; and he will be just as successful in his attempt to annihilate the *Freethinker*. He does not know "the insuppressible metal of our spirits." The party that fought and suffered years ago can fight and suffer again. You cannot frighten men who know no fear. If one goes to gaol, another will take his place, as soldiers step up to fill the breaches caused by the enemy's shot. Let the bigots do their worst. Let the law arm itself with all its terrors. We will tire out the malice of the one, and shame the brutality of the other.

The "Freethinker," July 16, 1882.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F.C. (Bermondsey).—Yes. Mr. Crilly (not Crilley) the film examiner was Gen. Sec. of the U.I.L. of Gt. Britain, of which "T.P." was President. "T.P." became President of the Film Censorship Board, and, the U.I.L. having shut down, Mr. Crilly became an examiner.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks. We knew we should have your whole-hearted support in any fight to defend the rights of Freethinkers. Hope you will have a pleasant holiday.

R. D. WADIA (Bombay).—Pleased you find our articles so useful in your propaganda. We have handed your letter to the N.S.S. Secretary.

E. McDONALD.—We note what you say and do not question its accuracy. But our opposition to blasphemy laws is quite independent of the character of those who are prosecuted under them. We object to anyone being punished for blasphemy. Blasphemy is a crime manufactured by religious people for the purpose of punishing non-believers.

WALTER STRICKLAND.—Letter has been forwarded.

"COMMON INFORMER."—The £1,500 which has been awarded a Manchester clergyman as a "Common informer" under a Manchester Sunday Observance Act will not be received by him. A later Act gives the Home Secretary power to remit, and this is usually done. Besides how could a parson bear to take money that had been even indirectly gained by an infraction of the Sabbath?

H. BAMES.—We saw a summary of the sermon when it was first delivered. But the Bishop of Durham's advanced thinking is, as usual very much behind the time. It has been quite evident for some fifty years that the fight between belief and disbelief in religion was no longer concerned with doctrines, but with fundamentals.

W. S. FORBES (Sydney, N.S.W.)—Cuttings received and welcomed, note your remarks re subscription, thanks.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The National Secular Society, at a special meeting, unanimously decided to appeal against the judgment of Judge Whitmore Richards in the action brought against the Clerk to the Birkenhead Justices. We feel that the action of the Executive in this matter will have the full support of the party behind it. Freethinkers never shirk a fight, although we do not believe in going out looking for one. But when a fight is forced on us we have to take it as part of the day's work.

We do not wish to pre-judge the case, and prophecy is a silly game in which to indulge. But it may be taken the Society has not rushed into action without the fullest consideration. Counsel believes, and we believe, that the Society has a very good chance of reversing the judgment of the Birkenhead County Court. But, win or lose, the action will at least serve the purpose of showing again what has often been shown before, that the National Secular Society is the last body in the country to have what it believes its legal rights infringed with impunity.

Our "Views and Opinions" on the Viscountess Snowden and the B.B.C. has attracted considerable attention. In *Reynold's News*, Mr. R. W. Postgate, referring to what we had to say, endorses our view of the irrelevancy and unfairness of Viscountess Snowden's letter, and says:—

The Governor says that prominent Agnostics like Lord Russell, H. G. Wells, or Harold Nicholson are allowed to lecture "frequently." (Not so frequently as all that.) But they are allowed to lecture on *other subjects*, so how is that to the point? Or does the B.B.C. take credit because it does not force each lecturer to pass a theological test before he may speak on "Garden Vegetables," or "Modern Literature." Secondly, the Governor says it would be an offence against good taste for Freethinkers to attack the sincerely held beliefs of millions of people. Perhaps, but why does it not work the other way? Ought not Freethinkers to be protected from attack from clergymen who attack them whenever they praise faith and denounce unbelief?

I think the secularist challenge should be heard. Will any fair-minded Christian listener-in give me a good reason why the Freethinkers should not be given a place of equality on the wireless with any religious sect?

That is our point. But the B.B.C. will have to change very much before it ceases to be a play-ground for parsons, and for apologists like Viscountess Snowden.

With reference to what recently appeared in these pages concerning the censorship "Telephus" writes:—

Your recent exposure of the Censorship is timely. The right of citizens to protection against the unfair administration or operation of law is constantly being over-ruled not only by censorship, but by procedure by Order in Council in connexion with numerous matters. These methods are very much the same as coercion, since they mean that the normal safeguards of law are superseded by the arbitrary decisions of Censors, Ministers, or Magistrates. Judicial decisions are subject to appeal, but the edicts of censors and Orders in Council, or directions given under the latter, are not. A pliant Parliament and an indifferent public make it more than ever necessary for Freethinkers to remember that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Bradford saints are reminded that Mr. G. Whitehead will be in that district from to-day (Sunday). The local Branch of the N.S.S. will co-operate at all the meetings, and we hope for a continuation of the encouraging reports of Mr. Whitehead's tour. At Newcastle a series of excellent meetings were held, the veteran, Mr. J. G. Bartram being busy at them all, but generally Branch support was poor. Bradford members will, we feel sure, take the hint and rally to the call of the special visit.

At the Hendon (Mixed) Adult School to-day (Sunday) Mr. H. H. Elvin, Secretary of the National Union of Clerks, and member of the Trades Union Congress will propose the following motion, "That in the universal application of Christianity, individually and collectively can be found the only effective solution of the world's difficulties, and the harmonious relationship of mankind assured." Mr. R. H. Rosetti will oppose the motion. Each speaker will speak for twenty minutes, and then for ten minutes. The school is held in the Deerfield Club, Station Road, Hendon, at 11 a.m., and the general public are invited to attend.

The Origin of Agriculture.

AN outstanding episode in human progress was the discovery of the use of fire. Later, when man had acquired the power to rekindle the extinguished flame his advance was accelerated. The invention of pottery, and the discovery that metals may be fused and moulded; the evolution of the alphabet, leading to printing and the vast increase in books and periodicals are a few only of man's achievements as he progressed from barbarism towards civilization.

Yet the supreme triumph of man was the invention of the agricultural art. Upon man's power to produce food from the soil his other achievements repose. For countless generations ape-like men were dependent for their sustenance on the animals they chased and trapped, and the roots and berries they collected. In time they learnt to utilize the skins of slain animals as crude garments. Then, when tribes of the lowly culture left their rough cave shelters, they began to fashion rude habitations in the open, young animals that had been spared from slaughter may have grazed round the homestead, and becoming accustomed to man's presence became the ancestors of his later completely domesticated flocks and herds.

In any case, pastoral peoples bred and herded animals. Then they learnt the secret of sowing and reaping corn which they made into bread. From the lowly occupation of food gatherer and the precarious position of hunter, fisher, and trapper, mankind advanced to husbandry and a settled dwelling-place where the soil was cultivated and crops could be raised more or less at will.

Early man in Europe was intimately associated with the many bleak and barren centuries comprising the Great Ice Age. As the closing stages of that glacial time drew near and the vast ice mantle retreated towards its arctic home, the great North European Plain became a land populated by multitudes of hooved animals feeding on the spring and summer vegetation. In Old Stone Age centuries, wild horses and oxen, reindeer, bison and other mammals abounded, and thus furnished the hunter with plentiful sport and provision.

As the glaciers and snow-mounds melted with the rising temperature, and the rainfall increased, pine forests spread to the Plain from the south-east; the reindeer retreated northwards, and the wild oxen and other game wandered away into Southern Russia and Turkestan.

During the closing stages of the Magdalenian Period the rainfall increased, and the pine was supplanted by dense forests of deciduous trees, over which the oak with its rich carpet of undergrowth reigned as monarch of the woodland wild. The pasture-loving animals had vanished, and the erstwhile hunter was driven to eke out a frugal existence along the sea shore or by the banks of lakes and streams.

To this day aboriginal tribes in North Central Queensland gather the seeds of wild grasses for food. Harold Peake also informs us that Sudanese natives who cultivate corn still collect wild grass seeds for sustenance when their customary crops have failed in seasons of drought. The accidental sowing of wild seeds may have led to the discovery of their artificial growth. In his essay on Agriculture in *Early Man* (Benn, 1931), Harold Peake ingeniously suggests that Epipalæolithic man "must sometimes have collected grass seeds in those regions where suitable grasses occurred. He may even have tended and cleared round the plants that produced these edible seeds. At length, he, or more probably his wife, discovered if some of these seeds were sown on a

clear patch of soil, a better crop would result. Thus it would be unnecessary to wander so far afield to fill the baskets and to provide an adequate meal."

The luxuriance of vegetation springing from the last resting places of the dead doubtless attracted the attention of early races, as also the vigorous appearance of those plants arising from seeds casually sown on earth enriched by refuse accumulated about the abodes of the living.

The first farm implement was the digging stick. Rude spades and hoes came later, while the plough was the last to appear. Hahn has noted the curious and interesting fact that "the digging stick is an extension of, and substitute for, the finger; the spade and hoe are extensions of the hand; and the plough bears a like relationship to the foot." Hahn also thought that women first pulled the plough, and that the use of beasts of burden came later.

It has been claimed that the Baltic region was the site of the genesis of grain culture. But this seems negated by the circumstance that no wild grain grasses are native to this area. Agriculture appears to have really arisen further east. From remote times rice has been cultivated in China and India, and there it was probably first grown. Millet was consumed as food in Egypt in predynastic centuries, but whether it was cultivated or merely gathered is uncertain.

In its wild state rye-grass is a common weed in fields of emmer. When planted in the highlands, emmer, which is a variety of wheat, is apt to fail, but its attendant the rye soon occupies its place. This occurs in Afghanistan where in some districts the emmer has completely disappeared. This may have happened in early ages in Europe where rye is now extensively grown as a grain crop.

Oats again are widely cultivated in Northern Europe. The wild oat enjoys a wide distribution in Asia. Some suppose that oats were originally cultivated in Germany, and that they were unknown elsewhere in Europe until the fall of Imperial Rome, but this seems erroneous. For we learn that Mr. R. C. C. Clay "found some grains of cultivated oats stored in some pit dwellings that he excavated a few years ago at Fifeild Bavant, in Wiltshire. The prehistoric village of which these pit dwellings form part was shown to date from the first La Tène period—that is to say, between 500 and 400 B.C."

As grain growths, wheat and barley lead us back to very ancient times. The latter cereal perhaps preceded wheat in Egypt as a field crop. Moreover, its antiquity is attested by the significant fact that in the comparatively late times of Hammurabi in Babylonia rents and salaries were commonly valued in terms of barley, but rarely, if ever at all, in terms of wheat.

Wild barley ranges extensively in Asia and appears sporadically in Africa. Various species or varieties of wheat grow wild in Western Asia, and one variety has been traced to Greece, while others flourish in the Black Sea district.

The lake dwellings of prehistoric times have preserved the remains of many cultivated plants. The studies of Neuweiler, Heer and other archaeologists have made known to us over 200 different plants cultivated in Neolithic Times. More than 150 of these were discovered in the pile-houses on the Swiss lakes. Among these early cultures were wheat, oats, rye, barley, flax, the apple, pear, strawberry and grape.

The history of the wheat plants from which the loaf is made has been lost, probably beyond recovery. Most botanists regard our cultivated wheat as a hybrid. In the opinion of Professor Ruggles-Gates our leading cereal is the product of a cross between the wild einkorn and the wild emmer wheat. Per-

haps its hybridization occurred in Asia Minor or even in Egypt. But the problem demands fuller knowledge for its solution.

The theory that where plants grow wild, there was the site of their first cultivation has not won wide acceptance among experts. But we can with certainty state that the agricultural industry dates back to very remote ages both in Egypt and Mesopotamia. It is a fair estimate that the evidences of husbandry in the land of the Nile stretch back at least as early as 5,000 B.C., while in the countries watered by the Tigris and Euphrates proofs of grain raising are equally ancient. Apparently neither region can claim priority in the cultivation of the soil. After a careful consideration of all available data Peake concludes that "we cannot with certainty attribute the discovery of agriculture either to the Egyptians or to the dwellers in Mesopotamia, though it seems likely that both obtained the knowledge of this art from some intermediate site. This was the view that obtained among the ancients and to the archaeological evidence adduced I should like to add the testimony of tradition."

Two thousand years ago, Diodorus Siculus recorded the belief that Isis, who subsequently became the venerated mother goddess of Egypt, in the day when she moved among mortals, gave to mankind the cherished cereals, wheat or emmer, and the barley corn of golden hue. These, the industrious and beneficent Isis found growing unnoticed amid other wild plants. Men gratefully accepted her gifts, and soon the blowing corn lands and granaries of Egypt became famous throughout the East. And not Egypt alone, but every neighbouring country treasured the tradition of the bounteous Corn Mother who made grain crops known to mankind. In succeeding centuries this graceful benefactress appears at Demeter in classic Greece. Among the Romans she was known as Ceres, and even now, among the peasantry of modern Europe the memory of the Corn Goddess has been preserved under the name of the Corn Maiden. Indeed all the ancient observances of the Harvest Home which lingered in rural England into the nineteenth century are reminiscent of an early cult in which the Corn Maiden reigned supreme.

T. F. PALMER.

The Sociology of Censorship.

When dealing with the psychology of censorship, I tried to show that it is essentially a primitive conception and, when in force a tribal function which has persisted into modern life. It was pointed out that its outward method is that of taboo, while it implies reliance upon magic to accomplish its ultimate objective of bringing about a new attitude towards certain phases of life, or reinstating an old attitude.

What, from a sociological standpoint would be the ultimate result of the establishment of an unchallenged censorship; and what does the present demand for a censorship, especially with regard to the "Film," indicate?

Censorship aims at fixity of ideas by a process of trying to prevent new ideas reaching the minds of people in general. In theology and ethics in particular, it seeks to prevent the circulation of any teachings that are, or appear to be in conflict with a given set of doctrines. To play the part as they should do, those who act as the Censor should issue a comprehensive and final body of religious doctrine and code of ethics, and then forbid and stop the publication

of any ideas that are in conflict with the standardized teachings. In reality, the new ideas are tested against what are considered to be orthodox principles of belief, which are not always too well defined, and consequently even those who uphold the censoring of modern thought, frequently differ amongst themselves with regard to doctrinal details.

Even the *Index Expurgatorius*, which may be taken as the outcome of the exercise of a powerful censorship, does not succeed in preventing different interpretations of religious and ethical teachings. The result being variations in doctrine within the Roman Catholic Church which claims to be the true interpreter of the ways and will of God to man, and to be able to set the latter right with regard to all problems of ethics.

Still, allowing for the variations which manifest themselves owing to the test being one of principle instead of final detail with regard to every doctrine, the censorship of the Roman Church illustrates the danger to society of any censorship. It maintains a theological boundary with regard to thought, and this cannot help but have a serious effect upon every phase of intellectual activity. The result being, as with many Roman Catholics, the religious profession of out-of-date doctrines, and the everyday acceptance of theories which are in contradiction to a religious interpretation of the universe. A charge which can, of course, be brought against other religionists.

Had the Catholic Church set up a body of doctrine to be accepted as the "whole truth, and nothing but the truth"; and had her censorship, in the forms of the *Index* and the Inquisition, been successful, we would to-day have nothing of what is known as modern science. As it is, scientific teachings are twisted and distorted in the interest of theology; and the unwary are presented with preposterous "problems" in religious "evidences" which ought long ago to have been buried. Frequently, men of intellect who might be of service in helping to solve the problems of social life, spend their lives in trying to convince the world that science and old religious doctrines are in agreement.

The fact that, with all her censorship, the Roman Catholic Church has not been able to force exact conformity in belief on the part of all her members, but has had to find room for many who make outward profession of the main doctrines while privately holding beliefs which contradict them, should be a sufficient refutation of the effectiveness of censorship.

As there are many who, in their desire to establish a censorship of literature and the "films," reveal their failure to learn the lesson of the past, it is necessary to point out the sociological dangers of such an institution.

Any attempt at an all-round effective censorship would mean the establishment of a new *Index* of a very comprehensive nature. It would mean the training of a large body of individuals whose vocation, with its implied attitude towards life, would make them a permanent danger to society. They would constitute a body of men and women whose power over the expression of thought, in every form, it would be impossible to calculate.

Under cover of religion and ethics they would be able to obtain sway over a large percentage of people. Which would mean their hands would be strengthened by two of the worst types, from an intellectual standpoint; the relatively unthinking religionist, and the indifferentist who desires to take life as easily as possible.

The effect of such power would not be bounded by the spheres of religion and ethics. Political censorship would be made much more easy than it is to-day.

In the majority of people the mentality of submission would be developed to a degree that would make almost any extension of the censorship possible.

Scientific investigation would be crippled; literature would be shorn of much of its value; art and the drama would be damaged, the "film" would fail to develop into what it should be, a pictorial synopsis of nature and human life, and a means of spreading new ideas. While to all this there would be added hypocrisy in religion, morals, and politics.

It may safely be said that the present-day anxiety for a censorship comes, in the main, from religionists. This fact alone ensures the development of hypocrisy, and also a good deal of unconscious failure to be intellectually honest. Little else could be expected from a nation in which there are so many sects with the "true" gospel to preach.

The different bodies of religionists, especially Christians, would profess to be concerned, in establishing a censorship, about teaching the truth and the way to clean living. No attempt at settling between themselves the question as to what are the real doctrines would be made. In spite of their different interpretations of "Christian Truth," they would join together on what would be called certain fundamental teachings, provided in that way religious supremacy in society could be established. Each sect would seek to derive benefit from the effect of censoring all ideas against religion. Unity in religious doctrine could go to the devil, provided a religious atmosphere were maintained, and the power of the churches made secure, by an agreement as to what should be censored.

In this way the ground work for an inquisition would be prepared. Such an institution is the sociological conclusion of a censorship. It is not much use doing the work in a half-hearted manner. Intellectual variations will appear while we have any thinking people left; and no mere censoring of ideas or of films is going to prevent new ideas, whether of sex or other things, spreading in modern society.

If the work of stopping people acquiring new knowledge is to be accomplished, to any degree worth talking about; it must be done on the lines of an inquisition. All the reactionary members of society must be induced to spy upon those who think and speak in unorthodox fashion. While every method of social and economic infliction of hardship must be used against offenders. Then, if this fails, there will have to be brought into play the old brutal methods of the historic Inquisition.

As Walter Bagehot said: "One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea" (*Physics and Politics*, p. 163), but there will always be men and women prepared to risk the pain. They will seek opportunity to give expression to their thoughts, and nothing but a well carried-out inquisition will avail against them in the long run.

This deduction of an inquisition from the idea of a censorship may appear to be fantastic; but it is assumed that those who advocate the latter desire to be effective.

Censorship contains the germ of inquisition, and it requires only a new lease to be granted to religious authority over society for the inquisition to appear fully grown. For a long time the forces against establishing an all-powerful censorship have been too strong. Unfortunately, there are signs of the mentality that would make such an institution possible being more widespread than appears on the surface. The way in which the churches, or those acting for them, can manipulate such questions as "Sunday Observance"; "Secular Education"; and the "Blasphemy Laws," may be taken as indicating this fact.

If such a mentality were to be made use of to the fullest extent, there is no reason why an inquisition could not be established in the event of a censorship not accomplishing the desired end.

Whether the establishment of a thorough-going censorship would ultimately result in the elimination of the ideas at which it is directed is a question which does not seem to present itself to those who advocate a censorship. It seems to be assumed that ideas can be killed off. As if they were independent entities. Things existing, as it were, apart from conditions.

Yet it should be obvious that ideas are the outcome of conditions, and the question to be faced is whether those conditions can be destroyed permanently. To ask this, is to remind us of the biological, economic, and general social factors which make ideas possible. Then the magnitude and futility of the task of destroying ideas by means of censoring them becomes apparent. As, also, in the cases of persecution and an inquisition. At most there would result a serious setback in the spheres of thought, science, and ethics. The fight for freedom and intellectual advancement would become more intense; and much that has been gained in the past would have to be won again.

With regard to the present demand for a much more drastic censorship in respect of "films," we find in the report of the British Board of Film Censors, for 1931, some very serious indications from a sociological standpoint. If there is any meaning in the claim that we must have a censorship for the purpose of saving people from becoming degraded by what they see on the films, then the contention that better education, and better social conditions, are needed if a higher mentality is to be produced is justified. While the Freethinker's claim that Christianity has failed, in large measure, to develop moral stamina in her people is also substantiated.

The list of subjects, on account of which films have been rejected during 1931, reveals a state of society that should make every thoughtful Christian ashamed. After so many hundreds of years of Christian teaching and "up-lifting," it is admitted that the majority of the film-going population in Christian England will flock to the most vile types of film production, whenever possible. This is an aspect of the question which is kept as much as possible in the dark but, evidently, it is believed that large audiences are waiting for the release of films that will satisfy their depraved tastes.

Those who desire a censorship are unable to believe their fellow-Christians have been well enough trained in morality, to ensure the worst kinds of films being given the cold shoulder, if released. They stand in fear of thousands of Christians being delighted by "Youthful depravity"; "Orgy scenes and riotous debauchery," "Indecorous and erotic dancing," "Human sacrifices"; "Gross brutality and bloodshed"; and many other things that a censor of films thinks will make a depraved England still more degraded.

That the morality of a large percentage of Christians is not of a high standard is true. Yet it requires a Christian "moral uplifter" and his censorship to point out the depth of depravity in a Christian nation; and, at the same time fail to realize the failure of Christianity from a sociological point of view.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

It is from our enemies that we often gain excellent maxims and are frequently surprised into reason by their mistakes.—*Thomas Paine*.

The more anyone speaks of himself the less he likes to hear another talked of.—*Lavater*.

The Truth about Spurgeon.

SPURGEON, like Queen Anne, is dead, but pious writers will not leave him alone, and, only recently, an article in the *Times*, in which the writer said some obviously accurate things about the former pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle aroused the wrath of the present occupant of that rostrum. It should not surprise anyone that Spurgeon should be dubbed a wit. His sermons, which were published weekly for years, had a circulation in numbers and in area the like of which has probably not been found for any other sermons before or since. John Bunyan might be instanced, but it is not by his sermons that he lives, and the latter statement is true also of Spurgeon.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, short in stature, plain in feature, and of a corpulent habit, yet had a rough dignity. He was the kind of man with whom it took some courage to be familiar. It is recorded that once, while he was preaching, Spurgeon spied a man taking furtive glances at his watch. "Put that thing away, Sir," said Spurgeon, "we are discussing eternity, not time." This is a good sample of his readiness. Another is that his lesser brother Thomas, in a youthful quarrel with him, called him *Charlie*, to which he immediately responded *Thomas(s)*. Another story, perhaps legendary, but too good to be lost, and at least true to the type of "illustration" which Spurgeon often used, is that, trying to enforce the idea that the road to heaven is hard and difficult, and that the path to hell is a slippery slope, he toiled, wearily and puffing, his plump hands gripping the rails, up the stairs on one side of the pulpit at the Tabernacle. Then, pulling himself together, slid down the polished top of the railing on the other side, and narrowly escaped an unfortunate accident at the bottom.

If anyone doubts Spurgeon's wit he should read his *Lectures to my Students*. They are to be commended to any who have an ambition to speak in public. For, if no man had a sharper eye for glib platitude, fluent humbug, and smug hypocrisy than Spurgeon, no man ever wrote with more appreciation of the perils of public utterance, and knowledge of all the elements that make for success in it. Thus, picturing the folly of overheating and exaggerated colouring, he draws a sketch of one inimitably named "Dr. Brimstone"! It is followed by a skit on the other vice of too many orators, sentimentality, or what is now called "sob stuff"; and here we have, to the very life, a faithful portrait of "the Rev. Mr. Treacle."

When Sydney Smith went, under the compulsion of the Clergy Residence Bill, 1803, from London to the uninhabitable Rectory of Foston in Yorkshire (which he did in 1808), that parish had had no resident clergyman since the time of Charles II. And the witty newcomer describes how "when I began to thump the cushion of my pulpit, as is my wont when I preach, the accumulated dust of one-hundred-and-fifty years made such a cloud, that for some moments I lost sight of my congregation."

Mr. Spurgeon did not do much cushion-punching; he had, indeed, a minimum of gesture. His supreme power was in his voice, which is said to have had a range and variety of tone equalled by few notable orators. It is, however, to those who are not and never can be orators—and they are the majority these days, at least in this country—that Spurgeon's helpful hints will be found most valuable. Here is an example of his gift of illustration, and of his aptitude of phrase.

He was warning his students to look out for trifles that might make them ridiculous. Not to have their ties awry, nor their buttons undone, and to see that the ensemble fitted their "sacred" function. There was, he said, a very short preacher who, on going into a strange pulpit, noticed that it was so tall in the front of the desk that only the top of his head would be visible to the flock below. Hastily looking round for a lift, his eye fell upon some hassocks under the pulpit seat. Hidden from view, he piled two or three of them up until he thought he had secured for himself a suitable visibility. But, no sooner was he perched thereon, than the carpet-covered edifice began to totter, and the risibilities of the congregation could not be

suppressed. "Fancy," said Mr. Spurgeon, indignantly, "a man who tried at one and the same time to maintain the equilibrium of his body and the balance of his mind; and to be, at the same moment, a Boarneges and a Blondin." The mention of Blondin "dates" Spurgeon, but his wit has at least survived in most memories that of the Victorian tight-rope celebrity.

Spurgeon's gospel is as dead as mutton in these days. He was, however, a "character," and for a dissenter, an oddity, for he liked his cigar and, it is said, a drink of a non-teetotal variety. He was a bigot without that sanctimonious air that adds personal insult to intellectual injury in the case of so many of his successors who, unlike him, have no sense of humour.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

"True Education is Necessarily Secular."

THE above is quoted from *The Nature of Living Matter*, a book recently issued by Lancelot Hogben, the newly appointed Professor of Social Biology in the University of London. The work is in the main a philosophical discussion of biological topics, evincing, however, very wide intellectual interest and learning. And although there is no direct discussion of the general secularist position the bearing of the matter is such as to give strong support to that position.

The outstanding constructive thesis is a fresh and systematic treatment of the principle of the communicability of knowledge and ideas. The labels "public" and "private" are used for the two sections of thought. The former is that which includes all that may be regarded as established truth, and as such is communicable to and accepted by all normal, duly trained and informed intelligences. Of this section science is the supreme example, being, of course, the same for all men. For though many of the facts and conclusions of science, as well as of other branches of genuine learning, must be accepted authoritatively by most people, who are obviously unable to examine the evidence for themselves (e.g., the principle of relativity), yet this authority is quite legitimate, the trust being in the general agreement of those who are well qualified to pass judgment on the points at issue. Here, then, we have the "public world" of thought.

The "private world," on the contrary, is made up of a mass of notions and "experiences" variously called philosophical (in the more introspective or metaphysical sense of the word), religious, theological, mystic, transcendental . . . Many, if not all, of these are notoriously different for different persons, are often irreconcilable with one another, and are rejected by a large and increasing number of those who are fully competent to deal with them. Here there can be no legitimate appeal to authority, as the ideas are not in the true sense communicable. "Those residues of religious belief which have survived the secularization of social life and the advancement of scientific knowledge, belong to the private world." Hence they should not be taught; and hence the pronouncement at the head of this article.

It is pointed out that the domain of the private world has in recent times been constantly invaded, and the territory wrested from it added to the public world. Thus the creation of the world and man, and cosmogony in general, have passed over from legend and authority to science—to astronomy, geology and anthropology; "revelation" has similarly given way to research into the history of ideas; and ethics has become, as our author remarks, "a subject for rational discourse," instead of being dominated by the ancient, ill-considered, largely contradictory and impracticable notions of persons who have not reached the scientific or rational and organized stage of thought.

Professor Eddington is duly criticized for his expression of the view that there is nothing in the outcome of scientific inquiry to prevent a reasonable man from entertaining religious beliefs, the conclusion being stigmatized as "a profoundly misleading one." "When Professor Eddington speaks of religious experience he clearly means something which belongs to himself

privately. When the vast majority of people speak of religion, they mean a body of beliefs which can be transmitted through the medium of discourse like scientific beliefs." And, it is added, "it is still permissible to ask whether he is justified in employing language in such an equivocal manner that his words will be used, when he must know they will be used, to give all the weight of a distinguished reputation to those forces of social organization which in the past have exercised a constant restraint on the freedom of scientific enquiry."

As regards the newer philosophical position known as Holism (propounded by General Smuts at the last meeting of the British Association), which Prof. Hogben evidently takes to be a sort of relic of theological-metaphysical thought, we note the following illuminating passage: "In our generation unbelief has spread to all sections of the community with results that are disquieting to those who pursue the study of philosophy in the hope of rationalizing their social prejudices. It is high time for make-believe to stem the tide of unbelief. Inevitably a new compromise emerges to meet the new situation. Beneath its downy wing holism takes all that mechanistic science can offer to industry and all that statesmanship call cull from metaphysics."

J. REEVES.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

R.L.S.

SIR,—Stevenson's poem "If this were Faith," had a concluding verse (of eight lines) which was never published. That verse seemed to me to suggest a challenge to God ending with the lines:—

"Help Thou mine unbelief
And be my battle brief."

The decision to exclude the verse (the poem was a posthumous publication) probably came from his mother (a daughter of the manse) acting in consort with other relatives, all extremely religious.

At this period (thirty-six years ago) St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, was about to give habitation to a large Stevenson Memorial, erected in his honour by readers in all quarters of the world, and perhaps the publication of the Verse and the Church Memorial would not have consorted too well, so the lines were filched from the dead and the Memorial was made safe in the "Westminster Abbey of Scotland."

The lines were not utterly destroyed but were left to take their chance down the years—no doubt a compromise with conscience. They are still extant.

J. MACKINNON.

P.S.—Miss E. B. Simpson (a daughter of the Discoverer of the Anæsthetic power of Chloroform) in her book *The Stevenson Originals*, says, p. 168, "The Vailima family worship was a pose but one which gave great satisfaction to his good mother."—J.M.

Obituary.

ROSE WITCOP ALDRED.

ON Wednesday, July 6 the remains of Rose Witcop Aldred were cremated at Golders Green Crematorium. Death took place on July 4 at the early age of forty-three years following an operation for Appendicitis. She led an active life, and was well known in the Socialist and Birth Control Movements. Although not a member of the N.S.S. she was a convinced and lifelong Freethinker. Perhaps the best tribute to the esteem in which she and her work were held, was the very large number of friends who packed the chapel at the Crematorium. A Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. A. D. McLaren.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, July 17, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, July 18, Mr. L. Ebury. Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Thursday, July 21, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.30, Sunday, July 17, Mr. C. Tuson. Wednesday, July 20, Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Friday, July 22, Wren Road, Camberwell Green, 8.0, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. H. C. White.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): Wednesday, July 13, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood. Thursday, July 14, at 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin. Friday, July 15, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. Sunday, July 17, at 12.0 Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Bryant and Wood; Platform No. 2, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood, Tuson and Bryant; Platform No. 2, Messrs. Hyatt and Saphin.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Ship," Plumstead Common): 7.45, Friday, July 15, Mr. S. Burke. (Berresford Square, Woolwich): 7.45, Sunday, July 17, Mr. S. Burke will speak.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Status of Woman."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BACUP: 7.30, Monday, July 18, Mr. J. Clayton. BISHOP AUCKLAND: 7.0, Wednesday, July 20, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

HARLE SYKE: 7.45, Thursday, July 21, Mr. J. Clayton. GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (West Regent Street): 7.30, Thursday and Friday, July 14 and 15, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak.

LUMB-IN-ROSSENDALE: 7.30, Friday, July 15, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWBIGGIN-BY-SEA: 7.0, Sunday, July 17, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Sunday, July 17, Mr. R. Atkinson.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, July 22, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR: 8.0, Saturday, July 16, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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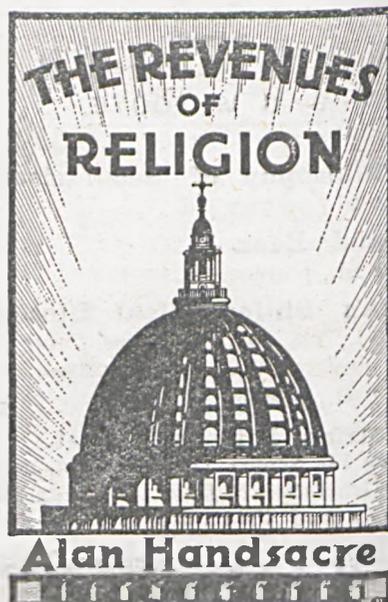
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