

# THE FREETHINKER

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

Views and Opinions.

Church and State.

In the collection of essays that go to make up the book *Christianity and The Crisis*, the Bishop of Croydon disclaims any intention of ending the existence of an Established Church in this country. He explains that he would mend it, not end it, and he would mend it by establishing a "complete equality of religious bodies in the national life." The Bishop is not alone among the clergy of the Established Church in coming to that conclusion. Nonconformists have gained in strength and influence, and are so insistent in their clamour for a share of the spoils of office that quite a number of the established clergy are realizing that unless they agree to share the plunder there may soon be none to divide. Those who are outside the privileged ring demand a share in what the good Christian gangsters of America call the "rake-off," and threaten the others that unless this is conceded they will, again like the gangsters, make business impossible. And it is quite on the carpet that the present Government will connive at some measure of disestablishment without disendowment, and buy off the dissenters by allotting them a larger share of public privilege and pelf than they at present enjoy.

It must be remembered that Nonconformists do not have any objection to a State religion as such; neither do they object to compelling all to support a State religion whether they believe in it or not. Dissenters never object to the Secular power protecting religion from attack, or helping it by patronage, (There was great disappointment among them when the first President of the United Methodist Conference was not given a seat in the House of Lords) or by keeping religion in the schools, or by dipping their fingers into the public purse by having Chapel rates and taxes remitted. Plainly their attitude is an expression of the good old adage, "Honour among Thieves," and an application of it to Churches as well as to pick-pockets. The Bishop of Croydon appears to agree with them, and when Christians agree their unanimity is wonderful!

What is a National Religion?

The Bishop's magnanimity does not stop here. He thinks it a grievous wrong that religious bodies should be subjected to exclusion from "national religious acts and occasions." But what is a national religious act? A national act should be one in which all the nation agrees to act either in person or by proxy. Thus, a representative of Britain is one whom the nation by some agreed method selects to represent it, and he is that even though the one actually selected is not the person many would desire. But so long as each has an opportunity of expressing an opinion as to the selection the representative character of A or B remains. But how can there be a "national religious act" in this country to-day? Apart from the mixture of quite contradictory religious beliefs millions of people have no religious belief whatever. Would a selected representative of all the Christian bodies represent the Jews, and Buddhists, and Mohammedans in the country? Would Roman Catholics agree to be represented by a Protestant, or a Protestant by a Roman Catholic? Why the *Church Times* recently protested against a Nonconformist being permitted to preach in the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral! As usual, the Bishop of Croydon is thinking of no more than a Christian family party. All the rest can go to the devil—where they will go if the Bishop's theology is sound.

A "national act" in existing circumstances means no more than the "Britain thinks," or the "England says," of the newspaper writer. As a statement of fact it is as mythical as Betsy Harris or "the nation is plunged into grief" at the news of the death of a member of the Royal family. There may be a religious act just as there may be an Atheistic act, that is, as an expression of a phase of the complex life of the country. I quite agree that in any national pageant intended really to represent the intellectual life of the country, religion should be represented, even though it is as much a reflection on the quality of our culture as would be an exhibition of scalps at a military parade. A number of religious representatives can represent none but their own particular organizations. It is only the impudence and arrogance of Christians that can convert a religious ceremony into a national act.

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Will Any God Do?

Nonconformist writers are fond of protesting against the injustice of selecting one form of Christian belief for State patronage and ignoring others. I agree with the protest, although in this instance the State has acted more logically than have the protestors. It is bad enough for the State to select any religion, but it would be unutterably ridiculous if after having selected one as being the true religion it proceeded to place all upon an absolute equality, and to say in effect that any other religion will do just as

well. The religion of the Established Church is based on the Bible, and when the Bible says "I am the Lord thy God," and "Thou shalt have no other God but me," it does not mean that any kind of a God will do, provided there is perfect sectarian equality on all national acts and occasions. The Christian God is a God who is not to be trifled with, not a God who says, "I am the Lord thy God, but any other kind of a God will do if you prefer him."

So the State, when it said that there must be a national religion, acted quite sensibly when it proceeded to say what that religion was to be. The State in saying this may have been wrong, but at least it was not fundamentally idiotic. It may have acted unjustly, but it used common sense in its injustice. If a man is allowed to pick whatever religion he pleases, the freedom of choice carries with it the implication that, so far as the State is concerned it does not matter what sort of a religion he has, and he may go without any if he so please. Where religion is really held to be necessary no such choice is permitted. There is the case of the King whose religion is settled for him before he is born. His religion goes with the job; it is settled by Act of Parliament, and if he publicly rejected that religion he would lose his post. It is not the advocate of a compulsory State religion that is acting illogically, but the Nonconformist who professes disbelief in a State religion, but hungrily grasps at every subsidy from the State and strains after every privilege it can confer.

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#### The Meaning of a State Church.

Like other social institutions a State religion rests ultimately on a presumed basis of utility. In all primitive societies respect for the Gods is compulsory because so much depends upon their good-will. In the case of the kingship magic is mixed up with it because, upon the king's divine or semi-divine character depends the favourable weather, the quality of the crops, and even the stability of the earth. This still lingers in the semi-sacred character and ceremonies surrounding the modern king, and its existence in the mentality of the race is seen in the surprise expressed when a King or a Queen is found behaving just like an ordinary human being. But the acceptance of established religious beliefs is strictly enforced in primitive societies as an act of self-protection or self-preservation. That primitive type of intelligence is still with us, not merely in the case of the "common" people, but in the case of many learned ignoramuses in our universities, in Parliament, on the bench of bishops and on the judicial bench.

Thanks, however, to the influence of Roman practice and Greek philosophy, Europe had largely outgrown this stage when Christianity came on the scene. A new era of religious intolerance was revived by the growth of the Christian Church, although until the Protestant Reformation, while there was always much trouble for those who challenged the Christian faith, there existed no law in Europe which compelled a man to be a Christian, and nothing in the shape of an Established Church. Of course, in practice the heretic "caught it in the neck," but that was upon other than secular grounds. The legal change came with the Reformation which gave Europe a State Church and made the acceptance of Christianity compulsory, save in certain specified exceptions. The State in this was quite logical. If it set up a Church it was bound to declare it the "true" Church, and disobedience to it was on the same level as disobeying secular laws. The conception of the social structure which was common in the most primitive times was thus established again in a Europe that had experienced the revivifying influence of the Greek and

Roman culture. Just as Christianity in its rise stood for a retrogression to lower levels of religious belief, so Protestantism actually stood for the more primitive conception of the function of religion in social life.

The reasonable conditions for a State religion are thus, either that primitive state of mind when tribal or national welfare is believed to be dependent upon the good-will of the the Gods, or, above that stage, a society in which there is practical unanimity in religious belief. To some extent we have this primitive condition with us still, but not in such a degree as to make it a strongly coercive force. But unquestionably there exists in every Christian country in the world large numbers of men and women wearing civilized dress, speaking a civilized tongue, behaving themselves with all the decorum of civilized people, but who in their fundamental religious mentality are no higher than the most primitive of savages.

The other condition which would give these primitive folk an air of modernity would be a common agreement as to religious belief. But this obviously does not exist. There are with us all sorts of discordant religious opinions, and there are probably several millions of the population who have no religious beliefs at all. In such circumstances it is absurd to talk of a national religion, and a social injustice for the State to select one form of religious belief for patronage and endowment. It is quite possible that if the bribe is attractive enough the Nonconformists will fall in with the suggestion that all religious sects—that is, Christian sects—shall be equally established. The Nonconformists have shown over and over again that they are in the market, and will deal if the terms are attractive enough. But nothing can ever make a State religion other than a gross affront to a civilized sense of justice, and an advertisement that the savage within us is not yet dead.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Summer Lightning.

"As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect."—Emerson.  
"Between the devil and the deep blue sea."

Ancient Proverb.

ONE of the most absurd costumes for a man in this country is that of the high ecclesiastics of the State Church. The stringed stove-pipe hat; the clerical dog-collar, the cloth gaiters, and apron, combined with the oleaginous professional smirk of a right-reverend Father-in-God is almost sufficient to make the lions at Trafalgar Square roar in sheer amazement. Wonderful as this is, the full war-paint of the bishops is still more extraordinary. From a theatrical point of view the costume is worth the £300 which it costs, although its resemblance to a sixth-century stained-glass window "saint" is obvious. Yet there are people who wish to make alterations in the ordinary episcopal attire, whilst leaving what a little girl would call "the party dress" in all its glory of gorgeous and gilded barbarity.

The latest critic is not a wicked Freethinker, nor even an envious Free Churchman, but, strange to say, a holy man who has worked himself up to a condition of terrible, and some may think, unwarrantable iconoclasm. The Bishop of Kensington is very anxious for a new and modern dress for bishops, and he aired his sceptical views at the opening exhibition to celebrate the centenary of the Anglo-Catholic Movement. His reverence really means business, for he suggested that Lord Sankey, the Chancellor, should move in the House of Lords a Bill "for the Better Habitment" of the Right-Reverends of the Parliamentary Religion.

The Bishop's objection to the present dress is utilitarian, and not æsthetic. He sees no incongruity in a costume which makes its owner look like an overgrown penguin making whoopee, but he thinks that it should be brought up-to-date. The bishop wants a costume that can be used whilst motoring, and he points out that the gaiters were designed for horse-riding, and gee-gees are now primarily used as cat's meat. He wants leather leggings and a peaked cap. In short, he wants the week-day dress of a right-reverend Father-in-God to resemble the costume worn by a work-a-day bus-conductor.

A protest against such iconoclasm is not inexcusable. Busmen are a most worthy body of men. Do we not trust our lives daily, even hourly in their safe-keeping? What have they done that they should be so cruelly lampooned in this manner, and their habits of dress caricatured? Of course, we realize that a silk stove-pipe hat is not suitable for motoring, especially if the tin-lizzie is small and the occupant on the aldermanic scale in the matter of avoirdupois. The danger of a smashed silk-hat is constant, and the result offensive, and there is a further danger of the owner using forcible, even profane language. Even a bishop might imperil his "immortal soul," if he possess such a thing, in such distressing circumstances.

Such iconoclasm really looks like the thin edge of the wedge. Once admit reformation in the dresses of God's anointed, where is it all to stop? Some carping critic might even suggest that the traditional dresses of the twelve disciples should be brought up to date. Instead of highly-coloured blankets, plus-fours might be substituted; in place of haloes, Homburg hats. What revolutionary ideas are these? When the sartorial reformation is complete, the sacred dozen look like disgruntled Cook's excursionists; or in more decorous clothing like a pawnbrokers' outing. You can play the tragedy of "Hamlet" in the clothing of any period, but a superstition must have an unfamiliar setting, or else it oversteps the narrow line which divides the sublime from the ridiculous.

That is the precise reason why modern versions of the Christian Bible have always been failures. A medieval creed is more in harmony when rendered in archaic language than in the live vocabulary of to-day. The Bishop of Kensington has drawn attention to a barbaric survival, and he thinks to bring it up to date and make it more in harmony with modern requirements.

In spite of the bishop, there are æsthetic no less than intellectual, objections to the clergy. To parody a smart piece of verse:—

"I wish I liked the priestly race,  
I wish I liked its silly face,  
I wish I liked the way it walks,  
I wish I liked the way it talks,  
And when I'm introduced to one  
I wish I thought: 'What jolly fun.'"

The trouble is that bishops and ministers of religion foster the quaint notion that they are not as other men. They profess very loudly that they are a caste apart from their fellow-citizens. They wear special dress, and adopt a form of speech reminiscent of an undertaker saying: "Does anybody wish to see the old gentleman before he is screwed down?" Lots of them work one day a week, whereas popular prejudice is in favour of six, and so many of them live in houses larger than their neighbours, and appear to be having a good time, "basking in the sunshine of the countenance of God," as one of their number expresses it. The Romish priests, and some of the Anglo-Catholics, who are as like them as margarine resembles butter, profess celibacy, which Horace Smith wittily des-

cribed as "a vow a man takes that he will enjoy none but other men's wives."

There are forty thousand professional ministers of religion in this country, ranging from Catholics to Christadelphians, from Methodists to Mormons. Looked at critically, they are neither more nor less than medicine-men engaged in precisely similar work to their dusky prototypes in uncivilized nations. They tell us of gods who get angry with us, of a dreadful devil who must be guarded against, of angels who fly from heaven to earth, of saints who can assist if supplicated. They warn backsliders of a red-hot-poker department where non-subscribers receive special attention. And these ministers of religion are as honest as fortune-tellers, but not more so. Many an old woman has been sent to prison for taking money from a servant-girl, after promising her a long life, a handsome husband, and six children, but these clergymen, are allowed to take all they can get for promises of good fortune in "the beautiful land above."

These clergymen have a good time; they are not crucified. The Archbishop of Canterbury gets £15,000 yearly, two palaces, and a town house. The Bishop of London, who is a bachelor, has £10,000 per annum, a palace, and a town house. The three-hundred bishops of the State Church share nearly a million of money annually between them. The leading Free Church ministers do very well, whilst travelling evangelists enjoy incomes that many business men would envy. Every one of these men absorbs so much money which could be very much more usefully employed. For men may be ordained to the Christian priesthood and yet have never been converted to civilization. One of their own saints, Jeanne D'Arc, called the English, "les God-damns." It is not a bad title for the clergy.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Story of the Disconcerting Comet.

THE sudden appearance of a comet in the nocturnal sky arouses little excitement to-day. For we live in an age when the advent of a comet is predicted by the astronomer, when the paths comets follow have been determined, and when their innocent nature has been fully established. It is therefore extremely difficult to realize the terror, frequently rising to a panic, into which the entire population of Christian Europe was for centuries reduced by the spectacle of a tailed and menacing comet in the heavens.

Although the ancient Chaldean astrologers regarded comets as purely natural phenomena, in other parts of the world these wandering lights were feared as heavenly messengers of misfortune. The cultured Mediterranean races inherited a vast sum of superstition from their savage and barbarous ancestors. Comets and eclipses they thought ominous to mankind. The appearance of a new star, or a meteoric display, was on the other hand regarded as auspicious inasmuch as it announced the nativity of divinities, sages, warriors or kings. A star heralded the births of Christ and Buddha, and is said to have presaged that of Moses. The coming of Abraham among the Jews, and the advent of the great and wise in Greece and Rome, were proclaimed by celestial lights.

Naturally such signs and wonders became part of the creed of Christendom. In truth they probably assumed a more sinister aspect when they were interpreted by the Church as God's warnings to wayward

men of impending punishment. And the belief that every comet is a dangerous firebrand flung into the sky by an infuriated deity to summon mankind to prayer and repentance was taught by the primitive Christians and remained orthodox until quite recent generations. Even when the discoveries of science had plainly disproved this doctrine, the unprogressive pious could always appeal to the authority of the Church and the evidences contained in the Scriptures.

It is noteworthy that teachers so diverse as Origen, the Venerable Bede, John of Damascus, and the great St. Thomas Aquinas himself, unhesitatingly asserted the malevolent meaning of heavenly meanderers. A tailed comet in the night sky foreboded evil in many diverse ways. Disastrous campaigns, the downfall of States, plagues and famines were all portended by the arrival of a comet.

Direful superstition such as this led to various evils. The belief that men's lives were at the mercy of baleful stars tended to enervate the will, to inspire and sustain fanaticism, and to strengthen the despotism of Church and State. Stagnation characterized the entire period embraced by the Middle Ages. As a standard authority, Dr. A. D. White avers: "At the appearance of a comet we constantly see all Christendom, from Pope to peasant, instead of striving to avoid war by wise statesmanship, instead of striving to avert pestilence by observation and reason, instead of striving to avert famine by skilful economy, whining before fetishes, trying to bribe them to remove these signs of God's wrath, and planning this supposed wrath of God upon misbelievers."

In days when the births of Pontiffs, princes, and other men of consequence were heralded by the appearance of splendid stars, and when their deaths were forecasted by comets their supreme importance was deeply impressed on the minds of the motley multitude. The seats of authority, both spiritual and temporal, were thus strengthened, and the arrogance of kings and priests rose to inordinate heights. Again, so far did this astral delusion minister to the vanity of autocratic rulers that they were apt to preen themselves on their semi-divinity, and to express their satisfaction that their deaths were of such universal importance as to call forth comets in the sky. Shakespeare immortalized this sentiment in *Julius Cæsar* in the lines:—

"When beggars die, there are no comets seen;  
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

In his *Norman Conquest*, Freeman has presented a realistic picture of the panic inspired by the terrible comet which watched over the deathbed of the pious and incapable Edward the Confessor, and presaged the disastrous Battle of Hastings when Harold, the last of the Saxon princes, was slain.

Throughout the Middle Ages Christendom was periodically reduced to a state of terror by the cometary harbingers of misfortune or death that hung menacingly in the heavens. So late indeed as 1456, when the Moslem Turk captured the Eastern Capital of Christianity, popular fear of cometary influences continued unabated. A comet was then visible in the sky, and it was believed that this presaged the complete triumph of the insolent Moslem. An able administrator, the Pope Calixtus III., nevertheless appears to have participated in the superstitions of the time. For, he was so deeply alarmed that he solemnly "decreed several days of prayer for the averting of the wrath of God, that whatever calamity impended, might be turned from the Christians and against the Turks." Then likewise was instituted the mid-day Angelus which summons pious believers to petition against the powers of Satan. The Pope is said to have

officially excommunicated the comet by means of a papal bull. A litany also contained the plea, "From the Turk and the comet, good Lord deliver us." Yet, despite the World War, with all its changing consequences, the Turks still retain possession of Constantinople, while the terrible comet since known as Halley's has been completely disarmed by the researches of science; its path through space has been determined; and its reappearance calmly awaited every seventy-five years.

Catholic apologists have endeavoured to discredit the story of Pope Calixtus and the comet. But it is accepted as truth by the leading historians of astronomy. The chief authority, however, is Platina the contemporary annalist who recorded the events not only at the time, but also on the spot. As Dr. White conclusively states, "the authority of Platina, who was not only in Rome at the time, but when he wrote his history, archivist to the Vatican, is final as to the Pope's attitude. Platina's authority was never questioned until modern science had changed the ideas of the world."

The belief in the supernatural character of comets long survived the Reformation and Renascence. Strype, Latimer, and many other Anglican divines furnish proof of this in England, as does John Howe, the celebrated seventeenth century Dissenter. Howe poured scorn on the scientific interpretation of comets, and asserted their godly nature, inasmuch as they were portents to a sinful and backsliding generation.

In Scotland the Reformers zealously espoused the theological teaching. Blunt John Knox regarded comets as tokens of the Almighty's anger, and even after scientists had penetrated the secrets of cometary phenomena, the Scottish Church in 1680 proclaimed that heavenly lights were "prodigies of great judgment on these lands for our sins, for never was the Lord more provoked by a people."

But the astronomical discoveries of Tycho Brahe and Kepler were steadily undermining popular superstition. Burton in his fascinating *Anatomy of Melancholy* notes their influence upon intellectual opinion. Sir Thomas Browne again, admitted that the evils attributed to malign stars had been exaggerated "since it is found that many of them are above the moon." Yet in 1682 a scientist, Ralph Thoresby, a Fellow of the recently formed Royal Society, writing in deep distress, while acknowledging the natural causation of comets, surmised that God might send them as warnings of impending calamity. Yet, at this very moment, Halley was conducting those epoch-making researches that were destined to liberate civilized Europe from the anxieties which had so continuously saddened the world.

It is probable that the Teutonic countries were those in which the cometary mania obtained its firmest hold. Central Europe was for centuries the stronghold of witches and wizards, and was ever a terror-stricken region in seasons of cometary manifestations. Small wonder then that their sinister character was taken for granted by the Protestant leaders. Thus Luther in an Advent sermon asserts that, "The heathen write that the comet may arise from natural causes, but God creates not one that does not foretoken a sure calamity." In another mood Luther traces them to Satanic agency and denounces them as "harlot stars,"

Melanchthon, Zwingli, and other theologians mention comets as God's evil messengers, while Lavater cited Scripture to prove that comets are tokens of death and disaster to the human race.

T. F. PALMER.

## Irish, English and Celtic Renaissance.

(Continued from page 470.)

The heroes of the Irish sagas were little known in the country at large until recent years. One story, which has attracted attention from several writers, is *Deirdre, or the Fate of the Children of Usnach*. The King is holding high revel with his Court in the house of his chief-bard, when a daughter is born thereto. A druid present prophesies great evils will befall Ulster because of her; and the warriors therefore wish to have her destroyed. But the King forbids and declares his will to have her brought up as he shall direct and, if she pleases him, eventually to be his wife. So she grows up specially tended, and develops surpassing beauty. As she approaches maturity the King makes his wishes known to her; but the maiden has other ideas about her fate. She desires a young and handsome lover and has cast eyes at a distance on one to her liking—Naisi, a bold warrior and hunter. She makes her wishes known to him and they elope, with his two brothers, and go to Alba (Scotland) where they live a happy and wandering life. But the King's vengeance has only slept, and he lures Naisi and his brothers back to Ulster on specious pretences, and then has them treacherously slain. On this Deirdre kills herself; and revolt and confusion follow among his subjects from the outrages—so fulfilling the prophecy.

Mr. J. M. Synge is best known for realistic studies of contemporary Irish life, particularly of the remote peasantry. Some of his work roused strong criticism from his compatriots for its subject-matter and mode of treatment when first produced; as *The Playboy of the Western World*, and *The Shadow of the Glen*. But he has taken the above story and made of it a high romantic tragedy, *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, and was engaged on its final revision at the time of his early death. In the scene where the King's messenger is persuading Naisi to return, a chance remark of his she overhears stirs in her the feeling that, dreading evil as she does if they go back, better destruction while their love is yet vital than live on for it to fade.

Deirdre: It isn't to great deeds you're going, but to near troubles, and the shortening of your days the time that they are bright and sunny; and isn't it a poor thing that I, Deirdre, could not hold you away?

Naisi: I've said we'd stay in Alban always.

Deirdre: There's no place to stay always . . . It's a long time we've had, pressing the lips together, going up and down, resting in our arms, Naisi, waking with the smell of June in the tops of the grasses, and listening to the birds in the branches that are highest . . . It's a long time we've had, but the end has come, surely . . .

Naisi (*still more eagerly*): Come away, Deirdre, and its little we'll think of safety or the grave beyond it, and we resting in a little corner between the daytime and the long night.

Deirdre (*clearly and gravely*): It's this hour we're between the daytime and a night where there is sleep for ever, and isn't it a better thing to be following on to a near death, than to be bending the head down, and dragging with the feet, and seeing one day a blight showing upon love where it is sweet and tender?

Naisi (*his voice broken with distraction*): If a near death is coming what will be my trouble losing the earth and the stars over it, and you, Deirdre, are their flame and bright crown? Come away into the safety of the woods.

Deirdre (*shaking her head slowly*): There are as many ways to wither love as there are stars in a night of Samhain; but there is no way to keep life, or love with it, a short space only . . . (*with a more*

*tender intensity*). We're seven years without roughness or growing weary; seven years so sweet and shining, the Gods would be hard set to give us seven days the like of them. It's for that we're going to Emain, where there'll be a rest for ever, or a place for forgetting, in great crowds and they making a stir . . .

In the original saga is a farewell to Alba by Deirdre, suffused with a sense of natural beauty, peculiar to early Celtic poetry. It has been given a modern interpretation in a poem from which we take two stanzas:—

Glen Masson, Glen Masson of blossoming bowers,  
Tall its wild garlic, white over with flowers,  
Joy-broken sleep upon beds grassy deep  
By thy River-mouth's murmur, Glen Masson, was ours!

Beloved is Draighen above a firm strand!  
How soft its stream purls over silver-pure sand!  
Till death I'd be under its sky of blue wonder  
Were Naisi not leading me home by the hand.

Mr. Yeats, in his own creations, treats largely the mystic and symbolic aspect of Celtic legend. For instance in *The Countess Cathleen*, a lady of old time sells her soul to the devil (or demons) in order to obtain means to save the people from a famine that is desolating her province. She is redeemed at the last through her "good deed"; a point treated in some quarters as blasphemous when the play was first presented:—

### THE ANGEL.

The light beats down: the gates of pearl are wide,  
And she is passing to the floor of peace,  
And Mary of the seven times wounded heart  
Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair  
Has fallen on her face; the Light of Lights  
Looks always on the motive, not the deed,  
The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone.

*The Unicorn from the Stars* is an allegory of a soul in travail over ideal aims and their means of attainment; and *The Land of Heart's Desire*—the conflict between reality and unsatisfied longing. Here the Sidhi or Faery folk play a leading part. The newly married daughter-in-law of a prosperous peasant household is absorbed with a MS. she has unearthed from the roof or thatch much to the disgust of a sharp-tongued mother. As customary in some of these families, the married son is living with his parents. The priest is taking supper with them and asks the girl what she is reading. The father explains it is some old book that belonged to his grandfather, who was of a similar dreamy nature. The girl makes answer:—

How a Princess Edain,  
A daughter of a King of Ireland, heard  
A voice singing on a May Eve like this  
And followed, half awake and half asleep,  
Until she came into the land of faery,  
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,  
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,  
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue;  
And she is still there, busied with a dance,  
Deep in the dewy shadows of a wood,  
Or where stars walk upon a mountain-top.

In the talk that follows the priest remonstrates with her, advises of her earthly duties, the bond into which she has entered and the danger to her soul of harbouring unholy fancies. But she replies that she is tired of the house and its nagging mother . . . 'The night is May Eve, when the folk are abroad, and she invokes them:—

Come faeries, take me out of this dull house!  
Let me have all the freedom I have lost;  
Work when I will and idle when I will!  
Faeries, come, take me out of this dull world,  
For I would ride with you upon the wind,  
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,  
And dance upon the mountains like a flame!

A child's voice is heard outside, and the father admits her; a child dressed in pale green and with red-gold hair comes into the house.

THE CHILD.

When I tire of this warm little house  
There is one here who must away, away,  
To where the woods, the stars, and the white streams  
Are holding a continual festival.

By her enchantments the faery casts a spell over the girl, despite the priest and her kindred, and draws her soul to the folk, and disappears. As the girl dies, voices are heard within and without in song:—

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,  
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,  
And the lonely of heart is withered away  
While the faeries dance in a place apart,  
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,  
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;  
For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing  
Of a land where even the old are fair,  
And even the wise are merry of tongue . . .

We think of Ireland, usually, as a country permeated by a Catholic atmosphere and tradition and all it implies. But in this literature we meet with what is in effect a Celtic renaissance, presenting in language often of great beauty and simple directness the Gaelic spirit in its native character and entirety, inclusive of pagan or Christian sentiment and values. This is to strike a true humanist note. Art serves to appease and unify and minister to heightened sensibility; hence its power to transmute such themes and fantasies into meaningful impressive poetry. At this juncture in Anglo-Irish affairs, an appreciation of that work as a valuable contribution to our cultural heritage may be taken also to include a gesture of good will and conciliation towards the Irish people themselves. The genius of both Gael and Saxon is needed for the working out of what from the nature of things remains a common destiny.

Before leaving the subject we will evoke somewhat of that proverbial Irish humour too little in evidence in recent relations. In some short discursive studies, Mr. Yeats recalls a Dublin character of a century back under the title of *The Last Gleeman*; a blind artiste of the streets who amuses his casual audience with song and verse, gibes at public affairs and people, or parodies of his own more serious efforts. Thus:—

In Egypt's land, contagious to the Nile,  
King Pharaoh's daughter went to bathe in style.  
She tuk her dip, then walked unto the land,  
To dry her royal pelt she ran along the strand.  
A bulrush tripped her, whereupon she saw  
A smiling babby in a wad o' straw.  
She tuk it up, and said with accents mild,  
"Tare-and-agers, girls, which av yez owns the child?"

AUSTEN VERNEY.

Epitaph on an Ape-Man.

"HERE lies—" No, no; he could not lie, for he could never talk—  
Therefore let's say, "Here rests a manlike-ape; one wont to walk  
Erect like apelike-men, who have a somewhat larger brain,  
And well know how to lie, and lie, and lie, and lie again."  
"Here rests—" No, no, poor brute, 'tis wrong; you rest not in this place;  
Your destined sepulchre will be in man's museum case.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Acid Drops.

Catholics are jubilant that 2,000,000 pilgrims from all parts of Europe are expected this year to visit the German city Trier "to venerate Our Lord's Holy Coat." Mgr. A. S. Barnes considers this relic to be "the third most important relic of the Passion," the other two being the Holy Cross and the Holy Shroud. So important is this relic considered that it is walled up when not exhibited. 1,925,000 people saw it and venerated it (grovelled before it, is meant) when exposed 42 years ago. Sick pilgrims are specially invited as—of course—many wonderful miracles of healing were performed at previous exhibitions. This "venerable relic" is the actual coat the Roman soldiers (badly in need of a new rig-out) cast lots for at the time of the Crucifixion and when darkness descended on the earth, the brave Tommies ran for their lives, dropping the Holy Relic. It was only discovered some centuries after by the saintly Mother of the equally saintly Constantine, when she came across the True Cross with the Holy Nails complete.

It should be added that this Holy Coat was the actual one woven by Our Lady for the Infant Jesus. As he grew, the coat grew, and he never required to renew it for the rest of his life. It was originally made without sleeves, but as Our Lord wanted sleeves when he grew older, they appeared miraculously thereon. This must be obvious to true Catholics as it would be the height of impertinence to suggest Our Lord called in the services of a Jewish tailor in the matter when he had the power of performing miracles at will. The Holy Relic was eventually taken to Trier, in which Holy City St. Matthew is buried, and already crowds of good Christians are making pilgrimages to the Apostles' grave as well. We suggest a special train of distinguished literary Englishmen and women who have become converts to the Saintly and Venerable and Holy Roman Catholic Religion be chartered, and photographs showing these "intellectuals" paying homage to the relics be published. What a mass of converts they would produce!

The L.M. & S. Railway reports in one month no less than 24,000 of the small towels supplied on its trains were stolen. And this in a Christian country, and during a period when on the highest religious authority there is a distinct revival of religion taking place. We suggest that the towels have been taken to wipe up the tears of repentance that these revived religionists are shedding. We doubt whether heathen China or Atheistic Russia could beat this record of petty larceny per population.

It reminds us of the story that G. W. Foote used to tell of his experiences in prison. On one Sunday he decided to go to the prison Church service. He went and listened to a sermon from the chaplain to the assembled "lags," all of whom had some sort of a religion, that were it not for the power of religion no man's property would be safe for a single hour. And the audience evidently agreed with the chaplain.

Four well-known laymen in the Church of England have appealed to the Archbishops to re-assure the laity by a public restatement of the Reformation position and by an official re-affirmation of the Scriptural basis of the Church's teaching. This is rather an unreasonable request to a Church which aims to be all things to (nearly) all Christians.

Slums and poverty abound in Limehouse, but money can always be collected for new Churches almost anywhere. This month, the building of the new church of Our Lady Immaculate in Limehouse begins at a cost of nearly £3,000 and a "special appeal" is being made for

Catholic women to rake in another £1,093 for the bells for the Clock Tower. Needless to say, there will be no difficulty in getting the money. Nor will there be any in raising funds for building another Roman Catholic Church at Shoeburyness as £1,100 have already been collected. It is far more holy to build churches than to abolish slums. What do hunger and disease matter when it's a question of building more and more churches for the glory of the Lord?

There are 10,000,000 people out of work in the United States, and masses of them barely know how to carry on from day to day. But there is no lack of money for churches. One million dollars will be spent on the new church now being built at the Shrine of the Little Flower at Royal Oak, Michigan, and the craftsmen are all going to be paid higher wages than the current scale. It need hardly be added that this is always taken—even by the most poverty-stricken—as a matter of course. People can die (and have died) of hunger, but Churches must be built and priests and nuns must be kept. Freethought has still a long and arduous task to perform before it can be said its work is finished.

In Ireland, the new Church of Corpus Christi, Moate, Co. Westmeath, has just been consecrated. It cost £14,000, and no doubt there are still many more churches required and will be built, and the money easily forthcoming. Millions of people without work, poverty-stricken and heartbroken, but a priest has only to lift his finger up for a new church and money is poured into its funds. Can anyone deny that religion is still a power in the land?

Liverpool needs 20,000 houses, Sheffield 27,000, Manchester 30,000, Glasgow 38,000, Birmingham 50,000, and Leeds 70,000. Let us render up thanks unto God that there is no lack of money to build him grand cathedrals, fine churches, and even tin tabernacles. This is still a Christian country, for it puts God's needs before man's. Hallelujah!

A discussion is proceeding in one of the popular papers as to the real cause of disease. Curiously enough, in view of the fact that God and religion are dragged into so many of these popular discussions, no one has yet introduced God. Yet, as every Christian affirms that God is the creator of all things, it must inevitably follow that God is the cause of disease. In former days, the fact was tacitly admitted by all Christians who appealed for God's help in curing or preventing disease. To-day, however, it is in danger of being overlooked, even by those stalwart defenders of a benevolent and loving God, the Christian Evidencers.

A suggestion in the correspondence column of a daily paper is that many Anglican clergy are Agnostics, and that being such they ought to leave the Church. Whereupon, it is pointed out that many of these Agnostics are married men with families, and if they left the Church their dependents might starve. The position is decidedly awkward, of course. But if a man has not the courage to remain his convictions to shape his conduct, he had better remain in the Church. For when the Church becomes full of cowardly Agnostics, it will cease to have much influence over the people.

A correspondent to a Church paper feels that the time has now arrived to consolidate and strengthen the Anglo-Catholic Movement by commending "their message to men's reason and conscience by thoughtful and intelligent exposition and argument, and must not merely rely upon authority." "It is," he adds, "far worse than useless to tell the average Englishman, 'This is the Catholic Faith, and therefore you must swallow it whether you like it or not.'" This strikes us as being about the most

sensible thing said during the Tractarian Centenary, and the only snag is, how to do it? How are you going to get intelligent people to believe that Anglo- (and Roman) Catholicism is anything but the crudest and silliest superstition except by an appeal to Faith? "Intelligent exposition and argument," and appealing to "reason" are the last things required. Faith, and nothing but Faith, is the way to true and genuine Christianity.

The Bishop of Llandaff seems to have been asleep for some years—or pretends he has, anyway. He tells us that "there are not wanting signs that during the next twenty years or so, the Church will be engaged in a life and death struggle with the forces of Secularism and Materialism—with a world that organizes itself more and more completely in its social and industrial and ceremonial life, without reference to God or spiritual realities." The dear man! He thinks this might happen during the next *twenty years or so*. Why, it's happening to-day. The Church is having its life and death struggle *now*, and it is only the fact that it is still more or less allied to the State, extremely wealthy and splendidly organized, that it has been able to resist "the forces of Secularism and Materialism" so far. The struggle, however, is there and even the Bishop of Llandaff can truly guess the result.

The Sabbatarians' God, who would rather see people miserable doing nothing than see them happily enjoying some healthy recreation, has received another rude shock. Hastings Council has voted, by 22 votes to 9, to open the White Rock Gardens for various games on Sunday afternoons. Strange to relate, Hastings has not been visited by divine displeasure in the shape of earthquake, or fire from heaven, or pestilence, or famine, or any other means by which an annoyed God is supposed to betray his displeasure.

To the plea that historical places, such as the Tower of London, should be open on Sundays, someone argues that this would deprive gatekeepers, guides and officials of one day off in seven. The argument is a specious one. For all these officials could be given another day off in the place of Sunday. But if that might entail expense, then these places could be closed one week-day in seven and open on Sunday. But, of course, the real objection to Sunday opening is a religious one. This, however, has no weight with modern people, and so there is put forward spurious concern for the officials' rest-day. These tactics are typically Christian.

It is pleasant to state that the first Sunday Public School cricket match has been played recently between Rossall School and Stonyhurst College. In addition to this the Headmaster of Epsom College, the Rev. A. C. Powell, has announced on School Speech day that, in his school, non-organized games had been substituted for the compulsory "round" walk, and "he was certain that the life of the school was improved by the change." To organized games, however, he still retained his objection. We see this objection vanishing in time for the oracles of God from which religious inspiration springs, have always shown quite a kindly spirit of accommodation to the unmistakably expressed desires of man.

It is for those who claim special sources of information, revealed or mystical, denied to the layman to figure out how it is that this information proves so misleading as to make this accommodation so frequently necessary. The Puritans, intent on their soul's salvation, and logicians up to a point, saw that a Christian had small cause for joyfulness anywhere or at any time, and made a magnificently concerted and successful attempt to check any mirthful ebullition on Sunday. They in their piety and prayerfulness were convinced that it was a heinous sin to laugh or smile, light a fire, cook a steak, kiss your

wife or child, or play games on Sunday. The one who changes not still presumably abides with the modern cleric, but it is, all the same, man nowadays who calls the tune.

The British Medical Association, which held its Annual Conference in Dublin this year might have had a discussion on birth control and abortion—surely two very pressing subjects. Dr. Helen Lukis moved a resolution to consider the law of the subject. "It was," we are told, "happily shelved by the tact of Lord Dawson of Penn," who felt that Dublin "was hardly a suitable arena" in which to debate the topic. If this means anything at all it means that British doctors were not to discuss two pressing questions because Roman Catholics were opposed to them. Why shouldn't they be discussed in Dublin or anywhere else for that matter? It is difficult to understand Lord Dawson's tender regard for the feelings of Catholics and his "tact" perhaps was really nothing more than giving in to broad hints from priests.

This is all the more remarkable because no one can accuse Lord Dawson of lacking courage or not speaking out when the occasion requires. Even on this occasion some of his remarks showed that on the question of abortion "there was a definite tendency hostile to Christian moral standards," and this admission is commented upon by a Church paper as follows:—

Lord Dawson implies that it is perhaps only a question of time before the medical profession may be frankly anti-Christian in its line on certain moral questions even though it would be inexpedient for it to declare its hostility now. We have often insisted that the question of Christian morals must sooner or later lead to a formal repudiation of Christianity on the part of large sections of society. Our anticipations are likely to be realized sooner even than we expected.

We hope so.

The fact that the Pope has conferred the Grand Cross of the Order of Pius on Herr Von Pappen, the Vice-Chancellor of Germany, is pretty good proof that Catholics as a whole are not very particular what happens to other religions so long as their own is properly safeguarded in any country. What the "Holy Father" thinks of the foul attacks on the Jews in Germany is not really known, but it is obvious that the Pope is not likely to condemn the cowardly Nazis in one breath and thank heaven for the Concordat between Germany and himself in another. As Hitler, Von Pappen and crowds of the most important supporters of the Nazis, are Catholics, the Concordat cannot come as a surprise to anybody. Submission to the Church is one of the first principles of Roman Catholicism, and its strength is shown again in making the present rulers of Germany toe the line.

In spite of the large numbers of pilgrimages to Lourdes we have read about this year, so far we have only come across one so-called cure. It seems that a Miss Nellie Brennan, after being unable to walk for eight years through rheumatoid arthritis, and after being discharged from the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, as incurable went with some Scottish pilgrims, dipped into the water and came away almost completely cured. Crowds surged on to the platform to see the heroine return, and though walking with a slight limp, she required no sticks. How much truth there is in her story we cannot tell without a complete investigation, but we would like to point out that millions of similar cures have been made by Mother Seigal's Syrup and other world-famous patent medicines, by travelling "healers" like Sequah who never appealed to God, or by gentlemen like Pastor Jeffries, who always does, or even by Mrs. Eddy who denied that there was such a thing as rheumatoid arthritis, but who cured it just the same. What we should like to know, however, is exactly how many really sick people have not been cured at Lourdes and why? But we shall never know that.

Captain Howard publicly protested recently against the persecution of Christians in Russia, Mexico and Spain. He contended that Bolshevism originated under the leadership of Jews and Freemasons who were (naturally) responsible for "the outrages in Spain and Mexico." A lady, Dr. A. Homer, M.A. (no descendant of the poet, we presume) was quite certain that "the recent persecutions formed a part of the Zionist plans for the repossesion of Palestine as the centre of a vast Jewish Empire," and she seemed very much upset about it, especially as our Government leaned "in favour of Jewish demands." No particular Jews were specified as being responsible for all the Christian persecutions, but we call the attention of the Duke of Connaught and other distinguished Freemasons, now that they have just opened their wonderful Temple, to the charges of Captain Howard and Dr. Homer. Are Freemasons responsible for Christian persecution or not? Please answer.

It is high time declares a reader of a popular paper, that advanced teaching concerning "sex" should be included in the school curriculum. He adds, "Away with the cant, humbug, and hypocrisy!" This is equivalent to demanding that Christian religious influence should be removed from the schools and from society in general. For, as everyone should know, the cant, humbug, and hypocrisy which is invariably associated with matters concerning "sex," originate in the foul and perverted views of sex familiarized by the Christian religion and Churches. There is little hope of sane and wholesome instruction of an advanced kind on sex matters being imparted in the schools so long as the Christian religion exerts an influence on educators and parents. Such instruction will be possible only when parents and educators have been educated out of their unfortunate Christian prejudices concerning "sex."

### Fifty Years Ago.

BEFORE me lies a report of a discourse by the Rev. M. Baxter, on "The Signs of the Times: the Coming Millennium."

About five years hence a throne will be set up "mid-way between the highest heaven and this earth," and God the Son will sit on it. This seal-opening performance, which sounds like the dissection of a carnivore, will take about three and a half years, for a new act commences as each seal is broken. Act 1 (on opening first seal): A white horse appears; 144,000 Christians will vanish; all who see this flight will fall on their knees and be saved. Act 2 (after several months): A red horse; "hundreds of thousands of persons now living" will be the victims of war, famine, and pestilence. Then, "after some time," Act 3: A black horse; our Russian and American food supply will be diminished by two thirds; thousands will be reduced to skeletons; the plague of 1666, the American yellow fever, and the Indian cholera, are nothing to be compared with the "coming judgments." Act 4 opens with a pale horse; the martyrs will repeat their grievances, and "a great persecution, slaughter, and massacre of Protestant Christians" "will in a few months" take place; ten Republican Governments will be erected, and Christianity will be extirpated, all believers to be slain. Act 5, 6 and 7, "in quick succession," produces an earthquake, black sun, red moon, and a shower of stars. "People mourned over the 200 children killed at Sunderland;" but the advancing judgments are infinitely more terrible. "In conclusion, he asked them to accept Christ;" and "they could stand serene, undismayed, and unterrified in the midst of these terrible scenes."

Now as God the Son said God the Father only knows the time, clearly the title Deus Baxterius is not out of place. Besides, if further proof of his divinity be required, no man could gloat over such a calamity as that which befel Sunderland, and, apparently, enjoy the thought of the greater slaughters to follow.

The "Freethinker," August 5, 1883.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

## Our Ingersoll Number.

As announced last week our next issue will be an Ingersoll Centenary issue. There will be two portraits of the great American Freethinker, and an appreciation of his work running to about twenty columns in length. Attention will be fixed on the lesser known aspect of Ingersoll's work, and we are sure that this will prove an issue of great interest to Freethinkers, and one with which good propaganda work can be done by regular readers taking extra copies for distribution among Christian friends.

We are almost doubling our printing order, and we feel sure that we have not greatly overrated the demand. But we do ask all our friends to assist us in putting this issue into circulation. No other man did so much in his time to make Freethinkers as did Ingersoll, and that power for good is still active wherever his writings are circulated. Mr. Cohen has written the appreciation, and, as usual, it is an independent one.

But orders for extra copies should be given at once. In the case of our special Jubilee issue we were unable to discharge all the orders received, and had to depend upon "returns."

We will send twelve copies post free for 3s., and we should like to hear from our business manager that at least a thousand of our readers have ordered at least this number.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

We must beg the indulgence of correspondents this week. Mr. Cohen is taking a few days much-needed holiday, and some things are held over until next issue.

As our readers are aware, we are constantly protesting against the abuse of power and position by public officials, often on the part of police officers. The latest instance that has occurred is the case of the young flying officer, Fitzpatrick. This young man coming through the streets in the early hours of the morning, and carrying a suit case, was pounced upon by two C.I.D. men, treated very roughly and dragged off to a police station. He was set free; and the matter would have ended there but for some activity in the House of Commons. Then the House was solemnly informed that the case had been enquired into, and that according to the information received no injustice had been done. It turned out that the enquiry consisted in asking for a statement from the police concerned. The House was greatly excited, but as not very long ago, in the case of the English prisoners in Russia, their innocence was proclaimed after an enquiry of their employers, there does not seem much difference in the two cases and no reason why the House should get so excited.

Of course, nothing could be more absurd than for the Home Secretary merely to take a statement from those indicted and decide in their favour without further bother. But that is the official way. (We complained once to the telephone authorities on what was, to us, a gross overcharge. The official reply came that the statement sent to us was in harmony with their records, and therefore was quite correct. Beyond that supreme stupidity we found it impossible to get.) For our part we would not take on its face value, and in the absence of corroborative evidence, the statement of the highest official in the land. The higher the official the readier he is to lie "in the public interest." The lies of officials, from Prime Ministers downwards, are as numerous as those of the clergy, and they are told under cover of the same kind of moralized justification. We are glad to see the House of Commons calling attention to the gross injustice of such a method, and hope that they will hold the same view in all such cases.

Another instance of the value of official assurance comes from Germany. The Nazi government has issued an appeal—it should read "order"—to all Germans who write business or private letters to foreigners to point out "emphatically" that "since January 21 not a hair of any person who did not violate the existing laws and regulations has been touched." Now here is a genuine "Official" assurance, and if any one doubts it and writes the German Chancellor we have no doubt but that he will assure them on his honour as an official that the statement is quite true. It should also be noted that while foreign officials may tell lies, within the borders of their own country, every official is an "honourable man."

London papers for July 29 report that sixteen Jewish students have been arrested by the Nazis, and the dead body of one handed back to the Synagogue authorities of Brunswick for burial. He had been beaten to death. But we beg to state that does not contradict the official statement that not a hair of the head of anyone has been injured since January 21. There is no mention that this man's hair was in any way injured.

Thomas Paine said that Government was the badge of lost innocence. If things go on as they are going Paine's saying will have to be revised, and Governments will be described as the establishment of sanctified and regularized rascality.

Tickets for the Bradlaugh meeting on September 23, are going well, and promise a crowded meeting to celebrate the centenary of the famous Atheist. There will be a good array of prominent speakers, amongst them Mr. George Bernard Shaw. The price of the tickets is 6d. and 1s. each, and we advise an early application for tickets if disappointment is to be avoided.

About the middle of September the Centenary Committee will publish a volume containing representative speeches, with introductory essays and a number of portraits and reproductions of numerous cartoons. The volume will run to about 350 pages, and will be sold—or given away—at 2s. 6d.

We note with pleasure an article in the *New Leader* entitled "Oil and the Archbishops," in which the recent Festival Service at St. Hallows Church in the City attended by the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. Directors and Employees, conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, is mercilessly satirized. A special Psalm of Thanksgiving is suggested, of which the following is the commencement:—

We thank thee, for the concession originally granted to Mr. D'Arcy in 1901, and afterwards acquired by the Anglo-Persian Oil Co., in 1909, giving exclusive privilege to search for, obtain, exploit, develop, render suitable for trade, carry away and sell natural gas, petroleum, asphalt and ozokerite throughout the whole of the Persian Empire for a term of 60 years! Hallelujah!

and so on through nine entertaining thanksgivings and supplications. William Hone more than a hundred years ago parodied Christian litanies and creeds in this fashion and underwent three separate trials at the Guildhall for it. The *New Leader* will escape that fate, and we feel sure they will be the first to recognize that it is to pioneer work of this character that they owe their immunity.

A very enjoyable day was spent last Sunday by members and friends of the West Ham Branch N.S.S. in a ramble through the country and forest around Grange Hill, Essex. The acting-secretary, Mr. F. G. Warner, is to be congratulated upon the smooth running of the arrangements made. The Branch is very fortunate in possessing a member like Mr. Warner, willing, and always on the spot when there is something to be done.

Mr. George Whitehead in his latest and perhaps biggest book, *Unemployment: Causes and Remedies* (John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., 10s. 6d. net.) has certainly shown great industry and research, together with a keen appreciation of the difficulties encountered in suggesting ways out of the economic morass in which the world is struggling at the moment. To attempt any definite analysis of his closely packed chapters would require almost as much space as he devotes to them himself. Starting with figures indicating the magnitude of World unemployment, Mr. Whitehead gives a précis of its historical basis which proves, at all events in this country, that unemployment has always been more or less rampant whatever the causes and conditions.

Mr. Whitehead gives details and figures and authorities for his statements regarding the world slump in employment, and these, with his chapters on currency, over-population, emigration, under-consumption, foreign trade, rationalization and many others as closely documented, provide the reader with a staggering amount of material on which to base either his own conclusions or to judge the validity of those of the author. Mr. Whitehead gives many opportunities for discussion and dissent, of course, and Socialists, in particular, will not be too happy with some of his emphatic views and deductions—especially as they are supported with abundant quotations from leading Socialist writers. The chapter on "Labour's Proportion of National Income," will also provide plenty of opportunity for controversy. Armaments, Free Trade and Protection are all discussed in detail, and finally Mr. Whitehead's closing chapter on "Remedial Proposals Summarized," can be read with great interest. He is optimistic as to our future, and quotes Macaulay's famous answer to the pessimists of his day—in 1830. We cordially hope that Mr. Whitehead's book will have a large circulation.

## Some Christian Playbooks.

(Concluded from page 485.)

ANOTHER of these children's books, says Elizabeth Godfrey, is entitled *The Life of a Baby*. This infant in arms was even more precocious than its precursors of the seventeenth century; for she severely rebuked her father for omitting to read prayers one morning when he was much hurried, and refusing to speak or to smile on any she thought unconverted. Needless to say, she died early.

This severe religious discipline had different effects upon different temperaments, says Miss Godfrey:—

with some high-spirited children it wrought in the opposite direction to what was intended, and once released from a burdensome restraint, they broke bounds and turned out wild, having learned to hate Sunday for its restrictions, they cast all care for religion to the winds; with some it fostered that self-satisfaction and priggishness to which orderly minded boys and girls are but too prone; while with other, tenderer souls, it took but too deep an effect. The longing so innate in an affectionate baby to please and imitate those whom it loves worked upon the little brain, till, over-pressed by the effort to learn what it could not understand, the little heart over-charged with emotions too great for it, the poor little body gave way, like a sheath worn through by the sharpness of the knife within, and the child sank into an early grave.

(E. Godfrey: *English Children in the Olden Time*, p. 212-213.)

We have an instance of this in the case of the little son of John Evelyn, so pathetically told in Evelyn's famous diary. To quote Miss Godfrey again: "At five years old the child could read Latin as easily as English, and had begun Greek; moreover, having listened to a long sermon—and the sermons in those days seldom lasted less than an hour—could give his father an account of it, and discuss the points that had struck him with all the gravity of a divine. The poor little fellow, when he lay dying, wanted to know if God would be offended with him if, in praying, he folded his hands under the bedclothes, as he had been bidden not to throw them off." (p. 213.)

With some, says Miss Godfrey, this religious training tended to produce that most unlovely type of character in childhood, which says to those who differ, "Stand by; I am holier than thou." On the other hand, "With a meek child it often crushed the spirit and lowered the vitality, while in one of a higher courage it was apt to provoke a dangerous revolt." And the boy who has been taught that to walk in the fields, or play on "the Sabbath" is a crime, learns to hate Sunday, and finding himself his own master breaks the Sabbath rule; and having done that proceeds to discard the really moral rules of conduct, on the principle that one may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb.

With Nonconformists and Evangelicals, who take the Gospels for their guide in life, the brightest and most noteworthy periods of our history are the Commonwealth under Cromwell, and the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century which continued into the nineteenth century, and is still alive, but rapidly dissolving under the potent influence of a secular civilization. Let us see how the child fared under Evangelicalism.

It was Isaac Watts, the hymn writer, who flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century, says Mr. Wingfield-Stratford, "who forms the most visible connecting link between the faith of the Dissenting and Evangelical revival that reached its height at the

opening of the Victorian Age. Dr. Watts' Lord was of a terrific and unrelenting sternness, and His Hell worthy of an age notable for the increased dimensions and heat of its blast furnaces." By means of his fiery hymns, says the same writer, he "made the divine name more terrible to successive generations of children than that of 'Boney' [Bonaparte] was ever destined to become." Mr. Stratford says he possessed a copy of this dreadful book, in which the illustrator had actually contrived to improve on the gruesome spirit of the author. He says:—

It was not enough for Dr. Watts to have written :

'Tis dangerous to provoke a God!  
His power and vengeance none can tell;  
One stroke of his Almighty rod  
Shall send young sinners quick to Hell.  
Then 'twill forever be in vain  
To cry for pardon or for grace

but the artist must needs emphasize the moral by a woodcut of a tiny tombstone, "In Memory of Annie, aged 4," leaving one to imagine poor little Annie screaming now, and through all future ages, in the most exquisite tortures. (Wingfield-Stratford: *The Victorian Tragedy*, pp. 56-57.)

For, says the same writer, whatever lip homage it might be prudent to accord, the real emotion that the Lord aroused, "was one of abject and unmitigated terror." Whitefield, the most eloquent preacher of the new movement, could throw audiences into convulsions by simply vociferating, "Oh the wrath to come! The wrath to come!" It was the same wave of terror that caused it to triumph over its rivals in the ancient pagan world. It is because people no longer believe in these terrors that Christianity has lost its driving power and is melting away like an iceberg under the sun.

As Mr. Stratford further observes:—

For wrath, and that of the most malignant and implacable virulence, was the quality of the Lord that seems most to have impressed His evangelists. And to this perpetual explosiveness was added a hatred of any sort of joy or happiness, on the part of His creatures, that did not directly arise out of His worship. Not only play or holidays for children (which John Wesley would have absolutely denied the poor little wretches who fell into his power) not only such hideous practices as dancing and theatre-going, but even the drinking of that Chinese decoction called tea, were discovered to be sinful. (p. 59.)

But if we want to realize the spiritual pabulum on which the Victorians were reared, says Mr. Stratford, we should do best to study Mrs. Sherwood's once famous *Fairchild Family*, a book, so popular, that it ran into fourteen editions between the years 1818, when it appeared, and 1842. Most children of the upper and middle class, must have been acquainted with it, and "the fact," says Mr. Stratford, "that they were not rendered nervous wrecks for life speaks a lot for the toughness of our grandparents' constitutions."

The title of one chapter in this pious work, runs "Second story of the Misery of those who are under the Anger of God. Exemplified by the unhappiness of a Child under the Anger of his Father." In this story Henry, aged six, has played with a hare instead of learning Latin. He has even had the unheard-of temerity to say that he does not want to learn Latin. This arouses the wrath of the godly Mr. Fairchild to the boiling point; with the following result:—

"But it is my pleasure that you should," thunders Mr. Fairchild, and then rising to the height of his divine majesty: "I stand in the place of God to you whilst you are a child . . . therefore if you cast aside my authority and will not obey me, I shall not treat you as I do my other children. From this

time forward Henry, I have nothing to do with you: I will speak to you no more, neither will your mamma, or sister, or John, or Betty. Betty will be allowed to give you bread to eat and water to drink: and I shall not hinder you from going to your own bed to sleep at night; but I will have nothing more to do with you: so go out of my study immediately."

No wonder the poor infant, who has already been held by the manservant while his father flogs him with a horse-whip, "looked surprised and frightened" at this harangue, but Mr. Fairchild is not the man to permit his programme of divine vengeance to be thrown out of gear by an inopportune repentance. Forgetting apparently that it is Henry who has been ordered out of the study, "Mr. Fairchild walked away with a terrible look," to arrange the boycott with the servants and other children, leaving Henry "wishing he had not been so obstinate." He has good reason to wish it during the next two days, during which the work of starving and terrifying him into submission is carried on with a thoroughness that under present-day conditions would certainly lead to Mr. Fairchild being boycotted himself, if not prosecuted by the R.S.P.C.C. (Wingfield-Stratford: *The Victorian Tragedy*, pp. 65-66.)

But Mr. Fairchild's resources in inflicting punishment are by no means exhausted by the above proceedings, for, overhearing, by cavedropping outside the door, a trivial dispute over a doll:—

The mills of parental wrath are at once put into motion. First of all the children's hands are impartially whipped, till, as the authoress records with sadistic glee, "they smarted again." Next they are deprived of all food during the morning, stood in the corner, treated to extracts from Dr. Watts' hymns, "and what was worse, their papa and mama looked very gravely at them." But Mr. Fairchild has not yet shot his bolt. That afternoon he forces them all to accompany him to a gloomy wood, in which stands a gibbet, and, "The face of the corpse was shocking." While Mr. Fairchild is just warming to the improving theme of hanging, and its varieties, "the wind blew and shook the body on the gibbet, rattling the chains," and the children implore to be taken away. But Mr. Fairchild is not to be moved. Instead, he assembles them beneath the gibbet, nor will he let them go till he has delivered a long account of the murder, drawn the appropriate moral, and flopped down on the grass to deliver a prayer to his God. (Wingfield-Stratford: *The Victorian Tragedy*, pp. 66-67.)

Our readers will no doubt agree with Mr. Stratford, that Mr. Fairchild "may perhaps pass for the most detestable character in all fiction." But the widespread and long continued popularity of the work shows conclusively how children were regarded and taught, when people really believed and endeavoured to practise their religion.

W. MANN.

### Mona Lisa.

A SOUL of Life and Beauty doth unfold  
Before me,—and I worship at the shrine  
Of him who wrought and gave with art divine  
The best the world for mortal man can hold,—  
A woman to be loved more dear than gold;  
Which art can only trace but ne'er refine:  
Among thy offerings I tender mine!  
A tale oft breathed eternally untold,  
The secret charm in purity expressed,  
The longing lips so modestly delayed,  
A passion hesitating, yet confessed,  
The eyes that follow where the heart hath strayed,  
All that the Gods bestow of heavenly grace,  
And, Ah! th'eternal question in that face!

W. J. LAMB.

<sup>1</sup> Wingfield-Stratford: *The Victorian Tragedy*, p. 56.

## The Physical Sciences and Mind.

A VIEW of mind which aims at any degree of comprehensiveness will not confine its researches to psychology. Inasmuch as the study of mind is the study of the conditions under which the living brain manifests mental phenomena; physics, chemistry and biology will make an important contribution. And the knowledge that mental phenomena are invariably associated with certain physical, chemical, biological, etc., conditions goes to suggest that they have at great length emerged from such conditions, and are dependent on them.

What is the message of physics and chemistry?

It is that mind, instead of filling the rôle of governor and sustainer of the universe, is only possible as an extreme rarity, where there are knots, or congealments, of atomic systems in a high degree of complexity as a result of a coagulative process. These complexes must be relatively stable, shielded from the disintegrating effect of radiation in excessive amounts, and maintained at a certain definite distance from a sun, or star, which regulates temperature. In brief, mind is possible in about one thousand millionth of known space, and even there it is a rare exception, not a rule.

Where, from this source, is the evidence that the universe has been specially constructed to produce mind? Where, in fact, is the evidence that the universe is designed to produce anything at all, in particular? In fact, if we care to imagine there is some preconceived purpose, the production of magnetism and radiation, we are told, are much higher in probability than mind, for whereas life (mind's preliminary) is indispensably associated with one element (Carbon), radioactivity has a range of ten (Nos. 83 to 92).

And where is the evidence that, having come, mind is jealously taken under the wing of mother nature, there to be sheltered from the forces of destruction? "Life exists," we learn, "because the earth receives just the right amount of radiation from the sun. And the essence of the situation is that the balance is very easily upset" (Jeans). The sun, again, is dying, and in time will not have sufficient heat to support life on this planet. Therefore, in order to prolong (not perpetuate) its existence, the earth should move nearer and nearer to the sun. It is doing exactly the opposite. Every year its orbit takes it further away from the sun. The ultimate effect (unless mind becomes sufficiently potent to stop it) will be the death of humankind in our corner of the universe.

One need not to be an expert scientist to perceive the obvious way in which cerebral activity responds to physical and chemical stimuli. Dr. Ludwig Büchner is by some considered an out-of-date Materialist. A question he asked still remains unanswered. If mind is a separate entity, why should it be affected by a blow on the head, a few glasses of wine, prussic acid, and opium, Thyroid disease, etc., etc? A blow on the head may be sufficient to render a man unconscious. Are we to suppose that a further blow, which kills him, has the effect of re-awakening his mental powers, giving him life after death?

The most popular attempt to meet the difficulty is Prof. Lodge's conception of a Mind which, after waiting for matter to reach a certain stage of complexity (protoplasm), seizes its chance, and lays hold of it, as Life, being finally shaken off when the material organization becomes disorganized at death.

The theory explains nothing: it endeavours to account for something that is not there, and entails

the postulate of a water principle which lays hold of hydrogen and oxygen for the manifestation of aqueosity; and similarly, a million and one other principles for each emerged phenomenon.

The message of physics and chemistry is that there are no experimental grounds for believing in the existence of an omnipotent being who is solicitous for the welfare of mind, and nothing to commend the hypothesis of a Mind distinct from mind as we know it.

G. H. TAYLOR.

## The Greek Ideal

"Then, when the soul leaves off to dream and yearn,  
May truth first purge her eyesight to discern  
What once being known leaves time no power to appal;  
Till youth at last, ere yet youth be not, learn  
The kind wise word that falls from years that fall—  
'Hope thou not much, and fear thou not at all.'"

Swinburne.

IDEALS that are realizable can scarcely have a true claim to their name. Wilde, in a serene moment, writing nearest to the best in him, stated that a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at for it leaves out the one country at which humanity is always landing. Heraclitus discovered the obvious in his perception that everything is in a state of flux. Readers of history will not be alarmed at any point on the compass of civilization if they have with Schopenhauer exchanged hope for insight. The writer of this article, a few years ago, in a friendly exchange of ideas with other writers, ventured to suggest it was just possible that a return to the Greek conception of life might, among the thoughtful, emerge as a result of the inevitable breakdown of an ideal mainly entrenched in fundamental fallacies. This suggestion was entertained at the banqueting board of the talkers, but it was politely bowed out of the room.

As the years advance I still count it as a priceless privilege to write for the *Freethinker*, for, if all it stands for does not exactly fill the mind with specious hope, it does not leave the heart empty with despair. There is in Freethought the salt of reality together with the freedom to wander in the philosophical garden of the world. There is no compulsion to accept any soothing by the fallacious. The *Freethinker's* mind must be refreshed and renewed by contact with the best that has been written, and the process of selection and assimilation in the light of true progress continues.

I have praised Mr. Richard Aldington's novel, "All Men are Enemies," and I find that this novel contains some of the matter that was presented at the feast mentioned above.

By some chance in our acquaintance with the Greek constellation of writers, Theognis was a good friend and companion for some years. A little of Theognis goes a long way. He will for your intellectual bedding-down, give you bricks instead of feathers. Theognis was born about 570 years before the Christian era and lived and died in a tumultuous period. His work, therefore, assumes a distinct value in the same way that Spinoza produced his own imperishable philosophy under conditions anything but ideal. As you may not touch Montaigne and forget him, so you cannot read the maxims of Theognis and remember them no more. His philosophy is certainly not soothing-syrup and his ideal is unattainable and that adds to its value. Listen to the vigorous wind of self-reliance blowing through the following injunction:—

Do not caress me in words, and keep your mind and heart elsewhere, if you love me and if there dwells in you a faithful mind. Either love me cherishing a sincere mind, or disown and hate me, having raised a quarrel openly.

In a garden, there may be seen a plant with dark, olive green leaves; it bears no striking blossom, yet if you bruise it, the perfume will remain in the memory for life. It is sage. Bruise the above sentence and my

analogy stands. It is the language of integrity. It is an attempt at the terrific simplicity, characteristically Greek. And present society would be better for an assimilation of an ethic of this kind—but it is not Christian. It is much too straightforward to be that.

Nietzsche in his philosophy was heavily influenced by Theognis. He made a re-valuation of decrepit values which had been current in Europe following an intensive and brutal schooling in Christian values that, however good in getting the individual into heaven, scarcely fitted him as a desirable product on earth. Good and evil were at that time slippery words, and it seemed almost logical from some of the definitions of good to infer that an epidemic was good for doctors. And Nietzsche had the clarity of mind when told that a thing was good to ask, "Good for what?" This in itself was a valuable and critical weapon among the shady characters in religious philosophy. In my copy I find that enthusiasm has underlined much that is pure gold. The temptation to quote is almost irresistible, but to give one more sample of the temper of Theognis the following will be a revelation of a remarkable character:—

No one of mine enemies will I blame, if he be noble; no, nor will I commend a friend, if he be a mean man.

This contribution is called the Greek ideal, but the surface of the matter has only been scratched. It is almost a commonplace for the majority of so-called enlightened people to accept the term "pagan" as something odious and undesirable. There is not much difficulty in locating the reason why such odium is encouraged. The press and pulpit are not slow, and they both excel in the art of *suggestio falsi*. Although we may not look at the Greek civilization through rose-coloured spectacles there is ample evidence to prove that life was not subjugated to a machine in an industrial world, and life was not held in terror under some specious scheme of rewards and punishments. There is a lightness and brightness and human happiness to be sensed in the best of Greek literature. Thought was fostered and encouraged. Discussion was the order of the day. Nothing was held sacred in this respect. In the old Greek poets the present was the time to be lived, but it did not mean the idiocy of, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

Mr. Richard Aldington has given us in his novel, *All Men are Enemies*, a touch of commonsense administered almost with a pole-axe; hence its reception at the hands of reviewers whose minds cannot rise much higher than Mayfair seductions or murders in a train. Aldington's philosophy cuts across the miserable conception of life preached and expounded by Christian shoemakers, who think that they can shoe the world.

By accident I found a short paragraph from a book by George Santayana, *Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy*, after this article was commenced. This kindly wizard writes as follows, and he would probably be the first writer to reject the Christian connotation with the word "soul":—

To subordinate the soul fundamentally to society or the individual to the state is sheer barbarism: the Greeks, sometimes invoked to support this form of idolatry, were never guilty of it; on the contrary, their lawgivers were always reforming and planning the state so that the soul might be perfect in it.

If my suggestion mentioned above was bowed out, I have adopted this method of bowing it back again for the readers' consideration and pleasure, and in the hope that they will, to their profit, spend a few hours with Theognis of Megara.

C-DE-B.

### On Poppies.

THE poppies do not blush;  
They blaze the truth:  
Their hue is but the flush  
Of ardent youth,  
Which knowing naught of man-made shame  
Rejoices in life's game.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

### "Has Religion a Use?"

It is common nowadays, to hear the life of fifty years ago compared to that of to-day and to have contrasted the narrow, stunted, life of our great grandparents, with the more crowded and fuller existence we enjoy. Fifty years ago, there was no wireless broadcasting, no cinemas, no motor-cars; journeys by train were few and far between. Most people lived and died in one district; they knew little of the world.

Nowadays there are few people who do not travel at least once a year. Broadcasting enables us to hear the music of a dozen lands in our own homes. The films bring the lives and scenes of the world home to us.

But the most important change has been the great increase in the distribution of cheap literature. Everyone to-day reads. And if this has resulted in a large output of merely meretricious fiction, it has also been accompanied by a greater diffusion of books on science, philosophy, history, and all knowledge that broadens the mind, and lifts people out of their narrow local groove. The man and woman of to-day know more, and are not satisfied to continue to walk in the footsteps of the past.

There has also been a marked decline in religious belief. Only about twenty-five per cent of the people attend any place of worship. Religious leaders and public men deplore this loss of faith, and generally attribute it to such habits as the "modern" craze for pleasure, the cinema, dancing, and so on.

But the modern spread of unbelief is due simply to a general decline of superstition. No one now, except a few Fundamentalists, believes in the literal truth of the Bible. And if religion served a purpose in this life, the need for that purpose is rapidly being dissipated. No doubt for millions of people fifty years ago, life would have been unbearable without religion, or alcohol. Fortunately both were cheap—and strong. Even to-day many people cannot live without them.

Religion then serves no useful purpose. It does not satisfy a need in our natures. Our conduct would not be worse, but probably a good deal better if religion were no longer a force in our lives. But it still lingers on, and because few people are willing to submit their religion to the test of reason, it remains, a putrefying corpse, an anachronism in the twentieth century, and a bar to many social and moral reforms.

IDRIS ABRAHAM.

### Correspondence.

#### RACE AND QUALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of July 30 you ask the question: "How does a race acquire its qualities?" Darwinian evolutionists believe that the primary races originated in exactly the same way as the different species of animals and plants. A people which lived for many thousands of years in a certain environment was gradually fitted to its environment by natural selection. The Negro, for example, became adapted to the tropics by long years of residence in them. To quote MacBride's *Introduction to the Study of Heredity*:—

"The Negro is a thoroughly tropical animal; his dark skin shields him from the deleterious effects of the sun's rays and his wide nostrils permit of a large surge of air into and out of his lungs, and this surge plays an important part in ventilation and the getting rid of superfluous heat. He thrives in heat and in fact luxuriates in it, and competes eagerly for positions in the engine-room of the steamers on the equatorial lakes of Africa."

Minor racial differences are probably due to crossing, as in the case of pigeons and many other animals. The English, French and Germans were all produced by a mixture of the Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean races, but the proportions were very different. The Germans are mainly of fair-haired stock. If a man has black hair in Germany, he is probably a Jew. In England he may,

be Ramsay MacDonald or Neville Chamberlain. In France the black-haired people are in the majority.

R. B. KERR.

[We are obliged to Mr. Kerr for his biological information, most of which is taken as granted among intelligent readers. But we wanted to know where do some muddle-headed folk who talk of "racial characters"—belligerence, cunning, taste for science, or for religion or trade—imagine these racial characters spring from? If they are the product of social and institutional life, then "racial" has little or no scientific value. If they do not come from these sources then we are thrown back on something suspiciously like the theological theory of "God's preparation in history for Christ."—ED.]

#### ESPERANTO OR IDO.

SIR,—Your correspondents have hastily misconstrued my letter as a militant attack on Esperanto. Another careful reading should mollify their uncalled for excitement. I mildly remarked, from a more or less detached position, that the only argument I ever heard for Esperanto was that of expediency, it being the best known and most widely established.

It is exactly the argument of the Christian to the Atheist minority. "Look what a few of you there are," to which the other, if he cared, might reply, "Yes, but look at the quality." The analogy is close. Idists originally were dissatisfied Esperantists, who collaborated to improve the existing language. Ido is the product of an international committee of scholars and linguists, who, after examining schemes old and new, adopted and perfected Ido, which is thus the outcome of collective study, not the undeveloped product of a single mind. By the simplicity and regularity of its grammar, and by the internationality of its vocabulary (constructed on the principle of the "greatest internationality"), Ido is claimed to be the easiest of existing languages. If it does not fulfil this claim, I want to see it exposed, not treated to an empty ridicule.

Mr. Butler tells us he could easily demolish these claims, were it not for the fact that Ido is so obviously and immeasurably inferior to Esperanto. He will permit me to wonder why he was unable to show such an obvious fact to Prof. Jespersen (Copenhagen Univ.) or Prof. F. R. Donnan (London Univ.). I know there are names on the other side, but I have already said that the popularity of Esperanto may be attributable, not to its comparative merits, but to the *idea* of such a language.

G. H. TAYLOR.

[We regret having to curtail Mr. Taylor's letter, but it was either that or holding over for a fortnight, as the space in our next issue is already booked.—ED.]

#### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JULY 28, 1933.

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

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Moss, Clifton, Le Maine, Ebury, McLaren, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Mrs. Grant, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and the Monthly Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to Birkenhead, Glasgow, Brighton, Derby, Dublin, N. London, W. London and Bethnal Green Branches, and the Parent Society. Permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the Society at Derby. Under Correspondence and Reports, communications from Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Birkenhead, Stockport, Montreal, Messrs. Brighton, Clayton and Whitehead were dealt with. Mr. Moss reported the serious illness of Mr. W. Heaford, and a motion was passed expressing sympathy with Mr. Heaford, appreciation of his many years of valuable work for Freethought, and hopes of a speedy and complete recovery. Owing to holidays it was agreed that the next meeting of the Executive be held on September 22.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

#### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

##### LONDON.

###### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Sunday, August 6, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"The Old Testament and the New." "Salmon and Ball," Cambridge Road, E.2, Thursday, August 3, 8.0, Mr. Paul Goldman.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (Shorrolds Road, North End Road): 7.30, Saturday, August 5, Messrs. Barnes, Bryant and Tuson. *Freethinkers* on sale.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner): 8.0, Thursday, August 10, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, August 6, Mr. L. Ebury. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, August 9, Mr. C. Tuson. Aliwell Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, August 11, Mrs. E. Grout.

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Regents Park): 3.0 and 6.30.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. C. Tuson and E. C. Wood. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Platform 1, Messrs. E. C. Wood and B. A. Le Maine. Platform 2, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and E. C. Saphin. Wednesday, August 2, 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and W. P. Campbell-Everden. Thursday, August 3, E. C. Saphin, 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and B. A. Le Maine.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, August 6, F. P. Corrigan—"The Harm that Good Men Do." "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, August 9, F. P. Corrigan. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Friday, August 11, S. Burke.

##### COUNTRY.

###### INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Central Halls, Bath Street): 8.0, Tuesday, August 8, Committee Meeting. All members of Society invited.

###### OUTDOOR.

ASHINGTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Grand Hotel, Ashington): 7.0, Friday, August 4, Mr. Alan Flanders—"The Unholy Alliance, Fascism and Christianity."

BLACKBURN MARKET: 7.30, Thursday, August 10, Mr. J. Clayton.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 7.30, Tuesday, August 8, Mr. J. Cecil Keast—"Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

CROOK (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, August 9, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DARWEN MARKET: 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday, August 6, Mr. J. Clayton.

DERBY BRANCH N.S.S. (Nottingham, Council House Square): 7.30, Thursday, August 3, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc. Derby (Market Square): 8.0, Sunday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 8, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): 8.0, Friday 4, Saturday 5, Sunday, August 6, Mrs. Whitefield. Messrs. Buntin and White. *Freethinker* and *Freethought* literature on sale at all meetings.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday August 6, C. McKelvie and J. V. Shortt. Grierson Street, Monday, August 7, H. Little and D. Robins, Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, August 10, A. Jackson and E. S. Wollen.

LUMB-IN-ROSSENDALE: 7.30, Friday, August 4, Mr. J. Clayton.

NELSON (Can Road): 7.30, Tuesday, August 8, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Mr. F. Bradford.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, August 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

MORPETH (Market Place): 7.0, Saturday, August 5, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, August 6, Mr. Allan Flanders.

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

Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1893 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

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