

# SOME TRUTH ABOUT THE WAR.

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

## Views and Opinions.

### Some Truth About the War.

BRIGADIER GENERAL CROZIER has been creating consternation by his book, *A Brass Hat in No Man's Land*, Jonathan Cape, 7s. 6d.) and the abuse he has received is quite undeserved. From 1914 to 1918, the uniform and standardized account of the British Army was that of an army of gentlemen, chivalrous to indiscretion, animated by the highest ideals, and fighting a war that was to end war. With the close of the war other aspects of the army in action began to appear. Some amount of demoralization due to the war was admitted, books began to make their appearance, which depicted men nerved to do what had to be done by the use of alcohol, numbers of them breaking down under the terrific strain, a looseness of the relations between the sexes in the war areas, with hints of the difficulty that officers had experienced in maintaining discipline. Those with level heads and truthful minds were not at all surprised at these disclosures, because they knew them to be normal consequences of war at all times, and if more marked in the last war, the difference was due to the greater strain. A more intelligent appreciation of the nature and consequences of war would find people prepared for what results, and not at all surprised when the consequences are published. But then, an appreciation of the nature of war would go a long way towards preventing war, and that opens up quite another story. As things stand, the course of events is something like this. First an idealization of war—appeals to patriotism, the nobility of the soldier, the moral justification of the war, etc.—then a feeling of revulsion when the war is over and the price paid for it is made known, finally, a reversion to idealization when it is feared that too great an insistence on the evils of war may make recruiting difficult, soldiering unpopular, and the thought of war disgusting.

### Getting Ready for War.

In a burst of pious indignation the *Daily Chronicle*—to take a specimen—decided to have nothing to do with General Crozier's book, because it thought that books depicting the viciousness of war had gone far enough. Other papers said that the stories of vice and brutalization resulting from war were not universally true, and there were fine examples of heroic courage, purity of living, etc. But General Crozier (it may be incorrect to leave out the full title, but it is easier writing), does not dwell only upon the dark side. He gives you a straightforward unprejudiced account of the war, as it was seen by one holding high rank. He pays full tribute to the good side of the men, but he says, in substance, “If you will have war, then you must expect certain results, and if you will put bodies of men under the charge of officers to be got ready for war, and kept fit while at war, then there are certain things that must be done, and these things must be taken as part of the price we pay for war.” That, I say, is a straightforward attitude. He says, what I have often said in these columns, that not only actual warfare, but the preparations for warfare involve a certain amount of brutalization. Take the following description of his work in drilling and preparing men for war in the early part of 1915:—

I do what I can to alter completely the outlook, bearing and mentality of over a thousand men in as short a time as possible—for blood-lust is taught for purposes of war in bayonet-fighting itself, and by doping the minds of all with propagandic poison. The German atrocities (many of which I doubt in secret) the employment of gas in action, the violation of French women, and the “official murder” of Nurse Cavell all help to bring out the brute-like bestiality that is so necessary to victory. The process of “seeing red,” which has to be carefully cultured if the effect is to be lasting, is elaborately grafted into the make-up of even the meek and mild, through the instrumentality of martial music, drums, Irish pipes, bands and marching songs. Sacred and artistic music is forbidden, save at Church, and even then the note of combat is struck. The Christian Churches are the finest blood-lust creators we have, and of them we make free use.

The British soldier is a kindly fellow, and it is safe to say, despite the dope, seldom oversteps the mark of barbaric propriety in France, save occasionally to kill prisoners he cannot be bothered to escort back to his lines.

In order that he shall enter into the true spirit of the show, however, the fun of the fair, as we may call it, it is necessary to corrode his mentality with bitter-sweet vice, and to keep him up to the scratch on all occasions . . . by September, 1915, everything we do is faultless, everything the Germans do is abominable. It is the only way in war, and both sides follow it.

The sexual licence that prevailed is treated in an



equally frank manner. Bodies of men, married and unmarried, were far from home, removed from civilizing influences, and General Crozier says that it was his business to deliver the men at the front as sound in health as possible. To preach continence in such circumstances was absurd. Arrangements were made to deal with the situation. He says, "Prostitutes and loose women always follow the big drum, the more big drums the more the prostitutes abound." He had seen what had happened in the South African war, and took steps to regulate it as far as possible, and to provide what was necessary. To those who raise objections to the provisions that were made for the men he says:—

I would remind them that we were at war . . . and that war always breeds vice and venereal. One is the corollary of the other. The abnormal life, the shattered nerves, the longing to forget, if even for one brief moment, the absence from home and the inculcation of barbaric habits in our manhood, tempered by the most beautiful acts of heroism, unselfishness, sacrifice to duty, even unto death, lead directly and inevitably to the path of free-love on a large, and ever expanding scale. My job was to provide food for cannon, and good food at that. Far better to eradicate the cause—war itself—than to build up hopes that it can be waged in any other way than by brute force and by brutal means. I go so far as to say that free-love in discretion for many of the celibates of both sexes, engaged in war work between 1914 and 1918 was as inevitable as the rising and setting of the sun.

That is a perfectly honest way of facing the situation, but it is not the way in which things are faced. Everyone knows that General Crozier is speaking nothing but the truth. Everyone who knew anything at all knew at the time what was going on. But to make that knowledge public was not "good form." The clergy knew it, but "the Christian Churches are the finest creators of blood-lust we have," and the business of the Churches during the war was to excite the war fever, to throw a mantle of morality over a beastly situation, to talk of it as did the Bishop of London, as "God's day," and that the soldiers were more than heroes, they were saints, and for Father Vaughan to impress upon the country that our business was to go on killing Germans. Everything was done by them that could be done to hide the truth and to paint war in glowing and heroic colours. They preached from the prophets, but said nothing about the profiteers. They harped upon the "moral uplift" of the war but said nothing about its inevitable beastliness and demoralization. They emphasized the value of their doctrine of love by inculcating the doctrine of hate. For the Germans to sing their hymn of hate was intolerable, because that was directed against us. For us to preach hatred of the "enemy" was to prove that we were on God's side. Naturally they do not now like General Crozier writing a book which exposes the part played by these self-appointed guardians of English morality.

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#### Preparing for the Next War.

As is very often the case, criticisms of the book appear to have missed the main point. Some have protested against the book on the score of the bravery and devotion shown by the men. As General Crozier pays full tribute to this the comment lacks relevancy. The real point that General Crozier drives home is not that many men failed in their duty, or that many gave way to the beastliness of war, nor is it a denial that very many withstood in a remarkable manner the full effects of the war in which they were en-

gaged, but that the proper conduct of a war is dependent upon subjecting the men to systematic brutalization, and an inevitable acquisition of vicious habits. That some withstand this better than others, is, fortunately true; that others may come through little the worse is also true. But the brutalization, the worsening of character by war is the main theme of the book, and until this is fully and universally realized the cessation of war is an impossibility. General Crozier's parsonic and other critics have simply shut their eyes to this central fact lest, one may presume, the army as a profession should suffer in popular estimation.

This is precisely the lesson that most people simply will not learn. War is, in spite of all that is being said on behalf of a professed desire for peace, undergoing a process of idealization. Once every year the nation is asked to remain silent and mediate, not on the barbaric nature of the conflict in which millions met their deaths, not on the beastliness, the filth, the degradation in which they spent their lives before they were killed, but upon their courage, their high devotion to duty, the example they set to succeeding generations. The monuments erected to their memory says nothing of the filth and beastliness of warfare, they point only to its ideal side. What kind of lesson does this give to the rising generation? Does it teach them to hold warfare in detestation and contempt, or does it teach them that the soldier manifests the qualities of courage and devotion upon which the welfare of the nation depends and which all admire? Everyone that looks seriously at things know that we are treading the same way, so far as the responsible authorities are concerned, that led the nations to 1914. The soldier is still the one who is paraded before the youth of the country on every occasion where display is possible. And it is not the men who went through the last war who will be called upon to fight the next one; it will be the younger generation that has grown up since the last war terminated, which knows nothing of the things of which General Crozier writes, but will only have before it the deceptive pictures placed there by the old and crafty men of the tribe. I re-echo the words of General Crozier, war is "the last resource of fools." "Youth sprang to the call . . . but let us guide our youth to the hard battle of peace." In 1914, protesting against what is here called "propagandic poison," I said that the task before the world was not that of killing Germans, but the much harder one of learning how to live with them. I said that it was a case of the war of ideas against the idea of war. I think so still, although we have just had a Naval Conference brought to a close, in which the sole thing seriously thought of was the cost of the present-day war, and how things could be managed so that the next war might be fought in a more economical manner.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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#### FRIENDSHIP,

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WHEN I have passed, my friend, and time  
With healing hands has soothed the pain  
That eats my aching heart away,  
You will stand but self condemned  
For men will sing your praise, and you,  
'Neath adulation's cheerful light  
Will purr in feline ecstasy,  
For some young fool who'll call you, friend.

E. HUGH COOPER.



## Sons of the Horse-Leech.

"Commerce has invaded the Church and the chink of the money-bag is audible wherever the faithful meet."

*Bishop of Durham.*

"There are occasions and causes, why and wherefore, in all things."—*Shakespeare.*

"A wise man should have money in his head, but not in his heart."—*Swift.*

PRIESTS are the most hardened and unabashed beggars. From the twilight of human history they have cadged without conscience. The thousands of millions of money they have collected, by hook and by crook, almost defies calculation. All this money has been in addition to the tithes imposed on agricultural land, the royalties on coal, and the vast revenues from ecclesiastical properties. Still the game goes merrily along, and one of the latest moves is supplication for the "Forty-five Churches Fund," for which a very modest quarter of a million of money is asked by the Anglican Church officials.

This present appeal is signed by the Bishop of London, the Lord Chancellor (of a "Socialist" Administration), the Lord Mayor of London, and Sir Montague Barlow, and asks for support for providing new places of worship in an area in London stretching from Brentford, Hayes, Acton, Ealing, Wembley, Harrow, and round to the Essex border. In this area it is stated that there are 70,000 new houses with a population of about 400,000. Presumably, the faithful few are now worshipping in tin tabernacles, for the appeal points out that "in every case a permanent church is entirely lacking." It also appears that some of the clergy are, like so many of their betters, living in furnished apartments, for the report mentions the want of "proper equipment" of vicarages, suitable for the Lord's chosen.

The cream of the jest is that several other denominations are "staking-out" the same territory, each regarding the others as being heathens, or worse. The Congregationalists are begging for £170,000. The Anglican Church, however, has one enormous advantage over its Nonconformist rivals, for she is a creature of Parliament, and the State form of religion. Indeed, the modest Anglican priests have mapped out the world as their dioceses, and, like Alexander the Great, sigh for more worlds to conquer. She may plume herself on being the English State Church, but she aims at being cosmopolitan. One of the higher Anglican ecclesiastics is styled Bishop of the Upper Nile, and his diocese has an area of 264,000 square miles and a population of 4,500,000, all ebony except a train-load of Europeans. Another modest Anglican priest is proclaimed Bishop of Northern and Central Europe, and it is a safe hazard that the inhabitants of those countries are unaware of the existence of their spiritual pastor and master. But the actual size of the congregations never worries a State Church official, for the stipend is paid regularly in any event. Suburban London is as much grist to their net as Uganda, and any priest would cheerfully accept the bishopric of the Arctic Regions, provided that the salary ran into four figures.

Curiously, the Anglican priests who ask constantly for money for building new churches and maintaining the clergy, do not worry overmuch concerning derelict places of worship. A few years back nineteen churches were so listed in the City of London, but, despite the lack of worshippers, the rectors and vicars are still on this Church's payroll. The sites on which these places of worship are built are worth fabulous sums of money, and the amount is actually increasing with the rise in land values. Congregations are very small because the resident population of the City it-

self is composed of Jews and policemen, the former never dreaming of entering a Christian place of worship, and the latter being past all redemption.

Although the English State Church is one of the wealthiest of religious organizations, the clergy are always pleading poverty and raising money. At one time the cry is for help for the "starving" priests; another time it is an appeal to save Saint Paul's Cathedral from toppling into Ludgate Hill. Now, the money is to provide more churches in Suburban London. Vast sums have been raised, but the only tangible results have been scaffolding in St. Paul's, the shrinkage of the number of curates, and the rapid multiplication of bishoprics, which now extend (on paper) over the whole of the habitable globe. In plain language the chief result of these appeals has been the creation of soft jobs for the higher ecclesiastics, with excellent salaries and palatial residences.

Priests take, but they do not give. No one gets big money in the Anglican Church except the clergy themselves. £50 a year is considered a good salary for an organist, whilst vergers and church cleaners are so poor that it is a pity that the ravens that are said to have fed the Old Testament prophet have retired from business. As for Church schools, the teachers are notoriously underpaid and overworked; whilst the equipment of the schools themselves beggars description. If this State Church's care for education is to be judged by the condition of her own schools, then is she the foster-mother of ignorance.

With the advent of Democracy and the installation of a so-called Socialist Government, it is high time that this financing of Superstition received more careful attention. The Government actually has a direct interest in this Anglican Church, for it is the State form of religion. This Church of England has official sanction, but it is no longer a national form of religion, for only one citizen in nineteen is actually within its fold. Yet this Church possesses property worth one hundred and twenty millions of money, much of which is rapidly rising in value. Its Bishops sit in the House of Lords and largely control legislation, whilst its priests have favoured positions in the Army and Navy and Universities.

The Sovereign is head of this religious organization, and it goes without saying that it is monarchial in character, and, therefore, Anti-Socialist. Thus you get the paradoxical position of a Socialist Government lending its support to an organization which, from the very nature of the case, must be its hereditary enemy. Disestablishment seems the only solution, but it must be accompanied by Disendowment. Otherwise, the unseemly struggles between a powerful Clericalism and a Kaleidoscopic Government, which have disgraced French politics for three generations, would be repeated on this side of the Channel.

Once this State Church was supreme, and Nonconformists were burned or hanged. A time came, however, when Dissenters became too numerous to be so honoured. To-day there are a hundred sects and many fancy religions. Out of forty thousand priests in this country the State Church now numbers only seventeen thousand. Owing, however, to Governmental support, this church of a minority enjoys a specially favoured position in the national life. It controls education, and it influences legislation, and always in favour of reaction. With the sole exception of London, the Universities of this country are priestridden. As for political influence, the votes of the bishops in the House of Lords for over a hundred years, prove beyond all cavil and all dispute that this Church is flagrantly in opposition to Democratic principles.

Over half a century ago Lord Shaftesbury asked the question, "Of what use are the Bishops in the



House of Lords?" and to-day men are still awaiting a satisfactory reply. An answer cannot be delayed indefinitely, for the tendency of the present age is towards Secularism and not Superstition. In this connexion I am reminded of a story of a missionary addressing a Sunday School class, "Just think, children," said the missionary, "In Africa there are many places where little boys and girls have no Sunday Schools, no hymns, no bibles, no prayers, and no teachers. Now, what should we all strive to save our money for?" "To go to Africa," came a chorus of young, cheery voices.

MIMNERMUS.

## Voltaire the Liberator.

"Ay, sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed  
To death Imposture through the armour joints."  
*Browning ("The Two Poets of Croisic.")*

On the 30th of this month, 152 years ago, there died, at the height of his fame, after a long life crowned with victory, such as few men have ever achieved, the greatest liberator of the human mind, Voltaire.

To the orthodox Christian he appears as an emissary of Satan. "To each alike of the countless sects," says Morley, "his name is the symbol for the prevailing of the gates of hell." And "Christian charity feels constrained to unmask a demon from the depths of the pit.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson said that Rousseau deserved transportation more than any felon from the Old Bailey, and that the difference between him and Voltaire was so slight, that "it would be difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them." The Catholic, De Maistre, spoke of him as the man "into whose hands hell had given all its powers."<sup>2</sup> But these flowers of Christian charity, from the people who are enjoined to love their enemies, may be considered as a tribute to the efficacy of Voltaire's lifelong campaign against their superstitious beliefs and cruel practices.

Voltaireism, to quote Morley again, may stand for the name of the Renaissance of the eighteenth century. "The rays from Voltaire's burning and far-shining spirit no sooner struck upon the genius of the time, seated dark and dead like the black stone of Memnon's statue, than the clang of the breaking chord was heard through Europe, and men awoke in new day and more spacious air." And again: "Voltaire was the very eye of eighteenth-century illumination. It was he who conveyed to his generation in a multitude of forms the consciousness at once of the power and the rights of human intelligence. Another might well have said of him what he magnanimously said of his famous contemporary, Montesquieu; that "humanity had lost its title-deeds, and he had recovered them."<sup>3</sup> Lamartine, the historian, says of him:—

Voltaire had the genius of criticism, that power of raillery which withers all it overthrows. He had made human nature laugh at itself, had felled it low in order to raise, had laid bare before it all errors, prejudices, iniquities, and crimes of ignorance; he had urged it to rebellion against consecrated ideas, not by the ideal but by sheer contempt. Destiny gave him eighty years of existence, that he might slowly decompose the decayed age; he had the time to combat against time, and when he fell he was the conqueror.<sup>4</sup>

If we judge men by what they have done, then Voltaire is incontestably the greatest writer of

modern Europe. No one has caused, through the powerful influence of his genius alone, and the perseverance of his will, so great a commotion in the minds of men; his pen aroused a world, and has shaken a far mightier empire than that of Charlemagne, the European empire of a theocracy.<sup>5</sup>

Never, during his lifetime, has a writer wielded such power. "Despite exile, imprisonment, and the suppression of almost every one of his books by the minions of Church and State, he forged fiercely a path for his truth until at last kings, popes and emperors catered to him, thrones trembled before him, and half the world listened to catch his every word."<sup>6</sup>

His works, says the Historian Taine, are really a summary of all the knowledge of the time. Their vast contents swarm with details on astronomy, physics, geography, physiology, statistics, and the history of all nations, and they are not merely the gleanings of the labour of other men, but: "the innumerable and personal experiences of a man who has himself read the texts, handled the instruments, visited the countries, taken part in the industries, and associated with the persons, and who, in the precision of his marvellous memory, in the liveliness of his ever-blazing imagination, revives or sees, as with the eye itself, everything that he states and as he states it."<sup>7</sup>

Voltaire sees things, not through the gray veil of abstractions, but in themselves as they really are. Take the "Dialogues"; "The Philosophical Dictionary"; the Novels, says Taine, you will find:—

the most striking feature of his style is the prodigious rapidity, the dazzling landscapes, narratives, dialogues, brief little pictures, following each other rapidly as if in a magic-lantern, withdrawn almost as soon as presented by the impatient magician who, in the twinkling of an eye, girdles the world, and constantly accumulating one on top of the other, history, fable, truth and fancy, the present time and times past, frames his work now with a parade as absurd as that of a country fair, and now with a fairy scene more magnificent than all those of the opera. (*The Ancient Regime.* p. 264.)

It is the fashion, among the religious, to regard Voltaire as shallow, because of his incomparable wit. They regard dullness as a virtue. Never was there a greater error. We need only give one illustration of this. It should be remembered that at this time the new astronomy of Newton was in about the same position as Einstein's new theory of Relativity was a few years ago—it is not much different now—it seemed incredible, and was unexplainable except to mathematicians, and in those days new ideas did not travel so quickly, and took much longer to assimilate than is the case to-day, the Church being much more powerful then, and although Newton's great work had been published fifty years, it was still practically unknown outside England. When Voltaire was in exile in England, he studied the new philosophy. Upon his return he decided to explain the new ideas to his countrymen:—

In his English Letters he had given Newton the place of honour, and this at a time when Newton's philosophy was unknown to the many and despised by the few. Out of England there were not in the world, probably, thirty Newtonians when Voltaire wrote upon Newton in his English Letters. He determined, in 1735, to write a volume, giving in a clear, exact, but popular form, the substance of Newton's work, which, being in Latin, and algebra, was, is, and will always remain inaccessible except to the learned. It was a project worthy of a patriot and a scholar thus to place the best intellectual treasure of a foreign land within easy reach of the

<sup>1</sup> Morley: *Voltaire.* p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Durant: *The Story of Philosophy.* p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> Morley: *Voltaire.* pp. 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Lamartine: *History of the Girondists.* Vol. I, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> Durant: *The Story of Philosophy.* p. 220.

<sup>7</sup> Taine: *The Ancient Régime.* p. 263.



whole educated class of his own; and it was peculiarly *his* work who felt that knowledge is the antidote to superstition, and that superstition was poisoning the life of France.<sup>8</sup>

The work entitled *Elements of Newton's Philosophy*, was published in 1737. Now Voltaire must have had a good knowledge of English, Latin, French, Mathematics and Astronomy, or he could not have undertaken the work. There were exceedingly few in the whole world who could have carried it through. It was no shallow mind that accomplished this. It was about this time that Voltaire set up a laboratory at Cirey, in which he worked for four or five years: "He filled his gallery with costly apparatus—air-pumps thermometers, furnaces, crucibles, retorts, telescopes, prisms, scales, and compasses." Says Parton, and "The chief results of Voltaire's studies and experiments in science occupy two volumes of his works, and strengthen every other volume produced in the latter half of his life."<sup>9</sup>

Voltaire had travelled widely, he had lived in England and Germany. He had mastered all the science and learning of his time. He was perfectly equipped when he entered the arena against the Church representing the forces of darkness, cruelty, and superstition.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

## The Italian Art Exhibition.

(A FREETHINKER'S IMPRESSIONS.)

In the history of art in London, perhaps no other collection of paintings has received so large a measure of attention from the press, the monthly magazine, and the public, as the Italian pictures recently exhibited at Burlington House. Though the predominating subjects of these great paintings, which represent the high-water mark of human achievement in medieval art, are Madonnas, Angels, the Crucifixion, and the characters or incidents associated with the creed and cult of the Christian Church, still the exhibition was of special interest to the man or woman who has no religion in any honest sense of the word. Not only the pictures but the atmosphere, the general tone, of the whole panorama, and, not least, the appreciations of the throng of onlookers, evoked in me a strange medley of feelings—enthusiasm mingled at times with a tinge of antipathy.

But here I am not directly concerned with the magnificence of the exposition itself nor with individual pictures. I intend merely to say something about the connexion between art and religion, and the general drift of the numerous discussions in the press and elsewhere or "the religious function of all true art." Most of these doubtless express quite accurate opinion; but some of them are in the best approved style of the professional apologist.

Now, however true it may be that from the dawn of ancient civilization we see art and religion hand in hand, the particular subject treated is an accidental, not an essential, of the art. The emotions are grounded in life and its attitude to Nature, and they are ceaselessly moulding religion itself in the direction of humanism, that is to say, new values and interests. Even the Roman Catholic, who consistently invests the medieval period which aspirations and achievements to which we moderns can make no claim, has travelled far beyond that period in the

ideas and influences that constitute his civilized life to-day. The Puritan represented the extreme opposite view. His attitude to art was that a necessary antagonism existed between the beautiful and the righteous. At the exhibition, I took particular notice of one picture, "The Miracle of the Profaned Pyx," and wondered how it impressed pious Catholics to-day. This is really a fine piece of work depicting the punishment of an impious goldsmith who has profaned a holy wafer. The goldsmith and his family, including a boy, apparently seven or eight years old, are burned at the stake. That a little child, deliberately pinioned and conveyed to the stake, should inspire such high and serious art, seemed to me to touch the very foundation of the "one true faith" which is to redeem the world. Ruskin said that the difference between the cruelty of the infidel Ghibelline and the Christian Guelph was that the former's atrocities were committed in hot blood, the latter's in cold.

It is on this last point that I would more particularly insist. The journalists who are now proclaiming, "Behold Art and Religion hand in hand," leave out of consideration altogether the reverse side of the picture, which is as truly Christian as the other side. "Pictorial theology" was intensely concerned to represent realistically repugnances as well as Madonnas and saints. The gruesome frescoes of the Campo Santo in Pisa, showing the punishments of the damned, do not stand apart as something isolated and exceptional. The churches were filled with such pictures. The terrors of the Last Judgment were a favourite theme, and so was Death, represented as a grim figure holding an hour-glass and a scythe, and intended to make the fear of the future as present and real as possible. Whenever I look upon a reproduction of "The Curse" (by Signorelli), or anything of the kind made the subject of high art, my feeling is one of contempt for the faith that inspired the artist rather than admiration for his genius. "The painter terrified himself with his own fiends," says Ruskin, "and reproved or comforted himself by the lips of his own saints."

After all, the most important contribution to the world's art—the most important in its actual attainment and in its abiding influence—comes to us from pagan Greece, not from Christian Italy. But here, too, our journalists and pious exhorters assure us that art is the child of religion. And what is this religion the child of? Of sunshine, clear skies, and mother earth seen through a temperament. The genius of the Greek could idealize life without ever losing its hold upon reality. His gods and goddesses, born of Nature, were everywhere, they were not confined within a system of theology that had to be reconciled with science. They still supply our painters with many a joyous and sunny theme, and this cannot always be said of the myths and legends of Christianity. But whether we are gazing upon a supreme masterpiece like Botticelli's "Birth of Venus," which formed part of the Burlington House collection, or upon such a picture as Poussin's "Saint Paul Caught up to Heaven," in each case we are face to face with the mythical.

One more word on the "inseparable connexion" of religion and art. How did Christianity show its appreciation of art when it gained a permanent ascendancy in those great centres of Greek and pagan worship—Ephesos, for instance—whose temples and sculptures were the admiration of the whole world of antiquity? These treasures have perished for ever, because it was a "labour of love" to destroy them. Nor have we to go far back in our own history to find the Puritans applying the same zeal to some of the best work in the English churches. Is it not, too, a little nauseating to hear men and women in England

<sup>8</sup> Parton: *Life of Voltaire*. Vol. I, pp. 354-355.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 364.



clamouring for more art for the masses, without a word of protest against the Sabbatarianism which has done so much here to cast a gloom over the people, and especially over the lower stratum of the community? And personally I should have welcomed some reference to the amount spent by the nations of Christendom on art, as compared with that placed on the annual estimates for armies and navies.

The success of the Church in the domain of art during the Middle Ages is not a mystery. Not only had she the wealth which commands service, but the great princes and nobles then were eager to save their souls and more than willing to be associated with the pious representation in paint or marble of some patron saint of the Church. But the appeal of art is universal, there is no "last word" in it. The most devout Christian who visited the Italian exhibition could not have been more sensitive than I to the matchless portraiture displayed in those pictures. Never before did I realize the possibility of depicting the human face as something at once so beautiful and so natural. But we are not honouring the great artists to whom we owe these creations by belittling the modern, by declaiming against "materialism" and regretting the encroachment of science upon every domain of life. It is as certain as anything can be that with the development of free thought man's conception of what is beautiful will be influenced and coloured by his conception of what is true; but his personality will not suffer for that, only his interest in art and letters will be lifted to a higher plane.

A. D. McLAREN.

### "Good Lord, it's Lord's Day!"

HISTORIANS agree that the old Israelite Sabbath was adopted from the Babylonians. Although this is probably true, it is certain that it is from the Sabbath of the Israelites that our present concept of Sunday as a day of rest gradually grew.

In the Fifth Book of Moses the words are clearly intended for a non-religious day of rest:—

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.

The indication is plain that the Israelites were to take over a day already recognised as a day for religious ceremonies, for the remembrance of the Exodus. (Compare the Genesis story concerning the Lord resting on the last day of the Creation.)

It is merely a case of stealing the other fellow's idea, but later the strict forbidding of work on the Jewish Sabbath led to popular belief in the originality of the day of rest.

However, in the course of time, Judaism found itself opposed by the newer Christian sects, and these latter strenuously fought for the strict religious Sabbath. At last a break was made with Judaism, and instead of the last day of the week being the holy day, the first day of the week was chosen.

The name "Sunday" was itself a compromise with the old Roman sun worship-day, which enjoyed great popularity in the third century. The older conformists kept to the name "Lord's Day" (Sabbath).

The fable was told that Jesus was the sun that illumined the life of a Christian, therefore Sunday was an appropriate name, but in the Roman Empire, this latter day was only very tardily accepted as a general festival—just so long as the Christians were in a minority in the political field.

In the year 321, under Constantine the First, a law was made making Sunday a day of rest. It reads: All nobles, townspeople and all handworkers shall rest on the celebrated day of the Sun. The country people may carry out any urgent work connected with the sowing or harvest when no other day offers.

Also the Christians managed to twist another day to their own use, New Year's Day, which in Rome was the day on which the Consuls took office. This was condemned as heathen and decreed a Christian festival.

Easter offers another example of the perfidy of Christianity, and the long struggle culminating in the Council of Nicaea in 325 is well known.

Whitsuntide and Christmas were also taken over from the Eastern peoples in the fourth century, and under the influence of the growing power of Christianity more and more holy festivals were created, often lasting whole weeks so that there were periods when the number of work days in a year hardly amounted to two hundred and fifty.

The Reformation brought down the hatchet on these excesses. Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas were shortened to two days each. The total of work days grew larger with each loss of a holy day. Even the Catholic Church felt the influence. The different countries, rapidly growing commercially and industrially were compelled to shorten the days of rest if they were not to be left behind in the race of progress. In the East the same process has taken place within the memory of most adults.

The seasonal work of agricultural and non-industrial work left room for long, easy-going periods. Several of these festivals still remain with us. The Church tried to capture the pagan "Harvest Festival" that was probably the first rejoicing ever held by man in primitive times.

Most of the Christian festivals, of course, can be traced back to pre-Christian times. Easter is the Spring Festival, the Festival of the Goddess of Light, Ostava, Mid-Summer Day (a Church Day on the Continent) is the festival of the decline of the sun. Martinus is the last remembrance of Wodan, who rode through the land on a grey horse with the coming of Autumn.

Christmas (as foreign and older names clearly indicate) is the turning of the year rejoicing. In old Mexico, under the Aztecs, where work was well regulated, the festivals were apportioned on the five-day system which has recently been adopted (probably presuming it an innovation) by U.S.S.R.. The Aztecs divided the year into eighteen months, with twenty days each and five festival days extra. Each month had four weeks with five days. Each fifth day was "Sunday," a market day when only selling and buying was carried on. This day, however, had no religious significance.

The whole process of secularization of Sunday is steadily advancing, and although to countries more developed industrially than U.S.S.R. is, there are many difficulties in an arbitrary one day in five, nevertheless this method will probably serve to kill two birds with one stone: to create the regular functioning of industry and to snap the religious bonds which hold the workers to religion, and therefore to inefficient methods.

In England, generally, the tradition of Sunday is likely to endure from sentimental reasons, even among the religiously emancipated—it is the only day on which all the members of a family can meet together, they plead —.

Nevertheless, although the opposition is weighty, the changing economic conditions and the fighting ranks of Freethinkers will win the day.

Let us have a day of rest, if you will (no one will say you nay) but not a day of long, sad, faces on which you belie the commandment of the Lord to whom you hold the day holy.

For the benefit of curious readers, I will add a note on the Russian week. Except for the two Sabbaths (Saturday and Sunday) each day in Russian has always been called "first working day, second working day," and so on, Sunday beginning the week with the first working day following, etc., until Saturday. Thus no radical change in the calendar has been made, and although a new set of names of Communist tendency has



been suggested, the old names are still retained. The official festivals reflect, of course, the new epoch and the saints' days are expunged.

May this attempt to bring rationalization from Christian chaos be successful, and help U.S.S.R. to find her way to a truly secular world conception.

The decay of Sunday is fought with many difficulties in England, as anyone will find on looking up the law of the land. With a State Church, Sunday can hardly die peacefully, and the punishments for breaking the Sabbath still stand on the statute books, witness of the love Christianity taught its followers, and a finger-post for lovers of Freethought.

L. CORINNA.

## Acid Drops.

In a speech, at Liverpool, the Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke incidentally gave an insight into the nature of the Church agitation against Russia, when he informed his audience that children were being brought up to believe in Atheism in Russia, and "the success which had been attained was gravely disquieting." Well, we have said many a time in reply to those who pointed out how ingrained was the belief in religion, that if we had the same chance as Christians have had, religion would soon be a thing of the past, with no chance of a revival. Give us two or three generations of children brought up without religious instruction, but receiving a sound education, and at the end of that time there would not be enough religion left in the country for any one to bother about. The only chance for religion in a civilized country is to get it into children before they are old enough to understand how they are being "doped." The Churches know this as well as we do.

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, has only a very short sermon in the "Saturday Pulpit" of the *Daily News*. Like the immortal baby of the servant in *Midshipman Easy*, it is only a very little one, but even then, it has given the Canon as much room as is good for him. "Our leading theologians," he writes, "are striving to find room in their theology for the best results of science." This is very pretty and ingenuous. It will be remembered how theologians tried to find room for Copernicus and Bruno. It is not forgotten how the theory of evolution was welcomed by theologians, and it is apparent to the merest dunderhead, that hell was scrapped by theologians when they could hold it no longer. Theologians trying to find room for science is on all fours with Rostand's chandelier, whose duty it was to remind the sun to rise.

We take the newspaper report for the information about the relationship of the leading dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church and Lord Strickland's Government of Malta. The Archbishop of Malta has ordered all his parish priests to announce in their churches, that whoever voted for Lord Strickland or any of the Premier's supporters would be committing a mortal sin. We mentioned a fortnight ago that the Roman Catholic Church in England is like knowing a tiger that has been subdued to run about one's back garden. Apparently, the animal in Malta has returned to its savage state.

There are many aspects to the question of religious education, but the chief one that stands out to any person not wearing theological blinkers, is the fact that the precious churches must catch the children when young. And in this game, Archbishops and Cardinals seriously and solemnly demonstrate the truth of innate religious ideas existing in the minds of young children. Could anything be more ridiculous?

Mr. A. A. Milne is maintaining a thesis against war in the *Daily News*, and he is doing very well. In the course of his correspondence he gives an example of one aspect of war that is interesting, and at the same time showing how Roman Catholic padres are in God's confidence. It is interesting also, at this particular time, when there is so much opposition to the deity being

shown on the stage. His representatives know his wishes, can tell you what he thinks, talk to him every-day, and yet, are spoil sports when the public gets a chance of seeing him. Here is Mr. Milne's reference, and God only knows, how a man's character is improved by a gas shell to himself or a bayonet in his bowels. We said God only knows; we should have added—or a Catholic padre:—

You say that the whole world knows that war is hell; I doubt it. A book has just been written by a Roman Catholic padre, which maintains that God approves of war for its character-building qualities; and the book is introduced by a Field Marshal, who rejoices that it restores the "healthy English way" of looking at war. The "healthy English way" of looking at war is to look at it as romantic, adventurous, exciting—and good for the character.

Baroness Clifton, in a whimsical article on the private view to the Royal Academy, relates that, by seeing a Bishop at the gathering, she derives some psychological and unexplained sense that all is well. There is perhaps a variation on the Dickensian "gas and gaiters."

The Rev. A. Oswald Brown, a missionary, rejoices that Christ is recognized in India to-day as never before. We believe the wily native also recognizes that there are certain material advantages to be gained by professing to love Christ and hanging on to the missions. Loving Christ enables him to get medical aid, schooling, and various things that make life more tolerable. If the missions dispensed none of these things but merely spiritual love, there would be an alarming shrinking in native adherents.

The Lord's Day Observance Society claims to have been very successful last year, at its job of interfering with other people's liberty to enjoy Sunday as they think fit. Total contributions to the Society last year, we learn, reached £18,361. That seems a lot of money to waste on trying to enforce an ancient Eastern taboo in a civilized Western country. Still, a number of primitive-minded persons received great spiritual joy from giving the money and the way it was spent. So let us all be thankful.

The Rev. P. Middleton Brummell, a Wesleyan chaplain, says, "You can't stop a soldier becoming a missionary if you win him for the Master." Of course not. The fact that he had been trained, and was paid, to use a rifle and bayonet wouldn't worry him. He would probably assume that these weapons were merely a reminder to obey the Master in the matter of turning the other cheek to the smiter.

Mr. Wm. Bruce, a former Welsh M.P., is frightened at the paganism of these days, and the utter indifference of large masses of the people to religion. He needn't be. Our modern pagans are not ferocious or intolerant. None of them has any inclination to burn, torture, boycott, banish or imprison Christians because of their opinions. Nor have they any desire, even, to prohibit or interfere with the Sunday amusement of Christians.

Telephones to the number of 800 are being installed at the Vatican. Apparently, directors of the Vatican business have only just realized that a big commercial enterprise cannot be run efficiently without telephones. By the way, it would be interesting to know whether any Vatican capital is invested with firms manufacturing crucifixes and other Romish magic charms.

We have been reading an account of locust raids in Egypt, and the measures adopted to defeat the pests. These measures, we are told, would not be so necessary "if more could be learned of the breeding-grounds of the locust in the African desert." Quite so. God knows, but he won't tell. He prefers man to acquire essential knowledge by minute and painful degrees. Of course, it is "anti-God" to seek for such knowledge as will interfere with the pests God created, and disrupt the plan of Creation.



A contemporary is responsible for the following. From the paper with the biggest circulation:—

The Duke of York drove his own car all the way from London to Windsor.

It seems very wonderful. Still, it is all part of the journalistic game of giving the public what the public is presumed to like. The journalist hasn't a high opinion of public intelligence as trained in the schools of the nation. We hope our educationalists appreciate this compliment to their high and noble efforts.

Mr. Lloyd George says that Parliament has to carry a larger burden than ever before. Still, there's some consolation in the fact that God is helping in the carrying. Each day's effort starts with prayer. This, we presume, is regarded as a greater aid than more intelligent methods of dealing with the burden, such as dumping time-wasting customs and procedures.

The Bishop of Durham says that the principle cause of clerical inefficiency are inadequate incomes and excessive absorption in raising money for Church purposes. In other words, if the incomes offered are large enough candidates for Holy Orders will come forward—and then, when they are ordained they will tell the whopping lie that they are there because they feel they are "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost."

The funniest comment on the Oberammergau Passion play is supplied by Hannen Swaffer in the *Daily Express*. He does not like the character of Jesus, because the actor made him look like a "bushy German." Well, why not? Jesus, if he lived, must have looked like someone, and we feel sure that if he had been made to look like an ordinary Eastern Jew, that also would have roused dislike. As a matter of fact Jesus never is presented as a Jew, particularly a stage Jew, and yet to look like James Douglas, or Hannen Swaffer, or a mere cloud, with a faint outline of Lord Beaverbrook, might have been more satisfactory.

What a time that revival of religion is taking! The latest to hand in a report on the question is the Bishop of Chelmsford. He says that "Family religion is at a low ebb. Children appear to receive little or no instruction in religion from their parents . . . the mass of workers have no interest in any form of organized religion . . . only a very small proportion of the population are practising Christians . . . Not only was the existence of a personal God questioned, but exceedingly influential people, whose writings are widely read deny the desirability of definite religion." No wonder the Bishop is downcast. It is all very well to keep on talking of the revival of religion that is coming, but silly as are the average followers of bishops, there are limits, and they must one day ask themselves whether the revival is a hoax or not. Gods can never have a greater measure of life than has stupidity, and as that decreases they begin to fade away.

It is seldom, says Viscount Castlerosse, in the *Sunday Express*, that the Church of Rome makes itself comic. That depends upon how one regards it. If one lives with a clown one spends little time laughing at his antics. Otherwise one may say that the Church of Rome is always comic. What could be more comical than the State dress of Pope and cardinal, Bishop and priest? If they were met for the first time in a gala procession everyone would roar with laughter. And what could be more comical than the pretence of these pantomimic artistes, that they can by crossing their fingers or mumbling something in a dead language, save the souls that people have not from a torment in a world that doesn't exist? Could there be anything more comical than carrying round an effigy of a man who never had a father, and believing that if you ask him in the right way he can alter the state of the weather. Why the whole scheme is a screaming pantomime to anyone who comes across it for the first time. But we have lived so long with the absurdity, and have got so used to its ridiculous features that we have ceased to be amused by them. That is the reason why

when the Freethinker does place this ridiculous thing before the people in a new light, and forces them to see how comical it is there is an outcry of blasphemy. The Freethinker does not make the Christian creed ridiculous; it was made like it.

At a debate in Barnsley recently, it was proposed that a forfeit be paid for every untrue statement made. Now that might be taken as a hint for every Church in the country that is in need of funds. If every Church member was fined in this way, there would be enough raised in the course of a generation to pay off the national debt. And applied to the parson, if only at half a crown a time, it would certainly save his salary. Some of them would be bankrupt before the first quarter of the year had passed.

What we really like about the Bishop of Chelmsford's address is the remark that only a small fraction of the population are "practising" Christians. A practising Christian is, we take it, one who puts into practice the teachings of the New Testament. But consider. The Peculiar People put into practice the teaching that the prayer of faith shall save the sick—and every now and then one of them gets imprisoned by other Christians as a warning to the rest. Then there is the behest to trust in God who will look after man as he looks after the birds of the air, but we have not noticed the Bishop and his pals in the House of Lords moving that we become practising Christians to that extent, and scrap our battle ships and disband our armies. To take no thought of the morrow may be taken as part of the practice of the clergy who have no thought whatever about salaries, and never trouble about clerical pensions. We should much like to know just what the Bishop of Chelmsford thinks a "practising Christian" ought to do and where should we find one?

The ideas in the schools of 1930 are the ingredients of the world situation of 1940, says the Bishop of Winchester. And we can understand the Bishop's anxiety to keep the Bible in the nation's schools, lest one aspect of the world situation of 1940 may be a world that has learned it can get along without priests.

The Automobile Association is fixing 500 reflectors on telegraph poles at bends in the roads, to make travelling safer at night. The Archbishop of Canterbury might note this as further evidence of a materialistic and godless age. A truly Christian people would put their trust in Providence and prayer, and not in man-made devices.

There are over 50,000 recognized charities in England and Wales. This is quite natural in a Christian-bred country. A more rationally organized society would have no need for make-shift expedients like charities. Still, while these are employed the Churches can still claim the modern state to be based on Christian ideals.

In *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy*, 1892-1928, by Florence Emily Hardy, there is a record of the old Veteran's last days. Near the end, he asked his wife to read aloud to him Mr. de la Mare's *Listeners*, and he finally fell asleep to the verse read at his request, from Omar Khayan:—

"Oh, Thou who Man of baser Earth didst make,  
And ev'n in Paradise devise the Snake;  
For all the Sun wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take."

And this was a noble man's finish, who had no use for the twaddle, however disguised, of the stock-in-trade of priests, whether dispensed in the red hat, mitre or any other uniform.

An old Cambridge graduate has bequeathed £250,000 to the University. Although some portion of this money will benefit Christian theology, there's some consolation in knowing that a larger portion will be devoted to real and useful knowledge.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—F. Wilford, £2.

F. FOWLER.—There is only one sound definition of an Atheist. He is one who has no belief in God. We sincerely hope that a genuine Atheist is not a "true Christian." A Christian is only tolerable when his Christianity has been well-diluted with a strong dose of Freethought.

MR. W. KENT writes asking whether "Mimnermus will be good enough to let him have the reference for the statement made in one of his recent articles, that John Wesley declared Atheism to be the greatest of all sins, worse than murder or unnatural crime."

W. COLLINS.—Yes, we have seen Mackenzie's book on Russia. It is better than many, but, as usual, it is overdone. He does not admit, for instance, that any of the priests in Russia have got into trouble because they were acting against the Government. The "Whites" boasted, at the time they were in arms against the Soviet, that they had the Church with them.

DR. R. K. NOYES.—Thanks for cuttings. They are always of interest and help to keep us informed as to the trend of opinion in America in certain directions. Pleased to have your high opinion of the *Freethinker*. Shall look forward to seeing you again one day.

L. W. PASTERBROOK.—The word is probably original with the writer, it is an ugly, and unmusical word, and quite unnecessary.

E. HENRY.—Two different things are always compatible with each other so long as one does not bear in mind the differences that make them incompatible. Socialism rests upon an economic analysis of social conditions, or at least upon definite sociological theory. The teachings of Jesus are at most, nothing more than a few moral amiabilities, and all rest upon a belief in God, and the need of saving one's soul in the next world. The identification of the teachings of Jesus with Socialism is just nonsense.

T. FISHER.—The fire in the Church of the Virgin, in Santiago, in 1863, is well known. We are not sure whether the death roll of 2,000 is not over-stated, but in any case it is a fine example of the protecting Providence of God, and of the stupidity of average human nature.

J. HARRIS.—We have no objection whatever to advertisements of a suitable character. Neither do we care to get subscribers to the paper on the condition that nothing appears of which they disapprove. The proper place of such is in Church. In that sense the *Freethinker* is not for sale, neither do its contributors write with one eye on someone who might be offended, and the other on someone whom they hope will be pleased. The *Freethinker* must be taken as it is or left alone.

R. PARKER.—Thanks for letter, contents noted. We are obliged for what you have done on behalf of the paper, and hope you are well.

H. MARTIN.—We are afraid that your talk of "National Honour" as a justification for large armies and navies is about on a level with the "honour" of the old time duellist, who would seduce a man's wife but felt insulted if someone suggested that he was not a gentleman.

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

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## Sugar Plums.

We trust that those members who are attending the National Secular Society's Conference in London on Whit-Sunday, will lose no time in writing the Secretary as to the hotel accommodation they wish provided for them. Special terms have been arranged, but it will be advisable to write as early as possible. In addition to the business meetings, morning at 10.30, and afternoon at 2.30, there will be the usual public demonstration in the Conway Hall in the evening. Slips are being printed advertising the evening meeting, and we beg the help of London Members in making the meeting as widely known as possible.

Mr. Cohen's lecture on *The Foundations of Religion* will be published about the 21st of this month. It has a lengthy appendix of illustrative matter, which should be found very useful. The booklet is well printed on superior paper, and the price will be ninepence, one penny extra by post. It is issued by the Secular Society. Mr. Cohen's book on *War, Civilization and the Churches*, will be published some time in June.

The *Star* is said to have a number of Freethinkers on its staff. We are inclined to credit that from the careful manner in which definite Freethought is kept out of its columns, for there are none like Freethinkers of the timid and respectable type so carefully to refrain from letting the outside world know that they have any doubts about the beauty of Christian teachings. If we were a Christian proprietor of a newspaper, and wished to make sure that nothing of an anti-Christian character appeared in its columns, we would see to it that none but this type of Freethinker was on the staff. A Christian might permit an item of anti-Christian news to creep in, he has no fear of being suspect. But the type we have in mind moves in such fear of being found out that it is sleepless in its care that no hint shall be given as to what their real opinions are. Their fear of being found out makes them trustworthy watchdogs on behalf of a religion they despise.

We were reminded of this by the issue of the *Star* for May 7. In that issue there appears a short and deserved little sketch of our old friend Mr. A. B. Moss, whom we noted last week has just passed the seventy-fifth anniversary of his birth. Quite properly it refers to his activities as a playwright, a worker for municipal and political reforms, his work as a journalist, etc. The notice was, as we have said, well deserved, but the great thing in the life of Mr. Moss, his abiding interest through it all, has been his work as a Freethought propagandist; and, so far as his health will permit he is still at it. Yet there is not the slightest hint in the *Star* that Mr. Moss is anything but a member of some local chapel or other, and spends the evening of his life singing hymns in a gospel shop. Anything more contemptible we have not come across for a long time. Of course, the reason is that if prominence was given to the great and permanent thing in the life of Mr. Moss, the heads of the Cocoa Press might suspect the writer of having sympathy with Freethought. All the article needed to round it off was a reference to the deeply religious character of Mr. Moss, which was developed by his association with that great religious leader, Charles Bradlaugh, and his life-long association with that evangelical organization, the National Secular Society.

*Human Nature*, by Dan Griffiths (C. W. Daniel & Co., 2s. 6d.), is a deterministic essay on sociology, the only fault of which is that it might have been longer. But it is well and clearly written, with opinions that are expressed with an admirable mixture of firmness and gentleness. Mr. Griffiths has unbounded sympathy with all kinds of misery and suffering, and a number of useful hints that may serve as a guide for their sympathetic, and therefore, probable reduction, if not their abolition. A little book, but full of meat.



The Bradford Branch is very active and appears to be getting a fair show of newspaper publicity. In some recent letters in the *Yorkshire Observer* and the *Bradford Telegraph*, we note letters from members of the Branch on quite a number of important social topics. It may help many people to realize that knocking theology out of people's heads leaves room for a healthy interest in other and more important matters.

The East Lancashire Rationalist Association asks us to announce that at 28 Bridge Street, Burnley, on Sunday (May 18), at 2.30, the Rev. J. Bretherton will tell the audience, "Why I am a Christian." At 7.30 there will be an open-air meeting in the Market Square, at which Mr. J. Clayton will be one of the speakers. If wet the meeting will be held at 28 Bridge Street.

## Church Unity and Bibliolatry.

It seems obvious that the basis of most church differences lies in the Bible itself. "Bound in Oxford," this literature carries a presumption of unity and homogeneity which has no real confirmation in scripture or in history.

Those who still believe in the inerrancy of the Bible have much to prove, but an inexhaustible store of texts to prove it by. Any part of the Bible which seems inconsistent with any other part (or with reason itself) is interpreted "symbolically."

We rarely hear stated from the pulpit the well known and accepted historical facts surrounding the origin of this collection of writings. Thus the average lay mind knows little or nothing of the bitter conflicts which have taken place in the church over the acceptance or rejection of certain books of the Bible. Whenever we hear the matter discussed at all it is from a party standpoint, and invariably the argument is aimed to prove the *unity* of the scriptures. The fact that there are several distinct systems of thought emphasized in the scriptures is either overlooked or unstated. Jehovah, Solomon, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter and Paul are taught as one voice, the veritable voice of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus is made the central figure, to be sure, but the fact that he and his teachings were grossly misunderstood by his immediate followers is generally disregarded in the interest of Bibliolatry.

Most preachers of the Gospel actually quote Paul more frequently than Jesus and with equal authority. That Paul almost never quotes Jesus, is of little or no significance. Notwithstanding the fact that Paul is discredited to-day as to the divine right of kings, as to slavery, as to the subjection of women, as to marriage, as to the end of the world (not to mention many lesser delusions and inconsistencies such as lying for the glory of God), Paul's doctrine of the shedding of innocent blood for the remission of sins is taken for granted without question and made the very core of Christian doctrine.

The fact that Jesus taught something quite different about forgiveness of sin is rather lost sight of. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will forgive you," is the unequivocal teaching of Jesus, emphasized by such stories as the Prodigal Son and the Lost Sheep. We never hear of Jesus going up to the temple to *sacrifice*. That salvation meant one thing to Jesus, and an entirely different thing to Paul appears to be overlooked or ignored by most of the clergy.

The disciples evidently misconstrued Christ's teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven just as some modern disciples of the same mental and material type have done. On the whole, a rather dull-minded group of fishermen, farmers, and tax gatherers, they did exactly what one might expect of them. They

started a commune! And they had a system by which executions took place quite promptly as witness the anecdote of Ananias and Sapphira. ("And the young men came in immediately and wrapped them up and buried them." Acts v.). Imagine Jesus instituting this sort of procedure! Peter himself had every reason to be charitable. Had not his own master freely forgiven him both lies and curses?

Finally Saul of Tarsus, that erudite and really intolerant zealot, enters the field and so dominates the little group, with his powers of exalted expression and his claims to scholarship, that the communistic experiment seems to have fallen into the background.

From this time on, the disciples reflect the influence of Paul. Notwithstanding some minor differences they appear pretty much in the same rôle as to doctrine, and to have forgotten the words of their original master, whom they never quote. Incomprehensible as it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact easy of confirmation that Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude in twenty-three letters to the churches, while quoting passages from the Old Testament hundreds of times, practically never quote from the words of their Lord. They never cite a parable nor refer to the Sermon on the Mount. There is almost no reference to the miracles of healing, and very little of a reminiscent nature to suggest that these writers had any genuine familiarity with the life and words of Jesus on earth.

What do they talk about? Why, the dominating theory of the self-appointed Paul, educated in rabbinical lore, who sees in the sacrificial *death* of Jesus a substitute for the blood of bulls and goats. God to Paul was Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of Noah. The God of flood and fire. The God under whose curse in the Garden of Eden all mankind stood convicted of sin.

The unfamiliarity of Paul with the teachings of Jesus can be instanced in many ways, but perhaps no more strikingly than by the picture drawn of Jesus sitting at the right hand of that Jehovah whose laws and exactions Jesus frequently ignored and sometimes repudiated. Jehovah was a jealous God who rarely had a constructive thought. His commands were mainly negative and his punishments, for the slightest infractions, death penalties. According to Mosaic law, a certain woman should have been stoned to death. Jesus let her go free. I doubt that Jesus pleased Jehovah.

Paul's conception of the Christian life is often expressed in terms of stress and warfare, a hard fight, a strenuous race, a competition for a goal so frequently placed in the next world, as to rob the contestants of any healthy interest in this one.

Jesus is recorded as a teacher of non-violence and universal good will. He was evidently a lover of nature, from which he gathers most of his illustrations. He loved children, birds, and flowers. He preached that the "acceptable time" is the present, and that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. This is all so different from the old Jehovistic conception that it is not to be wondered that Christ's words found difficult lodgment in the minds of men trained to the ancient Hebrew orthodoxy.

Many of the popular teachers of Christianity to-day seem to have overlooked most of these distinctions; they imply that everyone who contributed to the Bible literature was in some occult manner "inspired" to supply just the element needed to make a consistent whole; and they set about to prove it by fair means or foul. To the writer, this sort of Bible unity is incapable of demonstration. The more than one hundred and fifty-seven varieties of *mixed pickles* in the *Church universal* is confirmation of this view,

WILLIAM W. HARVEY, M.D.



## The Bank of Energy.

THERE stands before me now, upon my study-table, as I write, an enormously powerful-looking red and green motor-truck: loaded with Lott's bricks, and made out of Meccano by my son, at my side, last night, whilst I read an article on Archæological and Geographical Research In and Near Rome, 1908-1928, written by Thomas Ashby, D.Litt., and published in October, 1928, in the *Quarterly Review*. The truck in question has genuine Dunlop rubber tyres, costing one whole shilling apiece. There is also a sort of super-load of timber, cut into miniature building sizes, piled up on top of Lott's bricks; and the whole thing, spontaneously fashioned, in a quiet hour, by a happy child, looks like the working model of a masculine civilization that is really ready to start, and get to business.

Which is more, by far, than anyone can say for this accursed time payment fake-men call the Christian Church. Properly considered, a child is a Bank of Energy—a bank whose living cash deposits are the memory-reeds of an entire universe: a universe which parsondom and Popedom, if it had its way, would convert into the docile horror of a non-self-producing castrated world.

Some pseudo-civilizations, like our own, indeed, are born castrated; others achieve mental castration; whilst yet others, such as the native civilizations in New Guinea and New Zealand, have castration—thanks to the activities of land-grabbers, lawyers, priests, and other vermin—thrust upon them. I journeyed once, in fact, up the Wanganui River into the very heart of the Maori King Country, and found Jerusalem. It was a sort of crazy Roman Catholic mission-station, run by a few mentally crippled nuns. I was there, myself, to attend a tribal *tangi*, or wake, in honour of a dead woman, the native wife of a Scotch sheep-owner named Gregor McGregor; and as we sat there, that sombre and yet sharply sunlit afternoon, beside the crumbling wooden spire of that idiotic New Jerusalem, and enacted, among ourselves, a great and grand Greek tragedy, which recreated the living spirit of the New Zealand of ten thousand years ago, I both felt and spoke like the savage chieftain, Te Rauparah; and smiled to think how, at a single gesture from my hand, those reseminalized savages would have risen up, and thrown those toothless nuns, as well as their toothless edifice of a New Jerusalem, into the rushing stream of the Wanganui River.

Later, when I returned to Sydney, I wrote for the *Bulletin*—that scarlet dead-house of Australian literature—a Red Page article, in which I pointed out that Englishmen, as a whole, had the thickest and least satisfactory heads in the world: because Samuel Butler, of *Erewhon*, was the direct fulfilment of Macaulay's prophecy—namely, that of the coming of a New Zealander—who would stand on London Bridge, and gaze upon the ruins of St. Paul's; yet nobody in all England, apparently, had sense enough to know it, or to recognize that in *Erewhon Revisited*, Butler had written a New Testament more terrible for the Christian faith, and for its assembled eunuchs, than ten thousand Te Rauparahs, advancing upon a super-fatted monkery in search of human meat.

My article on Butler, so to speak, was like a golden penny, laid upon one eye-ball of an already stiffened journalistic corpse. And if I recall the whole incident now—first my visit, and my speech, to the savages of New Zealand; and secondly, my straight words about Butler, in that crimson morgue of a newspaper—it is because the surviving head of a wooden Maori god, with a face exactly like the face of Samuel Butler, still stood upright there,

not one hundred yards from the church-spire of that New Jerusalem; still giving the lie to all those Hail Mary-quacking fools in petticoats, and still announcing the incarnate majesty of unspoiled Man.

So, if a child of my own can thus be started right into life; taught, I mean, to regard himself as a living Bank of Energy, and not be poisoned, and cast down to the bottom of a sea of lies about Jesus, Abraham and Isaac: if this can be done now, as it is already done, and the green and red results made visible, in Meccano steel before me, then I consider that I have accomplished a greater and a more lasting human revolution than Stalin, and Lenin, and Trotzsky, with all their gab, and all their human numbers to work upon, have managed to contrive together.

Not that I despise, or would disparage in any way, the works of those men. No. If I regard Lenin, himself, as being but the faith-healing Mary Baker Eddy in trousers of modern Russia, it is still as a successful Mrs. Eddy that I salute him; but I do not see here, in Australia, the makings of a successful Eddy in the ranks of local Communism—I merely hear the noises, and see the baser menial gestures, of the imitative charlatan and fraud. I know myself, in short, to be the real leader of the coming anti-Christian revolution in the Southern hemisphere. Therefore I have fashioned this son of mine—this Bank of Energy, this Bengal tiger of debate—in order that there may still be somebody available, to ask awkward questions, and to insist upon their being answered, when I am gone.

Butler himself, in his New Zealander's vision of *Erewhon*, has devoted a whole chapter to what he calls the Musical Banks. These, of course, are simply the Christian Churches, whitewashed over by Butler with a fine satirical touch, and exposed as the places where people keep an invisible and despised account, for sheer social form's sake, with an invisible Bank-Manager named God. The description, given by Samuel Butler, of these holy deposit-makers should be brought home, by every vigilant, honourable father, to every intelligent child:—

"When I met them in the streets," he says, "they did not seem like other people, but had, as a general rule, a cramped expression upon their faces, which pained and depressed me . . . A man's expression is his sacrament; it is the outward and visible sign of his inward and spiritual grace, or want of grace; and as I looked at the majority of these men, I could not help feeling that there must be a something in their lives which had stunted their natural development . . . They had had the misfortune to be betrayed into a false position at an age when their judgment has not matured, and after having been kept in studied ignorance of the real difficulties of the system."

Is not this exactly what we are doing, I ask, ninety-nine per cent of us, with our own defenceless children, in this castrated ex-British epoch? Are we not playing the part of an infamous Abraham, dragging our little Isaacs up to the top of a mountain of hereditary mendacity, and—going one worse than Abraham—mentally and morally murdering them there, in order that Mr. Pangbalm, our unctuous suburban neighbour, may know that we are regular depositors in the Musical Banks, and that our account is personally marked O.K., every day, by God? And what is the direct result of this accursed, Isaac-strangling conspiracy of ours? Why, the result, of course, is the providential explosion in our despicable faces of such books as *All Quiet on the Western Front*—apocalyptic volumes, where an escaped Isaac stands up, on a post-war Patmos in Germany, and deals with Abraham with a javelin of justice snatched from the hands of a long-defunct St. John.

JOHN MCCRASHAN,

(To be concluded.)



## Rational Morality.

### SCIENCE SPEAKS FOR SECULARISM.

PART 29 of the *Science of Life*, by Wells, *Père et fils*, and Professor Julian Huxley, concludes a review of the findings of modern psychology, and contains a discussion of Conduct and Behaviour. Mr. H. G. Wells is well-known as a fearless critic of social defects and an inspiring prophet of better things, and it is not hard to recognize his voice in the discussion. For my part I have laid the book down with the feeling that it contains a very definite and inspiring message sadly needed by a world in revolt against the platitudes, the furtiveness and the moral confusion of the old theological scheme. It condemns with no uncertain voice the cowardly attitude of unquestioning submission to authority (Catholics please note), the moral and intellectual apostasy which drives men to the shelter of "schemes of salvation" offered by religion rather than face the facts of life and work out their own salvation in a natural world. The old idea of a man's duty being the ensuring of his own personal security in an after life is shown to be selfish and unworthy. The discussion is a definite urge to the spirit of enquiry, a plea for a fuller life, for individual self-development as the duty we owe to our race.

Christianity has always represented morality as the demands of a supernatural power, attended by reward and punishment. The sanctions of morality were a bribe and a threat. Each man was put in the world with no other aim than to secure for himself divine approval and eternal happiness hereafter as a reward. Apart from all questions regarding the authenticity of the "revelation" on which it was based, it was decidedly a cowardly philosophy. Modern psychology has abolished this fantastic view of morals. It abolishes the idea of man as an absolute distinct personality, living to himself alone, which is the last ditch of the theologian. It places man in a position of new dignity, as an actor in a cosmic drama. The emergence of the reasoning faculty has, in a sense, placed the reins of man's destiny in his own hands. We are biological experiments, try-outs, new shufflings of hereditary genes. Born into life equipped with certain tendencies and aptitudes, modified and conditioned by education and environment, we each have it in our power to assist the evolution of our species by developing our talents. The evolution of human life can only proceed by the contributions of individuals; and the attitude which accepts all standards at second-hand, a mental attitude which is essential to religious life, is nothing less than intellectual apostasy and a betrayal of those rational faculties which alone raise mankind above the level of the brutes. There is not a single one of the fundamental virtues, truth, frankness, honesty, idealism, altruism, which does not emerge from scientific examination in a clearer, nobler light, invested with a natural sanction of an infinitely higher kind than the demands of a hang-man God.

It is perhaps unfortunate that much of Atheistic propaganda must be directed to the destructive criticism of dogmas which by their own inherent absurdity should not need criticism. Unfortunate, but unavoidable. There is so much to destroy, so much superstitious lumber to clear away before man can see his own nature and life's problems in a sane light. To those who think that Atheism begins and ends with the declaration "There ain't no Gawd," nothing can be said. In Dr. Johnson's words, it is "Ignorance—sheer ignorance." But to those broader-minded people who are capable of seeing that there may

possibly be another side of a question than their own, it may be instructive to realize that Atheism is constructive too, that it has some positive contribution to make to the world's life and thought. In the hurly-burly of controversy there is perhaps little time to indicate the positive aspects of non-religious belief. But it is at least encouraging to a Freethinker to find the triune author of a popular work, including what is practically a secularist sermon, and dealing a definite blow at the superstitious view of morals. Half-a-century of intensive psychological research has inclined the verdict of science in favour of Secularism; and to find the authors of a popular work, speaking in the name of science, casting their vote in our favour, encourage us in our fight against pious superstition for the betterment of humanity.

C. V. LEWIS.

## Boccaccio and the Priests.

THE blight of Puritanism has strongly obscured for many British people the beauties of medieval literature, for the Puritans have always held that sexual matters exist but not to be mentioned.

In medieval times no one closed his or her eyes to the fact that women desired men, and men desired women, and so medieval literature frequently depicted all aspects of human life.

But with the rise of Puritanism, a writer who dared to deal with the facts of life was frowned upon, and so many people go through life without ever knowing of the beauties and the humour and the drama and the philosophy of such a writer as Giovanni Boccaccio, who lived and wrote in Italy in the fourteenth century.

Messrs. Dent, who have done so much to popularize great literature in their *Everyman Series*, have now made accessible in an unabridged form the *Decameron* of Boccaccio in two volumes, at two shillings each volume.

With the merits of the *Decameron* as literature, this article is not concerned. The world has set the seal of its approval on the hundred stories, and the Puritans cry in vain about the immorality of the tales.

But it will interest Freethinkers to consider the priests who shuffle or wriggle across the Boccaccio stage.

Boccaccio narrates one hundred tales, in which innumerable priests figure, yet there is only one priest at all worthy of admiration and he has no name. On the other hand, there are scores of priests who are either cunning or half-witted, lecherous or grasping, and it is obvious that Boccaccio wrote of people as he found them.

In an introduction to the *Everyman* edition, Edward Hutton suggests we should discount what we read "for scandal is more noisy than virtue, and the monks and friars were only exceptionally corrupt." Even allowing this to be so, and Boccaccio was surely too well educated and too well informed to be wrong, it is no credit to the church that in Italy, above all places, there should have been one priest ready to violate morality.

All the evidence, however, points to the truth of Boccaccio's allegations. The Bishop of Lincoln, Pope Alexander VI and Saint Catherine of Sienna, all gave ample proof that the church was sheltering rogues and beasts of the blackest hue.

But for the stories. The very first one tells how a certain Ciappelletto cheats a friar by a false confession and dies being reputed a saint. The next tells how a Jew went to Rome and was so amazed that religion persisted despite the evil lives of the clergy, that he promptly became a Christian. Rather a back-handed compliment one would think.

Other titles suggest their contents: "A monk lapses into sin meriting the most severe punishment, justly censures the same fault in his abbot and thus evades the penalty."

"Under cloak of confession and a most spotless conscience, a lady enamoured of a young man induces a booby friar unwittingly to provide a means of gratifying her passion."

"Fra Cipolla promises to show certain country folk



a feather of the Angel Gabriel, in lieu of which he finds coals which he avers to be those with which St. Lawrence was roasted."

"The rector of Fiesole loves a widow lady, by whom he is not loved, and thinking to lie with her, lies with her maid."

Women too were stigmatized: "An abbess rises in the dark with intent to surprise an accused nun abed with her lover; thinking to put on her veil, she puts on instead the breeches of a priest that she has with her." "Masetto da Lamporecchio feigns to be dumb, and obtains a gardener's place at a convent of women, who with one accord make haste to lie with him."

And so one could go on quoting the titles of stories galore, but enough have been chosen to show the general method of revealing priests as fools, swindlers, and sexual perverts.

The modern apologist insists that Boccaccio did not write of priests as they really were, but that he took one or two evil priests and wrote about them. Boccaccio forestalled this argument by writing an Epilogue to the *Decameron*, in which he stated definitely: "And who shall question but that yet others there are who will say that I have an evil tongue, and venomous because here and there I tell the truth about the friars."

Boccaccio's answer was a masterpiece of satire for it ran: "Now for them that so say there is forgiveness, for that 'tis not to be believed but that they have just cause; seeing that the friars are good folk, and eschew hardship for the love of God, and grind intermittently and never blab; and were they not all a trifle malodorous, intercourse with them would be much more agreeable."

The *Decameron* can be read for entertainment, but Freethinkers will also read Dent's edition for ammunition to supply their guns when attacking the pretensions of the modern church, and when dealing with the old lie that monks and friars and nuns have in the past led the pure and blameless life.

NECHELLS.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

MAN AND GOD.

SIR,—May I express my hearty co-operation with the *Freethinker*? The journal is splendidly, sensibly, logically right, the only "ism" that is worthy of a moment's thought—in "Religion's" barren field—is "Atheism," for Atheism has cracked Religion's "deceitful shell," and has extracted the nucleus Truth.

It astonishes me vastly that so many people, rational and intelligent concerning matters in general, should continue to be so easily gulled by the vendors of the myths: "God," "Spiritualism," "Priestcraft," and their "magic lamps," "Future life," etc., etc. This is all so obviously contrary to sound reasoning, displaying as it does, nought other than a condemnable, selfish commercialism, a bogus stock-in-trade which is being daily foisted upon a clientele formed of crass ignorance. It is extremely lamentable that the various Press organs are so averse from publishing homilies on the soundness of Secularism, but such is the fact, for here, in Bradford, the most convincing points of interesting articles are suppressed from rankly absurd scruples of religion which the "Daily Press" girds about itself as a cloak.

I have experienced the terrific sorrow of losing a splendid, loyal young wife at the age of thirty-six, having been left with a son and daughter in their teens, to whom she was no less magnificent a mother. Religious people have endeavoured to bring solace to my aching heart by saying: "it is all for the best, it is God's will, and her passing prematurely has probably saved her from some worse affliction." Idiotic statements such as these give birth to an uncontrollable bitterness in my breast, and more than once, Blasphemy Law or no Blasphemy Law, I have replied: "All for the best be damned, if your supposititious loving father and creator creates simply to destroy, then I arraign him guilty of murder, indeed the foulest and most prolific murderer in the history of the world." Times innumerable I have pointed out to these religious lunatics

that their "imagined idol" is *not even just*, to say nothing of *loving*, inasmuch that each freshly bereaved person, and every newly-dug grave form direct reproaches against his justice and his love. How it comes about that such people are able to pay homage to this God-myth, who is credited with having furnished them with a heart capable of love, and with an object upon which to shower that love, and who is persistently breaking those hearts by his fiendish mandate—"One shall be taken, the other left," utterly passes my comprehension.

Were I to believe in a being of this sort I should think him a tyrant, a monster, a fiend, for he could be no other. Even were I induced to give credence to the existence of their God-myth, I should find it quite impossible to give praises to one whose unjust decree had rendered my children motherless at a period when they stood so much in need of a loving mother's counsel, and myself wretched and alone.

I personally foster a pleasurable anticipation of the "peace of oblivion," the calm sequel to this hectic, mortal experience, than which nothing my mind can conceive could be better, for with cool deliberation the vague promise which appeals to the fatuous, viz., an everlasting vacinity termed, "Bliss," my intelligence treats with derision and unhesitating abnegation.

With best wishes for the success of the *Freethinker*, and its wide circulation.

H. JAMES.

## THE CALL OF THE GODS.

SIR,—Among the ancients the *Furies* were often identified with the *Fates*, both sets of sisters being Goddesses of Fate. According to Epimenides these deities were sisters, daughters of Kronos and Eponyme. The *Moirae* or *Parcae*, that is, the Fates proper—*Clotho*, *Lachesis* and *Atropos*—assigned to their sisters, the *Eumenides* or *Eriinnyes*, that is the *Furies*—*Alecto*, *Magaera* and *Tisiphone*—the particular torments they were to inflict in Hell upon beings who had sinned on earth, but both sets of sisters directed the fate of mankind according to the laws of necessity. In his *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology* Dr. William Smith says: "As the *Eumenides* (Furies) not only punished crimes after death but during life on earth, they were conceived also as goddesses of fate who, together with the *Moirae* or *Parcae* (Fates) led such men as were doomed to suffer into misery and misfortune." Hence my expression *Furies* or *Fates*. I agree with X.Y.Z., and thank him for calling attention to the fact, that, strictly speaking, there should have been discrimination between them. May I take this opportunity to point out that, through a printer's slip, my words "Echo Pined" have appeared as "Echo Joined."

CHARLES M. BEADNELL.

OWING to pressure on space we are obliged to hold over several letters till next week.

To be governed, is to be watched, inspected, spied, directed, law-ridden, regulated, penned-up, indoctrinated, preached at, checked, appraised, seized, censured, commanded by beings who have neither title nor knowledge nor virtue. To be governed is to have every operation, every transaction, every movement noted, registered, counted, rated, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, refused, authorized, endorsed, admonished, prevented, reformed, redressed, corrected. To be governed is, under pretext of public utility and in the name of the general interest, to be laid under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, exhausted, hoaxed and robbed; then upon the slightest resistance, at the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, annoyed, hunted down, pulled about, beaten, disarmed, bound, imprisoned, shot, mitrailleused, judged, condemned, banished, sacrificed, sold, betrayed, and to crown all, ridiculed, derided, outraged, dishonoured.—*Proudhon*.

Give me the liberty to know, to think, to believe, and to utter freely according to conscience, above all other liberties.—*Milton*.



## Society News.

## GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

THE President, Mr. Wm. H. MacEwan, in his review of the year's activities, showed that it had been one of the most successful since the war, there being better attendances and greater interest in Secularism. Some old members had dropped out, but new blood was coming in. The formation of the Paisley Branch was largely due to the work done in the past by this Society. Sympathetic reference was made to the death of Mrs. Peter Corrie, one of the older members of the Society.

The Treasurer's report showed that, with a struggle, we had been able to make ends meet. (This is a Scots Branch!)

Miss Isa Hill reported a successful season of Summer Rambles, and that the loss sustained on the Social had been wiped out.

There was considerable discussion on the work proposed for next season. A joint programme for the work of the Glasgow, Shotts and Paisley Branches came under review, and the provision of speakers for meetings of non-secular societies will be carried on, as and where opportunity occurs.

The following were elected to office:—

Hon. President: Mr. Robert Parker.

President: Mr. Wm. H. McEwan.

Vice-Presidents: Mr. D. Weir and Mr. D. S. Currie.

Secretary: Miss Isa Hill, 17 Battlefield Gardens, Glasgow, S.2.

Treasurer: Mr. E. Hale.

Librarian: Mr. A. Clark.

Committee: Mrs. Galbraith, Messrs. McColl, McKee, Organ, Phillips and Robertson.

R.W.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD commenced the season's outdoor meetings with a week in North London. The opening meeting, on the Sunday morning, in Finsbury Park, was poorly attended, a procession of "Hunger Marchers" at their subsequent meeting being found more attractive. The evening meeting in Regent's Park was very successful, and numbers of interesting questions were dealt with to the apparent satisfaction of an appreciative crowd. The Monday's meeting was marred by rain, and an unsuitable pitch. The four other meetings held at Highbury Corner went off quite satisfactorily, the audiences getting keener each evening until the end. *Freethinkers* were sold, and leaflets distributed during the week. We have to thank Mr. Rush for his enthusiastic support on each occasion.

## Obituary

## MR. FREDERICK MILFORD.

ON Friday, May 2, the remains of Frederick Milford were interred at Lodge Hill Cemetery, Birmingham. The deceased passed away very suddenly in his seventy-third year.

Although not a member of the Society, he had worked quietly and steadily for the cause of Freethought for a great many years.

A secular burial service was read by Mr. Frank Terry. Terry.

## Miscellaneous Advertisements.

CAN any Freethinker offer a job to fellow Freethinker. Served his time as a Carpenter; well up in Cabinet and joinery work. Can provide references.—Apply, Box H.J.E., FREETHINKER, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

## LONDON.

## INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station), 11.15, Mr. J. Hutton Hynd—"Sigmund Freud and Francis Thompson."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"Culture as an Ethical Ideal."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. James H. Leuba—"The Animal Origin of Human Morality."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): Thursday, May 22, Social and Dance, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

## OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Why I am an Atheist."

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Is There a God?" The *Freethinker* can be obtained from R. H. Page, 15 Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrols Road, North End Road): Saturday, 7.30—Various speakers.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park): 6.0, Mr. H. C. White—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, 11.30, Wren Road, Camberwell Green, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; 7.0, Stonchouse Street, Clapham Road, Mr. L. Ebury; Wednesday, Rushcroft Road, Brixton, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Mr. James Hart; 3.15, Messrs. E. Betts and C. E. Wood; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and J. Hart; every Thursday, at 7.30, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and Charles Tuson; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* can be obtained after our meetings outside the Park, in Bayswater Road.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.15, Messrs. Charles Tuson and W. P. Campbell-Everden.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. Grout—A Lecture.

## COUNTRY.

## OUTDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-op Street, Chester-le-Street): Saturday, May 17, at 8.15, Messrs. T. Brown and J. T. Brighton.

CHOPWELL CO-OPERATIVE HALL, Sunday evening at 7.0, Mr. R. Atkinson of Newcastle Branch will lecture. Admission free.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): The Rev. J. Bretherton, of Manchester Road Wesleyan Chapel, Burnley, will lecture at 2.30, on "Why I am a Christian." Chairman E. Atherton, Esq., of Blackburn. Questions and discussions invited. 4.30, General Meeting; 5.30, Tea in private room at the Empress Hotel, tickets 2s. 6d. each. 7.30, Open Air Meeting in the Market Square, Mr. Jack Clayton and other speakers. If wet the evening meeting will be held at 28 Bridge Street, Burnley.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Carrot. Meet at Eaglesham, 1 o'clock.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of High Park Street and Park Road): Thursday, May 22, at 7.30—Mr. J. V. Short—A lecture. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

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