

EDUCATION AND THE HUCKSTERS.

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Views and Opinions.

Education and The Hucksters.

THE Government is in trouble over its education proposals, and it deserves to be. Our dual system of education places part of the schools under sectarian management, subsidized by Government money, and the remainder under the control of local governing bodies working under Government regulations. The consequence of this insane method is, in practice, a Government subsidy, which is used in order to keep education down to as low a level as is possible. Sectarian schools are bound to obstruct education, first because their primary concern is not education but religious training, and, secondly, because every advance in education means a greater expenditure on the part of the non-provided schools. The way out is quite clear, but no Government has the courage to tread that path. They prefer trying to effect a deal with the churches, like two hucksters each trying to get the better of the other. Leading politicians, to whom our present Prime Minister is one, have declared that the policy of Secular Education is the only honest and the only logical one for the State to pursue, and then they have turned their backs on it for fear of an adverse vote, and have sacrificed to the gods of religious obscurantism and political expediency the interests of the nation. People are very horrified when they read of how in earlier days parents sacrificed their children on the altars of their gods; but we sacrifice the minds of our children on the altars of expediency and superstition with a fine glow of religious duty.

Principle and Expediency.

It is quite in line with precedent that the Government should try its hand at settling what is called the "Education difficulty." The phrase is in itself redolent of the humbug which pervades the whole

subject; for there is no difficulty connected with education, the difficulty is wholly a religious one, and owes its existence to the desire of the various Christian sects to place their brands on a certain number of lambs so that by the time they have become full-grown sheep they may be comfortably and profitably sheared. So when the Government comes along with certain proposals which will involve expenditure in the schools, the subsidized sectarian managers resist on the ground of expense. Replies the Government, "Well we will increase your subsidies on condition that you place the appointment of the teachers in the hands of the elected education authorities." "We agree," reply the managers, "but you must allow us to appoint a number of these teachers who shall come up to our theological requirements." To this the Government agreed, and the deal would have gone through but for disagreement among the sects as to the way the public plunder was being divided. Generally, the Church of England was content, but hoped to get more in the future. The Roman Catholic Church will not have it because it desires the appointment of every teacher in its schools—with the State paying for them. The Nonconformist—well, they as usual shriek loudly about principle and conviction, but prove that their principles are for sale, and their conviction is to get as much of their religion as is possible taught at the public expense. Their real fear is that Churchmen and Roman Catholics are getting the best of the deal. It is a real good thing that Christian brotherhood prevents these people working together for long. Of recent years the war was the only thing that has seen them completely united.

* * *

Nonconformists and the State.

The *Christian World* is amazed that Sir Charles Trevelyan, on behalf of a Government pledged to the equality of all, should contemplate giving a "statutory authority to credal tests." But it has only acted as previous Governments have acted. It is true that Mr. Macdonald has publicly proclaimed himself in favour of Secular Education, it is also probable that the majority of the Labour Party also believe in it, but at the election promises were made to get votes. The Roman Catholic vote, the most united and the most ignorant vote in the country, the wielders of which are driven to the polling booth like sheep, and register their votes like asses, was given for a promise, and payment is demanded for services rendered. And in politics debts are always paid—when it is unprofitable to default. It is idle for the *Christian World* to talk about principles in this connexion. The politician wants to keep his post and the parson his pulpit. Principle has nothing to do with the question.

What right has the *Christian World* to object to the

teaching of religion in the schools? What right has it to protest at the imposition of religious tests on teachers? In practice it agrees with both; it connives at both. What difference is there between the State subsidizing religion in the Church and the State subsidizing religion in the schools? The writer of the article draws a pathetic picture of the teacher unable to get an appointment in the provided schools unless his religious opinions are of the correct brand, and fears that it will mean the appointment of men and women, not on the ground of their educational proficiency, but because they are of the same religious views as those who appoint them. The *Christian World* is quite correct in what it says, it all sounds excellent, but coming from the source from which it comes it is just sound and nothing else. There is no chance whatever of abolishing religious tests for teachers while religion is in the schools. All over the country there are thousands of teachers who are afraid to let their opinions on religion be known. They know it will mean loss of promotion if they are already appointed, a difficulty in getting appointed if they are not. And it does not matter very much whether we are dealing with Churchmen, Roman Catholics, or Dissenters who are managing provided schools, or with Council schools with a number of Christians in authority. What chance, for example, in almost any part of Cornwall, where Nonconformity is all powerful, or in various parts of Devonshire, or in a town like Preston, would a known Freethinking teacher stand of either appointment or promotion when the other candidates were Christians?

What is the use of pretending in the face of well-known facts, in the face of the wire pulling and canvassing that goes on, that religious tests do not exist? The only difference is that under the proposed measure the tests in non-provided schools is an open one; under present conditions the test is there, but it is hidden. It is quite in line with the workings of the Nonconformist conscience that it should prefer an intolerance that is masked rather than one that is open. It has never yet had the moral courage to be decently dishonest and straightforwardly intolerant. What it really dreads in the present proposals is that they will give Churchmen and Catholics an advantage. If they gave Dissenters an advantage over the others the proposals would be praised as the quintessence of sound statesmanship and religious equality. In explanation of the last phrase I hasten to say that the history of Christian Nonconformity in this country proves that—with rare individual exceptions—religious equality means the equal sharing of pelf and privilege between Christian sects, and damned be everyone else.

* * *

Secularize the State.

I understand that the proposals made by Sir C. Trevelyan are likely to be, if they are not already, withdrawn. But so long as governments pursue the ridiculous policy of consulting Christian sects as to what *they* would like, and publicly announcing that if they can agree, a Bill will be brought in on the lines indicated by the agreement, we shall have the progress of education hindered. It is a public admission that in this country religion still rules the roost, for there is surely small difference between a country in which the Church dictates to the State what it shall do, and one in which a Minister of Education calls a gathering of the Churches—excluding all other interested parties—asks them if they can agree upon what they want, and if they can the Government will carry out their wishes.

When trying to frighten Christians and timid Free-

thinkers with manufactured stories of thousands of priests killed in Russia for daring to go to Church, some of the papers said that the move for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws was part of the movement for the secularization of the State, and what that would mean we were able to see from Russia. Well, it is quite true that the movement for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws is part of the general movement for the complete secularization of the State. So also is the movement in favour of Secular Education. Both are steps towards complete secularization. In education the State should be concerned with seeing only that there is placed within reach of every child the opportunity for a sound instruction which shall properly equip it for its duties as a member of a civil community. In social affairs it should treat religious organizations exactly as it treats other organizations—giving them the protection and privileges which are given to others, but conferring no preferential treatment, and demanding from them all that it demands from other bodies. This struggle for the secularization of the State has been going on for over three hundred years, and the triumph of the Secular principle is to-day more pronounced than ever. Unity in religious belief is the only possible condition that can make tolerable the enforcement or patronage of religion by the State. Our present policy means the State encouragement of a divisive and distorting element in society which aims only at its own aggrandisement. The Catholic Church has made it quite public that it will order its passive legions to vote against any Government which refuses its demands, and for any Government that supports them. The other Churches are not quite so outspoken, but their conduct does not present any great difference. The children are for the Churches so many pawns in the game. In the long run it is a fight for the direction of civilization; and if Freethinkers wish the principle of the secularization of the State to triumph, they must do more for the education of the general public than large numbers of them have hitherto done.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

... THE ...

Prime Minister & Secular Education

THIS is the only existing report of a speech delivered by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald giving an emphatic endorsement of Secular Education and a strong condemnation of religious teaching in State schools. It should be distributed by the thousand as a means of calling attention to the evil of permitting religious instruction in State supported schools.

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Many believed that Jesus' crucifixion was intended merely as an exposure, to frighten him out of what they considered an insane delusion, as there were so many imposters going about at that time, all aspirants to the Messiahship. This view is corroborated by Pilate declaring that he found no fault in him, and his desire to liberate him; by the gentleness with which he was treated, his cross being borne by another; by the giving him vinegar to quench his thirst; by the alarm of the guards when he fainted, and their pricking his side to see if he were dead, and their running off to report the matter to the Procurator. And finally, by their not proceeding to the death-blow by breaking his legs and arms, and taking him down after being only a few hours on the cross.

"A Voice from the Ganges."

The Oberammergau Passion Play.

THE *Freethinker* (May 18), commented on some objections made to the personal appearance of Jesus as represented in the Passion Play now proceeding at Oberammergau. In reading these I was vividly reminded of similar objections which I heard in Germany in 1910. Of all the pious German Protestants I met who had witnessed the performance, I don't think one spoke favourably of it, and some regretted having seen it. But the attitude of Roman Catholics was quite different, and this fact has a significant bearing on the influence of the dramatic element in Christian mythology, and indirectly, perhaps, on the origin and history of the New Testament story. The Catholic is accustomed to a large element of the spectacular in his religion—millinery, processions, pilgrimages, and scenic ritual in an atmosphere of solemn make-belief. The strictly evangelical Protestant, on the other hand, who "walks by faith and not by sight," is inclined to condemn the Oberammergau performance as Romish and Pagan.

The traditional account of the origin of the decennial Passion Play in the Bavarian village is that it was inaugurated in 1633, by order of an archbishop, to divert the progress of a pestilence. But the play is really a survival. The sacred drama representing the life of Christ was once widely spread over Europe under the name of mystery-plays which, like everything fundamental to Christianity, are of Asiatic or Pagan origin, and superseded shows associated with the older festivals. The miracle-play, strictly speaking, marks a second stage in the development of the sacred drama, and was especially popular in England in the fifteenth century, but was fairly well known here before the end of the twelfth. Collections of plays based on the life of Christ or the lives of saints survive for York and Chester and several other towns in England.

In Roman writers of the first and second centuries of our era—Ovid, Juvenal, Martial and others—there are numerous references to the Isis cult in different parts of the Empire. Part of the ritual pertaining to this cult was acted in public outside the temples. The death of Osiris, Isis' grief at her loss, and the mourning of the people in sympathy with her, were prominent features in the scene. An elaborate dramatic ritual, too, developed out of the simple rustic carnival held in honour of the Saviour-god Dionysus. At this festival slaves were allowed a temporary freedom—an aspect of the drama which reminds us of the story of Jesus Barabbas in our own gospels.

Judas is a very important character in the Oberammergau play, as the betrayal of Jesus leads to the latter's trial and condemnation, the pivotal incidents in the plot. When one bears in mind that the whole situation was predicted and foreseen as inevitable by Jesus himself, Judas' treachery seems needless except for the purposes of the drama. During the performance at Oberammergau, in 1870, Judas was presented to the spectators with a realism that seems to have outstepped the bounds of prudence. A number of rustics, good Christians no doubt, lay in wait for him and showed him practically what they thought of his treachery. It was customary at one time for the actor who personated Judas to have a raven or some other black bird under his robe. When the traitor committed suicide the bird, representing his black soul, flew away—another well-known item in the history of superstitious beliefs.

The ease with which the events lend themselves to stage-setting is noticeable, and perhaps the simple explanation of the fact is that the whole story as we

have it in the New Testament is only drama after all. I rather fancy that some idea of this kind vaguely suggested itself to those German Protestants who told me that they regretted having seen the Oberammergau performance. But to bring home to a Roman Catholic community the "reality" of Judas' betrayal and the trial and crucifixion of the Saviour-God is no difficult task, especially in a Bavarian village where a certain proportion of the inhabitants are wood-carvers, whose craft is mainly directed to the production of crucifixes, madonnas, and images of the saints.

Sir Richard Burton knew Jerusalem and the East well and took a very keen interest in religious history. He saw the Passion Play in 1880, and his general impressions of it are worth noting. It gives an importance and a splendour, he says, to incidents, and to a particular event, whose contemporary fame could not extend beyond the boundaries of remote Judea. "I need hardly say that neither the person of the Founder [of Christianity], nor the details of his career, nor the star of Bethlehem, nor the earthquake that rent the veil, nor the three days' darkness, are mentioned by any writer of the time, Jewish, Greek, or Roman; while the number of forged notices proves that the hiatus was greatly regretted." To him the Passion Play seemed an artificial production when compared with "the living and breathing representation" of incidents in the life of Mahomet, as seen in the three days' pilgrimage at Mecca. This, however, is only one man's opinion, and Christians may derive some consolation from the fact that the last rites of the Church were administered to him on his death-bed—an infidel convert of whom his wife was no doubt justly proud.

In one important respect, said Burton, the Christian and Mohammedan pageants are alike, "they both thrive upon the contributions of the pious." This is certainly true of the Passion Play; but others who are not over-burdened with piety also contribute something. The performance lasts from May to September, and in that period it brings appreciable revenue to the promoters of the show itself, to inn-keepers, tradesmen and the organizers of tourists' excursions. It may be that Christianity will provide popular entertainment, for a consideration, of course, long after its doctrinal foundations are completely destroyed. And this, at any rate, is better than some of the spectacles to which its fiery zeal at one time treated the faithful.

A. D. McLAREN.

To a Snob.

SWEET maid, alone this hour is meant
For thee, but lo, irrelevant
Without excuse, your babble sings
Of heavenly hosts, of spooky things
That pipe sweet ditties, on the wing!
Sans sanity, sans everything.

Sweet maiden list—mayhap I seek
To stain a deeper shade your cheek,
That blushes as a rip'ning peach
When Atheism's cause I preach—
Heed my advice; keep tightly bound
Your rosebud lips, just look profound.

E. HUGH COOPER.

Liberty is one of the choicest gifts that heaven hath bestowed upon man, and exceeds in value all the treasures which the earth contains within its bosom, or the sea covers. Liberty, as well as honour, man ought to preserve at the hazard of his life, for without it life is unsupportable.—*Cervantes*.

More Knocks from Knox.

"The crime of inquiry is one which religion never has forgiven."—*Shelley*.

"I care not what the sects may brawl."—*Tennyson*.

PRIESTS like to be thought of as learned men. Doubtless a few of them can claim such a title, but the great majority are only educated in the patter of their sorry profession. Ben Jonson's jest: "A little Latin and less Greek" would sum up the major part of their actual educational attainments. Concerning science, most clergymen are as innocent as the babes in the wood; and dead languages are of little use in a living world—when they are used to conserve dead thoughts.

Indeed, there does not appear to be any real necessity for a liberal education in a calling which so closely approximates to that of a charlatan. "Wealth is good," said an American to his son, "but the appearance of it is nearly as good." That is how the clergy feel about the matter of education. One of the most delightful experiences is to hear a priest bellowing Latin sentences with an Irish accent like the kick of a mule. Protestant priests are just as open to criticism. The Anglican State Church kindly provides a set ritual for its clergy, and even Nonconformist pastors use the ritual of their rivals as far as their own prejudices permit. As for sermons, these may be purchased at twopence a copy, and bound volumes cumber the booksellers' fourpenny boxes.

The power of the clergy, however, is waning. It is quite useless thundering from a pulpit if you face a beggarly array of empty benches. But people read Sunday newspapers if they no longer attend church or chapel. Hence a few clergymen have turned journalists in order to try and impose their peculiar views on a public which is escaping their influence. One of these men is Father Knox, who airs his prejudices in the columns of the *Sunday Dispatch*. In one of his contributions he falls foul of science in an article with the title: "More Shocks for the Scientists." This is the jaunty way that Papa Knox administers his knocks to his opponents:—

Science has so very nearly got the whole universe taped and pigeon-holed, is so hot on the heels of the last mystery, has its lethal bottle so close to the last fluttering idea which hitherto has eluded us, that we almost breathe freely when it records a check.

Father Knox ought to breathe very freely, for he records two alleged "checks" to science, and not one. The first relates to the germ of parrot-disease, which, by the way, is still sub-judice, as the lawyers express it. And the other refers to an alleged disclosure that a murderer's skull was said, by someone, to be typical of primitive man, which Mr. Knox denies hotly.

It would be interesting to learn where Father Knox gets the material for his tirade. It looks uncommonly as if he were commenting on paragraphs which have appeared in the provincial press, where junior reporters handle matters above their intelligence. Mr. Knox himself appears, in this instance, to be in the same boat with the cub-reporters. How otherwise could he have written so feelingly of scientists chasing an idea with a lethal bottle, a matter almost silly enough to be used as a subject for a stained-glass window in a church.

Why is Mr. Knox so venomous concerning scientists? Is it because he is himself a mystery-monger, and he dislikes all persons who help to remove ignorance from the world? Science is in the last analy-

sis, simply ordered knowledge; merely that and nothing more. Feeble jokes concerning post-mortems on parrots and coroners' verdicts on cockatoos may arouse a silly giggle from the coals'-and-blankets' brigade in a church congregation, but they neither enhance Mr. Knox's own reputation or detract in any manner from the character of men who are devoting their lives to the enlarging of the boundaries of human knowledge.

As a fact, Father Knox realizes that he is walking on thin ice when he attacks science. He says expressly that he does not scoff at Æsculapius, who is said to have been associated with medicine thousands of years ago. But, all the same, he scoffs at modern doctors and "enjoys" the spectacle of their alleged discomfiture. In this matter Mr. Knox is only doing what the clergy are doing the world over. They, the clergy, are very fond of pointing the finger of scorn at the conclusions of science, which they themselves only imperfectly understand.

Did the whole of the 40,000 clergy of this country ever do much for humanity beyond drawing fees at births, marriages and deaths? To feather their own nests the clergy of all denominations have sought to make death more gruesome. But medical men have robbed death of half its terrors. As a result of their discoveries death comes as a nurse to a tired child to patients who had otherwise died in the extremist woe and suffering. The death rate from fevers is today the lowest in the records of the world. Typhus, typhoid, cholera and scarlet fever are now almost completely under control, and the first three are on the point of extinction. From diphtheria the death-rate used to be one in two, but has since fallen to four per cent. During the last great war it was medical science that safeguarded the soldiers and sailors against typhoid, lock-jaw, and other horrors. The clergy were exempted from military service, and only undertook easy jobs at officers' pay, usually at the back of the fighting lines.

Deaths from consumption in Great Britain and Ireland amount to a thousand weekly, and in other countries the figures are worse. The 40,000 clergy recite prayers, but doctors risk their lives to fight this dread disease. The clergy, who opposed the use of chloroform because they pretended that it interfered with their deity's primal curse upon woman, are not equipped by education and training for passing judgment on scientists any more than the young choir-boys who are paid to sing their hymns. Science is a real saviour, not an imaginary one such as the priests worship. It keeps dread diseases from our homes; it holds plague and cholera at arm's length. If the many millions of money now wasted on Priestcraft and its devious ways were devoted to sanitary science, mankind will be greatly relieved of untold but preventable misery. The twin evils of cancer and consumption would be of no more moment than small pox and typhoid fever. Small pox, which was once a terror that devastated Europe like a huge prairie-fire, has now been so restricted by science that it is rare to find a person whose face is pitted with the marks of the dread disease that once rivalled the Black Death.

Father Knox may attract audiences by his high spirits and boyish wilfulness. Happily, he nullifies the effect of his own work by making his readers feel that priests are mere charlatans, and that religion is a joke played on the people in the interest of the governing class.

MIMNERMUS.

In a debate, rather pull to pieces the argument of thy antagonists than offer him any of thy own; for thus thou wilt fight him in his own country.—*Fielding*.

Voltaire the Liberator.

(Continued from page 324.)

FREDERICK fell out with Voltaire over the printing of this piece, and his displeasure was so threatening that Voltaire wrote to his niece: "I see plainly that the orange has been squeezed; it is necessary now to think of saving the rind."¹³ He also remarked that Frederick held a sceptre, but added, "I have a pen."

A peace was eventually patched up, but hardly had this been done than word was brought Frederick that the *Diatribes of Doctor Akakia* was on sale at all the bookshops, and that the demand exceeded the supply. The vain and pompous Maupertuis was not loved, and the Prussians were secretly delighting in the satire.

One Sunday afternoon Collini, Voltaire's Secretary, saw, from the window some strange proceedings in the street. It proved to be the burning of a book by the public executioner. Collini reported to Voltaire what was going on outside his door. "I'll bet," said Voltaire, "It is my Doctor they are burning." It was. The next day the official government paper in Berlin issued the following bulletin: "Sunday, at noon, a horrible pamphlet, entitled *The Diatribe*, etc., was burned publicly in different places by the hand of the executioner. M. de Voltaire is said to be the author of it."

If Frederick thought that he had finally disposed of the business by this act, he was grievously mistaken. The very action he had taken defeated his purpose; for the item was copied by all the Gazettes in Europe, and caused a great demand for the book. Ten presses in Germany were soon printing copies day and night. Six thousand copies were sold in Paris alone in one day. Voltaire packed up, and after a lot of trouble on the frontier, owing to Frederick's suspicion that he was taking some of the "dirty linen" with him for purposes of revenge, he at last got away from the angry king.

Voltaire would like to have returned to France but could not obtain permission. After moving about for a couple of years, and being entertained like a prince at various chateaus of the nobility, he finally arrived at Geneva, in 1755, to consult the famous Dr. Tronchin about his many ailments. On the outskirts of Geneva he purchased an estate which he named Delights (Les Délices). The neighbourhood was well adapted to one in the habit of offending rulers, like Voltaire. He was in the Republic of Geneva, ten minutes' walk would bring him to the kingdom of Sardinia. Thirty minutes easy riding would place him in France, and in an hour he could be in Switzerland. Not feeling very safe at Geneva, he bought a large estate at Ferney, on the shores of Lake Lemman, to which he finally retired in 1764. Besides these he bought two others, so that he had one in each adjoining country; whereupon he writes: "I am like the Old Man of the Mountain: with my four estates, I am upon my four paws."

Voltaire had now reached the goal of most men's aspiration. He was very wealthy. He was a grand seignor, with a château and gardens, enclosed in a park three miles in circuit. A fine library of five thousand volumes, and a fame, as a writer, more intense and widespread than ever before achieved by a living man. He was now over sixty, full of ailments, and might well be pardoned for deciding to spend his last years in ease and comfort. But the great work of his life, the campaign against injustice, cruelty, and superstition; which he entitled *Ecrasez l'Infame* (Crush the In-

famous) and the conflict with the Church, under the cover of whose robes these abominations were committed, had not yet commenced, or even been contemplated. He intended leading a more outdoor life, laying out his park, plantations and gardens. By which his health greatly benefited.

A frightful crime, due to religious fanaticism, was enacted at Toulouse, a most bigoted city which claimed to possess among its holy relics, the bodies of seven of the Apostles, the bones of many of the infants slain by Herod, part of the robe of the Virgin Mary; and yearly celebrated with joy the expulsion of the Huguenots and the slaughter of three thousand unarmed men, women, and children in their own city during the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve.

In 1761 a Protestant shopkeeper in Toulouse, named Calas, sixty years of age, and of irreproachable character, was arrested and charged with the murder of his eldest son. Calas had four sons and two daughters. One son became a Catholic, but nevertheless, was still treated with perfect kindness and consideration. The eldest son, Marc Antoine, had trained for the bar, but could not obtain permission to practise without professing the Catholic faith. This preyed upon his mind, and one evening he hanged himself in his father's shop.

The father was accused of murdering his son to prevent him from joining the Catholic Church. There was not a shred of evidence to work upon, so it was decided to torture Calas to obtain a confession of the crime. Cords were attached to his wrists and feet, and he was stretched until his limbs were dislocated and drawn out several inches beyond. This was the "ordinary question"; but Calas would confess nothing, he said he had nothing to confess. He was allowed half an hour's rest, then he was put to the "question extraordinary." This consisted in laying him on a table, with his head extended a little way beyond the end of it, and while one man held his nose, another poured slowly into his mouth, from a horn, three pints of water. With only a moment's pause in between, five more vessels of water were forced into his body, and he had suffered the intolerable anguish of a hundred drownings. There was then a pause to question him once again, and he once more asserted his innocence. Then five more vessels of water were forced into his body, swelling it to twice its natural size. Still no confession could be extorted. He was then handed over to two priests to be prepared for death. Taken to the place of public execution, he was bound to a cross and the executioner, with an iron bar, broke each of his limbs in two places. In this condition he lived two hours, and then the executioner strangled him. Ingersoll, in his *Oration on Voltaire*, remarked: "What would they have done if their hearts had not been softened by the glad tidings of great joy?"

When Voltaire heard the story, he thought that Calas was guilty, and it was a case of Protestant fanaticism, followed by the vengeance of Catholic fanaticism. But a traveller from Toulouse assured him that Calas was innocent. One of the sons of Calas had fled to Geneva, a Protestant city. Voltaire sent for him and questioned him closely as to what happened, and was much impressed by his story. He caused enquiries to be set on foot in Toulouse. He obtained a statement from Calas's widow; he went back to Les Délices, leaving his delightful labours at Ferney, in order to be near Geneva, where he engaged an able Advocate, from whom he obtained the legal points involved and a statement of the steps to be taken, the first of which was to obtain copies of all the documents and testi-

¹³ Parton: *Life of Voltaire*. Vol. II, p. 96.

mony from the officials at Toulouse; these were obstinately refused, and every one advised him not to meddle with the matter. But this was only another incentive for Voltaire to continue. But other tactics were obviously necessary. He would bring the irresistible force of public opinion to bear upon these monsters.

Voltaire's first move was to publish a pamphlet containing a full statement of the atrocity related by Madame Calas and her two sons: "No well-disposed person," says Parton, "can even now read this pamphlet without strong emotion." He followed this up by others, until he had published seven in all, he had them translated into English and German, where they produced a profound effect. The young Queen of George III, headed a subscription for the Calas family. Several German princes and nobles subscribed. The Swiss people helped. The Empress of Russia and the King of Poland contributed.

No power but that of the royal council could compel the surrender of the record of the Toulouse proceedings, but a year after the death of Calas the council met and ordered the record to be produced, and the case to be retried. But delay followed delay, and it was exactly three years after his death that the sentence on Calas was annulled, the family declared innocent; the confiscation of the estate cancelled. The magistrate, deserted by his accomplices, was deprived of his office and ultimately became insane; he made an unsuccessful attempt at suicide, but succeeded in a second attempt by throwing himself from a window.

Voltaire gave three years' of his life to righting this monstrous crime. During those years, he says, no smile escaped him of which he did not reproach himself. As Morley well says, "There was something inexorable as doom about Voltaire's unrelenting perseverance in getting wrong definitely stamped and transfixed," and Voltaire was the only man who could challenge, and emerge victorious over the combined forces of Church and State.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

We ought to feel depressed, whereas we are only amused, and instead of tears dimming our eyes, we expect, if we troubled to look in the glass, we should see only a twinkle. The whereabouts of this being the breaking forth of Mr. James Douglas in the *Sunday Express* for May 25. Here it is:—

I am honoured every week by the mud and the missiles hurled at me by that obsolete organ of pseudo-Semitic Atheism, the *Freethinker*. Its frantic frenzies arride me. Its infantile blasphemies amuse me. Cohenism is curiously archaic . . .

Even Mr. Chapman Cohen, editor of the *Freethinker*, must admit that philosophy has failed to explain the mystery of the universe, and that science is making that mystery more mystical and less materialistic, more spiritual and less mechanical. Einstein and Eddington are mystics, not mechanists.

I acknowledge Mr. Cohen's honesty. He is a sincere, though fanatical, bigot. His mind is like the pupil of the eye. The more light that science pours on it the more it contracts. I try not to be a bigot. I see the good even in rationalism.

Looked at critically that is really not well-done. It is not only common journalism, but it is very, very poor writing. For instance, Mr. Douglas says "Its frantic frenzies arride me." We are very certain that Mr. Douglas does not here mean what he says. Arride is a word derived from the Italian, and means to smile pleasantly and approvingly upon. I am quite sure that Mr. Douglas does not wish his readers to understand that he smiles approvingly upon the "frantic frenzies"

of the *Freethinker*. I suppose the word sounds well, and it will have the same effect on his ardent followers as did Daniel O'Connell's *Isosceles Triangle* in demoralizing the orange woman with whom he was holding a slanging match. If Mr. Douglas would care to spare half an hour we would not mind showing him how to write a telling piece of sarcasm on what the *Freethinker* has to say about him, something very much better than this farrago of commonplace epithets, and which would at least amuse anyone with an intelligence above that of a sucking curate. But, naturally, as a journalist, Mr. Douglas has to consider his audience, and the isosceles triangle will give greater satisfaction in that direction.

Mr. Douglas asks us to believe that there is honesty in faith as well as in scepticism. That is just another journalistic *cliché*, for we never questioned it. It is not the honesty of faith we have questioned, but its reasonableness. We plead guilty to having very seldom argued seriously with Mr. Douglas because he has hardly ever given us anything like a seriously reasonable proposition with which to deal. We have merely used him as illustrative of two things. First, the kind of mentality in the newspaper reading public that can accept such frantic frenzies, such pseudo-semitic mythology, such moronic infantilism, and schoolboy English as great writing and almost inspired thinking, and, secondly, the kind of scribbler who lives by satisfying the mentality of the aforesaid. It is true we have often wondered whether Mr. Douglas can really be as silly as he seems, and if he takes that as a reflection on his honesty, we cheerfully withdraw the presumed suggestion and admit that the articles written by Mr. Douglas do really reflect his own intelligence, as well as that of his admirers. We hope that Mr. Douglas will not take this as an insult by way of a correction.

There is another Christian protest meeting against the Russian treatment of the Churches, which is to be held in the Albert Hall, on July 14. The resolution that is to be put to the meeting "urges the Soviet Government to modify its opposition to religious teaching and worship," and asks for the "granting of religious freedom." We notice that all the talk of thousands of murdered priests, who were guilty of no other fault than going to Church, is left out. We fancy that that particular "stunt" is worn out. It ought to have received its quietus when the Archbishop of Canterbury, first denounced the murders, then promised an enquiry to discover if the stories were true, and if so would publish details, and then when the question again came before the House of Lords had nothing new to offer. It was at the Albert Hall that "Jix" gave his sensational story of the bishop who was stripped naked, and had cold water poured over him till he became a block of ice. We wonder what has become of that modern equivalent of the Biblical pillar of salt? It is fortunate for this class of people that the public has a very short memory.

We should like to see religious freedom of teaching in Russia and everywhere else, including Italy and Spain, so long as freedom of anti-religious teaching went along with it. But it is strange that the Christian Protest Movement has nothing to say against suppression of freedom of thought anywhere but in Russia. Of course there is a very great difference between Russia and elsewhere. In Russia the weight of the Government is thrown against religion, and it is religion that is suffering restrictions. In other countries the weight of the Government is thrown in favour of religion, and it is non-religion that suffers restrictions. That, of course, makes a tremendous difference to men like our Archbishops, Bishops and curious personages like "Jix."

The *Morning Post's* religious persecution stunt having fallen flat, it has now reverted to the communization of women scare, which was brought up soon after the Bolsheviks had gained control. In its issue for May 21, it publishes an account, from Riga, of a scheme devised by the Minister for Education, which provides for "the abolition of marriage, instituting equal distribution of women among workmen and peasants, with certain restrictions regarding members of the professions who are

not employed in Soviet institutions." The readers of the *Morning Post* seem able to swallow anything. We shall watch the development of this old yarn with interest, and also the pious indignation of those who prefer to carry on their promiscuous relations with women free from governmental regulations.

Film Weekly's Hollywood correspondent explains the art of hoodwinking:—

The laughable side of American film "censorship" is again illustrated by the pompous new "code of standards" drawn up by Will Hays' organization, the Motion Picture Producers' and Distributors' Association.

A similar new "code" is drawn up at least once a year, if not more often, and contains down to the most seemingly insignificant details, a list of "don't's" for film producers. If the new "code" were even 50 per cent acted on by the producers, the cinema would be turned into a sort of Sunday school. But the "fans" need have no fear of such a thing happening. The producers merely publish their "code" to hoodwink American censor boards, and American mothers into thinking the films are 100 per cent pure. As soon as it is published they go ahead and produce anything they like.

One can do nothing nowadays, declares a politician, without the help of the Press. Unfortunately, the Press with its characteristic lack of proportion usually gets done the things which do not matter, and leaves undone the things which do. A similar indictment can be levelled at the Church.

A portion of God's creation is undergoing a rough time at present. Fruit trees are now being sprayed with insecticide, in order to kill the insect pests which God delightfully ordained should destroy the food of man. It only remains to add that the insecticide is more advantageous to man than the prayers of parsons for good crops. Of course it may be that as it is man, and not God, that brought fruits to their present perfection, the insects represent God's anger at man for impiously improving his handiwork.

Mr. Henry Eversley, a Sunday-school expert, declares that it is far easier to get children to pray than adults. We respectfully suggest to this expert that the intelligence of the child being less developed than the adult's is the cause of the fact he mentions. Hence, every effort should be made to keep religion in the day school, and to drag the child into a Sunday school. The inculcation of religious ideas and practices must never be left until adulthood. For adults often acquire the depraved habit of reflecting critically on what they are told in regard to religion, a habit, which, as Christ suggested, will never get anyone into Heaven.

God be praised for the parsons of Liverpool. They have saved the city from moral and spiritual destruction, by influencing the City Council to vote against Sunday games in the ratepayers' parks. Liverpool should try the experiment of electing councillors who have twentieth century minds.

"It would be a happier world," declares the Duke of Gloucester, "if we all made the Bible our final court of appeal." (Cheers from the pious gallery!) It is unfortunate for this kind of clap-trap that there are such studies as history and sociology. During hundreds of years previous to this century the Bible was in Europe the final court of appeal. Happiness, however, wasn't a characteristic of the times for the mass of the people. On the other hand, as the Manchester Statistical Society was recently informed, conditions making for happiness have greatly improved of late years. This has come about only since the Bible ceased to be the final court of appeal. Anyone who really knows the Bible for what it is, and understands the baneful influence it has exerted on mankind, will not take the improvement for a mere coincidence.

Mr. E. E. Kellett, a *Daily News* reviewer, sums up Emerson in this wise:—

More is to be learnt, I think, at least by the present

generation, by reading about Emerson than by reading Emerson himself. His essays are spasmodic; they are full of good sayings, but rarely thought out to the end. He was a philosopher who never formed a consistent philosophy; and it would, I think be possible to prove that he contradicted himself a hundred times. He reads far better in a book of selected aphorisms than as a whole . . . Our age, so different from Emerson's, might do worse than sit at his feet—at intervals, and not too long at a time.

This is in line with the gentle art of "damning with faint praise." If Emerson had prattled Christian metaphysics and echoed Biblical wisdom, no doubt a *Daily News* reviewer would have managed to discover Emerson to be a philosopher of the greatest magnitude, and inconsistency could have been overlooked. We think the more intelligent portion of the present generation will learn more by reading Emerson than by studying what some know-all critics and literary gossip-mongers have written about Emerson.

The following, from a lesson on the history of language and writing, appeared in the *Schoolmaster*:—

Very slowly, during many thousands of years, Neolithic (Newer-Stone Age) people accustomed themselves to giving the sounds they made with lips, tongue, and throat, fixed meanings, and to teaching these meanings to their children. Thus came *language*. But as each tribe or group made its own collection of sounds and meanings many *different languages* were formed.

If this is the accepted scientific explanation as to the origin of the many different languages, then the Tower-of-Babel version in the Bible is untrue. Yet, we presume, the latter version is still told to children, during the Scripture lesson, as if it were an historical fact. So, too, other Biblical falsities, such as the creation story, and the tale of the Flood. Dare any teacher in the State schools explain that these stories are not accepted as historically true by scientists? The parsons would soon make a devil of a row if he did.

A pious scribe hopes that the day has gone by for ever when children are regarded as inherently depraved, and fit subject for harsh discipline and stern repression. We sympathize with our friend's hope. And we suggest he might spare a kind wish for Free-thinkers, who did so much to bring about the change by humanizing the Bible-trained minds of Christian parents. Another kindly thought might be given Free-thinkers for having managed to lift the fear of hell from the minds of the children. That was a species of child-torture practised by Christians too often forgotten.

Dr. D. L. Ritchie thinks that the churches to-day have got a chill and need to be warmed. We are not surprised. The boiler of spiritual fervour has been allowed to get cold; fear of hell-fire is no longer stoking it. This indicates the remedy; the Churches must return to the "simple teaching of Jesus." He didn't tell people Hell was an allegory.

To a grey, workaday world the unconscious humorist adds a little gaiety. This week's specimen is Sir Dennis Boles, Master of the Quantock Stag Hounds. He says: "Personally, and I am a humane person, I do not believe they (the stags) mind being hunted at all. Nor the fox, for that matter." This is rather a mild way of putting it. We should say that the stag enjoys being hunted. Any one who studies animals closely will observe the bored expression on their faces when they are let alone.

It is rather a pity that Judges do not restrict their comments to what is strictly relevant to the case before them. It is true they manage to illustrate the truth that the wisest of men may show themselves capable of very foolish statements when they get off their particular line, and so far it may be reckoned to the good. But the latest example of what happens when men do forsake their own particular line was given the other day by Mr. Justice McCardie. Commenting on the statement that woman was a favourite of the law he said that the middle of the eighteenth century

were the days of chastisement which now seem to be

gone for ever. It was in these days of chastisement that England laid the foundations of her greatness.

That is quite an interesting deliverance, and we have no doubt it will bring consolation to many. Every time a man gives his wife a thrashing he may reflect that he is helping, if not to build up, at least to sustain the greatness of the British Empire. That is an historical generalization that has escaped most historians, and Mr. Justice McCardie deserves the thanks of the nation for having directed attention to it.

Legally, however, Mr. Justice McCardie was not quite correct. The legal right to thrash a wife ended before the close of the seventeenth century. Afterwards it was no more than an old English custom. Legally the wife continued to be a chattel of the husband until the passing of the Married Woman's Property Act of 1882. This was largely, if not entirely due to the influence of Church law, which made husband and wife one in a legal sense, and placed the woman in a lower social, religious, and legal position than man. The whole influence of the Christian religion was in this direction, and it was only as Christian belief weakened that the doctrine of the equality of the sexes began to gain ground. It was a Church Council which discussed the question of whether woman was a human being, and only decided in the affirmative by a narrow majority. The thesis under discussion was that nature always aimed at perfection, and so would if it could produce only man. But woman was an animal produced by accident. The curious will find many examples of this kind of thing in Mr. Cohen's *Woman and Christianity*.

In an address at the City Temple the other day, the Rev. Fort Newton unconsciously foreshadowed the fate that is to meet those very respectable reverend Agnostic, "wistful unbelievers," and the legions of the mentally half-baked and timidly unconventional. He said:—

The advent of Atheism in our midst, amounting almost to theophobia . . . is a new temper, very different from the Agnosticism of the last generation . . . Mill, Huxley, and Morley were Agnostics, but they regretted it.

What a fate? To be looked down with pitying contempt by men of the stamp of the Rev. Fort Newton, men whose sole claim to distinction is that among a company of undeveloped intelligences they occasionally lapse into a little common-sense! Where else but in a Christian Church would a man such as this one have achieved fame, or even a livelihood? And to be patronized by him! And the worst of it is that men like Huxley and Morley often went out of their way to earn it.

Mr. Newton can forgive a man being a Freethinker, provided he has grace enough to confess with what regret he gave up the silly superstitions on which Mr. Newton lives, and if they also write of the wistful way in which they regard the Jackass mentality of the ordinary believer. He forgives them because they bear testimony to the greatness of his own position. Of course, there were other Atheists, men like Clifford and Bradlaugh, and Buchner, and Tyndall, who did not express regret for possessing intelligence, but Mr. Newton has never heard of them, or if he has he lacks the courage to mention their names. Anyway, we are rather pleased Mr. Newton has spoken. If the patronage of such men does not make certain non-believers sick, they are indeed hopeless. There is only one way to make Christians really suspect a Freethinker, and that for him to begin by respecting oneself. Otherwise he will get treated with the contempt he deserves.

A tree belonging to Mr. A. Blaustein, the Mayor of Finsbury, fell upon a boy and broke his leg. The boy sued for damages. But Judge Rowlands decided that the owner of the tree was not responsible. It was an "Act of God." Well, as there is a legal decision that God broke the boy's leg, it would seem that an action should lie against God. And as it is rather difficult to serve a summons on that party, we suggest that an action should be brought against the Archbishop of Canterbury, as he is God's chief official representative in England. Failing an appearance, or a repudiation of re-

sponsibility, we suggest that diplomatic relations should be broken off with God until proper compensation is made.

Another act of God has been experienced in Burma, where reports say that several thousands of lives have been lost owing to an earthquake. If one takes God's record, from the bungle over the creation of Adam down to the Burma earthquake, it seems nothing to be proud of.

The patron saint of Naples, St. Januarius, is under repair. This is the saint in whose name the Roman Church works its annual fraud of the liquefaction of his blood. This time the statue of the saint was seen to be tottering. First it was believed to be another miracle, and if the Church could have managed it would have been. But instead of that the fire brigade took the matter in hand, found that the foundations were weakening, and braced up the tottering saint with ropes attached to neighbouring buildings. Still, this is not the only saint who in these days cannot keep himself upright.

We have received a copy of the *Outspan*, a weekly paper published in Blomfontein. It contains an article by the Rev. J. R. Tuscott. He asks the question: "Did you ever meet a Jew who was an Atheist." We do not imagine that this parson would have to look very long to find one in Blomfontein, and in any case we could find him thousands in any part of the civilized world. But why should Mr. Truscott assume so easily that Jews are all fools? That is not the reputation they usually bear.

At Roscommon District Court a man was fined £200 for having "poten" in his house. When a Police-sergeant went to the house he was told that the jar contained hair-oil. In court the District Justice, Mr. Rice, ordered the man to remove a badge of the Sacred Heart from his coat. "I cannot," he said, "tolerate blasphemy." Now we hope that judges will not take to ordering Christians to remove some of their clothing whenever they tell lies, if they do we shall soon have the majority of Christians walking about naked. And God's image is far more attractive draped as it is, in the vast majority of cases, than naked.

A Nottingham curate, a Rev. F. Abbot, says that a new Puritan Party is needed to stop Sunday games, etc., and prevent "the filching away of the just rights of every citizen." But no rights are being taken from any citizen, except the Christian right of interfering with the healthy and harmless enjoyment of other people.

From *The African Sun*:—

The Rev. Stanley Astbury, of Durham, referring to "the desecration of Good Friday," said: "Go on with your picnics—I hope it pours with rain; go to your bioscopes—I hope they prove the worst shows you have ever seen." The *Sun* comments—"What a nasty temper! Go on with your sermons, Reverent Sir—I hope everybody falls asleep." In all probability that hope is very frequently realized.

Dr. Nansen, being a Freethinker, left instructions that there were to be no religious ceremonies at his funeral. This wish was respected in his native country. But one cannot expect anything to stand in the way of a religious advertisement in this country, so a memorial service was held at St. Margaret's, Westminster. No one appears to have been shocked at a religious ceremony being held in this country over a man, whose final instructions were that no church should take any part in his funeral ceremony. What a gap there is between common decency and Christian practice!

Signor Mussolini told the Italian nation that:—

To-morrow you will see an armed review of impressive character. It is I who desired it, because although words are beautiful things, rifles, machine-guns, ships, aeroplanes and cannons are still more beautiful. He might, to complete the picture, have shown the people some photographs of war cemeteries. These are the beautiful effects of the primitive method of settling disputes by means of beautiful weapons.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. A. MACDONALD AND D. MATHEWS.—Glad to have your appreciation of the articles, but we shall not reprint them unless the stories are revived. The exposure of the lies underlying the stories of religious persecution in Russia appears to have done its work, and there the matter must rest for the time.

W. JAMESON.—We do not expect all our readers to agree with us in everything, and we should think little of them if they did. It is quite enough if they agree with our general policy. In any case, we must be the authority as to what letters or articles are suitable or of sufficient interest for insertion. That is an editor's privilege—and misfortune.

H. ELMSLEY.—You say that you have had three illustrations of "Divine Intervention" in your behalf. We can only congratulate you on the importance in which God Almighty holds yourself, and marvel at the jar the universe would get if anything unpleasant happened to you.

H. C. GLEAN.—The falsification of the prophecy in Isaiah "A virgin shall conceive," etc., has been commonplace in popular Freethought for over a century. It will be found in Paine's *Age of Reason*. You will find a list of similar things in the *Bible Handbook*.

G. P. JOBSON.—Pleased to hear from a new reader. But you are not really a long way from the fight against superstition, that is going on everywhere. You are only a long way from London. But wherever one is one can take a hand in the universal war against superstition and ignorance.

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

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

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

Lecture notices must reach 51 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We regret that owing to an accident in the course of printing Mr. Cohen's *Foundations of Religion*, its publication has been held up for a few days. This will explain a little delay in fulfilling orders. But it should be on sale by the time this copy of the *Freethinker* is in the hands of its readers.

Next week (Sunday, June 8) the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will be held in London. The business sessions will run from 10.30 to 12.30, and from 2.30 to 4.30, at the Grafton Hotel, Tottenham Court Road. Only members are admitted to these meetings, and visitors must bring their Card of Membership with them. Between meetings a luncheon will be provided at 2s. 6d. per head. It will help if those who intend being at the luncheon will write the General Secretary.

In the evening a public demonstration will be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. The President, Mr. Cohen will occupy the chair, a list of the

speakers will be found on the last page of this issue. We earnestly ask the help of London friends in making the meeting widely known. A package of slips advertising the gathering will be sent on receipt of post card. Valuable help may be given in this way.

Acting on a suggestion made by several of our readers, the Executive of the N.S.S. made enquiries concerning the possibility of Broadcasting a brief talk on Secularism from one of the stations of the International Broadcasting Company. This Company undertakes to broadcast talks in English from one of several foreign stations, on payment of a fee. English listeners will probably have heard them broadcasting various business advertisements. Our own B.B.C. will not permit any advertisement, except that of their own publications. The reply received was very significant this was:—

We feel that we should risk displeasing too many of our listeners.

In Germany the President of one Freethought organization has been allowed to deliver an address on more than one occasion. In America this is frequently done. In England such a thing would never be permitted, and even foreign stations know English religious bigotry too well to offend by allowing Freethought to be heard here through them. We are not at all surprised at the refusal. Once more, if Freethinkers wish to secure justice for themselves they must go on hammering away at religion. It is useless lamenting the state of affairs and doing nothing to remedy it. Christians will treat Freethinkers fairly when the latter show they do not mean to submit to any other kind of treatment. To ask a Christian in power to be just to unbelievers is like asking a hungry tiger to be patient until the milk waggon comes along.

Should this meet the eye of Mr. F. A. Richardson, who, about five years ago, was living at 19a Childeric Road, New Cross, London, and who witnessed the will of Mr. H. Marshall, of 14 Childeric Road, New Cross, will he please forward his present address to the General Secretary, at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. We would be obliged for any information from readers which would help us to trace Mr. Richardson.

From an article in *The World* (New York), we see that Mr. Joseph Lewis, President of the Freethinker's Society, has filed a petition in the Supreme Court, asking for the removal of the Bible from the State schools, on the ground that its presence is an infringement of the Constitution. There is no God in the American constitution, and there should be manifested in the laws absolute neutrality in all questions relating to religion. In this respect America is ahead of us, although in one respect America resembles this country—where the interests of Christianity are concerned, considerations of justice and equality are apt to go by the board. Mr. Lewis has been pursuing this fight for a long time, and if he does not meet with success he is at least educating public opinion. There are some failures that are more creditable than many successes.

The American Rationalist Association has just issued a four-page leaflet entitled *The Gospel of Freethought*, at the price of one dollar per hundred. The leaflet is made up of telling extracts from the writings of the late G. W. Foote, with a brief biographical sketch. Mr. Franklin Steiner is responsible for it, and he says, "Of all the men who have fought in the army for the liberation of man from religious superstition, ignorance and tyranny, no name shines with greater lustre than that of George William Foote." No one who really knows what work Foote did will question that. Unfortunately many do not know to whom they owe the benefits they enjoy; and many who are better informed find the name of G. W. Foote so hated by the religious world that they lack the moral courage publicly to do him justice. We like the plan of this leaflet, and may pay it the compliment of imitation.

We are asked to announce that the name and address of the new Secretary of the Newcastle Branch is Miss N. Black, of 33 South Bank Road, Kingsway, Manchester.

The Supreme Problem in Religion.

(Concluded from page 325.)

I HAVE observed cases, where the development of even a mild sexual excitement induced artistic valuations, where none existed before. In another case there was an enhancement of the prior artistic valuation. The song of birds is often an effort to charm the mate. Even in humans, music is usually much more important during sexual maturing than afterwards. But when, in the above concepts, we substitute "religious experience" for artistic experience, then probably an increasing number of persons will protest with increased vigour against ascribing it to sex. So then we may properly enough insist on an inquiry as to whether or not a sexual ecstasy can be esteemed so important that it will carry a transcendental label. Let us assume a case of sexual hyper-æsthesia, in which the physical aspects of sex are esteemed very shameful. Naturally then the attention will be shifted from the physical manifestations to the feeling states, so as to inhibit the definitely sexual sensations, or causes from entering consciousness. If the ecstasy is abnormally intense that alone may induce the exclusion from consciousness of everything except the ecstatic feeling. With some feeling of pious guilt, and the appropriate ecclesiastical suggestion, it certainly is not unthinkable that the victim of such morbidity would accept or even invent, a transcendental dialectic, to explain the "unusual" experience. This is especially acceptable, if it comes in such a way as to ensure feelings and theories of self-exaltation, or the acclaim of others. Thus we may also account for the predominance of erotic dialects in the effort to describe "religious" experience and its transcendental valuations. But it is reasonably claimed that religious ideas find expression in such verbal symbols as are most convenient for use. Figurative descriptions are drawn from all human experiences to aid religionists in the portrayal of their religious valuations and feelings. The religionist uses not only the phrasing of the love-lorn, but draws with equal freedom upon all bodily functions for expressive figures of speech. Then, why not interpret religion as perverted respiratory, or nutritive functions, as well as perverted sexuality?

Here the religionist almost leads us into folly by a too superficial view. Whether or not religion is the *perversion or misinterpretation of any bodily function is not to be determined by merely the character of the figurative language used to describe it, but by the causes for such selection and use.* One may be impelled, solely by an objective study of social conditions, to specialize on sex. Then, because of such sex-centred attention, one may use frequent sexual allegory, in describing non-sexual experiences of life. This might include descriptions of his religious emotions, valuations and "concepts." It would be unwise to conclude from that fact alone, that such a person had converted sexuality into religion. If, however, the use of sexual figures of speech is due to a sexual obsession, probably founded upon sexual hyper-æstheticism, and therefore arising mainly from conditions within, then the situation is different. Now, something described as religious ecstasy or divine love, may be in fact but sex-feeling, and the sensual phrasing that is used will not be merely remote figurative description of a non-sensual fact. On the contrary, it is a description, as literal as possible, of a sexual-ecstasy, which is over-valued and so mis-called religious, transcendental,

etc. This misinterpretation may be facilitated, if some sexual phobia precludes it from being recognized as sexual and a great feeling of guilty inferiority requires a delusional neutralizing by such supernatural valuation and interpretations. Indeed, even by religious persons "false mysticism" is often admitted to be just that. If we find this to be the case in practically all heretical religious enthusiasts, are we not warranted in believing that in a less conspicuous degree, it is true of many or all persons, with whom religion is a matter of personal experience? In the last analysis, the difference between "false mysticism" and "true mysticism" is only a difference in the degree of the morbid intensity and a difference of label and theologic or metaphysical explanation.

We cannot allow our claim for the social utility of the erotogenetic interpretation of religion to be wiped out of existence by a mere wave of the hand and a haughty disdain. This is sometimes attempted even by those who claim to have outgrown theologies or even religion, but unaware, are carrying along all the old extravagant moral values that were founded on the old rejected transcendentalism. If religion is but perverted or misinterpreted sexuality, its ideals of practical life need revaluation, to see how far they are warped by these perverted or morbidly intense emotions. If the tentative claim of an identity of morbid sexuality and religious experience shall be even partly true, then all emotional religions and all revival excitement, may be appraised as damaging to mental hygiene and promoting irresponsible sexual irregularities. If, indeed, emotional religion is *ever* indistinguishable from sexual aberrations, it is time that even religious scholars made honest effort to discover the psychologic relation of that fact to the so-called normal religiosity. They should surely be interested in finding empirical tests for distinguishing between "true" and "false" transcendental experiences. Perhaps we may also surmise that respectable support for the erotogenetic interpretation of religion, will tend to discredit all ostentatious parade of sexual "purity," as also being symptomatic of psycho-sexual disorder. This, in turn, may suggest a need for some revaluation of religious codes of sex-ethics. So by minimizing religiosity we may be promoting mental hygiene. It would certainly be an important discovery, if conventional social purity should prove to be mere eroto-phobia, a psycho-neurotic counterpart from eroto-mania.

Let us not be too certain, in advance of fuller investigation, that Europe, during the periods of religious supremacy, has not been largely ruled by sexual psychopaths; that psycho-neurotic overvaluations of sex, are not now dominating us especially in fields not commonly recognized as sexual. Here I am thinking of the sado-masochist conflict as a universal promoter of war and of the most offensive economic exploitation. Also the inferiority-superiority conflict as the promoter of money-mania, racial antagonisms and the persecutions of religious and social heretics. Such suggestions could be extended indefinitely. No other phase of research into religious experience holds out the promise of as great social consequences as does its psycho-genetic investigation.

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

The great enemy of knowledge is not error but inertness. All that we want is discussion; and then we are sure to do well, no matter what our blunders may be. One error conflicts with another, each destroys its opponent and truth is evolved.—Buckle.

Why We Should be Active.

AN acquaintance of mine, who has reached the agnostic position in theological and cognate matters, holds that it is not worth while to take any part in the propagation of rationalistic views. After collating my thoughts on the question I put before him the following reasons why all who have become emancipated from the bondage of ancient, unreal ideas should help toward the emancipation of their fellows:—

(1) *The diversion of thought and effort from intellectual, ethical and social affairs.* Here we recall Blaise Pascal, that superlative genius, who after doing such notable mathematical work and some invention, wasted his powers on "religious philosophy." We think of two eminent Englishmen of our own day, one of them at least of superlative ability, of great scientific knowledge and achievement—who, many years ago, gave one of the finest educational addresses ever delivered—who is now obsessed with a modern form of psychism, and is largely occupied in recording his phantasmagorical impressions of the "other side." The other man, educated medically and a famous novelist, wastes his ability and energy in propagating stark spiritism, in writing amazing nonsense about fairies and the like. We give a passing, regretful thought to the loss which education, medical and hygienic science, and perhaps other departments of profitable thought and practice, have probably suffered through the fall into the slough of unreality of these and other men—and at least one famous woman, formerly a Rationalist and social worker—and to the probability that by their influence they have dragged down many others with them.

(2) *The hindrance to intellectual progress.* Here we note the prohibition of books by the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches. And the fact that the Soviet Government has similarly interdicted religious and philosophical books, which are not definitely atheistic in doctrine, may be regarded as a sort of imitation of the policy adopted during the long, repressive, pre-revolutionary régime in Russia.

As an indirect hindrance we have those curious books which decry science, proclaim its "bankruptcy," and the like; and a Continental professor has naively told us in the *Hibbert Journal* that "science is being replaced by culture as the aim of university activity." To this we may add the present attempt to falsify the history contained in school books in the interest of the Roman Catholic Church.

(3) *The hindrance to education.* As is well known the existence of sectarian schools forms a serious obstacle to a unified national system of primary education. They are now standing in the way of the reorganization of the schools; and though Anglican schools are in various districts falling in with the plans of Local Education Authorities, we learn that in some instances the price paid is the adoption of an "agreed syllabus" of religious instruction for use in the Council as well as in the voluntary schools (the Romanists will doubtless refuse to have anything to do with this arrangement). The agreement will presumably lead to further tests of teachers' beliefs, under the guise of enquiry as to whether candidates for appointment are willing to give the instruction. Against this the teachers are making strong protests.

The end of the religious trouble in education remains to be seen. It is not improbable that we may yet have to fight a proposal for the indefinite multiplication of sectarian schools at the public expense, a proposal which was defeated in Germany (the Keudell Bill), but was successful in Holland. The effect of this may be gathered from the following greeting sent by a representative of the Dutch Teachers' Asso-

ciation to his fellow teachers in Germany:—

I hope that for ever and ever you have buried the Keudell Bill. Colleagues! In Holland we have such a law, and its results furnish a most shocking example. Where once in towns and village there existed a large, well organized and efficient school, we now find frequently a small Roman Catholic, a small Protestant and often a small Reformed school, and unhappily the best, the neutral State school, has disappeared. . . . May God protect Germany and every land from a Keudell Law!

The ground is prepared for such attacks on our own and similar systems, not only by the persistent claims of professional religionists, but also by the astounding deliverances of a few educationists. Recently at an important educational conference an English professor of education, in an address on the philosophy of education, heard by several hundreds of teachers, divided education into humanist and spiritual sections, and devoted the greater part of his remarks to the latter; and a Continental professor (presumably of education), at another English conference, delivered himself, according to a report in the *Times*, of the following pronouncement: "The training of the child in religion was becoming to all concerned in education, part and parcel, nay the whole, of education"; and it became clear from other passages that the plea made was one for sectarian teaching in all schools.

(4) *The hindrance to international understanding, good will and co-operation.* The mere existence of exclusive religions and their propagation in non-Christian countries must form in themselves serious obstacles to this important objective. Recent illustrations of this point range from the four-square gospel crusade to Palestine of Mrs. Aimée Macpherson and her disciples—in the course of which, by reason of their peculiar dress or other antics, they were greeted by the Arabs with cries of "crazy Americans"—to the proceedings of the International Moral Congress. Here, in the presence of learned non-Christians such as Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Rationalists such as F. J. Gould, European speakers have harped on the aim of education as "stated by Christ," on the "Golden Rule of Christianity" (the latter followed by a protest from another speaker, that the Golden Rule appeared in the Jewish Old Testament), and so on. Probably worse than this, in irritative effect, was the inclusion in the report of the Congress of a presented Italian document on the *General Principle Governing Elementary Instruction*, the principle being that "the basis and crown of the teaching shall be the Christian Doctrine in the form received by Catholic tradition."

(5) *The financial waste involved.* This cannot be estimated, but must be enormous. In this country, though much of the income of the Roman Catholic Church comes from poor people, it includes the relinquished salaries of nun teachers employed in many of our State-aided and Local Authority supported schools, and also part of the salaries of an unknown number of lay teachers, the reported proportion being, in the case of a large secondary school in the Midlands, one half. This practically amounts to the endowment of Roman Catholicism from public funds. It enables this body of reactionary religionists to build new and unnecessary schools, which are then carried on at the expense of the public authorities, and thus to spread their ancient, mischievous superstition at the general cost of the community.

J. REEVES.

If a cause be good, the most violent attack of its enemies will not injure it so much as an injudicious defence of it by its friends.—*Colton*.

"James Douglas Battles with an Atheist."

THE title is not mine. Perhaps it is Jimmy's own; or a headline writer has thought, "That's the Dope to give 'em"; or a sycophantic office boy has seized his opportunity to deserve well of those with promotion in their power. But, all the same, isn't it a gem of a title?

It got me reading, and doubtless got a million and a half more *Daily Express* readers doing likewise. (No, I don't buy the *Express*. Providence sent this copy into my hands.) I began reading because I am always interested in Battles with Atheists. What I wanted was news from the arena. Did I get it? You shall judge.

Before the battle commences, Battling Douglas enters the ring and tells us who is to be his opponent. "Ladies and gentlemen, to-night is the fight of my career. I am not matched against one of those crude and simple, swashbuckling Atheists of old. To me a Bradlaugh or two would be easy money; but my opponent to-night is far worthier of my metal, for he is none less than the new Welsh Wizard of Atheism, Mr. Llewelyn Powys, author of *The Pathetic Fallacy*. (Loud cheers from assembled Douglasites.)

I settle down for the contest, but Jubilant James, the Fleet Street Fire-eater, has a few more remarks to make before he dons the gloves. "Mr. Llewelyn Powys is, let me tell you, far more dangerous than the less crafty Bradlaugh. On what authority do I assert this? My own, of course!" (More loud cheers, to the complete discomfiture of interrupter.) "Bradlaugh's cudgel was not nearly so deadly as artful Powys's poison-gas, which explains Christ charmingly and reverently." (Doughty Doug's metaphor seems a bit mixed. An example of his spiritual experiences proving their validity, no doubt!)

"How does he know that the spiritual teaching of Christ has no validity in the outer spaces? He has not been there." (Pause whilst audience meditates on colliding comets turning the other cheek, Martians drawing up a new set of Blasphemy Laws, and infidel nebulae being consigned to Hell.) "Christianity moribund? No, it renews itself perpetually in age after age. So there, Mr. Powys; answer me that!"

Our fearless fighter on behalf of Christianity must at this moment begin to realize that his readers are growing restive. What about that battle? So now comes a sudden change of tone. Douglas explains with great elaboration that he and Powys are really on the same side. Douglas's Christianity "has marched over the ancient pots and potsherds which Powys excavates. It is not defending the crumbling walls which he scales. It is not entrenched in the mouldering trenches which he bombards with his obsolete artillery." The only difference between them is that Powys is "dismally unconscious of the fact that we have evacuated the untenable old forts which he so eagerly besieges." Moreover, to the Christian, it is "reassuring to observe the wary caution with which he hovers round the spiritual teaching of Christ, vainly searching for a point in the invulnerable armour."

Disappointed again! There isn't going to be a fight after all. It's too bad of you Jimmy, after that headline, and your opening compliments to the redoubtable nature of your chosen opponent. Never mind, though. You would have won if you had only got as far as putting on the gloves. For Science "cannot invalidate the truth revealed by Christ," and defended so nobly by Douglas. But what a "battle"! P.V.M.

Life's Fiercest Enemy.

"The evil that Religion does lives after it,
It is not interred with dead men's bones."

If one could estimate the immense amount of mischief and suffering Religion has caused during recorded history, the total would appal the mind.

The millions of victims who have been destroyed, burnt, maimed, tortured and driven insane are greater than the whole present population of the world. Yet this religious mania which demanded victims and destroyed unbelievers was not so terrible in its consequences as the insidious mental poison, which religion administers to countless millions who come under its baneful tyranny.

At the present moment it may be said that millions of people are in various stages of religious poisoning, from the mildly sedative to the viciously intoxicating. They are an immense danger to the world. The poison is usually inoculated during childhood, when the system is most susceptible to this disease; it is carefully cultured in a non-resistant medium. Once the mind is impregnated with this odious virus, its action is so insidious and fatal, that the victims are made immune to all rational thinking thereafter.

The evil is immensely more dangerous and enduring in its consequences to mankind than any physical violence can be. Physical violence ends with the death of the victim, but a deranged mind with its out-pourings of poisoned and perverted ideas, spreads uninterrupted until, as at the present-day, whole peoples are infected with its bacilli. This insensibly disturbs the rationality of governments, that whole systems of laws and morals becomes established on the most immoral, illogical and archaic basis. We have the most insane spectacle of scientists, medicos and reformers, endeavouring to propagate and put into practice the most enlightened and hygienic methods and their being opposed by taboos, superstitions, savage rites and customs and all the obsolete traditional methods of the stone age. We have clerics, church-lawyers, huge semi-financial-religious corporations and a church-state maintaining an iron barrier against all scientific codes of law. We have an army of politicians for the most part afraid to offend the religious caucus that octopus-like sucks all initiative and independence from political parties.

We have grown up in public life, a population with dual minds, who in business and practical affairs pursue principles in violent contrast to all the religious precepts which they finance to be taught their dependents.

When these dependents grow up, so low is public morality, that they in their turn, teach to their successors the same double code of conduct, perpetuating the hypocrisy of religion.

They honour clerics for advocating systems contrary to their own practice and opposed to the whole routine of business sanity, from which they draw the means of support for these same clerics.

Religion entails an enormous drain on the productivity of the country. Just consider the large number of non-producers, religious drones, living luxuriously, palaced, clothed and fed at the community's expense and consider also the large number of men withdrawn from industry to administer to their fetish needs.

Consider the cost of the cathedrals, monasteries, churches, asylums, palaces, in human toil, the loss of valuable time wasted by thousands, fifty-two Sundays every year, listening to the banal utterances of the priests.

Consider the evil influence in thousands of homes, particularly Sundays, when the whole time is given up to ogling a tribal god, and when every interesting and recuperative entertainment is taboo.

Religion holds back the masses of mankind in a sheep-like docility most harmful to all progress.

No religious nation could maintain its place with a Freethought nation, other things being equal; only nations of slaves build pyramids, Roman temples, or English churches, the seeds of decay are inherent in them. The cost of religious services would solve many problems of poverty. Every cathedral represents human labour equal to 2,000 homes, yet while homes for men

are the crying need, religion provides more houses for God. Their God cannot provide for himself while man can, so they close the churches against the weary, and provide resting places only for the dead. The greater the religious activity the greater the exploitation and decay of the people.

But with the coming destruction of the belief in gods, will arise a nobler conception of life and its implications. Then will mankind soar forward to better life.

With a recognition that man can make progress only by his own efforts and only in a life on earth, men will seek to make this life endurable and pleasant. Man's only immortality is in his posterity, how much care should be taken to make that immortality worth while. That the immortals who follow us, whom we create, may thank us, in the æons yet to come; may not condemn us, for a continuation of the dark ages or for perpetuating it to their period of time.

All religions are pessimistic, regarding this life as a degrading one, men as steeped in sin, and happiness only to be found beyond the grave. Its systems of rewards and punishments are infantile; how much better to be good and moral on principle, self-reliant, rational, with happiness here below as the end in view.

Evolution is optimistic, because we ascend to higher and higher forms, and it is reasonable to assume that if science directed mankind, we should develop into noble, cultured, healthy beings.

We have emerged from the mud, from unicelled matter to complex thinking animals, who can predict to what lofty height we may yet ascend?

Our past ascent has been spasmodic, fortuitous and yet sublime and marvellous; what may not be achieved by a rationally directed race? Science may be maligned, its purpose misrepresented, its truths distorted, its old enemy the church will misdirect its findings, but Religion will steadily decline in power.

The thinking man is the natural enemy of religion, he despises its puerilities, detests its crudities and credulities, exposes its evil consequences and vileness.

No wonder Plutarch saw religion as a depressing and odious thing, the cause of more misery than joy; that Voltaire recognized it as an insatiable monster; Nietzsche as "the one great blemish on mankind"; and the present Russian Government as the source "of all the ills that they are heir to," which contaminates the mind and enervates worse than opium.

MAX COORLEGH.

Fables Founded on Fact.

THE LEAGUE AND THE LOONY.

ONCE upon a time, about a thousand years hence, there were six Nations.

And one of them said to the other five: "We have had the hell of a battle between us, have we not? We don't know what it was all about, do we? And even if we did know, we would lie like smoke about it, so as to put the blame on the others, would we not?"

The other five nations muttered in their beards some words to this effect: "Speak for yourself. We, at any rate, are honest and open in our dealings."

"Quite so," said the Nation who spoke first, "so am I. I—that is to say, we—never tell a lie. But the fact remains that this battle has been poor cheese for the lot of us. We are all broke, are we not?"

There was a rumble of denial in five languages.

"We may be bankrupt," they replied, "but the bright Escutcheons of our Honour remain untarnished."

"Quate, quate," said the first Nation, "we have all battled in the most Honourable and Chivalrous spirit. We have succeeded in slaughtering a goodly few of our erstwhile foes. "But—" he paused a moment, "to be quite honest, what on earth have we gained?"

The answer came like an anthem from a Church choir.

"We have shown the world an example of unexampled Heroism. Patriotism and Self-denial have swayed our hearts as never before. We have fought for the Rights of small nations and large nations, not to mention those of medium size. We have defended the

interests of individuals and non-combatants. We have maintained our right to a place in the sun. We have upheld the cause of Justice and Civilization, and we have maintained at the cost of millions of immortal lives, the irrevocable Sanctity of international treaties."

There was a loud chorus of: "Hear, hear," and "That's the stuff!"

"Quate, quate," said the first speaker again, "we did all that sort of thing right enough, but—where are we now as a result of it?"

For a moment there was no answer to this somewhat awkward and persistent questioner. Then one nation got up and, stroking its beard, said in a resonant voice: "We are where we were!"

There was a loud chorus of approval.

"Indeed," said the bearded one, gaining force as he stroked his beard, "indeed, if I may say so without undue exaggeration and with becoming modesty, we are further than where we were—miles further—kilometres further!"

Again there was a sound of delighted approbation, and some of the nations were heard to cry in Esperanto: "Hallelujah!" or words to that effect.

"We are," continued the whiskered one, "on the broad and flowery path to International Peace. In fact, I'm not so sure we haven't already arrived!"

"Well," said the original speaker, "I hope you're right. And if you are, what about putting an end to battles in the future?"

"That is what we are here for," was the prompt reply.

"Good! Then we can get to business."

"That's what we're here for," was the prompt reply again.

"Very well," said the first speaker, "since it is a matter of business, and we are all broke, I suggest that we begin by cancelling all our debts to each other. I further suggest that we join hands and share any profits we make in the future for the benefit of all of us."

A dead silence followed this suggestion.

"I further suggest that we co-operate in the matter of armaments, and that we build up an international police which shall be composed of national forces sufficient to maintain order in our respective countries, and collectively to withstand attacks from uncivilized races beyond our borders."

Another deadly silence ensued.

"Well? What about it?" asked the first speaker.

The bearded one rose again and spoke. There were tears in his eyes.

"My poor friend," he said, strangling his sobs, "we have listened to you with all the patience and forbearance which could be expected of civilized, progressive and peace-loving nations. We were afraid from the start that there was something in your views which differed from those of the rest of us. Now we are sure of it, and we realize what is behind it all. But out of the infinite compassion of our long suffering natures, and because of our ever-present and everlasting love of humanity—and especially of you—we could not bring ourselves to utter our suspicions in public. Circumstances, however, compel us now reluctantly to act upon the disinterested motives which underlie the very mainsprings of our—er—er—er—" the speaker turned to the rest of the assembled company for assistance, and after a whispered consultation with his colleagues, he resumed. "Er—anyway we all think you are mad and ought to be locked up."

So the five nations tried to lock the sixth one up. But the result of their efforts belongs to another and sadder story.

ImMoral.—My country, right or wrong—but, particularly, wrong.

C. S. FRASER.

Of what use is freedom of thought, if it will not produce freedom of action, which is the sole end, how remote soever in appearance, of all objections against Christianity? And therefore the Freethinkers consider it an edifice where all the parts have such a mutual dependence on each other, that if you pull out one single nail, the whole fabric must fall to the ground.—*Swift*.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE PLACE OF INGERSOLL IN FREETHOUGHT.

SIR,—I was greatly interested in the articles of Mr. H. Cutner regarding the position of Robert G. Ingersoll in Freethought history, especially in view of Prof. H. J. Laski's recent criticisms. When the Prof. first made his statement in the *Literary Guide*, that he could name twenty Freethinkers to whom Ingersoll was inferior, I challenged him to name ten. He responded by naming Paine, Huxley, Haeckel, Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Clifford, Laing, F. W. Newman, Winwood Reade and Leslie Stephen. Now in my over four decades as a Freethinker, a large part of those years an active Freethought worker, I happen to be familiar with them all, and no one admires them all in their respective spheres more than I do. Yet I do not hesitate to say that but two of them, Paine and Bradlaugh are even of Ingersoll's class. Does Prof. Laski realize that in Ingersoll's day and generation in America there were many able and brilliant men, yet of them all, only Ingersoll and Mark Twain are to-day read? You must search the corridors of second-hand books stores if you want to read the others. Does he realize that had it not been for his "Infidelity," Ingersoll could have had any gift in the bestowal of the American people? I have heard him lecture for two hours, yet the audience would exclaim, "Go on!" I have seen rigid church members in his audience applauding and laughing at his keen wit and flights of oratory. He had a manner of saying things and of appealing to an audience that could never be duplicated. He certainly got "under the hide" of bigotry as did no other man. At least two Presidents of the United States owe their election to Ingersoll's eloquence in canvassing for them. These were Garfield and McKinley.

I not only knew Ingersoll on the platform and in the press, but I was honoured by his personal acquaintance, having travelled with him on the train, sat at the same table and enjoyed cigars with him afterwards. I certainly regarded him as the greatest man I ever met. I am gratified to see that Prof. Laski stands almost alone among English Rationalists in the position he takes.

FRANKLIN STEINER.

STAGHUNTING.

SIR,—In reply to Major J. C. Darling, it may be said that most of the 80,000 persons who signed the anti-stag-hunting petition, know that hunting involves cruelty to animals. As regards West Country people who have passed resolutions condemning the attempt to prohibit stag-hunting, they are comprised of: (1) persons whose employment or financial prosperity is dependent wholly or partly on hunting, and (2) persons who enjoy hunting although cruelty is inseparable from it, and who are not intelligent enough to discover for themselves a pastime which does not involve pain and terror to animals. Their opinion is biased and therefore suspect. Finally, the means of preventing deer from becoming too prolific are not confined to the alternatives suggested by Major Darling—hunting or shooting. Should killing be essential, it can be done by the "humane killer," an instrument used on cattle by butchers' slaughtermen. Apart from this, every cattle-breeder knows of simple means by which the size of herds of animals can be limited if necessary.

D.P.S.

Society News.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD addressed six meetings at Highbury Corner. All of them were well-attended by audiences, who listened with the greatest interest and appreciation to the various lectures. In general there was no opposition except from a couple of opponents, who helped to provide opportunities for displaying the weakness of the religious case. In addition to a fair amount of literature being sold, a large quantity of *Freethinkers* were distributed. We have to thank Mr. Rush for his enthusiastic help at every meeting.—G.W.

Obituary

MR. FREDERICK WILFORD.

ON Friday, May 2, the remains of Frederick Wilford were interred at Lodge Hill Cemetery, Birmingham. The deceased passed away very suddenly in his seventy-third year. Although not a member of the National Secular 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.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): Thursday, June 5, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Social and Dance, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture. The *Freethinker* can be obtained from Mr. 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, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Mr. James Hart and Mr. A. D. McLaren; 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 and Mr. A. D. McLaren. The *Freethinker* can be obtained after our meetings outside the Park, in Bayswater Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, 11.30, Wren Road, Camberwell Green, Mr. G. Whitehead; 7.0, Stonehouse Street, Clapham Road, Mr. L. Ebury; from Monday to Thursday, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, and on Friday, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate.

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON.—Sunday, June 1, at 7.0—Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH.—Friday, May 30, at 8.0—Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble from Barrhead. Meet at Barrhead Centre at 12 noon.

HAPTON.—Sunday, June 1, at 3.0—Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of High Park Street and Park Road): Thursday, June 5, at 8.0, Messrs. D. Robinson and J. V. Shortt. Chairman, Mr. A. Jackson. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, at 7.0, at Town Moor, Mr. J. T. Brighton will lecture. Weather permitting.

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH of the National Secular Society are meeting on Sunday, June 1, at 3.0, at Blackroot Pool, for a ramble through Sutton Park.

WHEATLEY LANE.—Monday, June 2, at 7.30—Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name.....

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