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

Views and Opinions.

Timid Heretics.

SOME men receive an insult and take it as a compliment. Others are paid a compliment and think it an insult. Many believers have called a noted Freethinker a good Christian, not realizing that to the Freethinker a "good" Christian is a very bad sample of what a man ought to be, and that to a Freethinker a Christian is good just in proportion to the attenuated character of his religion. Others, again, hotly resent being called either a Freethinker or an Atheist, without recognizing that this, looking at the men who have borne these names, is a very high compliment. If they had realized with Samuel Taylor Coleridge that very few men have either the strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist, and had that opinion been held by a sufficient number of "respectable" individuals, there might not have been the same haste to repudiate the name. This shrinking from unpopular names is not, of course, peculiar to one class of people. It can be found in all classes and in all countries. The same character that in England hastens to minimise the dissent from Christianity would in Turkey be equally loth to publish his wholesale rejection of the teachings of the Prophet. In politics some of us are old enough to remember when the name "Socialist" carried all the implications of red ruin and calculated robbery. This place is now occupied by Bolshevism and Communism in this country, but in Russia it is mere liberalism that excites contempt and hostility. To-morrow it may be the turn of something else. Human nature is the same right through. It is entirely a question of the direction in which fundamental human qualities are manifested.

* * *

Atheist or Agnostic?

The other day the *Church Times* paid Mr. C. E. M. Joad the compliment of implying that he was an Atheist of the Bradlaugh school. Mr. Joad in return

writes protestingly:—

So far from being an Atheist who denies the existence of God, I am an Agnostic who considers that existence to be in the main doubtful. It seems to me equally presumptuous either to assert or to deny the existence of God—but I am one who in certain moods, feels so impressed by the testimony of the mystics that he is prepared to regard the existence of God as even probable.

I do not know when existence is, *in the main*, probable, so I pass that along with the clotted, but popular newspaper nonsense about the testimony of the mystics. But to take a question of fact. A very little acquaintance with the writings of Atheists, particularly those of Bradlaugh, should have been enough to correct one error. It is quite clear that—as Bradlaugh pointed out, every kind of definable deity is ruled out of existence in terms of either self-contradiction or on account of pure knowledge of their origin. Bradlaugh continually dwelt upon the first point, and also upon the consideration that without a definition "God" means nothing at all. And a non-understandable proposition does not admit of denial, although in Mr. Joad's case it does, apparently, admit of half-hearted affirmation. But to ordinary men such as myself the proposition that an atom consists of two Abracadabras revolving round a central Omniscion admits of neither affirmation nor denial because we cannot see what the deuce it means. It is probable that if I accepted the conclusions of the "mystics" I might come to a definite conclusion concerning the non-understandable, but in my blindness I cannot see any vital difference between the self-created visions of the "mystic" and those of the opium smoker or the hashish eater. I admit that "in certain moods" one may be powerfully impressed by almost anything. But reflection suggests to my obstinate mind that moods are moods, and must not be taken at their face value. A philosopher who takes his "moods" as other than mere temperamental vagaries is excellent material for a comic sketch, but he is not very promising material for serious discussion.

* * *

Feather Beds for the Tender.

Bradlaugh called himself an Atheist because he did not believe in a God, and never compromised in matters of opinion. T. H. Huxley was also without belief in a God, but did not care to be called by that name. Perhaps he also was afflicted with "moods." But "Atheist" was very unfashionable, and in the popular mind it stood for all sorts of dreadful things. So while Huxley agreed with Bradlaugh in being without a God, he did not agree with Bradlaugh in saying just where he stood, careless of whether it offended the fashionable world or not. As a result he invented the word "Agnostic," which meant one who was without God, to distinguish himself from an Atheist who was—one who was without God. And the word was a perfect God-send to many. The Christian liked it be-

cause it gave him the comfortable feeling that men of real culture were not Atheists. The Agnostic liked it because it kept him on passably good terms with the Christian behind him, and he was sheltered from theological brickbats by the Atheist in front. The Agnostic was, it is true, no more a believer in God than the Atheist, but he was not so "blatant," that is, he did not confess it, and he had as a reward the condescending pity of the Christian who sympathized with him on his loss of belief. What would have happened to the Agnostic had all the Atheists suddenly been wiped out of existence it is difficult to say. The one thing certain is that the Agnostic would have been made the recipient of the bricks that were being hurled at the uncompromising Atheist. After all "moods" have their uses.

* * *

Untying a Knot.

The truth is that men like Mr. Joad have managed to jumble together two entirely distinct questions. They have jumbled up a philosophical question with a religious one, and they have succeeded, not in making either position clear, but only in making the religious question less religious and the philosophical one less sensible. Agnosticism really came into existence—in substance, not in name—in connexion with what is called the problem of existence. In that form it is as old as Greek philosophy. So soon as it was recognized that man's knowledge of the external world was at least conditioned by his sense organs, the question of what mere existence was like apart from man was obviously and logically the next step. In the course of this enquiry the conclusion was reached by one school that knowledge of the external world, as it is in itself is impossible to man. The state of mind thus induced was a logical Agnosticism. In this there were two parts, first, the assertion of a belief in something existing apart from man, second, an assertion of the belief that there existed no means by which a knowledge of the nature of this something could be obtained.

But the belief in God, about which Mr. Joad either in or out of his "moods" professes Agnosticism, began in an entirely different manner. As all anthropologists know the belief in God begins by primitive man reading into nature his own feelings and ideas. There is no question here of the *existence* of the object of belief, there is room only for a degree of ignorance concerning its nature. But the religious dispute, as between Atheists and Theists, or as between Agnostics and Theists, is not how much we know about God, but whether there is any God to know anything about. And it follows that if the Agnostic means that he believes a God exists, but is in ignorance as to his nature, or as to his complete nature, then he will find many theists who will certainly agree with him, and his intellectual state is that of a very thin, watered-down Theism. But if the Agnostic means that he does not know anything about Gods, not merely as to their nature, but also as to their existence, then his position is that of an Atheist.

But it has happened that, partly by accident, partly by design, the religious and the philosophical questions have become confused. The average philosopher has winked at this because it made for an easy life, and the theologian has encouraged it because it averted criticism from the idea of God. Two distinct and different things have been mixed up, with the result of a very wide-spread state of muddle-headedness.

For the Agnostic does not say that he believes in the existence of God but has no means of knowing what he is like. He asserts that neither he nor any-

one else knows anything about God. One wonders, therefore, what it is that Mr. Joad is agnostical about? (I note that Mr. Joad thinks that the existence of God is "in the main doubtful," but the existence of God is "even probable," and this is too much of a muddle for my poor brain to grapple with.) If he is agnostical about the nature of God, then he does believe in a God, but knows no more than that he exists. In that case he really does believe in a God and has no right to the title of Agnostic. If he does not believe in the *existence* of a God, then he really is an Atheist, although his "moods" will not encourage him to wear that plain label. But no man, not even a newspaper philosopher, can have it both ways. It is sheer nonsense to say that one is Agnostical about something which one does not believe exists. Non-existence cannot be an object of belief. A very moderate capacity for thinking ought to make that much quite clear. Perhaps it is best to take this as an illustration of the way in which for generations religion has been living by a series of subterfuges, and of the splendid help it has received from many who do not believe in it. Yet these people have been unfortunate in the eyes of both parties in the struggle. In the eyes of the really religious they have been unfortunate in being endowed with enough intelligence to see the absurdity of religion, and in the eyes of the robust Freethinker they have been unfortunate in not being endowed with enough courage to state their position plainly and without qualification. In the result they have sacrificed the rapture of the keen Freethought fighter and also the narcotic pleasure of the whole-souled believer.

I need only say a word here on Mr. Joad's regard for the "testimony of the mystics." If Mr. Joad will pay due attention to the evidence that may be derived from abnormal and pathological psychology it should not be very long before he discovers that the testimony of the mystics may be equated with (1) a number of historical meanderings superimposed on religious teachings, and (2) that the visions and "moods" of the mystics have no better objective basis than have the visions and of the confirmed alcoholic, or drug-taker. The literature of this subject is to-day vast, and if Mr. Joad will give it the attention it deserves I venture to prophecy that his "moods" may become profitable objects of study. For we all have our moments of abnormality, and they will bring their lessons of helpfulness if we use them aright. But there is really no need to-day to seize upon these "moods" and use them to bolster up the rationalized beliefs of savagery.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Madre De Dios.

In those dim ages ere the Hyksos came
To Egypt was this pyramid upraised,
And in its shadow priests of Isis praised
The Heavenly Mother and Celestial Dame.
Our day is later but our need the same.
Oft in cathedrals have I stood amazed
What time the faithful on the Virgin gazed—
Had Isis, or the Virgin, greater fame?

Mother of gods; and Mother of the Son;
Mother of all; and Mother of that One
That we are taught is neither One nor Three.
Protection and compassion typified—
A husband murdered; a son crucified:
Man's need of Mothering in them we see.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Rise and Progress of the Primates.

The pronounced likeness of men to monkeys early impressed savage humanity. The folk lore of almost all primitive peoples who inhabited countries where apes or monkeys abound is replete with tales of their kinship, and sometimes of their identity with mankind. Nor is this recognition restricted to the lowlier races, as the most cultured communities seem instinctively attracted to their Simian relatives. The crowds that assemble where apes and monkeys are exhibited in menageries and Zoological Gardens, or linger near naturalists' establishments where monkeys may be seen, testify to the intense curiosity awakened by creatures so suggestive of ourselves.

Moreover, the external resemblances of *Homo sapiens* to his hairy cousins; the so human-like movements of the hands and expression of the eyes; the placid demeanour in moments of contentment; the fierce and angry attitude in times of annoyance; all bring home to us a slightly uncanny consciousness of man's kinship with the beasts that perish.

These outward appearances, powerfully suggestive as they are, become even more marked when the anatomical structure of the monkey group is examined. No wonder, then, that when pioneer naturalists attempted to frame a scientific classification of animals they were constrained to include man and monkey in one natural order—the *Primates*.

In addition to apes and men, this order includes those more primitive creatures the *Prosimia*, more popularly known as Lemurs. Related to the lemurs and lower monkeys there is a sub-group classified as *Tarsiodea*.

These interesting animals are now represented by a single genus. They still survive in the form of a queer little creature termed the spectral Tarsier, whose range seems now restricted to the Oriental areas of Borneo, the Philippines, Billiton; and Banca.

A veritable relic of the past, and peculiar to a confined habitat, the Tarsoids formerly possessed a far-flung territory. Ages ago, in Eocene Times, as their fossilized remains prove, these organisms inhabited lands as far apart as Northern America and Southern France. That they are to be enumerated among the ancestral stock from which men and monkeys have both arisen is practically certain. The New World forms are most ancient, and the strata that yield their petrified remains also contain fossils of even more primitive members of the same stock. Again, still earlier representatives of the Lemuroid group—the Tree Shrews—have been preserved in the same deposits. But whether man's most remote ancestors arose in America or in Asia remains an open question.

What are regarded as the most primitive forms of extinct monkeys were discovered in Egyptian deposits in 1911. The ancestral home of these animals is at present unknown. As the most primitive living monkeys are restricted to South America, Prof. Elliot Smith provisionally considers the Western Continent as the birthplace of man's dimly remote ancestry. And he surmises that: "When the Lemuroids and Tarsoids crossed the Atlantic bridge to reach the Old World, they must have been accompanied (or soon followed) by very primitive monkeys, whose modified descendants are the Oligocene fossils found in Egypt. Some of the earlier original stock remained in America, and found a permanent asylum in South America, where they still survive as the Platyrrhine monkeys." (*Human History*, p. 63.)

The land bridge which, millions of years since, connected America with Africa has long been submerged.

Still, once they had reached Africa the wandering lemurs and tarsoids ultimately evolved into the extremely primitive monkeys discovered in Egyptian rocks. These nimble animals apparently wandered in various directions for their remains have come to light both in Europe and Asia.

There appears little doubt that these early *Primates* first spread in an easterly direction. In any case, they flourished in India during the Miocene Period, for the Siwilik Hills in the Himalaya foothills have yielded the fossils of various manlike apes. In truth, wherever the climate permitted the growth of forests, monkeys and lemurs abounded, while in less genial conditions these animals languished.

At the close of the Eocene Period or in the opening stages of the succeeding Oligocene Period primitive anthropoids had made their appearance. Countless centuries later, in Miocene Times, many large anthropoid apes dwelt in India, and from this centre had migrated in all directions both East and West. Their remains may be found on the Atlantic sea board in Africa and Europe alike, while to those far eastern areas in which their ancestors settled in remote Miocene Times the gibbon and orang-outang are now confined. In India itself they have long since been extinct. It was in the Miocene that an extinct gibbon (*Pliopithecus*) existed in Europe in company with a large defunct species of ape known as *Dryopithecus*. This ape was the size of a chimpanzee, and it is of great interest to the evolutionist as its fossil remains indicate a closer affinity to man than any of the surviving manlike apes.

It appears probable that at the period when the apes invaded Europe their kindred roamed from Arabia into Africa, where their modified descendants, the chimpanzee and gorilla, now reside. The extinct ape's skull discovered at Taungs in Bechuanaland, which Prof. Raymond Dart has named *Australopithecus*, is an African relic possessing many points of interest to science. The skull is more fully complete than any other anthropoid fossil thus far known. Also experts think that it displays a nearer affinity to humanity than *Dryopithecus* itself.

Darwin considered Africa as the probable cradle land of humanity. Prof. Elliot Smith, after weighing all the evidences bearing on this problem that have accumulated since Darwin's day, now concludes that "it seems probable that the birth-place of the Human family lies somewhere between the Himalayas and the heart of Africa."

This much is demonstrable, that for untold ages tentative types of man tenanted the woodlands and forests of Europe, Asia and Africa. Their petrified relics have come to light in all these continents, while their entrance into Australia was barred by the intervening ocean until comparatively modern times when *Homo sapiens* had arrived on the scene.

Now that he had arisen, man's superior brain and extremely pliable tactual organs, supplemented by his greatly improved powers of vision, soon enabled him to more than hold his own in the struggle for existence. Man's higher understanding permitted him to cope with difficulties and dangers insuperable to other animals. The adaptation of his lower extremities and trunk to a practically upright posture, and the liberation of his fore-feet for use as hands conferred a power of greatly increasing his range of experience by means of touch. This, in its turn, led to the acquisition of a manual dexterity far superior to that of any other creature.

These and other advantages made him the victor in life's battle. No other animal organism has so far evolved the remarkable adaptability of man to the endless changes and chances of life. Man has permanently established himself in surroundings of the most diverse

character, and his superior powers of locomotion, natural and artificial, allowed him to settle and survive in every quarter of the globe.

Multitudinous must have been Nature's experiments with ape-men and men-apes before modern man—*Homo sapiens*—ultimately emerged. He was destined through his outstanding skill and intelligence to eclipse all humanoid competitors, and finally ensure their extinction. Herbert Spencer long since stressed the far reaching importance of the part played by the highly adaptable hands of men, apes, and monkeys in the evolution of mental power. And now our eminent anatomist and anthropologist, Elliot Smith assures us that: "The outstanding distinction of *Homo sapiens* is the possession of small and amazingly adaptable hands endowed with the aptitude, in virtue of the high development of the frontal region of the brain, to attain a perfection of skill which made them the special instruments of man's destiny."

T. F. PALMER.

"Honour Thy Father and Thy Mother."

WITH every increase in our stock of factual knowledge the further growth of an enquiring and sceptical outlook is inevitable. A truer understanding of things as they are renders the mind progressively more critical of things as they are believed or said to be. Consequently each generation tends to exhibit a more pronounced divergence from the generation preceding it in its attitude towards standards or beliefs that are predominantly traditional. It is natural, therefore, that this divergence should become increasingly noticeable in the sphere of Religion.

Religion is ninety-nine per cent tradition and one per cent change. And the one per cent change is not inherent in Religion itself, but is forced upon it from the outside. For in spite of the claim that Christianity—to take one example—is a progressive revelation, the facts are that it has never been ahead of, nor even in line with, secular knowledge, and has always been an influence to retard it. It follows that there is an ever-widening gap between the general public and those persons who benefit by maintaining religious beliefs; while the number of persons who accept such beliefs diminishes in proportion as genuine knowledge spreads.

This divergence between the views of old and the new generations necessarily results in conflicts between parents and their offspring. And the offspring, having reached an age of maturity, are not inclined to allow their thoughts to be dominated by a generation which, on whatever other grounds it may claim respect, cannot claim it on the grounds of having accepted obediently and without modification the opinions of the generation which preceded it. So the question often arises as to what consideration adult and independent "children" should accord their ageing parents when a divergence of religious opinion has occurred.

Except in specially accredited localities, where only one side of the subject is ever mentioned, religion is seldom a matter for public discussion. Religion is a man's private concern, we are told—as though it were some peculiar undergarment of odd pattern or design. In many respects it would be advantageous to all if this attitude could be consistently maintained. Unfortunately religion refuses to keep itself to itself, and persistently pokes its uninvited nose into everyone's affairs. For example: coroners have refused (quite illegally) to accept the evidence of witnesses who objected to swearing upon the Christian holy

book; religious societies are continually endeavouring to prevent persons, who do not agree that Sunday is a day of taboo, from doing anything which members of those societies regard as taboo on that day; politicians, ignoring fair-play and moral consequences, allow themselves to be browbeaten into taxing one form of Sunday profit-making (the Cinema) and not another (the public house), because the one and the other is a more serious rival of religion for public favour. And if we chose to trace backwards in history the interference of religion with human rights, the list of examples might be extended indefinitely.

It follows that, among relations, however anxious they may be to avoid the religious issue in direct discussion, it is practically impossible to maintain a state of neutrality. An adult son, to avoid further deception, may admit to his elderly father that he is no longer a Christian but an Atheist. The father, a Christian, is persuaded by very reason of his religious bias that this must imply a relapse into immorality of some sort. According to the nature of the parent this may result in anything from complete severance of relationship to a mere melancholy regret, accompanied by efforts to bring back the "lost sheep" to the fold. It might have been more profitable to the son and less upsetting to the father if the former had dissimulated a bit longer. But who is to say that honour would have been served in such circumstances; or that, whatever unhappy results may ensue in particular instances, humanity as a whole will not gain by the open avowal of even one small truth.

Apart from the foregoing there is always a chance that the interchange of views may result in a better understanding. Even if the consequences appear to be unfortunate at first, it does not follow that the situation will be improved by promptly pushing the issue out of sight. It would be impossible to make it a rule that, in all matters of discussion between two generations, every expression of opinion which might be resented by the older generation must be strictly avoided by the younger. For were this to be done, then every generation would have to wait till the preceding generation was dead before it could proclaim or act up to any change in religious opinion. But since there is no definite boundary between one generation and those which succeed it, this rule is quite clearly impracticable.

One special aspect of this question is worth considering in greater detail. It is generally believed that in the life of every man and woman there comes a time when it is impossible for them to change their views. I know no proof of this. I have never heard of any approximate limits of age within which this mental atrophy is supposed to occur. And until incontestible evidence of the truth of this belief is adduced, it is difficult to see how it can be practically acted up to. Is a sane, healthy man of sixty, or seventy, or even eighty really incapable of logically debating the pros and cons of any subject?? If not, why of religion in particular? Even supposing one were to agree that it is useless to argue with men or women over, say, sixty-five years of age, does this mean that every subject, whose discussion is likely to annoy them, is to be barred in their presence for those who are not so old as they? Or is it only religion which should be taboo? And if so, why?

The answer usually given, even by some who profess to be Rationalists, is something to the effect that since religion is a solace to those who hold it, we should refrain, out of consideration for their age, from any attempt to remove this comfort. But what an argument! Drink and drugs are a solace to the addict, no matter what age he may be. Are we only to consider the feelings of the addict, whether he be addicted to drugs or religion, when truth and the com-

fort of humanity are at stake? The fact seems to be that persons who advocate sparing the feelings of the older generations in matters of religion are themselves in doubt of the value of their own beliefs. What earnest religionist would be deterred from doing his utmost to convert an aged parent, if the latter happened to be an Atheist? And who would blame him for his zeal, or deem him wanting in respect for old age? Certainly not his co-religionists. Why, then, should the gag be applied to the younger generation of Rationalists and Atheists who may wish to convert their religious parents or elders?

C. S. FRASER.

The Collapse of the Churches.

"Most people whose intelligence is much above the average are nowadays openly or secretly Agnostic."

Bertrand Russell.

"You cannot put back the clock of time, and yet some men persist."—*Bishop Barnes.*

It is customary for priests to speak of Britain as a "Christian" country, and to include the whole of the forty millions of inhabitants in the statistics of Orthodoxy. In like manner, France is loosely described as "Catholic," whilst Britain is labelled "Protestant." This rough and ready classification may have been approximately correct in the early eighteenth century, but it is not even a plausible overstatement in this twentieth century.

As far back as Voltaire's time there was sufficient diversity of theological opinion in this country to give point to his jest that England has "a hundred religions and only one sauce." Since his day this diversity has so increased that the effect is kaleidoscopic. At the present time Mormon missionaries may be found in many towns, whilst Spiritist churches have sprung up all over the country. There are Moslem mosques, Hindu temples, Muggletonian chapels, and a score of fancy religions from the United States with meeting-places in and around the Metropolis. Jewish synagogues are not uncommon, and derelict Orthodox churches and chapels are being transformed into cinemas, markets, post offices, and shops.

Orthodoxy is fast losing its grip on the people of this country. Even the established State Church, which is nominally Protestant, is partly Catholic, and the number of its priests has decreased. Hundreds of its churches are sparsely attended, and no less than nineteen places of worship in the heart of the City of London have been declared derelict by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The multiplication of bishoprics by the Church Authorities is so much eye-wash. As a particular instance it is safe to hazard that the inhabitants of Northern and Central Europe have never heard of the right-reverend Father-in-God of the Anglican Church, who is facetiously supposed to look after their eternal welfare. This annexation of territory on the part of priests is not unlike the lengthy squabbles between rival "War Lords" and tin "Napoleons" in Manchuria. Each pretends to be the over-lord, and gets his hands into the till up to the wrists. Britain is mapped out in dioceses by the Anglican and Romish Churches, and the thousands of Freethinkers who belong to neither the one nor the other can laugh at their holy hocus-pocus.

That Britain is still studded with churches is due to the ancient endowments of the State Church. The London City Churches, fifty in number, minister to a decreasing population, and, with the exception of St. Paul's Cathedral, which is a show-place as much as the Zoological Gardens, or Madame Tussaud's Exhibition, have congregations of microscopic proportions.

If the State Church were disendowed and disestablished, two thirds of the Anglican places of worship of the entire country would be found to be redundant and unnecessary. The State Church will be in evidence as long as it controls property worth £100,000,000. Take away its tyrannous tithe charges on agriculture, its coal royalties, its slum property, it would sink immediately below the level of some of its Nonconformist rivals.

The Free Churches are in an awful mess. Most of them are actually living on the support of their old members, grey-haired people whose days are numbered. The rising generation mostly stop giving pennies when they have left school. The Congregational Body, once the oldest and most respected of the Free Churches, is in a parlous condition. The seven varieties of the Methodist Church have united to save themselves from sinking altogether, and the boasted union really means that a larger number of chapels will disappear in order to fill the remainder. Even the astute ministers of the Jewish Faith are lamenting the laxity in synagogue attendance on the part of British Jews, and the *Jewish Chronicle* waxes hysterical on the terrible evil of intermarriage with Gentiles.

This all-round disintegration has had one result, which should add to the gaiety of the nation. It has forced the dear clergy to advertise the "bread of life" in the same way as business men advertise patent medicines or carpet-slippers. But they ought to employ advertising experts, and not rely on their inexperience like the curate who put out a notice: "Don't go to Hell! Hear our organ." To display printed slips in private-house windows imploring people to "Come to Church" is unlikely to fill places of worship when the average citizen realizes, with Mark Twain, that the only difference between a place of amusement and a place of worship is that you pay to go in the one, and pay to get out of the other.

Bradlaugh, who was, in his own characteristic way, a keen theologian, declared that religions did not die, but they changed, and Christianity itself is undergoing this transformation. The alteration has been taking place so quietly that it appears to have been wrought with the complete unconsciousness of clergy and congregations alike. In order to meet the humanitarian objections to the barbarities of Orthodoxy, leading clergymen have played into the hands of the Freethinkers. They put the lid on hell, and pretended that it was all a misunderstanding. The underworld is not a Turkish Bath but a refrigerator. Blood and brimstone were eliminated from the vocabulary of the educated clergy, and left for street-corner evangelists and Romish priests.

After that came the deluge, which has brought upon its flood undogmatic religionism and the rest of the hectic nonsense which now passes for the religion of Christ "once delivered to the saints." This dilution of dogma has had other effects. Painful Sabbaths have been replaced by Pleasant Sunday Afternoons. String bands and soloists take the place of leather-lunged preachers. Tame Labour Members of Parliament, lady evangelists, and all manner of ephemeral notoriety threaten to oust the parsons from their pulpits.

This transformation has but one meaning. It is the secularizing of Christianity. Talks on hygiene, lectures on social subjects, addresses on non-committal questions, with a few popular hymns thrown in, are but feather-beds to catch falling Christians. It may be magnificent, but it is not war. Neither is it the Christian Religion as taught for near twenty centuries. It shocks one; it is almost like meeting one's pet dog in the form of a pound of sausages.

The bed-rock fact remains that the present generation is not frightened by the priests' abracadabra. In

other days men went to church, and gave money, in order to save their souls. To-day, men are not so sure that they have souls to save. In any event, money can be used more wisely than in bolstering superstition. We live in a utilitarian age, and look at things from a different angle from that of our innocent forefathers. Many of us would sympathize with the East-end tradesman, who, when an evangelist laid a tract upon the counter, remarking, "Christ is coming," smilingly replied: "It does not matter, my friend, so long as he doesn't open a tailor's shop."

MIMNERMUS.

Evolution Without Tears.

A Picture Book of Evolution by Dennis Hird. Revised and brought up to date by Surgeon Rear-Admiral C. M. Beadnell. Foreword by Sir Arthur Keith. (Watts, 10s. 6d. net.)

A GENERATION has gone since this book first appeared. The author has been dead for a decade. No worthier tribute could be paid to those responsible for this re-issue than to say that, if Dennis Hird had survived to produce it, his own rare accuracy and expository skill could not have been more consistently sustained. Advances in knowledge made it necessary in effect to re-write the whole book. Yet as Rear-Admiral Beadnell says in a happy simile, though the original woodman's axe has "had to be fitted with a new blade and a new haft," his spirit survives and his purpose is given a new fulfilment in these pages.

No more valuable addition has been made in recent years to the literature of modern scientific knowledge than this book. From the first page to the last it is fascinating, both in text and illustration. True the grip is in the subject—its vast range, its innumerable and enlightening revelations—but many a reader who, having thought "there must be something in evolution," has shied at what seemed to him to involve much hard and dull reading difficult to understand will find he was mistaken. It is not the realm of "mystery" but the world of reality that is full of possibilities. The mystic shuts his eyes and dreams of wonders he will never see. Science, and above all, the great key of evolution, opens the eyes of men to behold, and in a large measure to understand, wonders of which they never dreamed. The story of evolution has such wonders in every chapter, and almost in every line. It is hoped, and it may be believed, that many an enthralled reader of this book will marvel as he proceeds that he could ever have held the jim-crack ideas about man and the earth that are the stock in trade of supernaturalism. H. G. Wells once suggested that the Catholic Church should tell her faithful her own story of man and the universe, since it rejects that given by science. It was a devastating question, never likely to meet with a response; for, the moment evolution is granted, there is no room for any other explanation of what it so clearly and unanswerably explains.

A word must be said for the "get-up." The printing is admirable, and the paper brings out the illustrations with unusual clarity. In future editions perhaps room might be found for a few more details about the original author. He survives by this work; but his other labours, at Ruskin College, as a lecturer, and with his versatile pen are worth recalling to a generation that knew them not. Anyone who has read *Toddle Island* or *A Christian with Two Wives* will admit that Hird's gift for satire had the authentic ring of a master of that now sadly neglected form of writing.

A. H.

For the world is only governed by self-interest.

Schiller.

No man can climb beyond the limitations of his own character.—*Robespierre*.

Acid Drops.

In a few days we shall be having all the solemn and sinister pomp of Armistice Day. Originally an expression of genuine sorrow and horror at the carnage of the war, it was an impressive manifestation of general sorrow. Those who had lost, and those who had not lost, some loved one in the war were in the mood to take part in a general expression of grief. But it has long ceased to be useful for the purpose of generating genuine horror of war, or save in a minority of cases, more than a formal expression of grief. People cannot be sorrowful by either royal or parliamentary decree, and Armistice Day is now little more of an expression of national grief than would be a two-minute silence for the death of Queen Victoria. Grief to be impressive must be spontaneous. To have it sent out by the B.B.C., or through the newspapers, it has been ordered that on November 11, the whole nation shall express its sorrow for the late war for two minutes is to make real grief ridiculous. The private room not the public highway is the place for genuine sorrow. To see a number of people, on their own accord, remaining silent on some anniversary that is to them sacred or sorrowful is one thing. It is as impressive to intelligent folk as would be a Mohammedan suddenly placing his prayer mat in Cheapside and going through his devotions. But to see everybody expressing grief to order with an occasional case of a man being assaulted by the crowd because he will not obey the order to be sorry, is to reduce the two minutes' silence to almost the level of an incident during the progress of an election. It is time the command performance was abandoned and everyone left free to indulge in a natural and healthy sorrow.

But whatever may have been the original idea of the two-minutes silence, and the Cenotaph ceremonies, it is certain that to-day they are serving the very opposite purpose for which the mass of the people originally believed they were intended. What will happen round the Cenotaph on November 11, but substantially a glorification and a hallowing of war. There will be present the army, the navy, the air force, and the Church. Force and cunning will receive its annual advertisement and its annual glorification. A contingent of men representing art, commerce, science and literature will not be present. Naturally, for so far as war is concerned, art is useful only to display the attractiveness of war, literature to extol it, science to invent instruments for waging it and commerce to provide the means for carrying it on. Their place is with the crowd in the pit, not with the performers on the stage. The stage must be reserved for those who can be trusted to act as "the creators of blood-lust—to use General Crozier's expressive phrase.

The ceremony round the Cenotaph will be a replica of hundreds of ceremonies and sermons throughout the country. With unconscious sarcasm "O God our help in ages past" will be sung, the noble self-sacrifice of the men who died will be extolled, soldiers will be there with their spick and span uniforms, their wearers well-fed and well-clothed, military bands will add their contribution to the emotional excitements of the occasion, and beyond will be a new generation, the potential fighters of the next war, feeling what an important person to civilization the soldier is, what noble men a military life breeds, and how essential the soldier is to a genuine civilization. Why there could not be a better recruiting agency than this annual parade, this ceremony of a two minutes silence, when everything is hushed so that the nation may collectively do what it can to keep alive the spirit of militarism.

For this is what it has really become. We have a nationwide ceremony, the effect of which is to impress upon a new generation the value of militarism to the people.

Some few days ago a deputation of leading parsons waited upon the Prime Minister to impress upon him the importance of peace. The deputation really said nothing, and the Prime Minister emptied his mind to them—that is he said nothing. But suppose the deputation instead of talking futilities about the necessity of peace and the evils of war—at which game Mr. Macdonald is easily their master, had issued an ultimatum. Suppose they had said that for the future none of their organizations would take any part in military parades, that they would cease to take any part in military organizations, that if war came, not a sermon would be preached encouraging men to go to war, not a word would be said about the "moral uplift" of war, not a text would be cited from the Bible in favour of war, that the clergy would continue to preach during war as during peace that war was a degradation, that it demoralized all, victor and vanquished, that in modern war, death during war meant death amid filth, amid such scenes of brutality and horror that men could only remain sane by cultivating the habit of laughing at them.. Supposing they added that during the Armistice commemoration they would all take care to preach that kind of sermon, and keep their word, then there would indeed be let loose a tremendous agency against war and against militarism.

At present we are making for war. Our leaders tell us that we are nearer war than we have been since 1914. And if it comes, and when it comes, we shall have the usual childish recriminations as to who began the war, or which nation wanted war. We could end war if we would. But we cannot hope to do so with our public processions which glorify war, with our public shows of naval parades and military manœuvres and their subsequent boasting of the strength of our navy, and the efficiency of our army and air force, with our training of schoolboys in military drill, with cadet corps and military tattoos, to which thousands of school children are taken. Wars are made in times of peace, and the nations are to-day so acting as to make the next war "inevitable." They are concerned chiefly that it shall not be too dear and not too dangerous.

Father Woodlock of Farm Street, who contrives to rival his predecessor there of a generation ago (Father Bernard Vaughan) as a "stunt" provided for the press, has protested against the anti-Christian sermons of Dr. Barnes, and questioned the honesty and propriety of the latter's position as an Anglican Bishop. Only very simple folk will imagine that the distinguished Jesuit is anxious for the well-being of those he prays for as "our separated brethren." Dr. Barnes, who is daily denounced both by Anglo-Catholic and evangelical churchmen, does indeed present a problem, but one which, an outsider might think, is no concern of Father Woodlock's. Nor is the problem a new one, although it is significant of the times that, up to now, there has been no suggestion from within the Church of England that it is one that presses for solution. The same problem was raised in a much more acute form seventy years ago by the publication of that theological bombshell, *Essays and Reviews*. Simply put, it is a problem concerned with *bona fides* in the matter of clerical subscription to the Articles, Homilies, Canons and Formularies of the Established Church. It is not without interest to recall that famous controversy.

When, in October, 1860, *Essays and Reviews* appeared, a great storm arose. Ten editions were printed in two years. During that period, or for a few years more, the storm scarcely abated. There came from the press a long procession of protesting books, sermons, review articles, press correspondences and pamphlets. They ranged from works as big as the offending book (the chief of these was *Modern Infidelity and Rationalism exposed in answer to Essays and Reviews by the Rev. John Cumming, D.D., and the Rev. R. P. Blakeney*) down to single-sheet leaflets. There are over one hundred of them

in the British Museum catalogue. The seven writers included Jowett (afterwards "of Balliol"), Temple (the Headmaster of Rugby) and the Rev. Mark Pattison. Temple's *Essay on The Education of the World* was specially obnoxious to the orthodoxy of that day. A quotation may indicate how little it would have disturbed the church of to-day. Said Temple:—

The steady progress of toleration is unmistakable. The mature mind of our race is beginning to modify and soften the hardness and severity of the principles which its early manhood had elevated into immutable statements of truth. Men are beginning to take a wider view than they did. Physical science, researches into history, and a more thorough knowledge of the world they inhabit have enlarged their philosophy beyond the limits which bounded that of the Church Fathers. And all these have an influence, whether we will or not, on our determination of religious truth. There are found to be more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in the patristic theology.

Surely a mild and harmless statement; but it was thought diabolical!

The controversy which followed was concerned, not only with the supposed errors of the writers, but also with the question as to how men who, to put it bluntly, were prepared to put secular learning before God's word, and to judge the latter by the former, could conscientiously continue to be clergymen of the Church of England. We do not say this was, or is, an irrelevant question. One of these writers said it was high time "religious ideas were submitted to the rough and ready tests by which busy men try what comes their way, and be made to stand their trial, and be freely canvassed *coram populi*." This certainly did not leave much room for "revelation." To-day, however, there is precisely the same ground for depriving the Bishop of Truro as for depriving the Bishop of Birmingham. One, having assented that "masses are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" (Article xxx. 1) teaches they are the chief Act of Christian worship. The other, having assented to the doctrine of original sin (Article ix.) openly affirms the truth of evolution! The plain fact is that, as another of the writers in *Essays and Reviews* has it, "nothing is allowed in the Church of England but the formulæ of past thinkings, which have long lost all sense of any kind." If, after sixty years, this is still true (as it is), how many anglican clergymen to-day could not be deprived? Father Woodlock naturally only points out the case that suits him; yet, in the sense here suggested, almost every clergyman is equally chargeable.

The Rev. F. C. Spurr says the Pope's recent Encyclical on the state of the world "must command the respect of all religious people." He regrets there is not a single "trumpet voice" for the whole of the Protestant Churches. To judge from the output of apologetics in which the trumpets give "an uncertain sound" the Protestant Churches are getting short of wind. As we pointed out at the time of its issue, the Encyclical was intended "to command the respect of all religious people." So far as the Catholics are concerned anything the Pope says commands not respect, but obedience.

One always thought that Scotland, the land of John Knox, had nothing to learn about religion. The peculiar thing is that Scotland is the dumping ground of a lot of foreign evangelists! Evidently the Scottish people have fallen from Grace, and, instead of being the converter of outsiders, has herself to be converted by a miscellaneous gang including the Christian M.P. for Leith; a "Principal" (Heaven alone knows where he acquired the title) from America; an imported spouter from Australia; and several other foreign upholders of the Faith, who apparently think Scotland is going to the dogs. Puir Auld Scotland!

Indeed the absence of prominent Presbyterians from Salvation Army Platforms is no longer to be the order of

the day. Edinburgh and Leith hoardings are plastered with huge placards announcing that "General" Higgins is to conduct a campaign in Edinburgh, and that his platform is to be graced by the presence of the Rev. Dr. James Black, of St. George's West Presbyterian Church, Edinburgh, in the hope of stimulating a great revival.

At the foot of these placards appear the words: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." This is a slap in the eye to reformers who believe that further human improvement can only be brought about by drastic change.

The quotation seems to be an unhappy and inappropriate one. What is the use of enthusing about a "great Revival" in these troublous days if Jesus Christ has nothing new to offer by way of social regeneration following the "second birth" of individuals? It is a black look out for the physical, mental and moral development of the Scottish people many of whom seem to be "whoring after false gods."

Of course the whole thing is a stunt to conserve vested interests and privilege. But like former efforts to keep the masses from thinking for themselves, *it will fail*. It will fail despite spectacular displays like the Edinburgh Police in full uniform attending their official annual services in St. Giles' Cathedral. Following that the Judges of the Scottish Supreme Courts were also invited to observe the annual formal farce of attending public worship in St. Giles'. Out of a bench of thirteen Judges, only six attended the religious service. Possibly some of the others may entertain ideas like those of Lord Neaves and Lord Monboddo, who had no love for traditional religion, and whose biting satires are still studied by original and independent thinkers.

The Revival stunt in Scotland must be costing the Churches a good deal of money—bread they no doubt regard as being cast upon the waters. Salvation, of course, is offered to the poor "without money and without price." It sounds a bit fishy that Scottish ecclesiastical organizations should be at the expense of importing all these foreign gas-bags for the purpose of suppressing intellectual independence. The sentimentality of benevolent industrial autocrats is a fearful and wonderful thing!

The gangsters on the Council at Beckenham have agreed to permit the Cinemas to be open in their district provided the proprietors hand over seventy-five per cent of their profits. This is a much greater tax than the gangsters of Chicago—on whom the Government modelled its Sunday Entertainment Act—charge their victims for permission to follow their usual occupations. When the American gangsters note the levy on the Beckenham cinemas they must, like Warren Hastings, marvel at their own moderation. All we have to say is that if the Beckenham Cinema proprietors submit to this they deserve to lose the remainder of their profits.

In the *Times* for October 27 there appears a letter by the Vicar of Croydon in support of Sunday opening of Cinemas, in which he cites in his support Cardinal Bourne, the Archbishop of York, Rev. S. Berry (Secretary to the Congregational Union) and the Rev. Dr. Norwood, of the City Temple. Such agreement is very remarkable among so many parsons, but one would suspect, without reading the letter, that some very parsonic purpose is to be served by the agreement, and also that this agreement will be at the expense of the general public. It is always a case of sectarianism before everything.

One's expectations are not disappointed. The whole aim of these clerics is to get control of something they

would like to suppress but cannot. The position is put plainly by Dr. Norwood, he says:—

I think there is a public demand for the opening of Cinemas on Sunday, and I think it is a perfectly understandable demand. It is much better that the Church should seek to direct it and exercise some guidance or even control in the matter of selected pictures than merely to express objections.

It is to be noted that Dr. Norwood says the demand for Sunday entertainments is "understandable," not justifiable. But the opinion of Dr. Norwood and the other clerics is quite plain. They would all like to stop Sunday entertainments if they could, they would drive people to Church if they could. As neither of these things can be done the next step is for them to get control and see that nothing is shown on the films with which they disagree. The films must be Sunday films. It is bad enough for the Government to play the gangster by plundering men of their profits if they will help to provide amusement on the Sunday, but that pales beside the downright impertinence of these Church and Chapel meddlers coolly telling the public that if it gets entertainments on Sunday it must be such as meets with their approval. And the British public submit!

The latest stunt of an organization called the Movement for World Evangelization—with an address in Mildmay Park, N.1—is a campaign to "the Mothers and Daughters of England." It is stated as a "staggering fact, nay, a calamity," that these women have "lost their sense of sin." So "drawing-room meetings will be held wherever possible," and ladies who have "become frivolous and indifferent to the high calling of the sex" are to be "won for Jesus." They will then, we presume, become sober and sex-conscious!

Fifty Years Ago.

We believe in the human institution of a day of rest. In the form of a seventh-day cessation from labour, it was known to the Babylonians and Egyptians long ere Moses is said to have lived, and thousands of years before the laws were written which the Jews have attributed to him. The Lord's Day Rest Association cry out that their opponents want to bring in Sunday labour. This is a lie and they know it. To prevent Sabbath desecration this very Society urged the keeping open of South Kensington and other museums on Saturday afternoons and evenings from two until ten; eight additional hours to the same attendants, when only half that time was asked for them to be opened on Sundays, with relays of men to give all attendants a holiday.

Not by one jot would we add to the labour of the over-worked many. We would give them more leisure and more opportunities of profiting by it; not confining them to the fetid atmosphere of church and public-house.

We do not find the clergy and Lord's Day resters speaking out for early closing on other days than their "sacred" one. The thousands of girls and other shop-assistants who have to stand twelve hours for six days every week need not look to them for support. Their anxiety for the workers is a pretence. They oppose Sunday freedom as they have opposed education, civil marriages, and every form of dissent. They would like to keep their fingers in every man's pie and want no counter attractions to their one day's ministrations and mummery. But their ghastly gospel of self-salvation and the damnation of other people is doomed. Secular literature is displacing their holy Bible for Sunday reading. Excursions and home amusements are taking the place of Church going. Vainly they get up attractive "special services"; vainly substitute singing for preaching, stained-glass windows for bare walls, or emulate the Salvationists with trumpets and tambourines. Their fiddles and fal-the-rals only show how hard pushed they are to hold their place. A cry has burst in upon them. The kingdom of man is at hand.

The "Freethinker," November 5, 1882.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H.S. (Chesham).—Lessing's Play "The Freethinker," terminates as you say; but Advast, the Freethinker is a highly virtuous character. The *Freethinker* to which Lessing contributed was short lived. It was published at Leipzig.

P.T. (Clapham).—Bradlaugh certainly would not have supported "a rational religion." He said: "The word (religion) must always be taken, and, except with Positivists, has always been taken to involve some assertion of the supernatural."

F.L.R. (Stockport).—The Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Disorders 1906.

H. JOHNSTONE.—Regret the length of your letter precludes publication.

M. BARNARD.—The correspondence in the *Essex Chronicle* is interesting, and you got in some good shots. Other communication shall appear soon. Pleased to have your high appreciation of the *Freethinker*, after so lengthy an acquaintance with it.

H. HASSELL.—Thanks. The Rev. Desmond Morse-Boycott is very amusing without intending to be so. He is funny when he aims at being serious, and serious when he aims at being amusing. He serves to remind us that most things have their uses—even parsons.

F. HILL (Sydney, N.S.W.).—Pleased to have such hearty good wishes from a new reader of the *Freethinker*.

F. H. DEAN.—We quite understand the distinction. You appear to have overlooked the fact that the paragraphs were "writ sarcastic."

S. HAMSON.—The difficulty is to get some really able Christian to undertake a public discussion with a representative Freethinker. Candidly, we don't blame the clergy for shirking such discussions. They have simply nothing to gain and a great chance of heavy loss.

J. ROWLAND.—As soon as possible, but we are terribly overcrowded with copy, and have to return a number of manuscripts because we cannot hope to publish within a reasonable time.

F.J.—Verses hardly up to standard.

H. DELLA VERDE.—The address of *Der Atheist* is Schrifteitung und Volwaltung, Prag 55 Postschliessfach (Hatrwig).

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection 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.

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

propagandist movements the Birmingham Branch is feeling the pinch, and we hope that all Freethinkers in Birmingham who are in a position to help, or to increase the help usually given will do so.

On Sunday next (November 13), Mr. Cohen will speak in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30.

The Liverpool Branch is holding a "Social evening" at the Washington Hotel, Lime Street, on Saturday, November 5, at 7.30. Tickets will be one shilling each. A good attendance is expected, and we hope the Branch will not be disappointed at the result of their efforts. It will form an excellent opportunity for members and friends to become better acquainted.

Manchester Freethinkers should make a point of attending the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, to-day (Sunday) when Mr. A. C. McLaren (London) will speak on behalf of the local Branch N.S.S. at 3.0 p.m., on "A Freethinker Looks at the World," and at 6.30 p.m., on "The Mythical Christ." Mr. McLaren's lectures are always interesting and scholarly, and that should attract a full audience at each session.

The Sunderland Branch N.S.S. has arranged a Study Circle and Speakers class to be held each Monday evening, commencing November 7, at 7.45, in the I.L.P. Rooms, Foyle Street, Sunderland. Mr. J. T. Brighton will be in charge, and it is hoped the local saints will take full advantage of the opportunity for a preparation for the Freethought platform as well as for controversy.

Twice in one week the Commissioner of Police has broadcast advice to people not to attend any of the demonstrations of Hunger Marchers. Of course it may be all the Commissioner has in mind is making the task of preserving order easier, but it is quite likely that it will be taken in quite a different sense, particularly by magistrates who have the administration of the law. We shall be greatly surprised if they do not take the disregard of the Commissioner's "advice" as an aggravation of the offence. Of late years the police have made more than one attempt to interfere with freedom of public meeting, and as the law stands at present every British citizen has the right to attend any public meeting he wishes, and it is the duty of the police to see that he is protected in the exercise of that right. If the House of Commons were not what it is, we might expect that the question of the Commissioner's action would be raised there. We have had of late years an enormous extension of government by administrative decree—quite in the line of Czarist Russia, and if we do not keep on the alert we may find ourselves governed by Police order, and public meetings only allowed by permission of Chief Constables.

Following an active outdoor season the Liverpool Branch N.S.S. are now drawing full audiences at its Sunday evening indoor meetings at the Transport Hall, Islington, the next step is to be the introduction of some social activity, and a Social and Dance has been arranged at the Washington Hotel, Lime Street, on Saturday evening, November 5. We hope to hear the local saints have responded well, and that a pleasant evening will be spent.

The Birkenhead Branch N.S.S. was very unfortunate in the start of its indoor meetings at the Engineers' Hall, Price Street, last Sunday, owing to the awful weather which naturally interfered with the attendance. Dr. C. H. R. Carmichael will be the speaker to-day (Sunday) and his subject "The Test of Civilization" should provide a very interesting evening. The lecture begins at 7.0 p.m.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 6) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Birmingham. The lecture will commence at 7.0, and admission is free. The Branch, we understand, is working hard to see that the large hall is well-filled, and we hope their efforts will meet with success. Like all

Rousseau: The Sentimental Pietist.

Napoleon made a significant remark: "It would be better for France if I and that man [Rousseau] had never been born."—(Charpentier: *Rousseau: The Child of Nature*. p. 301.)

THE true believer is very apt to give himself airs and look down upon the unbeliever as a common fellow, a low person, dead to the finer feelings which he flatters himself inspire his own life and conduct.

Unfortunately for this view, the facts are all against it. The Ages of Faith were ages of cruelty, violence, ignorance, and general wickedness; yet never were the people more fervent in religion, or the Churches more crowded.

We may know all about the religious beliefs a man holds, but it tells us nothing of his character. He may have a fervent belief in God, and a future life, and yet be mean, cruel, and cowardly. He is often, by his own confession, a "miserable sinner." Which reminds us of a story told of Charles Lamb. A friend carried him off to a religious meeting, where his friend made a fervent speech, and ended by describing himself, with much self-abasement, as a miserable sinner. Lamb was then called upon to speak a few words; whereupon he said that he could not say much for himself, but he could quite confirm the truth of his friend's description of himself, as a miserable sinner.

Rousseau, the sentimental prophet of the return to nature, and a simple faith in religion devoid of all dogma and ritual, was full of fine feelings; at least, according to his writings. But, unfortunately, when it came to the test of acting up to them, he always failed.

Rousseau was born at Geneva on June 28, 1712. His mother died a fortnight later of puerperal fever. "I was born weak and sickly," he says, "I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes." However, he did not suffer so much through this calamity as most children do, for he was nursed, with every care and tenderness, by an Aunt. Other relatives and neighbours were also kind to him. His father was a watchmaker and dancing master, and was, we are told: "his chief companion—a frivolous, impulsive man, with an excitable disposition, a selfish nature, and a sentimental heart. His son, however, thought him possessed of every virtue, regarded him as 'the best of fathers,' and revered alike his principles, which were certainly very admirable, and his practice of them, which was singularly deficient."¹

Like father, like son. Every word of this description would apply to Rousseau himself later on. His father taught him to read, and they read aloud by turns far into the night, often until dawn; when his father would say, "Let us off to bed; why I am more a child than yourself." Sometimes his father would say, "Jean-Jacques, let us talk of your mother," and his son would answer, "Yes, father, but then we shall cry." His father, who enjoyed being inconsolable, thereupon always wept."² Rousseau himself was always ready to shed floods of tears on the slightest provocation.

His father never attempted to train his son and soon left him entirely to his relations. Getting into trouble with the police he fled from Geneva, taking with him the money which Jean Jacques inherited from his mother. At the age of eleven he was sent into a notary's office, but was ignominiously dismissed for dulness and inaptitude; his fellow-clerks pronouncing him stupid and incompetent past hope.³

¹ H. G. Graham: *Rousseau*. p. 3.

² *Ibid.* p. 3.

³ Morley. *Rousseau*. p. 18.

In fact he "found it impossible to make anything stick in his mind without the most laborious effort." Seeing that it was useless to put him to a profession, his family decided to put him to a trade, and apprenticed him to Abel Ducommun, an engraver at Geneva, but he says that the harshness of his master turned him against it. Probably the harshness was due to his own incompetence and idleness.

At that time the gates of the City of Geneva were closed at sunset; twice, while living at the engraver's, Rousseau had been shut out. The third time, rather than face another thrashing, he ran away. At first he was filled with anguish at the uncertainty of his future. Overcoming this, he was overjoyed by his freedom, and with the thought of being his own master. His eager imagination painted a glorious future, observes Mr. Charpentier:—

Needless to say, the picture of his future, which he painted to himself, was coloured by his natural indolence and his self-indulgence. He looked forward to a long succession of banquets, for he was greedy; to handsome possessions, for he loved display; to devoted friends, for he craved affection; to mistresses striving to please him, for he was exceedingly susceptible to feminine attraction. No noble ambition and no desire to play an important rôle entered into his scheme. (Charpentier: *Rousseau the Child of Nature*. p. 4.)

He tells us himself: "My ambition soared only to a single château, where I might be the favourite of both the lord and the lady, the lover of the daughter of the house, the friend of her brother, and the patron of the neighbours." All these things were to exist merely to provide Rousseau with a pleasant and idle existence, free from the necessity of working for his living, and free from all financial cares and anxieties!

Travelling from farm to farm, he turned aside into the Savoy region, and curiosity led him to the house of the village priest of Confignon, who saw in the boy only a Huguenot from the Protestant city of Geneva, whom heaven had sent him to convert. In return for an excellent dinner washed down with good local wine, Rousseau allowed himself to be easily convinced of the truth of Catholicism, and renounced his faith. The priest then directed him to go to Annecy, about ten leagues away, where he would find a charitable lady to whom he was to bear a letter of introduction.

This lady was Madame de Warens, a sort of Catholic missionary. Having run into debt, while she was a Protestant, says Charpentier, "she heard the divine call at the height of her difficulties, when all her property was being confiscated," deserted her husband, put herself under the protection of the King of Sardinia, abjured her Calvinistic faith and was granted a pension to carry on Catholic propaganda.

At this time Madame de Warens was twenty-nine years of age, and Rousseau seventeen. He was a good-looking youth, well set up, a charming mouth, fine eyebrows, chestnut hair, and deep-set sparkling eyes. Madame was greatly attracted by the lonely youth, especially when she learned that he had lost his mother at birth, as she had done herself. Rousseau at once set about establishing confidential relations with Madame, and poured out the whole story of his life and they soon became intimate, she gave him the pet name of "Little One" and he called her "Mamma." The nine years he spent with Madame were the happiest of his life:—

In her absence he suffered from a kind of nostalgia which reduced him to tearful melancholy and to a distress from which he suffered intolerably. He might wander off into the fields to kill time when she left him, to attend to business in the town or to her devotions in the Church, and there the notes of

⁴ Charpentier. *Rousseau*. p. 115.

the bells, which always affected him strongly, the songs of the birds, the beauty of the sunshine, the charm of the landscape, the scattered cottages in which he dreamed of life with his beloved patroness, all these things combined to excite him until he fell into ecstasies. He built castles in the air and lost all sense of reality in illusions. His happiness should be to live out his life with "Mamma," never leaving her for a day. (Charpentier: *Rousseau the Child of Nature*. p. 36.)

Never, at any time, could Rousseau endure existence unless he had the skirts of a woman to cling to. This—if we except his Aunt—was only the first of a series to whom he clung for support.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Failsworth Secular Sunday School.

LAST month I was allowed the privilege of addressing the members, young and old, of the Secular Sunday School at Failsworth, near Manchester. What I had already heard of this Sunday School had suggested a rather interesting chapter in the history of our movement in the North.

The original Mechanics' Institute, erected on the site adjoining the present school about a century ago, is now the annexe of the hall build in 1880, the foundation-stone of which was laid by Mr. Sidney Gimson, of Leicester. Mr. Thomas Anderton, who was then Secretary, was present at my meetings last month. I could not ascertain exactly when or how the Institute became the Failsworth Secular Sunday School; but at a very early period classes were held to given instruction to adults in writing, calculating, and other subjects of a practical nature, and this probably suggested the Sunday School. In the 'seventies Benjamin Brierley, of Failsworth, author of *Humorous Rhymes* and many tales and sketches of Lancashire life, was one of the leading lights of the School. Among others who then took a prominent part in its work were John Pollock, Henry Taylor, Thomas Hayes, Henry Clough and Thomas Anderton, sen. The photographs of many of these pioneers adorn the walls of the school. I looked over some of the old minute-books—an interesting reminder of the stirring times of fifty or sixty years ago. Under the date September 19, 1880, I noticed a resolution, "That Mr. Bradlaugh's kind offer he accepted with thanks." The minutes of the same date have references to Mrs. Besant, Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, and Charles Watts.

On the Sunday when I visited Failsworth there was an excellent programme of music both in the afternoon and in the evening. This feature of the "services" deserves special mention. Recently considerable attention has been given to it, and the Failsworth Orchestral Society has been re-organized and should contribute much to the future success of the school. A very good library is also an important part of the equipment of the institution.

The work carried on by our Failsworth friends deserves high appreciation. In discussing its prospects with several old supporters I expressed the opinion that some outside propaganda in the district, if it could be arranged, would be helpful to the school. The Churches are well represented in the neighbourhood and they deserve attention.

We Freethinkers have more than an ephemeral interest in this question of Secular Sunday schools, and perhaps I may be permitted here to enlarge upon it. If the "Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching of Children Bill," which was before the House of Commons in

March, 1927, had become law I should have been liable to heavy penalties for speaking as I did at Failsworth. And more even than the Bill itself the speeches of many members of the House on that occasion clearly revealed a strong desire to exercise strict control over the children of the country in order that only what is "correct" and "orthodox" both in politics and religion should be taught to them. This Bill was only an attempt to forge another link in a long chain of such measures. One of the main objects of the Uniformity Act, 1662, was to debar Nonconformists from the exercise of the teaching profession and to break up their schools. The proposed Schism Act, of Queen Anne's reign, made it an offence for any person to teach as tutor or schoolmaster without a licence from the bishop of the diocese. These Bills by no means exhaust the list of such attacks on Freethought, and it is our imperative duty to keep them in memory.

At Failsworth I spoke on "Young England and the Freethought Movement," and chose this subject because "youth movements" seem to be the order of the day at present and enter largely into the activities of the Churches. "Orthodoxy is manufactured at the cradle." But why is there so much difficulty in the process to-day, in "the age of the child"? This piteous call to service is a sign of the times, in strange contrast with the Churches' attitude when religion dominated nearly the whole of life. "Service" was then compulsory. There were no questions about Genesis or the Higher Criticism to puzzle orthodox teachers, and the Trinity, sin, heaven, and especially hell, were real enough for all practical purposes. Religious "instruction" aimed more at the heart than the head. It does so still. In regard to such "instruction" the elementary education of the child to-day does not itself reflect the changed relative position of Christianity amid the intellectual or moral factors of modern civilization. Lecky complained many years ago that the habits of modern life were becoming inimical to the growth of the reverential spirit, and the cry has often been heard since. No doubt Lecky was right. But after all a good deal of that spirit was only camouflaged fear, and had for its ulterior motive submission to authority. Is not civilization itself largely the substitution of the critical for the reverential spirit? The clerics seem to be well aware that reverence of this kind will disappear altogether when they are no longer able to quarantine the child's emotions throughout its early years. Witness the recent attack on the book edited by Mrs. Mitchinson.

A. D. McLAREN.

Revival! Revival!! Revival!!!

THE crude efforts of slush-slinging pious journalists and imported evangelists, who are battering the doors of Heaven for "showers of blessing" or a downpour of the Holy Spirit, do not appear to be meeting with particular success. The majority of the workers to-day find all these demonstrations to be irrelevant, useless and futile, for they are too much taken up with finding daily bread for themselves and their families. Moreover, in this engineered plan to reinforce the power of the Churches, several cross-currents are to be observed. The Oxford Group have been holding meetings in St. Andrews, the golfing centre, and one Scottish clergyman who attended a meeting there was so disgusted with the senseless unwholesome and vulgar remarks he heard that he became positively ill, and had to go home to bed. He writes to the *Scots Observer* sending a list of searching questions as to the methods of what he calls this American movement, which has taken hold of the

imagination of a handful of sensation-seeking enthusiasts at Oxford. Whether he gets any answers to his questions remains to be seen. Then again an Edinburgh mission man said the other day, that he could not understand why Edinburgh with so many able and well-equipped ministers needed to depend upon English, Australian and American tub-thumpers to bring about a religious revival. It is contended that the "Oxford Group" Movement knows no social or class distinctions so Professors and domestic servants associate and exchange views and testimonies with perfect confidence and without embarrassment. Hugh Redwood has been in Scotland giving a hand, and furnishing in himself a most affecting picture of affected humility on the public platform. This is the sort of thing that gives the Salvation Army, which used to suffer a good deal of boycotting in public from superior Scottish Presbyterians a chance to get into the limelight—Every little helps. Even the evidence by Commissioner Lamb before the Gambling Commission serves to remind the indifferent of the Salvation Army: though what it has been saving or salving is not very conspicuous by its presence.

While the people generally are not getting the "Kick" out of this missionary campaign that they did out of Sankey and Moody last century, the same old fallacious doctrine is preached, viz.: that simple belief in and acceptance of Jesus Christ radically changes the whole nature of the converted one in the twinkling of an eye. Many good-living pagans must be relieved to know that they are not to be housed in the same place as the thieves, burglars and murderers whom Christianity is daily providing with passports to glory. One thing must be said. The Hymnology of the present time is somewhat lighter and brighter than that of the Sankey and Moody days. This is another proof of evangelical subtlety. The fearsome ballads of mid-Victorian religiosity are put in the background. We remember for instance:—

Great God what do I see and hear
The end of things created,
The judge of mankind doth appear
On clouds of glory seated!

That dreary doggerel with its dirge-like tune:—

For ever with the Lord.

is not heard so often nowadays. It may be said no doubt that Sankey introduced more "rollick" into his "Songs and Solos" than could be found in pre-existent revival hymns. "Hold the Fort" was a great favourite in the eighties of last century, and was even parodied—in this way for instance:—

Hold the fort for I am coming!
Sankey's on the spree,
Up to the neck in a rhubarb pudding,
That's the game for me.

Later on we got the Glory Song:—

Oh that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me:
When by his Grace I shall gaze on his face,
That will be glory, be glory for me!

The intimate and sentimental song was represented by:—

Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on his gentle breast.

And now we have the modern refrain:—

Jesus my Jesus.

This is a line that catches some starved emotional natures. But how does it affect human beings who have been fortunate enough to experience a very great all-possessing and all-absorbing human love? Are such persons to be told that they must for their eternal happiness transfer their affections from an adored human being to an alleged supernatural being whom they have never seen? Love needs vision, presence, contact.

It is significant that the Moderator of the Church of Scotland went down to Leith (a woe-begone centre of industrial depression and most wretched housing conditions) to give his benediction to the revival missionaries who have been, it is said, drawing enormous crowds to the new Town Hall. One ventures to suggest that of these "enormous crowds" 90 per cent were attracted by curiosity and a desire for warmth and sensation, and that the remaining 10 per cent were believers already. There is a chance too that if you go to the penitent form (or its modern equivalent) there may be "something doing" about employment; restoration to the "dole" or of securing something from the cold fist of charity—public or private. Some men are driven to resort to any device to get the means to feed hungry wife and weans.

Certainly these peripatetic, cosmopolitan, undenominational evangelists are the advance agents of the ecclesiastical corporations, and their job is to fill empty pews and collection plates. These evangelists—leather-lunged and bodily well nourished, alert and active—have luxurious motor cars placed at their disposal, and one may be sure they will not leave any district in which they have been operating without payment of substantial hire. Their "labours" ostensibly being for the advancement of the "Kingdom of God" without regard to any sect, have prompted the leaders of the Churches to greater and greater efforts to eradicate sectarianism and promote more ecclesiastical unions. Thus in the *British Weekly*, there is a proposal that all the chief Non-conformist Churches in England should seriously contemplate a "wider union." The point, of course, is that when these undenominational itinerants get a convert, they get him simply as a disciple of Christ: the choice of his future place of worship is purely his own. Therefore it would be a tremendous advantage to unite all the "Evangelical" churches so that "converts" would have less difficulty in selecting a meeting house; and there would be much less chance of their ultimately being "lost" by drifting out in a mood of disgust occasioned by some emphatic outburst of sectarian bigotry. If there were a general consensus of opinion and unanimity of spirit about doctrine, there would—the advocates of union declare—be full pews and happy preachers.

Yet after all is said and done, there is no man or woman who will continue in association or identification with any Church when it is not his or her interest or enjoyment to do so. And as knowledge increases and superstition loses its hold, no person of average intelligence is going to be bullied by veiled threats of Purgatory or Hell Fire. The Protestant Churches long for the unity and indivisibility, the infallibility and authority of Rome. But every union within Protestantism means more divisions and schisms. The amalgamation of sects means the formation of others; and sometimes the desertion of thinkers to the camp of Freethought. This is something for the leaders of the "Free" Churches to put in their pipes and smoke at their leisure. Logically, the only true home for any believer in supernaturalism is the Roman Catholic Church. Papa at Rome dreams of the realization in the not distant future of "one flock and one shepherd." Some day the wandering prodigals will return! Meanwhile, the watch dogs of Freethought must keep well together in defence of the sheep against the wolves in sheep's clothing!

IGNORUS.

Who speaks the truth stabs falsehood to the heart.
J. R. Lowell.

This Mysterious Universe.

With Earth's first clay, they did the Last Man knead
And there of the Last Harvest sowed the seed
And the First Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

Omar Khyyam.

"There is no doubt that these words express what is in our minds when we refer to determinism." "Determinism means predetermination." "Regularities in the course of Nature=Laws of Nature." "There is a gradation from phenomena predictable with overwhelming probability to phenomena which are altogether indeterminate." (From a lecture by Prof. Eddington to the Mathematical Society, in *Nature*.)

We can take a risk and predict from experience, without knowing the reason, that the sun will rise to-morrow, but we will certainly feel a little more confident about it if we know how it happens. Knowing this it becomes a case, at least, of "overwhelming probability." The Nautical Almanac goes even further, and predicts events three years ahead. Now we have only to imagine the Nautical Almanac extended backwards and forwards in time (on a pinch, like Omar, we might even do without the Nautical Almanac) to realize the profound truth that the First Morning can only be the prelude to the Last! But it is the interval between these two extremes that matters most, it is in fact the only reality, and evidently Omar's meaning is that this same inevitability applies here also. No doubt he was right, it was his way of saying: Given matter and its properties everything in the physical world happens as a matter of necessity; and, as kittens don't grow up to be elephants, we may extend the formula and say, Given living-matter and its properties all the phenomena of life, from its origin, if it had one, are inevitable also. A theory like that of evolution seems to be a sort of almanac of the past, but does not help much in predicting human affairs. Probably the political and economic condition of Europe will be about the same to-morrow as to-day, but this is about as far as you can go. This is entirely due to the fact that "mind" or "intelligence" with its vagaries enters into the problem. We have to say for instance: Tariffs will be higher to-morrow unless the Free Trade members of the Government prove too strong for the Protectionists. It is otherwise in the physical world. Some physicists, according to their theories, predict even the end of the world, and tell us something about the beginning of it too, but they are able to do this only because it is not necessary to take "mind" or "intelligence" into account—they do not need to say: The sun will rise to-morrow unless so and so changes his mind about it. There is no mind in it, the world turns round because it must, and with just as much necessity as a kitten has to grow up to be a cat and for the same reason—the nature of things. Given matter and its properties everything that happens is inevitable or is determined even if we have not enough knowledge to predict it or say what has been in the past. But inevitable, or determined, does not necessarily mean predetermined in the sense that there was, in the beginning, some "being," "mind" or "intelligence" whose function it was to determine the course of events beforehand, to know the end from the beginning, to wind up the clock, as it were, on the First Morning and then let it run down of itself until the Last Dawn. For one thing there is the tremendous length of the interval during which this "Great First Cause" must be supposed to be quiescent. Still, it is only on this assumption of a First and a Last that the god-idea can be brought in at all; if things or processes working automatically did not come to an end he would never get the opportunity to change his mind and he might as well not be there at all in that case. Regularities in the course of nature are due to the properties of matter, but there is no mental or logical necessity to imagine a "being"—whatever that might be—whose function it was "to make up his mind" beforehand what these properties should be. Regularities in the course of nature are not in themselves evidence of mind, while the stories of irregularities, stories of "change of mind" attributed to a well-known popular deity are such caricatures of in-

telligence as would condemn out of hand the notion of the universe being under any intelligent control.

"Regularities in the course of Nature=Laws of Nature." Anything that happens only once can have no "regularities," it does not run a "course," it is beyond the pale of "law." If there should be such an event it would be a "miracle," and nobody wants a miracle because it would be something beyond all hope of our comprehension. But this is the trouble with "origins." An origin, in the case of fundamentals, as here, is a single event or if it was a process it would be a process taking place in a world altogether beyond our ken, the final result only, matter, being perceptible by us. In the case of the physical world we might get over the difficulty by supposing, for the time being, at any rate, that it never had a beginning, that Omar was wrong, that there never was any Morning of Creation. But living-matter seems to be a different case; the "matter" is the same, it is three-quarters water, but it is only within certain degrees of temperature, which have not always obtained, that water and consequently living matter is possible. As far as we know all existing living matter is "descended from" pre-existing living matter supplemented with the power peculiar to living matter of taking up water and other things and converting them into its own living substance, that is, feeding, growing and reproducing. But our earth once formed part of the sun so that if we look backwards this process of descent must have had a beginning, that is we come to a single event, beyond the pale of "law," in other words we come to a miracle, or to say the least of it, a mystery. The physical world may be "endless and sublime," as Byron says of the ocean, or it may have had, as Omar suggests, a beginning and be a miracle, but in either case it seems to be no less a mystery, while the presence of living matter on the earth, partaking, as it does, of the mystery of the physical, has a mystery all its own.

At length I said, "Show me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid on the other side of the rock of adamant. The Genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me. I then turned again to the vision I had been so long contemplating; but instead, I saw nothing but the long, hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep and camels grazing upon the sides of it."

Herbert Spencer asks: May there not be something that transcends intelligence? Perhaps, no one can tell, it is an "unobservable" and science has advance says Prof. E. A. Milne, by cutting out unobservables, but though there should be nothing in the idea it is still better than any personifications of intelligence, though, of course, not as humorous.

CHARLES PORTER.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The brave and honest gentlemen who signed the second letter condemning the book entitled *Outline for Boys and Girls*, seem to have been inspired by the example of a no less brave and honest Quaker, who is reported to have acted as follows. One morning he found that a stray dog had slipped into the house and lapped up the family milk. His stern principles forbade him to hurt the animal, and so he opened wide the door, and the gate, drove it out into the street, and then called loudly to the passers-by, "A mad dog, friends, a dangerous mad dog." History proves conclusively that the integrity of ecclesiastics is no less suspicious in the upper than in the lower ranks.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Vulgarity is only in concealment of truth, or affectation.—*Ruskin*.

Obituary.

MR. JAMES NEATE.

It is with profound sorrow that I have to record the death of one of my oldest friends in the Freethought movement. He was present at the first speech I delivered from a Freethought platform, now about forty-three years ago, and the friendship which began then has remained unflawed ever since. I have been with him in Society work during the whole of that time, and have found him always the most industrious of helpers and the most loyal of friends. He was not a man who thrust himself forward, was not a speaker, but when work was to be done he was always there, and nothing was permitted to interfere with his services to the movement if it could possibly be prevented.

In the whole of our acquaintance I do not recall his ever being guilty of a mean or dishonourable action. He could be trusted in every respect, and his word once given could be relied upon absolutely. He was slow to pass judgment on men, but firm once that judgment was given. I had many instances of this, and also, many quite unknown to him (although I had his confidence more than most) and of the many cases he helped financially in his own quiet way. Where help was needed, and so far as he thought it deserving of help, he was a ready and sympathetic friend.

For some time his health had been bad, and for some weeks past, very bad. I saw him on several occasions recently, the last time only two days before he died. I should have seen him just a few hours before he drew his last breath, but business in connexion with the Society prevented my doing so. He died on October 28, and the cremation is fixed for November 3, just as this issue of the *Freethinker* is going to press. I promised him that whenever the end came I would say a word of farewell over his remains. I shall do so, but it will be a hard task, among the hardest I have ever had. The cremation will take place at the City of London Crematorium, Ilford, on November 3, at one o'clock.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

ARTHUR BUTTON.

THE remains of Arthur Button were interred at West Ham Cemetery, London, E., on Saturday, October 29. Indifferent health followed a stroke which occurred about four years ago, and the end came on October 25, at sixty-nine years of age. A member of the Bethnal Green N.S.S., he had a long record of active service in the Freethought movement, and was proud of the part he played in the "Old Days," when the present President of the National Secular Society was taming wild Christians in Victoria Park. In accordance with his wish for a Secular funeral, the ceremony was duly carried out in the presence of relatives and friends by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD OCTOBER 28, 1932.

THE President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs Rosetti (A. C.), Clifton, Wood, LeMaine, Easterbrook (W. J. W.), Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Sandys, Easterbrook (L. M. W.), Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted, and Monthly Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to the following Branches, Preston, Sunderland, Burnley, Liverpool, Manchester, Blackburn, Bradford, West Ham, and the Parent Society. Permission to form Branches of the Society at Burnley and Blackburn was given. Reports were received of meetings held at the Picton Hall, Liverpool, Stockport, by Messrs. Brighton and Clayton, and the Charles Bradlaugh Centenary Committee. Matters in connexion with Preston, Swansea, and Nelson Branches, and the International Freethought Federation were dealt with. Arrangements for a Social to be held in Caxton Hall were agreed upon. The Executive heard with great regret the death of Mr. J. Neate. The President paid a glowing tribute to the

loyalty and years of sterling work on the Executive and in the Freethought movement generally. The Secretary was instructed to send a message of condolence from the Executive to Mrs. Neate.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on November 25.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station, Hall No 5): 7.30 Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe (President, Metropolitan Secular Society)—"Secular Steps to Salvation."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Sunday, November 6, Lord Snell, C.B.E.—"The Revival of Anti-Semitism in Europe."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Coming Fascism."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 7, Mr. Goldman—"Cause and Effect."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.0, Tuesday, November 8, Christopher Dawson—"Religion and Rationalism as Elements in Western Culture."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N.): 6.45, Mr. F. Verinder—"The Bible and the Land Question."

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Mitchell's Restaurant, 114 High Road, Wembley): 7.30, Sunday, November 6, Mr. G. F. Green—"The International Aspect of Roman Catholicism."

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, November 6, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, November 6, Mr. B. A. Le Maine, 3.30, Messrs. Bryant, and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Le Maine. The *Freethinker* and other Pioneer literature can be bought during and after our meetings of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ACCRINGTON (King's Hall Cinema): 6.30, Sunday, November 6, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Challenge of Atheism."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Sunday, November 6, Mr. J. H. Morgan (Bradford)—"Intolerance."

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead, near Hamilton Square): 3.0, Sunday, November 6, Dr. C. H. Ross Carmichael (Liverpool)—"The Test of Civilization."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall, Birmingham): 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen, President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*—"The Psychology of Belief."

BURNLEY (Barden House Club): 11.0, Sunday, November 6, Mr. J. Clayton—"Woman and Religion."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Branch Rooms, Front Street): 7.0 Sunday, November 6, A lecture and discussion.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Sunday, November 6, Mr. J. Clayton—"War and Religion."—Questions and discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room): 6.30, Sunday, November 6, Dr. Kent, M.A., Ph.D., F.C.S. "Is Atheism Really Scientific." Questions and discussion. Silver collection.

HANTS AND DORSET BRANCH (36 Victoria Park Road, Bournemouth): 6.30 to 7.0; Sunday, November 6, A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Sunday, November 6, E. C. Gates, J. P. (Manchester). On behalf of the Howard League for Penal Reform—"Penal Reform." *Freethinkers* on sale.

(Continued on page 719.)

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(Continued from page 718.)

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—A Social and Dance will be held on Saturday, November 5, at the Washington Hotel, Lime Street. From 7.30 to 11.0 p.m. Tickets (not including refreshments) 1s. each. Everybody welcome.
PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus) : 7.0, Sunday, November 6, Mr. A. E. Knowles—“Can I be a Christian.”
SEAHAM HARBOUR (Co-operative Hall) : 7.0, Sunday, November 6, Mr. J. T. Brighton—“Christianity and Progress.”
SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Buildings, Green Street) : 7.30, Sunday, November 6, Mr. Alan Flanders—“Catholic Action.”
SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (I.L.P. rooms in Foyle Street, Sunderland) : 7.15, Monday, November 7. A Study Circle and Speakers class will be conducted by Mr. J. T. Brighton every Monday.

The Secular Society, Ltd.

CHAIRMAN—CHAPMAN COHEN.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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