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

Views and Opinions

The Road to God

THE B.B.C. has been giving a series of talks on "The Way to God." As usual the speakers have been very carefully selected, for had they not been, some very obvious things might have been pointed out by one or two of the lecturers. As it is, I do not imagine that anyone will find the way to God by any of the roads indicated, and it is quite certain that none of those who have already given up the road as leading nowhere will be induced again to tread it. By this time it ought to be clear that a road which needs so much finding, and which when found is so easily and frequently lost, could not have been well planned. If there is a God, and if he really wishes us to find him, he might at least have opened a road that could be found with a moderate amount of searching. What we actually have is a series of ways, each of them differing more or less from the others, and a number of guides competing with each other, one half of whom assert that the other half is sure to lead the traveller astray. It is a very curious road, often turning back on itself, so that the traveller is apt to find himself exactly where he started from, or else he finds that it leads in all sorts of directions. Last, but not the least, curious fact is that the number of those who really wish to find the road is steadily decreasing. These either say that there is no road to tread, or they do not wish to tread it; or they show a strange disinclination to go, as the old religionists used to say, home to God. So that there is this strange position. There is, we are told, a God who wishes us to find him, but who cannot or will not make himself plain enough to be found; and there is a growing number of folk who say they do not believe there is any God to find, while even those who believe otherwise show a disinclination to make a closer acquaintance with Him. * * *

A Parson in a Fog

One of the B.B.C. regular parsons is the Rev. J. S. Whale. Mr. Whale is a well-known clergyman, which, I think, is the best—and the worst—that can

be said of him. He has been selected to answer the questions put by some of the listeners, or perhaps I ought to say some of the questions put by the listeners, because one may be certain that really pertinent questions will not be publicly noticed. As it is, after Mr. Whale has selected such questions as he thinks easiest to answer, the result is very deplorable. For Mr. Whale has all the parsonic quality of beginning nowhere and ending where he began. He sets out a problem, often one that does not logically belong to the subject, and then gives you an answer that leaves things where they were, while guarding himself from rebuttal by saying that after all we do not know whether what he says is correct or not. If you complain that his answer does not fit the facts, he replies that we do not know the facts, but if we did we might find that his answer is the correct one. To that the obvious reply is that if we do not know the facts, then Mr. Whale may be quite wrong; and in any case, if we do not know, then it would be well to cease making statements until we do. I think that Mr. Whale's reply to that might well be that if theologians remained silent until they were sure of the facts, or even sure there were any facts of which to be sure, religion would die out long before enlightenment came. Religiously the promise is "He that believeth shall be saved." If religious salvation depended upon *understanding*, then indeed would there be few chosen, even though everyone were called.

* * *

God and Nature

If anyone thinks I have been unjust to one of Sir John Reith's tame parsons, I suggest they turn to the *Listener* for November 28, and note the quality of Mr. Whale's replies to questions. I will not deal with the whole of his article, that would take up too much space. I will confine myself to one point, with the exception of noting the fatuous remark that it is certain "we cannot explain the higher by the lower," when, as a matter of fact, that is the only way in which the "higher" can be explained. For explaining means stating the conditions in which a given phenomenon appears; and this means that in any given series it is the "higher" which always emerges as the product of the "lower." There is no room for controversy here, it is a statement of simple fact.

The one question that I intend dealing with in order to exhibit Mr. Whale's quality is a very old one, that which is known as the problem of evil. Why, he asks, "If God is all-wise and all-loving is His world so ravaged by suffering? Earthquakes, shipwrecks, cancer and the tragedy of the lunatic, the cretin, the deaf-mute—whence and why are these things, if God is good?" Mr. Whale's first answer is that much of our suffering and pain is man's own fault. But how can the suffering and pain connected with an earthquake be man's own fault? If there is

one event with which man has absolutely nothing to do, it is an earthquake. Man does what he can to remedy the consequences of an earthquake, but what has he to do with its cause? Later on this aspect of the matter strikes Mr. Whale, and he offers the very old and the very foolish reply that "we know very little about the universe as a whole," but if we did we should see that "the very things in nature which seem haphazard and accidental are nevertheless parts of an ordered whole, grounded in the purpose of God." But if we know very little about the universe, and if we should understand it, did we know all about it, may it not be that the real truth is as likely to be against Mr. Whale as for him, and that we should find ourselves in the end only sport for the Olympians? And if everything is ordered by God, what is this but a roundabout way of saying that it is God and not man that is really responsible for all that happens in the world?

Mr. Whale gets more incoherent as he progresses. Turning to another group of happenings he says that these are due to "man's inhumanity to man," and he instances the cretin, the village idiot, the down-and-out. Well, suppose we grant that these and similar evils do result from man's inhumanity to man, what happens? It is not the man who does the wrong who becomes a cretin, an idiot or a down-and-out, it is the other fellow. As parts of an ordered whole grounded in the purpose of God, it is A who commits the injustice, and it is B who becomes an idiot and who pays the price. Somewhere in this combination of the cretin, the preacher and the guilty party, there is certainly an idiot, and I must leave the reader to place him.

* * *

The Benefits of Misfortunes

The preacher is capable of yet greater folly. Mr. Whale explains that when God made man he also made it possible for him to do evil and work woe. He did this because "it is only in a world where such horrors as war, prostitution, and slavery can occur that the learning of fellowship, chivalry and self-sacrifice will happen. Could we learn it under any other conditions?" So the evils and the horrors are not evils at all. They are the *conditions* of good, and God determined that this should be the only way in which man could learn chivalry and fellowship. So when we meet a cretin, or a down-and-out, or note the existence of war and prostitution and slavery, let us not forget the wisdom of Mr. Whale and say, "Thank God for these things, because they are parts of God's plan, and they exist in order to develop my character." I confess that this puts the white slaver, the slum landlord, the sweeter and the war-maker in quite a nice light. They are really benefactors. Without them we should remain destitute of the qualities of self-sacrifice, etc., etc.

Mr. Whale, secure in the protection which the B.B.C. gives its speakers, proceeds from muddle to muddle. "Nothing can take us out of our Father's hands," he says—although it looks very much as though the less we have to do with Him the better—"It is in terms of the environment that the Eternal Spirit trains our spirits for eternal life in Himself. . . The conditions of moral growth is struggle against hard circumstances. Effort, hardship and pain seem to be involved in any kind of moral world really conceivable as worth while." But if God is training us in this environment for the next life, then the next life must be like this or the training would be useless. And if the condition of the moral life is struggle against hard circumstances, then there must be the same struggle against the same things there that exists here, and if we cannot have self-sacrifice and

chivalry, without war, prostitution and slavery, then we must have all these things there, and we shall meet the cretin and the idiot and the down-and-out, as part of the necessary conditions of continuing our moral development. If this is not so, then there must set in, so soon as we get to the next world, a very rapid process of deterioration. I think there is a good deal to be said in favour of this—granting the existence of the next world—and if we can rely upon the angelic messages that are received from time to time, for certainly the messages received *via* Spiritualist mediums are all in favour of the deterioration theory. Whatever man over there may lack, for his necessary development, there will certainly be no lack of idiots.

* * *

Real Christian Morality

One final gem must be taken from Mr. Whale's basket. God, Mr. Whale believes has designed this world as a school of character, and has made or permitted all the things that we seem anxious to get rid of, so that it may develop our characters. He uses the idiots, the unfortunates, the cretins much as the Spartans used their slaves when they made them drunk, so that their children might learn the evils of intemperance. What kind of character does this divine discipline produce? It is cruel, but I must take Mr. Whale's own estimate of himself. He says:—

If there is no moral meaning in things, why are people such fools as to be conscientious and do the painful things? Why are they loving and heroic and self-sacrificing? Why die for a great cause? How can there be a great Cause? Why let truth, beauty and goodness have a compelling right over you?

There is the true Christian philosophy in all its naked barbarity and absurdity. When I have put it to Christians that the kernal of their creed is that the only reason they have for behaving decently is that they may get a dividend on their investment in decency when they get to heaven, and that if they do not make the investment they will be punished in hell, often enough they have said that I was wrong, that I was caricaturing their creed. Well, here it is from the mouth of an Oxford teacher, a Christian minister, a lecturer in one of our principal universities. Unless there is "a moral meaning in things," that is, unless there is some supernatural power quick to punish, even though slow to reward, then a man is a fool to be decent. What is this but the old teaching, if there is no resurrection from the dead, then nothing matters. There is no one to punish, there is no one to reward, and we may let ourselves go. It is the morality of the market place without the elementary sense of honesty which the market place displays.

I am quite sure there must be someone in one of the Oxford colleges capable of informing this Oxford Professor that morality has nothing whatever to do with what is involved in the meaning of "things," other than those actions which go to make up the relations between human beings living in groups. It is my relations to my fellow beings, my capacity for benefiting and injuring them, their capacity for benefiting or injuring me that constitutes the essence of morality, and gives the need for its cultivation. In the days before the timidity and muddled thinking of some of our popular scientists had provided an excuse for theologians to get back to the anti-social teachings of primitive Christianity, a famous preacher who was looked upon by many of his less developed brother ministers as a heretic in disguise, said that whether there was a heaven or not, whether there was a God or not, it was still better to be honest than to be a thief, still better to be brave than to be a coward, still better to be kind than to be brutal. I agree, but Mr.

Whale wraps his denial of this in pseudo-philosophical language, and the Committee of the B.B.C. selects him to instruct people on the way to God, with an understood promise that there will be no opportunity of exposing his ignorance in the place in which it is voiced.

The Rev. J. S. Whale is a lecturer on Church history in Mansfield College, Oxford. What kind of men are likely to be turned out under his influence and teaching?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Napoleon's Religion

"The only true conquests, those which awaken no regret, are those obtained over ignorance. The most honourable, as the most useful pursuit of nations, is that which contributes to the extension of intellect."

Napoleon.

INTEREST in Napoleon Bonaparte never ceases, and has even been heightened by the events of the past score years. He appears to have been the last of the great military leaders who have impressed mankind; and modern warfare has not, since his time, produced a personality who sets the world alight before he is thirty years of age. Even the remarkable period through which we are passing tempts many to hark back to the very remarkable being who was a great general from early manhood, and who rode the old world like a Colossus.

The thing that first and last most impresses us is the truly amazing personality of Napoleon. Even after his death this characteristic told in some inexplicable way upon those who had come in contact with him. Ensign Duncan, a young English officer, who was on duty at Longwood at the time of Napoleon's death, and on two succeeding days visited the chamber of death, has recorded this impression in memorable words. Writing home to his mother, he said:—

To see a man who has caused Europe and the world at large so much trouble lying in a small room, in his military cloak and camp-bed, dressed in his full uniform, was an awful sight. It struck me so, I could have gazed on him for hours, have taken his hand and kissed it, but I could scarce breathe. What would not thousands of people have given to see what I have seen?

Since that far-off day much ink has been spilt on Napoleonic history, and books about him are as thick "as leaves in Vallombrosa." Hundreds of books have been solely devoted to Napoleon's personal traits. They throw a flood of light upon the unique individual who changed the map of Europe and bowled over Kingdoms like ninepins. In spite of it all, the verdict of the jury is by no means unanimous.

Emerson, an acute critic, regarded Napoleon as the supreme type of the man of the world, and Thomas Carlyle admitted that the one article of Bonaparte's faith was "the tools to him that can handle them." Ingersoll thought Napoleon to be no better than a successful gangster, but Heine regarded him as a liberator of oppressed peoples. Indeed, Napoleon's character baffled so many men. Even his own brother was mesmerized, for, after the Emperor's death, he marvelled at the impression his dead brother had produced on men. "He was not so much a great, as a good man," he said, with disarming innocence. And he was not the only man deceived by this Colossus, who bestrode Europe for a generation, and whose greatness endures beyond death.

Critics have said that some of Napoleon's conquests were splendid rather than useful; but they cannot deny that the ardour of his magnetic personality set

France afire. It inflamed the soldiers who dragged the cannon over the sands of Egypt, and the warriors who carried their muskets among the ice and snow of Russia. Napoleon also imparted to his marshals something of his own impetuous and adventurous career. And when victory succeeded victory, nothing seemed impossible, for none then foresaw the melancholy and inglorious close of the Emperor's career, when, caught like a rat in a trap, his armies dwindled to a corporal's guard, he made sordid exit from the stage of life. Or that still later period when another Napoleon, a pinchbeck charlatan, humiliated France to the dust, and imperilled Liberty in the land of Rousseau and Voltaire.

To Freethinkers, Napoleon's views on religion are of interest. We have, of course, often read vastly entertaining anecdotes in which the emperor is represented as pointing to the firmament, and declaiming a fruity brand of theism. We have heard that he once kicked Volney, the philosophic writer, who had discoursed so eloquently on "The Ruins of Empires," suggesting that Napoleon had an idea that his own name might be included in an appendix of a famous work. No less a man than Cardinal Newman has given further currency to a story that Napoleon thought Christ superior to Alexander the Great, and more sublime than the Cæsars. But the real Napoleon did not talk like the legendary figure in tracts and sermons.

As a fact, Napoleon was a man of action. He knew far more of the book of the world than the world of books, and he never snivelled like an American evangelist. He preferred Mohammedanism to Christianity. He objected to the Christian Religion because it damned Marcus Aurelius, Plato, and Socrates, and he questioned the justice of eternal punishment for finite offences. He also agreed with the Moslems that Christians who worshipped three deities must, necessarily, be Polytheists and Pagans. "As for me," Napoleon broke out on one occasion, "my opinion is formed that Christ never existed." As to man, he proclaimed himself a Materialist. In all this he was a true son of the Great Revolution, which has changed, and is changing, the face of the civilized world.

Like so many rulers and statesmen, Napoleon was utterly cynical in using religion and priests to further his own ends, but, unlike some of them, he frankly admitted the impeachments. Recall his biting words:—

It was by becoming a Roman Catholic that I pacified the Vendee, and a Mussulman that I established myself in Egypt; it was by becoming Ultramontane that I won over public opinion in Italy. If I ruled a people of Jews, I would rebuild the temple of Solomon.

This patronage of priests and religion in a ruler of a nation is a very old custom. The Roman Emperors did it systematically, and made no fuss about it. Did not Henry of Navarre retract his Protestant views, saying that "Paris was well worth a mass?" And in quite recent days "the Holy Carpet" of the Mohammedans was saluted by the guns of British warships, and everywhere, during its journey, received with full military honours at the hands of Christian soldiers. Napoleon's Catholicism was assumed to please his subjects, the majority of whom were Romanists. Yet his treatment of the Roman Pontiff was callous in the extreme. In forcing the Pope to attend his coronation, he had no other object except that of "tickling the ears of the groundlings." His tolerance of the Catholic Church was not for any higher motive than that of consolidating his rule, for he was enough of a politician to know that the priests would be more useful in harness than as open

enemies. Napoleon always used religion to further his own schemes, although he was himself as irreligious as Voltaire, but had none of that passion for humanity which distinguished the great writer.

Although he postured in imperial purple, and learned deportment from Talma the actor, Napoleon could be democratic at times. Whilst walking at St. Helena with a lady, a heavily-burdened peasant approached on the narrow road. "Respect the burden, madame," said Napoleon, as he himself stood back to let the loaded man pass. Indeed, a mere catalogue of Napoleon's actions is more profitable than a string of epithets.

The great Napoleon has been for a century the riddle of the world of critics, and he remains, like the Sphinx, an unsolved problem. He was not only the greatest soldier of his time, but he challenged and destroyed the divinity of kings. Ironically, this great soldier's reputation is associated with the pacific Code Napoleon, which so happily superseded the legal despotism of earlier centuries. It was amid the storm and stress of widespread war and revolution that this humane system of legislation was born. Is it not a portent of the glories and spacious days to be, the days of which the blood-red sunset promises the golden dawn?

MIMNERMUS.

In The Days of Bradlaugh

SIDE-LIGHTS ON "TOLERATION."

THOMAS PAINE once said that toleration was in effect only another form of intolerance. The word itself is susceptible of various shades of interpretation. At its best, toleration involves all that we mean by equal rights, even if the toleration comes as an obvious gift or concession from those who have had the power to refuse it.

Toleration is, however, more frequently conditional, limited, and distinctly offensive. At times its terms, "uttered or unexpressed," are deliberately insulting to the point of persecution, a mere modification of intolerance. Instances abound. Jews compelled to dress and live within defined limits; legal marriages called "adulterous" because Church canons are lacking in civilization: these and many other kinds of "toleration" justify Paine's sneers.

Atheism and Free thought are tolerated in so far as the imprisonment of blasphemers is rarer than it was. But toleration which retains laws specially devised and used to imprison blasphemers is little above intolerance. "Educational" disqualifications for teachers who do not lie about their Free thought convictions, and the many obstacles to Free thinkers participating in the civic administration of public institutions prove that toleration is not yet understood by Christians.

One of the most "tolerant" Christians of Bradlaugh's day was Samuel Morley. He was in Parliament from 1865 to 1885. A very wealthy man (I. & R. Morley was his family's business), he subscribed lavishly to a great many Evangelical and Nonconformist organizations.

At his first election, Morley was supported by the then influential Liberation Society, of which he was a member. At that time Spurgeon and Parker were sufficiently "tolerant" to wish the Church of England disestablished, and Mr. Morley might have been expected—as a good "liberal"—to be at least loyal to such degree of toleration as membership of the Liberation Society involved.

In 1868 Morley found that Churchmen had votes, and he (while still on the Executive of the Liberation

Society), accepted the electoral support of Canon Girdlestone's party on the understanding (to which Morley agreed in writing) that Morley would "not unite with any who are banded against the Established Church." Morley assured the Canon that his nonconformity had no political significance, and the Church votes were secured. All was harmony—except that Morley had to resign from the Liberation Society.

Morley's attitude towards Secular Education was at least straightforward unmitigated intolerance. He opposed all the liberals who supported Mr. H. Richards' motion in the House on July 19, 1870, which would have saved the country generations of futile bickerings about what shade of piety our children must be taught at the citizens' expense. Mr. Morley's ground of opposition was "that the parents do not object to the Bible."

Samuel Morley was so ultra-religious that at some chapels the Lord's Supper was deliberately interrupted in order that Morley's Electioneering campaign should be forwarded. The Rev. W. Brock wrote Morley to tell him: "I referred to you expressly at our Lord's Supper, and solicited the prayers of the brotherhood on your behalf."

Mr. Edwin Hodder, Morley's biographer, is not content to give a list of all Mr. Morley's pious donations to pious causes, he has also to boast of his hero as displaying "the breadth of Mr. Morley's practical Christianity." So here we get toleration, or "breadth." Let us see it as a Christian ideal! The instance Mr. Hodder gives refers to a famous Free thinker. Mr. George Jacob Holyoake was stricken down by illness and blindness. A fund was raised on his behalf, to which Samuel Morley gave a small donation. It is a singular source of claim for credit when a very wealthy philanthropist drops a penny into a blind man's hat. But, says Mr. Hodder, who should know his friends, "this was made the occasion of some severe and scurrilous attacks upon Mr. Morley for aiding a man who was not a Christian." Mr. Morley's critics, scurrilous or not, could only have been Mr. Morley's fellow-Christians.

This exemplary generosity to a non-Christian, worn out in the very un-Christian propaganda of co-operation and similar reforms, was the high-water mark of Morley's toleration. It is not to be wondered at that the good man ejaculated "Horrible," when he read the views of Secularists concerning human liberty. The occasion was a meeting held to protest against George William Foote's imprisonment in a Christian jail for the Christian-made law called "blasphemy."

Morley's "Horrible" did not, of course, refer to the vileness of the bigotry which sent Foote to, and kept him in, prison. The Catholic Judge North's historic utterance that "God has given you talents which you have prostituted in the service of the Devil" might have raised qualms in the breast of any "liberal" nonconformist, one might think. But Morley knew that the Liberal Government he supported when it was most illiberal were Foote's jailers, and he wanted Foote held for the full term (as he *was held*). Morley's horror applied to the remark of the chairman of the protest meeting: "The liberty to worship is bondage if there is not also liberty to blaspheme." "Horrible," indeed—to the "tolerant," "liberal," "nonconformist."

In 1880 Charles Bradlaugh, in the midst of the Election which made him M.P. for Northampton, was shown a telegram from this tolerant Christian, recommending the Liberals of the constituency to vote for Labouchère and Bradlaugh. True, he did not mention any names, but his words were explicitly addressed to the actual fight as it stood in Northampton

and was addressed to Mr. Labouchère, and specifically referred to the two Liberal candidates, expressing the desire that "not even one" should be defeated.

The congenial biographer of Mr. Morley calls this an "inadvertence," "pure and simple," and "explains" it away. Mr. Hodder's praise of Morley's later repentance is worthy of immortality. "Then," says Hodder, "he did what only an honest, upright and Christian man could do," and, of course, this was to make the meanest possible excuses, and to eat his own words while he ran away from his first adventure in tolerance.

From that time, Morley became a fanatical opponent of the great Freethinker. He described Bradlaugh's Freethought as "a system of violent, offensive and disgusting attacks on the Faith." He spoke of Bradlaugh as being a writer in the *Freethinker*, "and on being challenged," says Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "he made neither admission nor correction."

Morley carried his antagonism to the point of separating himself from his party rather than tolerate in the House a man repeatedly returned by his constituency to represent them. Morley's curious justification of his intolerance reads strangely to those unfamiliar with Christian character. He said, "I will not be party by a hair's breadth in bringing about any arrangement for admitting (to Parliament after legal election) a man whose principles I hold in detestation."

Morley, we are assured, regretted bitterly "as long as he lived" "this painful episode": the "episode" of having "inadvertently" appeared to be a real Liberal.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Hardy Re-visited

TALKING over novels with friends, several of them expressed the opinion that they did not find much in the really modern world to interest them. Ephemeral was the word one used, and although my own taste impels me to examine the new with feelings of hope, there is little to encourage the eating of a curate's egg. In a way I was secretly gratified to hear this opinion, for I have been, for these last few months, reading through fourteen volumes of Hardy. The excellent pocket edition of Macmillan enables one to browse at odd moments in travelling through a rambling world. The last volume to be studied was *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and, although I had not read it since as far back as 1901, the second approach enabled me to realize the strength and genius of one who will remain immortal as long as human nature endures.

There is a story of Hardy that he deliberately weeded out from photographs of himself all those giving a hint of cheerfulness in his expression. It is a small matter, but a photograph I have of him must be a rare exception. It shows the old veteran in a garden, seated in a wicker chair and on his face, stamped with serenity, there is the dawn of a smile. There is much humour in his writings, but it is not exactly of the boisterous kind—it is different because it is intelligent—it is not a sneeze of reason. This humour even exists in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, but when orthodoxy had to grapple with the effects of his verbal dynamite, with his real depiction of the essence of Greek tragedy, his breadth is forgotten in the overpowering indictment of the needless misery engendered by a creed fit only for mental slaves.

This is by way of an introduction to a book, in the words of booksellers, "remaindered." The title in full is *The Human Pair in the Work of Thomas Hardy—An Essay on the Sexual Problem as treated in Wessex Novels, Tales and Poems*, by Pierre d'Exideuil: translated from the French by Felix W. Crosse. With an Introduction by Havelock Ellis. Humphrey Toulmin—price 10s. 6d. Mr. Havelock Ellis is a writer of rare

distinction on his particular subject of sex; he can write without sending a reader to a glossary and he can also discourse on his matter without making one feel sick for that is the result of reading most books on sex. When sales is the important factor on sex matters, the student is entitled to be suspicious.

In the Introduction, itself almost worth the price as an essay in fine writing, Mr. Ellis remarks, "He (Hardy) was a natural and simple man, as free from the pretentiousness-ness of 'high art' as from any other pretence, so modest and human as to feel hurt by the clamour of fools around his 'Jude the Obscure.'" He compares, in my opinion, in this respect with Maxim Gorki. And again, "His modest, quiet, smiling simplicity was the dominant impression the man made, at all events in earlier days, when one met him." It is true as written by Leonardo da Vinci, that "those who know need not shout," and it was the Hardy who sensed the rule of injustice in life, and its antagonism to any glib theological explanation, who had no occasion to write at the top of his voice.

The French author of this book moves freely among the works of foreign writers—Zola, Schopenhauer, Strindberg, Ibsen and many others to demonstrate influences from and to Hardy; he is terribly at ease with the giants, as he needs must be to do justice to his subject. There is the fine flavour of copious admiration reminding one of Victor Hugo's sustained eulogy of Shakespeare, and what more glorious task is there than that of praising the worthy?

A writer's influence on life is not sudden, and it is more frequently subtle and takes time to reach maturity. It would not be a bold assertion to make that Hardy has quietly done more for woman than those who made noise; and obtained for her the doubtful benefit of the vote. In the same way that Catholics were allowed to believe that the world revolved round the sun in 1820, so the French author records the fact, "It was only in 1882 that the English woman acquired civil personality in the eyes of the law." This is a good point, and students who knew the history of religion towards woman will not be slow to perceive that her low status from centuries of biblical teaching was reflected in her retarded growth politically—or as a member of the State.

The Woodlanders, written in 1887, let a little fresh air into the musty chamber of marriage at that time. One of the characters, Dr. Eddred Fitzpiers says, "Marriage is a civil contract, and the simpler and shorter, the better." This downright statement, bearing in mind the period, was clarity itself. Was it likely that those who gripped humanity at birth, marriage and death would greet this presentation of the obvious? In it was the cry to clear out from one ceremony at least—to make room for a little dignity, to allow human beings to dispense with meaningless talk. In civil marriage the child was and is protected; we do not see that the proportion of divorces as a result of civil marriages is higher than that from marriages having received the assistance of the priest.

The reader will not regret the purchase of this book; the style is not heavy, the author knows his subject, and the matter has the human and intimate touch to reward time spent on reading it. It is extremely useful to the young man in a study of Hardy's use of plot and material, and a study of the best makes a comprehension of secondary writers a matter of hay-making in the sunshine.

With the ding dong bells of pessimism and optimism, one can play tunes for eternity. In this question I should like to have found in some part of my reading a reply to pessimism by Hardy—"Guilty and proud of it"; here would be my answer:—

Yes; your up-dated modern page—
All flower-fresh, as it appears—
Can claim a time-tried lineage.

'That reaches backward fifty years
(Which, if but short for sleepy squires,
Is much in magazines' careers).

—Here, on your cover, never tires
The sower, reaper, thresher, while
As through the seasons of our sires

Each wills to work in ancient style
With scedlip, sickle, share and flail,
Though modes have since moved many a mile!

The steel-roped plough now rips the vale,
With cog and tooth the sheaves are won,
Wired wheels drum out the wheat like hail;

But if we ask what has been done
To unify the mortal lot
Since your bright leaves first saw the sun,

Beyond mechanic furtherance—what
Advance can rightness, candour, claim?
Truth bends abashed, and answers not.

Despite your volumes' gentle aim
To straighten visions wry and wrong,
Events jar onward much the same!

—Had custom tended to prolong,
As on your golden page engrained,
Old processes of blade and prong,

And best invention been retained
For high crusades to lessen tears
Throughout the race, the world had gained!
But too much, this, for fifty years.

These lines are "The Jubilee of a Magazine" (To the Editor) after fifty years of publication—*The Cornhill* seems to be intended. The italics are mine. And there is the kernel of pessimism by one who fought in the only fight worth taking on, and knocked a little elementary decency into his very Christian generation.

C-DE-B.

"Arms and the Clergy"

Nothing could be more opportune than Mr. George Bedborough's latest work* After sixteen years of "peace," the nations who suffered most in the Great War are re-arming. More and more money is being spent on war-preparations. The slogan—to ensure peace, it is necessary to be fully armed and prepared—is incessantly urged. Nations no longer trust each other, and warlike dictators of all opinions breathe fire and slaughter and pooh-pooh, in their mad desire for "cannon-fodder," any population restriction.

The clergy, as usual, are vacillating in their policy; but they are shrewd enough to see that, whatever dictators, war-mongers, or armament manufacturers are now saying, the common people who have to bear the brunt of war in the end, who have to be killed, or maimed, or blinded, or sent mad, *don't want war*. They have nothing whatever to gain by war, and everything to lose. It is therefore not surprising that the clergy in this country at all events, think it best for the moment to show that Jesus was really the Prince of Peace, that he never did take out his shining armour and become the God of War, and that Christianity always has fought solidly for peace and nothing else. To read their declarations on the subject these days ought to bring back the quite different stories they retailed twenty years ago. Unfortunately, the public have short memories. They have forgotten what the Bishop of London, Dr. Horton, Dr. Clifford and hosts of lesser lights really did say. Their sermons and strident declarations are buried in the old files of newspapers of wartime, and nothing would please these people more than if they were buried for ever and ever.

That is why this little book makes such interesting reading. The introduction gives an excellent *résumé* of many utterances which should certainly shame their clerical owners, unless they have the hide of hippopotami. And the bulk of the book consists of extracts, fully documented and printed without comment.

Of course, one must take into account the War and all it implied, the passions it aroused, the hatred of one's foes, the loss of one's best friends and so on. But we are always given to understand that it is under such exceptional circumstances that our spiritual advisers shine

best, and should be appealed to most. Under God's guidance, believing in his most holy religion, our priests and pastors should have led the nation into genuine paths of righteousness. What do we find? The reader must get *Arms and the Clergy* to learn the truth. If there is such a thing as "spirituality," or gentleness or hope or indeed any of man's better qualities, these clergy showed precious little of them. Not only was this war a war absolutely justified of God and Jesus, but it was necessary to kill and kill and kill. The German—he may have been a poor unlucky peasant or worker, hating to be killed or kill—had to be exterminated. And this killing was almost always associated with God's will or Jesus's, or the truth and beauty of the Gospels.

The Bishop of London said it was the "Great Battle of God"—"If," he declared, "we are to fight Christ's Battle it must be with Christ's weapons, and in communion with Him." The Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., besought his hearers "to continue this warfare in the Christian spirit." The Rev. R. Free ridiculed the idea that we should "fear" death. "The modern fear of death," he asserted, "discernible in some quarters, is to my mind, almost ludicrous. Any shift is deemed excusable if the possibility of death may be escaped. If I had ten sons they should all be on active service, or I would know the reason why." Gallant Mr. Free! Who better than he could rally on our men to be killed or crippled? What is the use of life—for the other fellow? Mr. Free was a magnificent acquisition to the Church. It was also good to be reminded by Dr. A. C. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, that "whatever nonsense the Kaiser may talk, he does not deny Christ." The implication is, of course, that Hun though the Kaiser was, awful as was his crime of being responsible for the war, stupid as he certainly showed himself in many pre-war and war utterances, one thing we had to give him credit for—he *did not deny Christ*. How comforting this must have been to the many widows and mothers of dead sons during those terrible years!

There are dozens of other quotations I should like to give, but everyone can buy the book. It contains many gems indeed—though, it must be confessed, few quite equal the extract from the Bishop of London's famous sermon delivered in Westminster Abbey in 1915. "Kill Germans," he cried, "Kill the good as well as the bad, the young men as well as the old, kill those who have shown kindness to our wounded . . ."

I wonder whether the Bishop would now dare to talk like that, war or no war? Well, we may not be able to stop war; but, at least, we can show what the clergy were saying during the last war.

Here then is the book, and I hope it will be on the shelves of all Freethinkers who have the cause of peace in their hearts.

H. CUTNER.

RELIGION AND MAN

It appears most demonstrably that all those whose influence rests on an imputed connexion with the Divine Being cannot fail to be animated by an interest incurably opposed to all human happiness; that the inevitable aim of such persons must be to extend and render irremediable those evils which natural religion would originate without them, viz., ignorance, extra-experimental belief, appalling conceptions of the Deity, intense dread of his visitations, and a perversion of the terms of praise and censure in his behalf. . . . Natural religion is thus provided with an array of human force and fraud for the purpose of enforcing her mandates and realizing her mischievous tendencies. A standing army of ministers is organized in her cause, formed of men who are believed to be specially gifted from the sky, or of others who pretend not to any immediate inspiration in their own persons, but merely act as the sub-delegates of some heaven-commissioned envoy of aforetime. The interest of both these sorts of persons is precisely identical, nor is it of the smallest importance whether the patent is worked by the original pretender, or by anyone else into whose hands it has subsequently fallen. In either case its fruits are equally deleterious.—George Grote, "Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion." pp. 129-30.

* *Arms and the Clergy*, by George Bedborough, 1s. paper, 2s. cloth, net. The Pioneer Press.

Acid Drops

The Rev. Sydney Diamond, M.A., says:—

When we ask the question, "What is the soul?" we are facing one of the most crucial problems of the mind. For what at the outset looks like a mere matter of definition by the science of mind, or psychology, proves before long to be an enquiry that leads to the heart of philosophy and theology.

It may lead to the heart of *theology*. But as for psychology and philosophy, we rather fancy that the up-to-date practitioners of these would be more inclined to want a satisfactory answer to "Is there a soul?" before they started dabbling with a theological conundrum "What is the soul?"

The Rev. Dr. W. F. Howard explains that to Paul the supreme message of the Gospels is that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. For all the centuries that have followed, readers of the New Testament have made the same discovery. The burden of the New Testament is that, in Jesus Christ, 'God hath visited and redeemed His people.'" And this is why we can "trust" the New Testament! One can trust it because the writers of it believed in, and recorded, their beliefs and fancies in regard to "God," a "Messiah," a "fallen" mankind, and "sin." It can be relied upon as revelation from God because the writers of it believed God was guiding them and revealing himself unto them. But why one should trust and believe in what people fancied nineteen centuries ago—God only knows. Incidentally, there is no evidence that Man has "sinned," and "fallen," or that he needed "reconciling" to some supernatural Creator by a blood sacrifice of a bit of this God. The tale is just an ancient fancy.

A correspondent of the *Christian World* wrote in a recent issue of that paper that the evidence of good work done by the Committee of film censors in Croydon is shown by the fact that 25 per cent of the films examined were rejected. That is typically Christian—its effectiveness is shown by what it suppresses. Whether these censors have any right to suppress—and what it was they suppressed, are questions not discussed. The main point is to suppress. That is mainly the Christian's idea of reform—stop people doing something. If people find pleasure in the thing that is banned, so much the better, that is a *prima facie* proof of justification.

The worst of it is that the people of this country are getting so used to the coercive action of self-appointed committees and so habituated to obeying a public order from any official, that while we are protesting against a single dictator, we are agreeing to the creation of a number of dictators, some of whom are without legal warranty for what they are doing. The police, the Home Secretary, minor Government officials in the income tax and customs departments are constantly acting towards the public as though they have powers to enforce their orders. When challenged, and advised to go to a place where heretics were once consigned, they promptly climb down. But until they are challenged, they act with the assurance of a Mussolini or a Hitler. Even when some Member of Parliament asks a question in the House, he is so ignorant of the facts that he is silenced with an answer that ought not to satisfy a schoolboy.

Dr. James Reid preached recently on "Memory," a subject about which the Bible has much to say. Dr. Reid quotes with approval various unimportant lines from Darwin, Freud, Anatole France and St. Augustine. But Dr. Reid omits all reference to the numerous occasions when indignant believers have had to jog God's memory because He has forgotten those who trusted in it. King David, the alleged author of the unlucky "Thirteenth" Psalm, says (verse 1) "How long wilt Thou forget Me, O Lord; For ever?" On the other hand, God's memory can be stirred-up by His own "jealousy" so vindic-

tively that He will "visit the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation." (Exodus xx. 5). What a memory. And what a God!

A writer in the *British Weekly* asks the startling question, "Why did Jesus not solve the economic problem at one stroke for Himself and the rest of us?" The writer discusses the theory that Jesus rejected "this temptation of the Devil," because if we did not have to fight for bread, "we should get soft and flabby." He admits that this is a "doubtful explanation," and tells us that when Jesus told the Devil: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord," it was only another way of saying: "My Father would have told me if He had meant me to do any such thing, and I am not going an inch beyond my instructions." Quite an early case of "Spenlow and Jorkins" apparently. What a pity that the Sole Representative on Earth of the "famous Old Jewish Firm" had no more discretionary power than any ordinary travelling salesman.

The *Christian World* tells what it calls "A Strange Story" about the late Sir Ernest Cassel. His wife, a Roman Catholic, lay dying, and could not rest in peace, believing that the man she loved would be cast into a Hell of eternal torment while she lived in Paradise. Solely to calm his wife's troubled mind, Sir Ernest allowed a priest to perform over him the meaningless mummeries of Baptism into the Catholic "Faith." Lady Cassel died and her widowed husband ignored the whole "Baptism" after it had served its purpose. But when he died, the Catholics performed a Requiem Mass at Farm Street Church, although there is no evidence that Cassel ever entered a Christian Church. The *Christian World* quite impertinently couples together "Catholicism and Atheism," and asks the ridiculous question: "Are the two things incompatible?" Why not ask the question: "Is there any deep-seated incompatibility between the nonsense of supernaturalism, whether it be Catholicism, Judaism, or any other religion and the common sense of Atheism?"

We understand there was some warm debate amongst the Archbishops, as to the order of the two rival ceremonies in connexion with the recent royal wedding. Both Archbishops wanted to be first in the field. With exaggerated politeness the Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateira told Ed. Cantuar his private opinion of the value of a merely Protestant Sacrament. Canterbury smiled, knowing that no mere Greek could take precedence (in England) of our own native Chief Medicine-man. And it was so. First the Duke was married. Then he was allowed to listen to a ceremony in a language which was "all Greek" to him. Yet when one thinks it out, the "victory" of the Archbishop of Canterbury was not quite so victorious as at first appears. It looks more like the earlier ceremony being illegal or ineffective. If a document has to be stamped to render it legal, it must be subjected to a second stamping only if the first one is admittedly improper. Cantuar would have been wiser to wipe out the Metropolitan by a polite gesture which would have treated a couple as unmarried if they had previously patronized some other joss-house official.

We have often pointed out that "Christian brotherhood" was as different from (and inferior to) ordinary brotherhood as—let us say—"a perfect lady" is different from a lady. The adjective, as Dr. Johnson said, is often the enemy of the noun. The *Literary Digest*, in its "Lexicographer's Easy Chair" column, makes some very helpful remarks. It gives as illustrations of "limitation or restriction," two common phrases, namely: "a poor critic," and "brethren in the Lord." Brethren are sometimes brethren. Brethren in the Lord are—well—they are simply "Christian" Brethren.

A writer in the *Methodist Recorder* tells of Christian proselytizing in the British Museum, of a character which we think wholly improper. He was studying certain Assyrian Cylinders when a party led by a guide

approached this section of the Museum. After listening to what the lecturer said, he had the impertinence to demand "whether one of the objects of these lectures was to confirm the truth of the Bible." After his interruption he appears to have got into conversation with a lady, a very innocent act in itself, but learning she was in the habit of attending a Roman Catholic Church, he "suggested her giving him her name and address." Having obtained this, the writer says, "I went straight to" (mentioning the Methodist Church nearest to the lady's home) ". . . The Sister to whom I gave the name and address, promised to look into the case." The article is headed, "A Thrill of Success."

What is a "Gripping Sermon"? We learn that the Rev. W. L. Waight delivered one of these "grippers" last week at Wesley's Chapel, London. It was all about Jeremiah who, he assured us "was feeling a heart-experience—but there was a flame in his bones which he knew meant the sovereignty of God." Internal inflammation sounds like influenza, which is also called "La Grippe." Waight made the usual lying innuendo by grouping together "hate, bitterness and materialism" as "preparations for another welter of blood." Mr. Waight must read *Arms and the Clergy*, which shows Christian ministers boasting that the war of 1914-1918 was God's own work, and man was "about his Heavenly Father's business" in that "welter of blood" which Mr. Waight refers to.

Communism is warned by the Rev. Harold Roberts, in an article which asks rather needlessly: "Is the Church Necessary?" "Communism will come to grief," he says more in sorrow than in anger. Mr. Roberts predicts a sad failure for Communism, "unless it relates its programme to a world other than this, and plants its citizenship in Heaven." We imagine this means little more than a polite invitation to Communism to go to Hell.

There is a passage in the latest report of the Christian Evidence Society, which is undeniably funny—though the writer did not see it. It is to the effect that such subjects as politics and economics attract much more attention in the open air than religion, and in consequence the work of the speakers is far more difficult. In other words, the religious propaganda of this particular body out to produce and supply evidence for Christianity (an object in which it has heretofore completely failed), is becoming more and more useless. And with the class of speakers which grace its platforms one can well understand why they find it so difficult to deal with other and more urgent subjects. For the rest, we note that the Bishop of Chelmsford said that "the C.E.S. was doing a most valuable piece of work, which was very difficult and very necessary." He might have added, in view of the foregoing that it had also almost completely failed.

Dr. David Forsyth has brought a nest of hornets round his ears. He actually had the temerity, in an address to the Royal Society of Medicine, to suggest that psychology proved once for all the absurdity of religion in general and Christianity in particular! It is one thing to say it in expensive books like the *Golden Bough*, or in a paper like the *Freethinker*; but to say it publicly so that reporters of our national newspapers can include it in their accounts of the Society's proceedings is really too much. Dr. Forsyth was immediately repudiated by some of his colleagues. Mr. Middleton Murry, the eminent Communist, described the address as "portentous in its superficiality." The *Universe* says the public has the right to be offended at the matter, and "all bounds of the permissible are passed when Dr. Forsyth applies one particularly nasty concept of pathological psychology to the Person of our Lord Himself." But the cream of its comment is this:—

Things of this sort will be said, but at least they might be confined to professional treatises, and not flaunted in the face of the public. There should be a certain decent reticence in public utterance.

But what if Dr. Forsyth was right in what he said?

Prebendary Wilson Cash is very downhearted at the failure of missionary enterprise, and in a pamphlet issued by the Church Missionary Society says, "Nothing will so weaken the missionary works of the Church as the paganizing of our own land; and to-day pure paganism is a force to be reckoned with in England." Though Christians have for centuries claimed paganism as rife throughout England, it was generally with less justice than at the present day; and it is good for the truth to be broadcasted sometimes. But we do commiserate with Mr. Cash. How can missionaries go to foreign lands with the joyful tidings of the Risen Lord, when so many people here have given up all belief in the saving grace of the gospel—when they look upon the story of Jesus as so much superstition and legend, if nothing worse? We suggest Prebendary Cash and his friends try Christianizing England for a change. If money has to be spent on religion, it is far better to have it in circulation in our own land.

Canon Wade is the latest translator of the New Testament, the documents of which he has also arranged "chronologically" in his work. He believes in doing nothing by halves; so the novelty of some of his work is, when not understanding quite what an inspired writer was driving at, putting in his own interpretation. For example (quoting a pious reviewer), "In the Epistle to the Romans, where St. Paul's rapid dialectic constantly leaves stages of the argument unstated, Dr. Wade bodily fills in the gaps, printing in italics in the text what he conceives St. Paul meant but did not write." We think this an admirable way of dealing with a Divinely Inspired work—though we admit that it is difficult to imagine God through Paul leaving an argument "unstated." Dr. Wade seems also to have inserted "a similar elucidation" in the Sermon on the Mount, though it is difficult to imagine a truly pious Christian even daring to add to what we are told is the greatest of all sermons. Fancy adding to Jesus! Is not this blasphemy?

The Rev. W. J. Sparrow Simpson preached a sermon, the other day, on "Christianity or Christ." He made some remarkable admissions about the history of the Church, and "the unworthy conduct on the part of Christians. They have shown," he declared, "deplorable fanaticisms and intolerance, indifference and unreality. They have refused to others a freedom which they claimed for themselves. They have approved and prompted atrocious cruelties. They have been strangely insensible to social disorders. They have obstructed the progress of knowledge and suppressed genuine discoveries"—and so on. Is this, he asks, an argument against the truth of Christianity? Not at all, for to get the "Christian" character, you must go to Christ himself. Well some of us would not find it difficult to prove even "Churchianity" rather better than "Christ"; but if Mr. Simpson is so much against the grave charges which, on his own admission, can be laid against Christians, why does he not do something about it? For example, why talk "freedom" so much? Why not give a hand in the fight for freedom of speech, and help to abolish the Blasphemy Laws? Possibly, however, that is a different story.

This simply won't do. Everybody knows that cures, or rather, miracles, take place regularly at Lourdes, because of the special intervention of the Virgin Mary. No one can explain them otherwise. Yet here at Kevelaer, the Rhenish pilgrimage place, which is not, as far as we know, particularly associated with Mary, miraculous cures take place which are quite as wonderful as those at Lourdes. For example, a paralysed woman of 62 prayed in front of the shrine, in her wheel-chair. In a moment she got up and walked and as 2,000 people were present, they all sang the *Te Deum*. A child born blind had her sight restored at the age of four, a deaf mute, and two other paralytics were also completely cured—and all this in a fortnight. Kevelaer looks like knocking Lourdes out for genuine and successful cures, and no questions asked. What are the Virgin and Lourdes going to do about it?

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. WATSON.—We quite agree with you as to the interest of many of the old debates between Christians and Freethinkers. But we are afraid that reprinting would involve too great a financial loss.

W. R. STEVENSON (Melbourne).—We are obliged for cuttings.

F. BRADLEY.—We agree that Canon Round-Turner, having so much faith that "God will never desert his Church," should leave the task of raising funds for its repair to him. But there is obviously a limit to the Canon's trust in the Lord.

H. SEARLE.—We could only deal with the matter as reported, and on the face of it the occurrence was not an unusual one.

T. SMITH.—We have not your trust in these anonymous reports of "signs and wonders." So many of them turn out to be mare's nests when subjected to examination.

B. L. BOWERS.—The Christian Science lecture is too full of clotted nonsense for serious criticism.

FOR Advertising the *Freethinker*.—W. James, 5s.

D. FAIRCLOUGH.—One may think of any amount of development in the range and quality of the sense organs, but to do so is not to abolish them.

H. SILVESTER.—Thanks for cuttings.

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 offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1357.

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.

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

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."

Sugar Plums

A miserably wet day and an afternoon lecture are not conducive to a large attendance, particularly when the hall is of the size of the Birmingham Town Hall; and the few hundred present looked rather scattered. But while the attendance was a very long way off the usual evening gathering, no lecturer could have had a more attentive audience than Mr. Cohen had on Sunday last, and the appreciation was marked. Mr. Willis occupied the chair with his usual ability and good humour, and there were quite a number of questions.

The Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. appears to be making up its mind for a more vigorous campaign than it has attempted of late, and we hope it will receive the necessary moral and financial support from local Freethinkers. The address of the local Secretary is Mr. Cottingham, 93a Bristol Street, Birmingham.

We are led to repeat something we have often said concerning the circulation of this journal. Our business manager reports a gratifying number of new subscribers, and very many of these say they only recently made the acquaintance of this paper, and express their regret that they had not done so earlier. That should remind our friends how many thousand potential subscribers there are to be found if one only looks for them. We invite

all and sundry to spend a little of their spare time in finding them. It will help in a variety of ways.

The Annual Dinner is fixed for Saturday evening, January 26, 1935, at the Holborn Restaurant, London, W.C.1, and everything points to another enjoyable evening and happy re-union on that date. Besides the dinner, there will be speeches, a first-class musical programme, and an opportunity of meeting Freethinkers from all parts of the country. Tickets 8s. each, may be obtained from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or from the offices of the National Secular Society, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A cordial invitation to all Freethinkers is also extended to any friends they may wish to bring.

Burnley and District saints are reminded that Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture to-day (December 9) in the Phoenix Theatre, Market Street, Burnley, at 2.45 p.m., on "The Troubles of a God," and at 7 p.m., on "Jesus, Fascism and Freethought." The lectures are under the auspices of the East Lancashire Rationalist Association, admission is free, with a silver collection.

Mr. J. T. Brighton, who has a record of excellent work from N.S.S. platforms in Durham and Northumberland will speak for the Liverpool Branch N.S.S. to-day (December 9), in the Milton Hall, 12a Daulby Street, Liverpool, on "Sins of the Sabbath." Mr. Brighton has youth, ability, and courage on his side, and we advise Liverpool saints not to miss the opportunity of hearing him. The lecture begins at 7 p.m. and admission is free.

We again call attention to the greeting cards suitable for Freethinkers, which may be obtained from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or the N.S.S. Offices, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The cards have an artistic design on the front, and are of a folding pattern, with a striking quotation from Col. Ingersoll inside. The price is 2d. each, or 7 in a packet for 1s. post free.

A debate will take place in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, on Tuesday, December 11, at 7 o'clock, between Mr. Joseph McCabe and the Rev. A. W. Harrison on "That Christianity did not Promote Civilization." The admission will be 1s. Tickets may be obtained from the Rationalist Press Association, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

The Doom of a City

THE moon hung golden, large, and round,
 Seething its beauty up the quiet sky
 In swanlike slow pulsations, while I wound
 Through dewy meads and gardens of rich flowers,
 Whose fragrance like a subtle harmony
 Was fascination to the languid hours.
 A tender mist of light was interfused
 Upon the hills and waters, woods and leas,
 Throughout the gloomless gloaming; and I mused
 Dim thoughts deep-floating in delicious dream,
 Until the long stern lines of cypress trees,
 Amidst whose plume funereal there did seem
 To creep with quivering sobs a moaning breath,
 Awed back my heart to life—to life and death.
 Far in the mystic moonlight lay outspread,
 In trance of solemn beauty still and weird,
 That Camp and City of the ancient dead;
 And far around stood up in dense array
 Those monumental marbles ever reared
 By men still battling with the powers of Life
 To those released before them from its sway;
 Victors or vanquished in the fearful strife,
 What matters?—Ah, within our Mother's breast,
 From toil and tumult, sin and sorrow free,
 Sphered beyond hope and dread, divinely calm,
 They lie, all gathered into perfect rest;
 And o'er the trance of their Eternity
 The Cypress waves more holy than the palm.

JAMES THOMSON.

The Art of Living

I.

STROLLING through the representative collection of paintings of various historic schools in our National Gallery of London, stirs different feelings of appreciation. It is a relief to the humanist to turn from some of the rooms to others presenting another order of creation. The Medieval Church was a leading patron of plastic and graphic art at a time when progress was going forward in its method and resources. So its creators had to meet the taste or demands of their employers. Thus we get that long procession of crucifixions, martyrdoms, holy families, and the like, which if often exhibiting extraordinary qualities of colour and technique, oppress one with the monotony or dreariness of their subjects. But the decline of the medieval system, and the rise of prosperous centres of trade and industry as with the free cities of Germany, Flanders, and Italy brought into the field a demand of another character, and a fresh type of connoisseur and patron. It is with pleasure then that we contrast some of its products: the sensuous beauty of Titian's compositions from antique myth and story; the opulent charms of Rubens' ladies; the portraiture of Rembrandt and Velasquez; the quaint interest of some Dutch interior, or the early schools of seascape and landscape painting. The influence of secular life and action on esthetic culture in all its aspects in the modern world is a subject of vital interest, and has a particular bearing on its development in our own time and country and in hopes for the future. It embraces poetry, music and drama, though it is mainly with applied art in mundane affairs that we are concerned for the moment.

The genius of British art has been illustrated in several recent exhibitions. There was the Academy display of art and craftsmanship from the later medieval age to the Mid-Victorian period; the representative show of Burne-Jones, and William Morris, at other centres; while this year's Royal Academy presented various phases of contemporary trends. What then is the purpose served by Art in general? Without attempting any detailed philosophy of the matter we may say that it promotes several allied ends. It expresses the pursuit of that intangible but deeply-sensed entity we define as Beauty. It adds to consciousness by projecting the "self" into wide modes of experience by imagination and sympathy through painting, poetry, music, sculpture, drama and architecture. On the more concrete side of things, it ministers to the finer satisfaction of expanding needs through craftsmanship in its manifold forms—dress, furniture, building, decoration, ornament, the refinements of the table—the preparation and serving of food. It extends to the lay-out of a garden and the open spaces of cities; and may include all that assists the sublimation of the coarser necessities of existence, even to admirable modern accessories of hygiene and sanitation. And in a yet subtler way beauty touches issues of conduct and human relationship.

The sense of beauty in scenery appears to be a comparatively recent acquisition. Travellers in the remote parts of these islands in the early eighteenth century were perturbed by the forbidding aspects of such regions as the Fells, the Border, and the Scotch Highlands; places now sought for their picturesque aspects, and illustrated in a hundred different modes. Perhaps imperfect means of approach and of accommodation on the way may have affected them here. English landscape painting has since attuned the mind to the attraction of scenery and colour, not

alone in our own land, but wherever it can be seized. This particularly applies to the line of painters in water colour that has flourished from the eighteenth century to the present day, without ignoring the claims of the sister art in oils. That line, numbering among its earlier exponents, De Wint, Cotman, Crome, Cox, Constable, Copley Fielding, Girtin, Turner and others, is not only a unique contribution to representation in a special medium, but also a revelation of the picturesque in nature, and the life of town and hamlet, at home and abroad. It still continues in vigorous activity, but reached its highest expression in its formative period in the mature work of Turner. Here he invests the scene he depicts with those transient aspects of supernal loveliness of colour, light and atmosphere that project one's sense into the Infinite, and often pass even in the observing.

This stimulus of graphic art to appreciation of external charm and interest is paralleled by English nature poetry. Though beside our present purpose we may note in this connexion the lines of Wordsworth:—

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

The British school of painting in oils and related arts, as it developed during the last two centuries has drawn most of its inspiration from mundane sources. Few distinctly religious artists are numbered among its many eminent exemplars, who together make up a national contribution to esthetic tradition. Landscape continues a favoured object of study. The trial and exploration of fresh methods and ideas has followed changing social and intellectual circumstance; shown in the much-discussed "impressionism" of Whistler, whose centenary has revived interest in his peculiar gift, besides other curious experiments elsewhere. History, symbol, legend provide matter for its greatest achievements; notably instanced in such pieces of colour and poetic compositions as *Ferdinand and Ariel*; *Sir Isumbras at the Ford* (Millais); *Dante at the Tomb of Beatrice* (Rossetti); *The Golden Stairs* (Burne-Jones); *Love and Life* (Watts). The everyday life of the people has yielded a fruitful field for illustration from Morland and Wilkie onward. Portraiture too holds a prominent place, providing a gallery of many famous, or obscure, personalities who have played their part in the general roll of British enterprise or culture; of beautiful or famous women, and charming children; overpassing the transiency of our human lot. Then there is a singular body of work devoted to the excitements of sport, and interpreting a strong national idiosyncrasy in itself. And as befits a country that is vitally connected with seafaring, nautical and marine subjects have had their

share of attention; which bring to mind a wonderful sea-piece, for its spacious atmosphere, in one of our galleries, entitled *Britannia's Realm*. Naval and military incidents afford innumerable themes for treatment from the career of a people who have adventured and fought the world over; whence their present position has been secured. Even the sombre features of an industrial town are made to reveal striking aspects of light and colour.

A change alike in taste and social conditions has affected the demand for certain forms of presentation popular in the last half-century. It is a tribute to the liberal patronage of connoisseurs that so much work, some of surpassing value, should have been encouraged during this period. To the present outlook we must return later.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

Nature and Man

WITH his recently published *Biology and Mankind* (Cambridge University Press), Mr. S. A. McDowall has written an excellent introduction to the science of life. Chaplain and Head Science Master at Winchester College, the author of this volume displays pronounced Mendelian predilections, although he is fully aware of the various other factors involved in the grand drama of organic development.

This work is instructively illustrated; the verities of evolution and the differing interpretations of these phenomena emanating from Lamarck and Darwin are clearly expounded. Then a chapter is devoted to a consideration of the experiments which tend to demonstrate or invalidate the theory of the hereditary transmission of acquired characters, and this is followed by a description of the mechanism involved in Mendelian inheritance. The vital importance of human heredity in civilized life; its bearing on social affairs, and its relationship to international problems from whose influences no existing community can escape, are all carefully studied. The book contains a good, if incomplete glossary, in addition to a useful index.

Herbert Spencer untiringly told us that all the innumerable problems of life and society are fundamentally biological. McDowall, who remains consistently scientific in all his reasonings, obviously shares this view. For he assures us in his preface that: "The problems and disasters of to-day, social, political, economic, are in the long run biological problems. Because we have been governed by politicians who know nothing of biology; because we ordinary citizens are content to remain in such abysmal ignorance of the inevitable effects of mistaken ideas and mistaken legislation that we allow our leaders of all parties to enact social laws, and to shirk the responsibility of taking action when a clear method of escape lies open; because, blind ourselves, we trust blind guides; because we cannot think further than the life of a Parliament, while Nature works by generations and tens of generations, we are face to face with disaster."

McDowall emphasizes the recognition of an endless continuity of causation in all departments of natural phenomena, and the genesis of life itself he refers to purely physical causes. As he justly remarks, the suggestion favoured by Arrhenius that primitive spores of living matter reached the earth from planetary or stellar space, merely relegates the origin of life to an earlier age. Much more scientific is the view that the organic arose from the inorganic on a cooling globe. Indeed, it is more than probable in the light of recent researches in bio-chemistry that, in our author's words, "we may one day be able to syn-

thesize a kind of protoplasm in the laboratory a substance more or less living, which will behave more or less as an organism."

Evolution having superseded the pre-scientific theory of special creation, a craving for compromise has arisen in religious circles, and it is suggested that, at an early epoch in life's history, there occurred an intervention of supernatural character which led to life's emergence from non-living matter. The ball of purely natural evolution was thus set rolling, but the impetus was given by a divine hand. This illogical contention our author stigmatizes "as a compromise which satisfies neither the scientific mind nor the primitive concepts of God, which characterized the infancy of religion; yet we cling to it because here, as elsewhere, we are very loth to put away childish things."

It is sometimes urged that the sense of beauty with a keen appreciation of art is exclusively human. Also, that it is something that no naturalistic theory serves to explain. Yet it is notorious that a marked appreciation of colour is possessed by many birds, while the chaffinch and other feathered singers display a truly wonderful æsthetic sense in adorning their nests. Sexual selection, as Darwin demonstrated, has played at least some part in the development of the brilliant plumage of birds. At the season of courtship especially, pheasants, peacocks and other gorgeously-plumaged members of the avian family, parade their adornments before their less resplendent hens. The lyre bird and birds of paradise are other notable instances of this, and as, other things equal, the most attractive males obtain the best partners their embellishments reappear in their offspring. Combats between buck deer are waged to secure possession of the does. Again, "the mandrill woos by displaying alternately his blue face and his scarlet backside. The spider dances a kind of Russian ballet before his mistress, who in some cases ungratefully eats him when she is tired of him. The bower-bird builds a pleasance for his inamorata, planting flowers and bright pebbles, and erecting a kind of tent in the midst with two doors, through which the birds chase each other in and out."

A confirmed Eugenist, McDowall regards the sterilization of the unfit—pathological subjects who are incurable—as a matter of urgent necessity. He, in accordance with many others, deplors the reckless multiplication of the less efficient sections of the population among whom the birth-rate has scarcely declined, while the vigorous and more capable members of the community tend to produce fewer and fewer children.

The dictum of Francis Galton that mental power is mainly dependent on sound parentage finds support in the inquiries conducted by Havelock Ellis, Cattell and other investigators. The pronounced ability exhibited by the Darwins in science, and the remarkable musical proficiency displayed by members of the Bach family, in which, during eight generations, Galton recorded no fewer than fifty representatives eminent as composers or instrumentalists, serves to illustrate this truth. Inter-marriage among the musical fraternity is frequent, and hereditary influences are thus increased.

Reverting to the Darwin pedigree of ability, and the Darwins may be regarded as the ablest of modern English families, it is noteworthy that "The Darwins with their relatives the Galtons and Wedgwoods are particularly striking. At least sixteen men of scientific eminence, more than half of them lineal descendants of Erasmus Darwin, arose in this family in five generations, of whom nine were Fellows of the Royal Society."

Men distinguished in several departments of juris-

prudence have successively appeared in the Pollock family, not to mention various other instances of hereditary descent. Still, we must remember that nurture as well as Nature has contributed to these results. For the groups in question have usually enjoyed economic security, the advantages of education, social prestige and other favourable conditions. These are absent in the lives of most men. Yet giants in their respective spheres such as Dickens, Faraday or Keats overcame the heaviest handicaps in the fight for fame.

Yet, heredity is still a potent factor, as the history of the Jukes family and other defective stocks demonstrates. This family originated in America from the offspring of a Dutch immigrant. Two of his sons mated with two of a family of six sisters, and Dugdale found that the dreadful descendants of five of these women bearing the name of Jukes formed a large proportion of prisoners immured in several county gaols. This was in 1874, and it is stated that "the descendants of Ada were prevailing criminal; those of Belle without sexual control; those of Effie, paupers. This first investigation of 540 persons of Jukes blood, and 169 related by marriage or co-habitation, many of whom were probably blood-relatives, showed that of 162 marriageable women 52.4 per cent were known to be harlots; that of 535 children born, 335 were supposed to be legitimate, 106 were illegitimate, and 94 unknown. Further, over 20 per cent of the males and 13 per cent of the females received almshouse relief, 50 were convicted criminals; 50 were prostitutes, 40 of whom spread disease. There were 250 arrests and trials. The direct cost to the State by 1874 was over a million and a quarter dollars."

Nearly half a century later, Estabrook traced the history of this degenerate group to date. The black record remained, although a minute improvement was discerned. Previously the family was isolated in a hilly habitat, where close interbreeding was usual, but subsequently wider opportunities were afforded for migration, and the family became less confined. To the introduction of purer blood is attributed the slight improvement noted. Out of 654 individuals identified, 323 only were classified as utterly worthless; 255 were casual labourers, while 76 were creditable citizens. There was smaller criminality; prostitution little changed, while institutional treatment showed a slight increase. To what extent the intermingling of Jukes blood with normal stocks had led to their deterioration is a matter of conjecture. The Jukes had added 2,000 members to their clan, but the birth-rate had dropped some 50 per cent.

From the standpoint of science, breeding from sound stocks is as imperative in human kind as all raisers of domesticated animals recognize it to be in practice, when safeguarding and improving their strains. Logically, then, the demonstrably unfit should become impotent. Grave misunderstanding exists concerning the form of sterilization now in operation in some American States. Speaking from the Eugenic standpoint, McDowall cogently says: "Ignorance and prejudice are still so widespread in this matter that I may perhaps be pardoned for stating clearly that ligation of the *vas deferens* in the male or of the *Fallopian tubes* (oviducts) in the female has no ill effects whatever, and does not in any degree affect married life except in so far as it renders conception impossible. Sterilization is not castration, and has none of the tragic results of that operation." Harold Cox and several medical authorities have long since striven to lighten popular darkness in this matter, yet grave misconceptions concerning it remain almost universal.

T. F. PALMER.

How Sandy Paid For His Father's Mass

MACNAB fell from the scaffolding into the river, and the current took him away before they could fish him out with a boathook. As is the habit of the rich, he left property behind him, to wit, a log-cabin, a rabbit hutch, and a potato-patch. In the cabin there was a widow and six children; in the hutch, a buck and two does; and in the patch, a few rotten tubers. Early in his career, as a shipbuilder's labourer, MacNab conceived a too limited idea of the indisputable truth that the ones who earn should be the ones who spend; and thenceforth he practised this restricted conception with unwearying zeal to the no small incommmodity of his wife and children. He flourished in the days of low wages and cheap drinks, and the larger part of his earnings enriched the publican. Sometime after the casualty, and when it had become certain that the fishes would take care of the funeral, if they had not already conducted it, Father O'Flarty paid a visit of condolence to Mrs. MacNab. He began by extolling the virtue of the deceased.

MacNab was a pattern of industry and contentment, always rejoicing at his task, and never giving ear to the mischief-makers by whom men are wont to be set against their masters. Then he was such a good husband, witness all these olive branches twining around his table, and the tears of his affectionate and bereaved spouse. After Mrs. MacNab had duly appreciated this eulogy, the father proceeded with great delicacy and discretion to intimate that however illustrious were the merits of the deceased, he none the less shared in the frailties of human nature, and that therefore it was necessary to save him future trouble by performing on his behalf the customary offices of religion. "Your husband," said his reverence, "was often hot and thirsty down here; and he will be hotter and thirstier still down there; so the sooner we get him into a cooler place the better." "But I've got nothing to pay for the mass with," said Mrs. MacNab. "And if it is not paid for, it won't do any good," remarked the father. "What shall I do?" she asked. "Well," replied he, "You've got three rabbits; two does, and a buck. The does are in the family way, so the buck is no longer needful. Give him to me, and I will say the Mass." "Let me think it over," answered Mrs. MacNab. Father O'Flarty consented and wished her "Good morning." Presently, Sandy MacNab, the red-haired scion of the regretted defunct, came home from his modest occupation of stone-breaking. "I'll make it all right," quoth he, on hearing his mother's tale. That same night, Father O'Flarty's tom-cat, a superb animal, mysteriously disappeared. Early next morning, Sandy observed to his mother that he would prepare the buck rabbit, and bring it to the presbytery.

Before her eyes he took Bunny from the hutch; and then carried him behind the cabin, apparently to spare her the sight of a disgusting operation. Five minutes later, he returned, holding in one hand a canvas bag, and in the other a ghastly looking creature, deprived of its skin. "I'll take this on to his reverence," said he, exhibiting the skinned beast. "Won't you give him the fur?" she asked. "I've got it here," he replied, holding up the bag. Father O'Flarty said the Mass on MacNab's behalf that forenoon, and what he got for saying it was turned into a tasty meal by Angelica, his pretty "niece." After enjoying this repast, he told her the story of its origin. Whereupon she exclaimed in horror-stricken tones, "save your reverence, but young MacNab was

selling a big live rabbit in the market place this morning, just after he brought us that dead thing; and, since he was round here last night, pretending to look for sparrows, our old Tom has never turned up." "But what about the fur?" queried the Father becoming pale. "Fur," replied his "niece," "there wasn't no fur at all, he said that he had skinned the thing to save us the trouble of skinning it, and that somebody had stolen the skin behind his back."

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Blowing the Gaff

(Continued from page 766)

GOVERNMENTS do not want war, but those they frequently represent do. Tarquin did not want rape; but as it was the only means to his end, the painful necessity was upon him; and he did what every other fraud—social and political—does, moralized it for his own purpose. Cecil Rhodes summed up the whole situation by saying: "we want land, not niggers." "I want to paint as much of the world as possible British red." He, and his capitalist confederates, did not believe in murder, as such; but, as the damned niggers won't come along on their hands and knees with their throats bleeding, war, for our imperial ends, and to fulfil our glorious destiny, is a painful necessity; and diplomats, statesmen, and such stuff are always at hand to justify the proceedings. "Look at large maps," said Salisbury. "Think imperially," said Chamberlain. All this we have faithfully performed; and the bloody war and the bastard peace are the fitting reward of our labours! Having swallowed more than we can chew, like past Empires, we are suffering from dyspepsia. Napoleon said they died eventually in that way; also, that war settled nothing—except Napoleon and his Empire!

It is a matter of Parliament controlling the military and financiers; and the means to such an end means the destruction of a system—a vicious system that means not only the enslavement of the body, but the soul as well. We fear for the destruction of something we call Civilization. A civilization that is afraid of, and for itself, has sounded its own death knell; and will most assuredly go! Let it! Millions of poundsworth of food, and other stuff wantonly destroyed on the plea of over-production; this in a world where millions are begging for bread; not excepting our own country, where—in spite of the National Government's claims—millions are to-day undernourished. Our civilization is a thing of nerves; and enjoys its manifold advantages with the grace and ease of a cat sitting on a hot brick.

Well then, in our despair, we must turn to religion, you say. Who, the Britisher, with his virulent Whiteman-ism and a creed he thrusts down the throats of the benighted natives, but laughs to scorn amongst his own confederates, or over a whisky and soda? A religion we offer Japan, with the Singapore base—our gesture of peace—is not for Mr. Lloyd George, or any sensible man. In the days when the Christian superstition was all-powerful, the opium could be administered instead of the money. I have read that "our rulers in 1815, after the Napoleonic wars, voted £1,500,000 to build new churches; after the war of 1914, they had to vote "doles" for the unemployed, and "subsidies to miners." The way of the Church is that of a man dragged by the heels!

"It is time organized Christianity should make an impression on the statesmanship of the world." The partnership of the Holy Father and the Italian C.O. dictator does not smell good for a start; and in Ger-

many one section of the priesthood is at war with the other. As for our Established Church, it is neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. It reminds me of a fine lady with holes in her socks, and a tide-mark around her neck. Tied to the imperial establishment, there is no hope from that quarter.

But our statesmen; how to get at them with our religion! Well; religion in the hands of our statesmen would be like truth in the hands of an expert witness, who holds the facts in his hand, and the truth up his sleeve. Religion is the anæsthetic our statesmen administer to the patients prior to the operations of the battlefields. The speeches of these political savages sound as if they were unacquainted with the most elementary morality; and, in time of war, in pulpit, on platform, in Parliament, and in the press, every principle of decency and morality is inverted if, and when, required. It was Christian Europe that made the last war, and Atheist Russia that blew the gaff on the dirty secret treaty game of the Allies. How much of the present dirty diplomacy is our Government responsible for?

It would be an insult to our intelligence to suggest that the Treaty of Versailles was calculated to produce anything better than the Europe we now behold; that a policy of piecing and patching would result in anything except a desire for vengeance. The spirit of intrigue, and mistrust has found us in a nest of national and political scorpions. Having got rid of the German viper in the path, we got tied to the tail of the military mad dog of Europe; and now we know that neither the German nor the French eagle will be fed on canary seed!

It is easy and popular to bemoan the murder of prominent public men; and much enthusiasm is aroused when a few madcaps are chased by an army of gendarmes in a wood; but when diplomats, and their confederates dip their pens in blood, it is quite natural that multitudes should swim in it. Our vengeance on a few revolutionaries must not blind us to the fact that the so-called great men of Europe are the real perpetrators of the evil. We deplore murder with all the strength of our being; but when a man is raised to privilege and power on a mound of corpses, we are not inclined to weep unduly when another carcass is added to keep company with them. The wages of sin is death; and a blind justice will deal it out, regardless of the sentimentalizing that comes too late. Of most of the men who are honoured in our time, a wiser posterity will say: let their memory perish.

"No Government wants war"; not even our own Government—at least not yet. There are too many living who remember the last war; the political lies—that it was a war to end war; a war to make the world safe for democracy, etc.; the broken promises; manufactured atrocities; and the truth made manifest to all, that money was sacred, and flesh and blood were cheap. All this, and more, is still fresh in the memory of millions. Lives of men for the asking; and money to make money at a sure five per cent. There are millions who know too much about the last war; and who are entirely unconcerned about our success or failure in the next. The Sedition Bill is being prepared for the benefit of such; so the churches will now have a good excuse for doing so little in the cause of peace; it will pay them better to line up with the Government in the good old way.

There is a profound reason for the Sedition Bill, even as there is for the Singapore base; and, in plain language, here is the reason: there is dirty work in the offing!

We are for peace; but not for peace at any price. The sacrifices of war are great; but the sacrifices of peace are many; and, alas! too magnanimous for the

swelled head and diminutive soul of the imperialist. It is well that lovers of peace should be clearly distinguished from the common anti-war-mongers. Nations, and men having decided advantages may well desire to be left in calm and peaceful enjoyment thereof: other nations, and men not so fortunately placed, and who claim a right to live on the planet, ask for concessions; and these being denied them, they seek means to secure a share of the plunder. To outlaw war is good; but not at the expense of the starving millions, who are short of land. These men are asked to admire the lovers of peace, who entertain the world with accounts of, and displays of, prodigious wealth, and the wanton destruction of it by civilized savages. Well might our so-called inferiors say to these savages: make room for others; who, at the worst, could not show more vile an example, nor a failure more complete.

WM. J. LAMB.

(To be concluded.)

Correspondence

OUT OF THE FOG

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Replying to your correspondent, Mr. G. Sadler, in his letter to you entitled "The Emerging God." I wish to say with all deference due to his rank and learning, how utterly amazing it is that in matters religious all sense of logic, relevancy or even reasonableness just goes by the board.

Mr. Sadler thanks Mr. Cohen for his help in conquering the belief in miracles such as the Virgin-Birth and Resurrection. Does this mean Mr. Sadler holds some reserve on other miracles? Mr. Sadler is quite right. Jesus was no man. We Freethinkers insist he was a God. Jesus was made a God, and he will have to die as other Gods before him died.

I cannot understand Mr. Sadler's delight in his welter of perplexing terms. Let us look at his formidable collection.

"Eternal God," "One Creative Mind Energy" (exhausted by weaving stars (?))—but emergent by evolution here and expressed by aspiring souls. Then we have "It," "Infinite," "Exhausted," "Creative," "Life-by-giving Life." I am a plain average man who thinks for himself, and Mr. Sadler appears to me to be lifting his head so high up into the clouds, only to lose all touch with the earth.

Mr. Sadler acknowledges Mr. Cohen's help in clearing away the old theology and aiding the "One Infinite Life," without knowing it. I suggest Mr. Sadler be a jolly fellow and join our ranks as a good-hearted Freethinker. It seems he, too, is bent on carrying on the good work of dispelling old theology and belief in Miracles, otherwise he would not lavish such praise and compliments on our Mr. Cohen.

If only Mr. Sadler would alter his "One Infinite Life" to "Humanism," and all his other verbal concoctions to "The Great Fight for Human Liberation," he would find us all pulling the same way, and it would be such a jolly party.

J. GARRICKSON.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 30, 1934

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

Also present: Messrs. Hornibrook, Rosetti (A. C.), Clifton, Silvester, Easterbrook (W. J. W.), Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to Birmingham, Sunderland, Glasgow

and the Parent Society. Reports of lectures held at Finchley, Stratford Town Hall, Bradford, and by Mr. Brighton were received. Matters concerning Swansea, Bethnal Green Branches, and the International Federation of Freethinkers, and East Lancashire Rationalist Association were dealt with. Correspondence from Liverpool, Leeds, Chester-le-Street, received attention, and the Secretary was instructed to deal with certain matters. It was decided that where suitable halls in London were available, further lectures be arranged. Progress in arrangements for the Annual Dinner were reported, and the meeting closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be on January 11, 1935.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Sunday, Mr. W. B. Collins. 3.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant, Collins, Gee and Tuson. *Freethinker* on sale outside Park Gates and literature to order.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. A. J. Miles (British Union of Fascists)—"Fascism, Social and Ethical."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Lord Snell, C.B.E.—"The Old Dead World and The World Unborn."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. J. C. Flugel—"Hedonism Reconsidered."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, December 10, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"What is Progress?"

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Conway Hall, 49 Theobalds Road, W.C.): 7.0, Mr. J. Humble—"Pensions for all at Sixty." National Campaign for Pensions at Sixty, organized by the *Sunday Referee*.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Grove House, Leyton, E.10): 8.0, Mr. Paul Goldman—"Modern Religion Explained."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"The Cult of Folly."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, Birkenhead, opposite Scala Theatre, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, Sam Cohen (Manchester)—"God and Mammon."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools): 7.0, Mr. C. H. Smith, A Lantern Lecture—"Does Modern Science Confirm God?" Illustrated with Astronomical Slides.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.0, Mr. H. Archer (Burnley)—"Determinism." A Discussion Class is held every Thursday at 7.30.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.30, Monday, December 10, Mr. Jack Clayton—"Evolution To-day."

BURNLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-op Assembly Hall, Hammer-ton Street, Burnley): 7.0, Tuesday, December 11, Debate: Speakers: Rev. J. P. Giles, M.A., B.D. (Immanuel Church, Burnley), Mr. Jack Clayton, (Burnley)—"Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" Chairman: Mr. W. M. Whitehead, A.R.C.A., Burnley.

BRADFORD SECULAR SOCIETY (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.0, Mr. T. W. Green—"Religion and Russia."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (Phoenix Theatre, Market Street, Burnley): 2.45, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"The Troubles of a God." 7.0, "Jesus, Fascism and Free-thought."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. S. G. Service—"Life: Its Origin and Perpetuation."

(Continued on page 783)

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(Continued from page 782)

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mrs. Janet Chance—"Godless Humanity."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Milton Hall, 12a Daulby Street, Liverpool, off London Road, by the Majestic Cinema) : 7.0, J. T. Brighton (Chester-le-Street)—"Sins of the Sabbath."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarion Cafe, Market Street, Manchester) : 7.30, J. Clayton (Burnley)—"Humours of Free-thought Propaganda."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus) : 7.0, "Shellback"—"Around the World by Sail."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Hall, Laygate) 7.30, Mr. A. Flanders—A Lecture.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street, Sunderland) : 7.0, Miss E. Moore—A Lecture.

MR. JOSEPH McCABE will debate with the REV. A. W. HARRISON, D.D., at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, on Tuesday, December 11, at 7 o'clock. Subject: "That Christianity Did Not Promote Civilization." Admission 1s. Tickets from the R.P.A., Johnson's Court, E.C.4, or Conway Hall.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President - - - **CHAPMAN COHEN,**
General Secretary - **R. H. ROSETTI.**

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