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Views and Opinions

War and the Peace

ONE would have to be very bold to greet the New Year in a spirit of unqualified optimism. We have had many assurances that we may face the future with confidence, but there seems to be little more behind these than a good prospect of winning the war. Unless the war develops into a real world war, already half the world's inhabitants are actually engaged in armed conflict, the defeat of Germany is certain. But as in 1914 the essential problem before us is not that of killing Germans, but how to live with them. And unless we bear that in mind we may, as in 1918, win the war and lose the peace. It is useless saying that our war aim is to defeat Hitlerism; that is obvious. Every nation at war aims at defeating the nation with which it is in conflict. Vague talk, such as the Pope gave the world, and which we have had current here, that we wish to give every people the right to a free and independent life, will not do. Russians, Germans, British and French, all nations in short would agree upon that formula, and in the name of it would find a new reason for more war. We are at war because we are not in agreement as to what these words mean. The future depends upon an agreement as to their precise significance.

But if we are to bring about a condition of the public mind fitted for a *real* peace—instead of another 1918 armistice—it would be little short of madness to leave the determination of the conditions in the hands of politicians and professional diplomats. These men have spent the whole of their lives in counting the real greatness of nations in terms of hoarded wealth, the size of the army it can put in the field, or the extent of its "possessions." With rare exceptions these men have the minds of hucksters, they can think only in terms of immediate profit, and are incapable of taking long views. A few years ago they could have bought the peace of the world (as peace was then understood) on easy terms. But they would not, or could not, see the significance of Manchuria, of Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain, China, Austria and

Albania. They said these places were far off, or we must mind our own business, interference might mean war on a large scale. So these survivals of the eighteenth century, to avoid war, paved the way for a much greater war. They could not realize that Manchuria is not far away, that Abyssinia is at our doors. So we are at war. These men showed themselves to be not merely hucksters, but short-sighted hucksters. They were living in the past, and were incapable of anticipating the future.

* * *

A Change of View

The end of this war should provide the occasion for laying the foundations of a peace that would be more than a truce, and we cannot trust to this being done in the flush of victory. We are fighting, for what? For victory? That is what every contestant in any struggle is fighting for, and we must not be fobbed-off with phrases. Is it too subtle or too profound for our leaders to realize that Germany has grown out of the European situation, as the European situation has grown out of the world situation? For that is the fact that is before us. The situation must be radically altered if peace is to become stable and tolerable. There must be an end to such foolish talk as that of Mr. Duff Cooper, that German human nature contains something different from the human nature of other people. That product of our "upper class" education ought to be excluded from public life. What the German of to-day is, the extent to which he differs from the human nature of the Englishman, the Russian, or the Frenchman is the difference between the cultural and social history of these peoples. If the German loves to obey an order (all Germans obviously have no such taste), if the Englishman is over ready to humble himself before a title (not all, of course), the difference is explainable in terms of their social histories. Social characteristics are no more miraculously produced than is the colour of the hair or the shape of the head. Our own history, with its much mixed population, is enough to prove this.

Let us then distinguish between peace terms and peace aims. The first will partly be determined by two things, the nature of the military victory and the education of the British and French people during the war. But the second, war aims, should determine at least the *direction* of the peace terms. If there is any significance in the recent declaration of the President of France that we are not fighting against the Germans but against war, much of our war-aim should be quite clear. One of the first aims must be *national* disarmament. I italicize "national" because international armament is another question altogether. It may be said that we have had Disarmament Conferences before, and they have ended in nothing. I deny that we have ever yet had a Disarmament Conference. We have had Conferences for partial disarmament, and that is all. And at these Conferences

the most prominent feature was the dishonesty and would-be trickery which marked the proceedings. Each of the "powers" represented was willing to limit the arms it valued least if the others would dispense with those they valued most. And even with such limitations as were agreed upon, not one of the great powers would submit to a supervision that would prevent the agreement being infringed. To repeat a phrase already used, the participants in the Conference were mere hucksters, each trying to drive a bargain that would rob the other fellow of an advantage.

What else but failure could emerge from such a gathering? None of its members was willing to place its "honour" in charge of an elected court composed of judges of proved integrity and of mixed nationality. For the certain thing is that while nations continue to claim the right of deciding when their national "honour" is impugned, war will continue with a growing threat to the security of civilization. Where complainant and judge are embodied in the same person only one verdict will result. The close of the era of war will be in sight only when each nation declines to be guided by the ethics of the bully and the duellist, when we have replaced the uniform of the soldier by the robe of the judge, and established law in the place of war. So far we have generally abolished the duel as a method of vindicating individual honour. We must bring war to the same ethical level.

* * *

A New League

But if this is to be done the creation of a real League of Peoples is essential. The failure of the existing League need not discourage us. Manned by the old gangs of the different conquering powers that League was never intended to succeed. It was assassinated as surely as any individual ever died from the hired knife of a medieval bravo. The manning of a new League must avoid that criminal blunder. Politicians might advise, diplomatists might be listened to, with a due cognisance of their very marked limitations and a fondness for plots that deceive only the general public—who most need enlightenment. There must be equality between its members and no question of small nations humbly suing to large ones. The sole consideration would be one of justice in terms of a constitution drawn up and agreed upon; and any question upon which the League could not arrive at a decision should be submitted to a properly constituted international court made up of men who were above the battle of party politics and national ambitions. There would be no exclusion from such a League, no repetition of the stupid blunder which began with excluding Germany at the wish of the "old gang." The more backward the nation, the more doubtful its aims; the more necessary for it to be inside the League. A criminal is never so harmless as when he is within sight of a policeman. At any rate, we cannot hope to exterminate 60 millions of people in one area, or keep them under subjection. We must live with Germans, and they must also live with us. The foolish talk of such men as Duff Cooper would be absent from the League.

The internal laws of members of the League would remain their own individual business, as would their cultural development. It would help for sanity in the first and encourage development in the second. I think it would also contribute to a settlement of the approach of all nations to the natural wealth of the world. Strategic points would decline in importance as the world grew accustomed to do what no decent and honourable member is ashamed to do—submit all claims to a tribunal which would exist only to administer justice.

I said a while ago that there should be *national* disarmament. This would not prevent an international force that would be able to enforce order between groups whenever necessary; but I see no reason why decisions alone should not become as powerful as decisions awarded to individuals. There cannot be an insuperable obstacle to nations becoming as civilized as individuals. At present the one lags a long way behind the other.

* * *

Some Cases

Our politicians and the press were, the other day, proclaiming with joy that France and Britain were pooling their resources for the duration of the war. This does not mean that the French and the British people will merge their social habits, or cultivate the same tastes in art, literature and music. It means only that for a given purpose there is a unity of action, a resolve to act together for a specified end. And it is not improbable that in certain eventualities we may add to this combination the United States. But it is to be noted that this combination is for the purpose of war. Collective action, which our Prime Minister and his predecessor so often treated with contempt, is, in a time of national danger, regarded as a guarantee of restoring peace. Why cannot we take this as a symbol of what might be accomplished on a wider scale, and for a better purpose than even winning this war? With the British and the French Empires and the United States, a population of some five hundred million peoples, and with immense resources, there would be a splendid start for a world League of Nations and a court of justice that would rapidly bring to itself the rest of the world.

It must be remembered that the United States fought its most trying war for the sole purpose of preventing the various American States from being disrupted. It believed that these States might settle all its disputes by an appeal to a supreme court; and in its relation with Canada it could peaceably settle without thought of war any differences that arose between them. No one would deny the truth of the statement that if each State in the Union had had its own armed force, and if each State had got no higher ethically than maintaining its right to decide when its interests and its honour were affected, war would have been as endemic in North America as it is in Europe. Is it really true that in this respect we Europeans cannot achieve the development of the United States? America has shown Europe still more. It has shown us how people of different nationalities may fuse into a common life with common ideals. And nearer still to us we have in Switzerland an example that French, German and Italian may live together generation after generation without appealing to brute force to settle any differences that may arise.

I repeat, the issue is law or war; the rule of the duellist or of a sane standard of honour. In our own national life, in the national life of France, and in the national life of the Germany of yesterday (and we hope in the Germany of to-morrow) there exists and has existed the conviction that law is greater than the individual, and that the safety of each person in every civilized State lies in each one rising above the duellist's code. The choice before Europe to-day is collective action or chaos, either we co-operate in keeping alive the certainty of war, or we co-operate to make war impossible. Unless that is the issue faced by those in whose hands rest the making of peace, all the bloodshed and misery of this war will have been in vain, and any monument that is raised when this war comes to an end will be as great a mockery of the dead as the monolith that stands in Whitehall.

CHAPMAN COHEN

The Theory of Nordic Supremacy

THIS series of articles on eugenics was begun with the reminder that the theory of racial superiority was a logical extension, and it is to that subject we return in conclusion.

The term racial type is sometimes used to describe groups of people having definite characters in common. We should be on our guard against assuming that these qualities have been divinely infused into them, or that distinct "races" were each the subject of a special creation. Mankind is fundamentally a single evolved species and no "races" exist so diverse as to produce sterile progeny. And according to Prof. Osborn we are in no way superior, physically or intellectually, from men of 25,000 years ago. Our social and institutional life is more complex because of the accumulated knowledge passed from one generation to another.

It is environmental conditioning that leads to the natural selection of those qualities fitted to survive. It is permissible to say that the environment creates the qualities in the sense that a rise of the sea so many feet would make an island where the Pennine Chain is. The environment no more creates the genetic materials than the sculptor creates his stone. Out of given genetic data natural selection picks out those having survival value. Of two female deer the one which habitually abandons her young on the approach of a beast is not likely to perpetuate her type against one which defends her young with some measure of success. The carnivorous intruder provides an environment in which the qualities of courage or mother-love have survival value. The Swiss decided to establish a chamois reserve since they were in danger of becoming exterminated. Under protection they deteriorated, their former agility being restored on the introduction of a few wolves.

The beast does not get into the internal structure of its prey and put in certain genes; it functions as the condition under which the genes associated with certain qualities of behaviour are perpetuated. And so it is with "races." They are formed in the same way as different species of animals and plants. "No satisfactory causes of evolution other than the action of natural selection on fortuitous variations has ever been put forward." (Haldane, *Fact and Faith*).

As in the case of animal species blurred boundaries embarrass an exact definition of race. Haldane (*Heredity and Politics*) attempts a minimum definition and Hogben remarks that future research may detect and measure racial intelligence differences based on genetic constitution. In spite of gene dissociation it is possible to trace back outstanding genetic types. If environment were the only factor operative the Maoris, for instance, could be little different from the aboriginals.

The British Isles contains a mixture of three types, according to Prof. F. W. MacBride, who stoutly defends the theory of race supremacy. J. B. S. Haldane, while agreeing with the validity of these stock types, accuses MacBride of Fascist sympathies and also adduces in support some newspaper correspondence by MacBride which he (Haldane) regards as German-inspired (this was before the present war started.)

People of Britain are recruited from the Nordic (North Sea), Alpine (Turkestan steppes) and Mediterranean types (see MacBride's *Introduction to the Study of Heredity*). They have, of course, become very thoroughly mixed, the Nordic occurring pure only in north-east Scotland, and the Mediterranean in South Wales and the South-West of Ireland. "Each of these races," he says, "has its inborn psychic

qualities." The Nordic fishers and mariners learnt in their struggles with the bleak climate courage, adventure and justice. He notes the double meaning of the word "fair." The Norsemen were, of course, very fair ("angels, not Angles"), tall and long-headed. The Normans and Danes, MacBride tells us, "built up the British Empire. They form the bulk of our aristocracy and the backbone of the middle class, the sons of whom still show the racial enterprise in their willingness to seek their fortunes overseas."

The rather short, round-headed, dark-haired Alpines were bronze workers, and now form the bulk of the artisan class (I am following MacBride's exposition). Their broad skulls and bronze tools have been located in caves.

The Mediterraneans are of a mercurial temperament, musical and poetical, without the Nordic courage or organization. They are dark-haired and long-headed, and have swarthy skin. They lack, too, the plodding industry of the Alpines, and are warring or treacherous, as in the legends of Irish clans. When they go to the towns they become the "submerged tenth" of the slums.

Therefore, MacBride concludes, the maintenance of law and order, and of our national life, is "dependent on the upholding of a due proportion of the Nordic race among the population." He deplors that "recent legislation has been entirely detrimental to the Nordic race," and regrets the "attempts to favour the slum dwellers by encouraging their habit of reckless reproduction, in throwing the support of their children on the state," thus placing "a heavier burden on the shoulders of the Nordic race who form the bulk of the taxpayers. The prospect is such as to make a patriotic Englishman shudder." Civilizations decay when the ruling, organizing race dies out. "The inferior races can be trained in civilized habits and kept in them so long as the superior race is in control, but left to themselves they revert to the stage of development appropriate to their inborn psychic equipment," and he instances three small Republics.

The U.S.A. he regards as the work of Nordic peoples, but under the eighteenth century fallacious a priori doctrine of equality the country was thrown open to vast crowds of Mediterranean people who are now making themselves felt.

"Whilst the Nordic element, with characteristic prudence, limit their families to numbers which they can support, the Mediterranean races breed recklessly and thus tend to form a larger and larger section of the population." They form the bulk of the morons. [In American psychological terminology, the mental age of a moron is eight to ten years]. In the past "their offspring, owing to inherent weakness and want of care, died like flies, and hence they did not form a serious social menace. But nowadays, with the growth of a maudlin, unthinking sentimentality, strenuous efforts are made not only to keep all their offspring alive, but to allow them to breed at the expense of the more competent members of the community. The consequences of such a policy can easily be foreseen; in U.S.A. it has already been shown that a very large proportion of the criminals, prostitutes and habitual drunkards are M.D.'s." He suggests the same would be true here if an inquiry were made. Though there is no criminal type of mind, he contends that moral development—self-control—goes with mental development. Defective self-control means that the subject is unable to foresee the results of his actions, which are impulsive.

With men of opposite views, such as Hogben, MacBride agrees that we should improve nature, not imitate her in her cruel "survival of the fittest," but he

maintains that in letting our sympathy run amok we are not improving nature, but actually hampering the more beneficial work accomplished by natural selection. Sympathy, the cement holding society together, should be governed by reason, and "if social reformers seek to interfere with natural selection by keeping the weak and incompetent alive they must provide some device to secure breeding by the fit only."

Haldane shows how the genes can be dissociated, giving, for example, the appearance of fair hair and long heads separately in Oxfordshire, instead of correlated as in East Anglia. He suggests the gene associated with Nordic Viking enterprise may have become dissociated.

The Nazi theory of an Aryan race is, as is now fairly well known, utterly unscientific. "Aryan" refers to a language origin, stretching now from the Atlantic to North India, and in view of the Nazi anti-Semitism, it is rather pertinent to note that the Aryan group includes the Armenians, who have been described as more Jewish than the Jews.

We propose to conclude with a brief survey of the restrictions placed, by what is known, on any far-reaching theory of an intimate universal brotherhood.

G. H. TAYLOR

Shelley's Atheism

(Reprinted, *The Freethinker*, 1892)

CHARLES DARWIN, the Newton of biology, was an Agnostic—which is only a respectable synonym for an Atheist. The more he looked for God the less he could find him. Yet the corpse of this great "infidel" lies in Westminster Abbey. We need not wonder, therefore, that Christians and even parsons are on the Shelley Centenary Committee, or that Mr. Edmund Gosse was chosen to officiate as high Pontiff at the Horsham celebration. Mr. Gosse is a young man with a promising past—to borrow a witticism from Heine. In the old *Examiner* days he hung about the army of revolt. Since then he has become a bit of a Philistine, though he still affects a superior air, and retains a pretty way of turning a sentence. The selection of such a man to pronounce the eulogy on Shelley was in keeping with the whole proceedings at Horsham, where everybody was lauding a "bogus Shelley," as Mr. Shaw remarked at the Hall of Science celebration.

Mr. Gosse was good enough to tell the Horsham celebrants that "it was not the poet who was attacked" in Shelley's case, but "the revolutionist, the enemy of kings and priests, the extravagant and paradoxical humanitarian." Mr. Gosse generously called this an "intelligent aversion," and in another sense than his, it undoubtedly was so. The classes, interests, and abuses that were threatened by Shelley's principles, acted with the intelligence of self-preservation. They gave him an ill name and would gladly have hung him. Yes, it was, beyond all doubt, an "intelligent aversion." Byron only dallied with the false and foolish beliefs of his age, but Shelley meant mischief. This accounts for the hatred shown towards him by orthodoxy and privilege.

Mr. Gosse himself appears to have an "intelligent aversion" to Shelley's principles. He professes a great admiration for Shelley's poetry; but he regards it as a sort of beautiful landscape, which has no other purpose than gratifying the æsthetic taste of the spectator. For the poet's teaching he feels or affects a lofty contempt. Shelley the singer was a marvel of delicacy and power; but Shelley the thinker was at best a callow enthusiast. Had he lived as long as

Mr. Gosse, and moved in the same dignified society, he would have acquired an "intelligent aversion" to the indiscretions of his youthful passion for reforming the world; but fate decided otherwise, and he is unfortunate enough to be the subject of Mr. Gosse's admonitions.

Shelley lived like a Spartan; a hunk of bread and a jug of water, dashed perhaps with milk, served him as a dinner. His income was spent on the poor, on struggling men of genius, and on necessitous friends. Now as the world goes this is simply asinine; and Mr. Gosse plays to the Philistine gallery by sneering at Shelley's vegetarianism, and playfully describing him as an "eater of buns and raisins." It was also lamented by Mr. Gosse that Shelley, as a "hater of kings," had an attraction for "revolutionists," a set of persons with whom Mr. Gosse would have no sort of dealings except through the policeman. "Social anarchists," likewise, gathered "around the husband of Godwin's daughter"—a pregnant denunciation, though it leaves us in doubt whether Shelley, Godwin, or Mary was the anarchist, or all three of them together; while the "husband" seems to imply that getting married was one of the gravest of Shelley's offences. But the worst of all is to come: "Those to whom the restraints of religion were hateful marshalled themselves under the banner of the youth who had rashly styled himself as an Atheist, forgetful of the fact that all his best writings attest that, whatever name he might call himself, he, more than any other poet of the age, saw God in everything."

We beg to tell Mr. Gosse that he is libellous and impertinent. He knows little or nothing of Atheists if he thinks they are only repelled by "the restraints of religion." They have restraints of their own, quite as numerous and imperative as those of any religionist who fears his God. What is more, they have incentives which religion weakens. Mr. Gosse is perhaps in a state of ignorance on this matter. He probably speaks of the moral condition of Atheists as a famous American humorist proposed to lecture on science, with an imagination untrammelled by the least acquaintance with the subject.

So much (it is quite enough) for the libel; and now for the impertinence. Mr. Gosse pretends to know Shelley's mind better than he knew it himself. Shelley called himself an Atheist; that is indisputable; but he did so "rashly." He was mistaken about his own opinions; he knew a great many things, but he was ignorant of himself. But the omniscient Mr. Gosse was born (or *was he born?*) to rectify the poet's blunder, and assure the world that he was a Theist without knowing it—in fact a really God-intoxicated person.

What wonder is it that Mr. Gosse became intoxicated in turn, and soared in a rapture of panegyric over a Shelley of his own construction? "The period of prejudice is over," he exclaimed, "and we are gathered here to-day under the auspices of the greatest poet our language has produced since Shelley died, encouraged by universal public opinion and by dignitaries of all the professions—yea, even by prelates of our national Church." Here the preacher's intoxication became maudlin, and there should have been an interval for soda-water.

Curiously enough, the very last page of Trelawny's *Records of Shelley and Byron* contains a conversation between that gallant friend of the two poets and a "prelate of our national Church."

Some years ago, one of the most learned of the English Bishops questioned me regarding Shelley; he expressed both admiration and astonishment at his learning and writings. I said to the Bishop, "You know he was an Atheist." He said, "Yes." I answered "It is the key and the distinguishing

quality of all he wrote. Now that people are beginning to distinguish men by their works, and not creeds, the critics, to bring him into vogue, are trying to make out that Shelley was not an Atheist, that he was rather a religious man. Would it be right in me, or anyone who knew him, to aid or sanction such a fraud?" The Bishop said: "Certainly not, there is nothing righteous but truth." And there our conversation ended.

Trelawny's bishop was willing (outside church, and in private conversation) to deprecate prejudice and acknowledge the supremacy of truth; and perhaps for that reason he allowed that Shelley was an Atheist. Mr. Gosse's bishops will soon be converting him into a pillar of the Church.

Trelawny knew Shelley a great deal better than Mr. Gosse. He enjoyed an intimate friendship with the poet, not in his callow days, but during the last year or two of his life, when his intellect was mature, and his genius was pouring forth the great works that secure his immortality. During that time Shelley professed the opinions he enunciated in *Queen Mab*. He said that the matter of that poem was good; it was only the treatment that was immature. Again and again he told Trelawny that he was content to know nothing of the origin of the universe; that religion was chiefly a means of deceiving and robbing people; that it fomented hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; and that it also fettered the intellect, deterring men from solving the problems of individual and social life, as well as the problems of nature, out of regard for the supposed oracles of Omniscience, which were after all the teachings of bigoted and designing priests. Shelley called himself an Atheist; he wrote "Atheist" after his name on a famous occasion; and Trelawny says "he never regretted having done this."

"The principal fault I have to find," wrote Trelawny, "is that the Shelleyan writers, being Christians themselves, seem to think that a man of genius cannot be an Atheist, and so they strain their own faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted from the earliest stage of his career to the last day of his life. He ignored all religions as superstitions."

On another occasion Shelley said to Trelawny—"The knaves are the cleverest; they profess to know everything; the fools believe them, and so they govern the world." Which is a most sagacious observation. He said that "Atheist!" in the mouth of orthodoxy was "a word of abuse to stop discussion, a painted devil to frighten the foolish, a threat to intimidate the wise and good."

Mr. Gosse may reply that Shelley's conversations with Trelawny are not absolute evidence; that they were written down long afterwards, and that we cannot be sure of Shelley's using the precise words attributed to him. Very well then; but so. Mr. Gosse has appealed to Shelley's "writings," and to Shelley's writings we will go. True, the epithet "best" is inserted by Mr. Gosse as a saving qualification; but we shall disregard it, partly because "best" is a disputable adjective, but more because all Shelley's writings attest his Atheism.

Let us first go to Shelley's prose, not because it is his "best" work (though some parts of it are exquisitely beautiful, often very powerful, and always chaste), but because prose is less open than verse to false conception and interpretation. In the fine fragment "On Life" he acutely observes that "Mind, as far as we have any experience of its properties, and beyond that experience how vain is argument! cannot create, it can only perceive." And he concludes "It is infinitely improbable that the cause of mind, that is, of existence, is similar to mind." Be it observed, however, that Shelley does not dogmatize.

He simply cannot conceive that mind is the basis of all things. The cause of life is still obscure. "All recorded generations of mankind," Shelley says, "have wearily busied themselves in inventing answers to this question; and the result has been—Religion."

G. W. FOOTE

(To be concluded)

Papal Infallibility

DISSENSION in the ranks of "The Dispersion"—as the Jezides or Piscisoli (little fishes) called themselves in the first century of the Christian Era (John vii. 35; 1 Peter i. 1; Jas. i. 1) commenced early; for hardly had the newly-acclaimed "Messiah" been gibbeted, than certain of his disciples began to claim pre-eminence. Paul tells of the existence of "Party of Apollos," and "Party of Paul" (1 Cor. iii. 15) and one John—whoever he might be—(3, 19) says: that Diotrephes "loved to have pre-eminence." In this Article, we are only concerned with a later party—that of papal Rome.

In 1870, a General or Ecumenical Council was held in Rome, under the auspices of Pius IX., for the express purpose of considering—and we may say "declaring," for the conclusion was a foregone one with a council packed with an Italian majority—the question of the infallibility, with its concomitant omniscience, of the Pope, when deciding on any question of faith or morals. As was expected a majority declared for the dogma, in consequence of which, a number of foreign and intellectual representatives, rather than subject themselves to such an illogical conclusion, seceded from communion with Rome; dissenting from agreement with a dogma, contradictory to the history of the papacy, the biography of its Popes, and repugnant to common sense. Appeal to history exposes errors and mistakes such as might occur with institutions of human origin; and reference to the lives of mediæval Popes, instead of examples of benevolence and holiness of lives, reveals little else but lives of licentiousness, vice, and crime. Notwithstanding these facts, and the fact that there is no authentic evidence of Simon-Bar (Son of) Jonah or Peter ever having been in Rome, or ever occupying the position there as Bishop; that Church has the audacity to claim that he was their first Pope, and that the present Pope, his predecessors and successors, are each and all *infallible* when pronouncing on matters of doctrine, which by implication includes *omniscience*. What have we to say to such an imposition forced on an ignorant and consequently credulous laity bound with fetters to the enslavement of an *Index Expurgatorius*?

With regard to Simon called Peter and the witticism upon his adopted name (Matt. xvi. 17), the account is evidently a late interpolation, firstly because of its omission from the other three gospels; and secondly because the word "church" was neither used nor even known to "The Dispersion," and there is no corresponding word in the Aramaic for it. The word *Synagogue* before Jews, or *Kingdom*, would have been used. The passage should read: "Thou art Peter (*petros*, a small stone)" upon this rock *petra* "I (Jesus) will build my kingdom. I will give to thee the key" (of Jonah or Janus, j pronounced as v, a planetary god always represented with key and pastoral staff) of the "Kingdom of the heavens" (*Olympos*, the abode of the *elohim* or planetary gods of whom *Jehovah* was chief). The change of name to Peter shows the association of many of the legends concerning the supposed wonderful performances of Jesus recorded from hearsay in the New Testament with

planetary mythology. Had it been intended to appoint Peter to a headship over "The Dispersion," can we conceive it probable that he would have chosen one who denied all knowledge of him before the Court of the Jewish High Priest at Gethsemane; and who was said by Jesus to be possessed of Satan and dismissed from his presence as a "stumbling block" (Matt. xxvi. 73)? It is much more probable that he would have chosen Paul (Titus i. 3; Cor. xi. 28; Gal. ii. 11.) Was not Peter accused and condemned to his face by Paul (Acts xv. 7-9) because he—a circumcized Jew—had not only claimed to be the minister of the gospel to the uncircumcized Gentiles, but had actually eaten with them contrary to Jewish law and tradition?

Early in the fourth century, when the claim of Rome to pre-eminence over the African and Eastern Bishops had become acute, and discussion over the Arian question had caused the First General Council to sit at Nicæa in Bythinia (325 C.E.), Canon VI. of that Council declared that "The Bishop of Rome is merely of the same rank and authority in his own region as the Bishops Alexandria and Antioch in their respective regions." At a second General Council held at the same place (381), Canon III. ordained that "The Bishop of 'New Rome' is equal in rank with the Bishop of 'Old Rome.'" Constantine had removed the seat of Government from Rome to Byzantium. Pope Gregory "the Great" (590 C.E.) denounced the idea that any bishop had the right to assume the "blasphemous title of Ecumenical Bishop"; and in an orthodox Controversial Catechism edited by Keenan before 1870, it was declared that the idea of Papal infallibility was "a Protestant invention and no article of faith." It may be here noticed that a singularly appropriate—almost prophetic—warning was given by Paul to the Thessalonians (2, ii. 4) "not to let yourselves be led away by one who exalteth himself, is worshipped (honoured?) and sitteth in the sanctuary setting himself forth as a God!"

Early in the fifth century, Pelagius—an itinerant monk—was condemned for heresy by the African Bishops, though his preaching had been favourably received at Rome previously. By a synod at *Diospolis*, he was subsequently acquitted; but again condemned by Pope Innocent I.; and later that condemnation was annulled by the next Pope, Zosimus, and his teaching declared orthodox! In 680, *Pope Honorius* was condemned for heresy by the Sixth Council of Constantinople. In fact the question of the heresy v. the orthodoxy of the Popes was a fruitful source of dispute for centuries.

Coming to later times: the Astronomer *Copernicus* was in 1543 condemned for heresy for teaching the pythagorean ("heliocentric") theory of the Universe, that the sun was the centre, and that the earth was not flat, as the Bible taught, but globular, and revolved on its own axis, and around the sun in an elliptical plane once a year, and his ex-communication was not removed until 1821. For eighteen centuries the Church had taught error with an infallible Pope at its head! And left the name of a man of science to the contumely of the religious world for 280 years. In 1600, *Giordano Bruno* was condemned for heresy, tortured, and ultimately burnt at the stake for the same teaching, because it "was contrary to the Bible." Sixteen years after, *Galileo*, for the same offence was condemned by the "Holy" Inquisition. In 1619 *Vanini* was condemned for heresy at Toulouse for supporting Copernicus, and was duly burnt at the stake by the Inquisition there. All these distinguished men of science were murdered and tortured in the most cruel manner it is possible to conceive at the voice of the church, whose master is reputed to have

taught that brotherly love was all sufficient and embodied "the whole law" (Matt. xxii. 40); and with daring *volte face* diffidently now accepts as true what it previously condemned! The excuse made for such a large delay—eighteen centuries—before the promulgation was announced, viz., that the whole of the gospel was not intended to be divulged in the first instance, is inconsistent and discordant with the finality statement of Jesus in the above quotation; with his assurance of his second coming "in clouds, with great power and glory" (Matt. xiii. 30)—words reminiscent of previous Sun worship—and with the proud motto of "*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*"

W. W. HARDWICKE

Deism against Humanism

My dearly loved parents possessed the highest qualities of truth, justice, and kindness in an unusual degree. Father (brought up very religiously) eschewed Christianity and Judaism at an early age. Likewise did one of my uncles. My revered mother was a firm believer in a God. She would not believe in a Hell because "a good God could not be so cruel and wicked as to punish everlastingly the poor helpless creatures he made himself." "The priests and others who burnt people alive are very wicked, and it is a wonder God allowed it."

At seven years of age it was decided I should "learn" the "Bible." Then as I grew up I would be able to judge it. Likewise I was to learn the elements of Astronomy, Botany, Geology, Physics, History, etc. The Bible first. *Genesis*, of course, was the beginning. "God made the Earth," etc. I asked my Mother, "who made God?" She informed me that all good Christians believed the Bible and believed it to be inspired by God. I was not satisfied with that. I wanted reasonable grounds for belief. It was not forthcoming from the Bible. I studied the Bible. I searched it for evidence: and found it. The evidence conclusively showed that the "Bible" is merely a jumble of discordant narratives derived from various sources some legendary others "imaginary and forming as a whole a mixed-up medley of often contradictory assertions. Subsequently I found that this "word of God" had been "revised" and re-edited by human mortals. Those mortals were following the trade we know as "Priestcraft." Surely an intelligent God could invent a better way of making his wishes known to the peoples of the Earth than through the medium of such a frowsy, immoral, and false witness as the Bible is! Could not God have invented a better way to divert his humans from sin than having his "only begotten Son" brutally executed as a convicted felon, in front of his agonized mother?

Now after 1900 years of God's experiments and efforts to banish sin through the medium of the "Vicar of Christ" of the Church of Rome, the slaughter of millions of humans in the name of God and Jesus, the stake, the "Holy" Inquisition and virulent, merciless persecution, we still find God utterly impotent and the human race dropped straight back to barbarism, where force and greed prevail, and justice is not. And this after nearly two thousand year's administration of The Vicar of Christ, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Humanity is further than ever from "Peace on earth and goodwill to mankind." God has failed.

The great Universe with its immutable laws over-rides God. His puny creeds of Christianity, Judaism, Mahommedism, and all other "isms" of Deism are naught as against the eternal and Infinite universe. As everything in this universe is the result of force, which is the primary cause of effect, and the final factor without exception in all things, in what way can force be directed towards the attainment of "Peace on Earth, and goodwill towards Mankind"?

In the first place it has yet to be decided what forms of moral code can be devised which will command the adherence of the great majority of mankind. All codes based upon religious bases having utterly failed, it is evident that the only alternative is a civil code enforceable by world-wide law.

Knowledge is power. Power can use force, therefore until mankind is universally educated sufficiently to abolish religion and supplant it by law, it is a certainty that exploitation, and the mass murder which war now is, will not abate. This is the task facing Humanitarians, be they Deists, Pantheists or Atheists. Once religion is shelved, once humanity makes the best of life on earth for all humans (and leaves out hope of a future life as a factor in the guidance of *this* life) then universal happiness will be feasible. Civilization, based upon the known, immutable laws of nature, can achieve what no *imaginary God* can do. All Gods are now proved to be, demonstrably and actually, imaginary. They are obsolete, and Hell is no longer (as Burns said) "The whip to haud the wretch in order."

Therefore let us propagate Humanism and love for our fellows, and consign the discredited Gods to the flames and tortures peculiar to their individual hells. And particularly Jehovah who, according to his "divine revelations" appearing in the "Bible," is self-convicted as the most fanatical criminal amongst criminal impostors. How futile are the efforts of the Christian advocates to reconcile their hotch-potch Bible, with the truths, unchallengeable and eternal, as revealed through science and the knowledge of the constitution, the laws, forces and other attributes, of the universe.

Knowledge consists of truths provable as such. Judaism can bring not one atom of proof that there is such a thing as *any* kind of God. Neither can any other creed, person or persons. Those who do believe in some kind of God assert that it is a *fact*. Therefore before we can admit that it is a fact we require *proof*. The proof has never yet been given. Before Canterbury transfers his allegiance finally to Rome he should at least give *proof* of the existence of the God of Israel. *Proof* that Jesus of Nazareth was the God of Israel's only begotten son. *Proof* that Jesus of Nazareth ascended into Heaven. *Proof* that the Pope of Rome is the duly divinely appointed Vicar of Christ. *Proof* that "Christ" authorized the torture and burning of Heretics.

Also Mahomet's claim to be the only true representative of Allah must likewise bring *proof* of his semi-godship.

Unless these creeds can justify their claims of the right to take human life in maintaining and propagating their creeds they are impostors, and murderers potentially, and, when opportune, in actual fact, and that on the most virulent and cruel scale. We people should by law suppress this criminal form of organization which has in the past brutally murdered our forefathers and is still plotting, scheming and bribing to regain the power to repeat their atrocious crimes of the past against mankind in the name of the Holy Trinity, the "Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

JAMES SINGEON

Acid Drops

God Almighty's New Year's gift to the Turkish people, which arrived a little before time, and before the parsonry had ceased to chant that the Christmas message was peace on earth and good will to all men, was one of the most frightful earthquakes of recent times. If it had occurred in either Germany or Russia good Christians might have treated it as God's judgment. But the people who have been killed were not at war with anyone, and if it was not intended to punish them, we can only regard it as a very bad shot, or an act of criminal carelessness.

In any case theologians assure us that the universe discloses a "Plan"—with a capital letter. Perhaps some of them will explain what part of the plan is occupied by earthquakes? It will be useless replying that the structure and constitution of the earth make earthquakes inevitable, for the structure of the earth is part of the plan. Neither will it do to say that it is a warning to man against settling where earthquakes are likely to occur, or as a punishment for man's wickedness, for the people who are punished are dead, and can learn nothing from the cause of their death. Young and old, good and bad, believers and unbelievers, were all brought to a common end. How does the theist explain such a catastrophe in the light of his assertion of a plan in nature? And why does the Archbishop of Canterbury complain about the Hitlerian plan of managing Europe, and offer up praise to the heavenly Hitler—and take an income of £15,000 in his service? We will forward the *Freethinker* for five years to any Christian who will send us even a plausible answer.

Our contemporary, *Picture Post*, has been banned in Limerick. It was the agitation headed by the *Irish Catholic*, protesting against the precis of Mr. H. G. Wells' *Homo Sapiens* which brought about the ban, and which has thus proved itself a thorough disciple of the kind of dictatorship infesting Germany, Russia, and Italy. The President of the Irish Newsagents' Association is loud in his praise of Limerick's action—as he says, "It is by no means to the good of Ireland—but clearly to its disadvantage—that English newspapers in general should have such a large sale amongst our people. Even one generally regarded as reputable has standards and outlooks that cannot be to any extent justified or sanctioned from Catholic or national standpoints. . . ."

This kind of thing has roused the ire of Mr. St. John Irvine (who is an Irishman) and *Picture Post* publishes a letter from him expressing his opinion and pointing out that the latest edition of the famous Roman Catholic *Index* has 500 pages of works banned by the Church, including Gibbon, Mill, Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Voltaire, Dumas, Zola, Anatole France, and Maeterlinck. If *Picture Post* really has a six million circulation, it is good for the thousands of Catholics reading it to know this, as most of them are too much under the thumb of their priests to know anything which savours of genuine freedom. It is also good for the editor of *Picture Post* to know what he is up against in thus incurring the intolerance and bigotry of Christ's own Church.

In the new life of Jesus, by Mr. S. P. Carey, we note, according to a reviewer, that "there is no whittling down of the miraculous, for the author advances the argument that, if once we start picking and choosing, the whole fabric begins to collapse, and in any case the supreme miracle is the Lord Himself." This is exactly the Freethought position, and we congratulate Mr. Carey upon seeing it so clearly. Take away any of the miracles in the Gospels and you immediately begin to question the biggest of them, Jesus the God; and questioning any miracle, no matter how absurd, means doubting God's Word; and immediately the door is open to heresy. The moral is to believe without qualification; only thus can one remain a true and faithful Christian.

Canon Newbolt, in a recent article on Hell, thinks it "a topic from which one naturally shrinks, not only on

account of the difficulties inherent in the dreadful mystery itself, but because of the trend of contemporary feeling." But why should the Canon do any "shrinking" whatever? As a good Christian, he surely believes in Hell, and he ought to take no account whatever of contemporary feeling in the matter. Either there is a Hell or there is not; but as Jesus certainly believed in Hell, as he did in the Devil, what else need be said? Miracles, Hell, and the Devil, are part and parcel of the Christian religion; without them it has no *raison d'être*; and any attempt to explain them away, or to insinuate that there is anything symbolic in them should be severely deprecated by all true believers. Fortunately Canon Newbolt is absolutely trustworthy on all these points.

Although columns of unadulterated rubbish about Jesus are always being published at this time of the year, it would be difficult to write bigger nonsense than that written by Mr. Maier-Hultchin in the *Universe*. It appears that "the birth of Christ at Bethlehem was the greatest surprise ever experienced by mankind," and that "in a certain sense he is born into the world in all ages, and always his coming is the greatest of surprises." We think a far greater surprise is that so often presumably intelligent men can write such unmitigated balderdash. Actually, the real surprise in the "birth" of Jesus is that anybody believes it—or indeed anything whatever about his life as related in the Gospels. The incidents are about as true as those related of Sinbad the Sailor.

A solemn warning is issued in the *Universe* against anyone not properly authorized by God Almighty trying to exorcize the Devil in possessed persons. We gladly give publicity to the exact words used in the warning:—

The express permission of the bishop of the diocese is required before the rite of exorcism may be used in the case of a person supposed to be possessed by the Devil. The rite is found in the Roman Ritual, which warns the priest beforehand that he is not easily to suppose that a person is possessed in reality, and then sets forth certain signs which may indicate possession, such as speaking words or talking intelligently in an unknown tongue, the revealing of distant and hidden things, the exercise of supra-normal powers, etc. It is not for a mere layman to meddle with such matters.

Meddling in Infernal matters seems about as dangerous as meddling in Divine questions. The only person who can get really in touch with either God or the Devil is a priest, and we are surprised anybody can be found who can question the fact. Are not priests in full agreement?

Just over 11,000 "conversions" were made by the Catholic Church in 1938. Both the number of Secular clergy and of priests also increased during the year, while there were 51 new churches. These figures, with others, are officially given, but nothing is said of the severe losses which take place every year. If any increase is shown in the number of the actual Catholic population it is, of course, due to the excess of births over deaths; but that losses do occur one has only to read the lamentations of bishops, who are always bewailing the way in which born Catholics are not "practising," or who are "indifferent" or who actually go over to the enemy. Catholic statistics are nothing to be proud of.

An awful incident occurred in Guernsey on Christmas morning. The rector of St. Martin's Church there discovered that his parishioners had put up a statue of Atargatis, the Syrian goddess (a version of Venus or Astarte) outside the portal, bedecked with a garland of flowers, and a prayer on a piece of paper asking the divine lady to stop the war. The rector is horrified, and lamented that this was not the first instance of "paganism" in the parish. The interesting point is, of course, that this incident has occurred in such a thoroughly Christianized island as Guernsey! and it proves that the superstition of "paganism" is at bottom exactly like that of Christianity. A petition to Atargatis will have the same result as a petition to Mary, for they are variations of the same "Mother."

Two reverend doctors provide an amusing contrast for *Evening Standard* readers. Dr. W. R. Inge's articles in that paper are known to many; and, being far more literary than theological, have met with some appreciation. But now comes Dr. A. F. Winnington Ingram, ex-Bishop of London, with a half-page of his typical fatuities under the inspiring title: "Let us settle down for this strange Christmas." One extract from the latter will more than suffice most people. Referring to the war the ex-Bishop writes:—

To my mind, the slogan of the crusade is the slogan of St. Paul: "Who is weak, and I am not weak; who is offended and I burn not!"

Now is this un-Christian?

Only if we think Christianity is a milk-and-water affair which does not distinguish between right and wrong. There is such a thing as the wrath of the lamb, all the more terrible because the lamb is the type of all that is most gentle.

"The wrath of the Lamb!" No Salvation Army trouper or Church Army boy-captain can hope to beat that idiotic "allegory."

A Mrs. Bolster is an alderman and deputy-mayor of Wood Green, London, N. She is a "bolster" to give one a pain in the neck, for she thinks the borough which honours her a dirty borough. How else can she esteem it when going so far as to state that the local parks have become a great moral danger since the outbreak of war? And her opinion may lead to the closing of all open spaces in Wood Green at night, notwithstanding the air-raid shelters provided there. Alderman Blue (the names are quite real; we have not mixed up a pantomime report with the paragraph) said it might be possible to provide keys for the park gates. He did not promise that the key keepers would be standing ready to open the gates. But surely the black-out should be very welcome to the "nosey-parker" type of people? (And "Honi soit qui mal y pense" is almost a national motto!)

Fifty Years Ago

WILL DUKES, the murderer, just hanged at Manchester, was a very commonplace villain. He killed his employer like a beast, and tried to conceal the crime like a fool. During the trial he imitated the unhappy example of Mrs. Maybrick, and made a voluntary statement, in which the jury showed their disbelief by bringing in a verdict of wilful murder. But before paying the penalty of the law he was prepared for kingdom-come by the professional soul-saver of the gaol and so efficacious were this gentleman's services, that Dukes went to the scaffold with the sure and certain hope of a glorious passage to heaven. At any rate he "died happy," to use his own last words, and it is to be presumed he is now in glory, twanging his hallelujah harp, blowing his hallelujah trumpet, joining in the chorus of all the menagerie of the Apocalypse, and consorting with all the lung and unlung scoundrels who have left the earth for a more genial locality where their characters are better appreciated. May God, if there be a God, forbid we should ever join their holy crew, for we would rather take a villa or a flat in Hell than be for ever disgusted with such neighbours in Heaven.

Dukes made an edifying end. He died happy. Heaven opened as earth slipped from his feet. The night before he exchanged the prison cap for a crown of immortality he wrote a longish letter to a friend, full of maudlin self-pity and unctuous cant. He recommends "religion and temperance," quotes Scriptures, believes he can suffer hanging as Jesus Christ suffered crucifixion, reproaches the friends who had not called upon him in prison, but magnanimously forgives them, though with a warning to "be careful." Not a word about poor Gordon whom he murdered. Not a word or a sigh of regret, except for his own plight and the sorrow of his own wife. Such "repentance" is detestable, and the religion which inspires it is accursed.

The Freethinker, January 5, 1890

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JUBILEE FREETHINKER FUND.—J. H. Etheridge (Kenya Colony), £5; H. M. C., 4s.; Ishmaelite, 4s.; W. G. Dickinson, 5s.; B. Jenkins, £5 5s.; W. R. Angell, 5s.; J. B. Hindley, £2 5s.

L. W. RENNISON.—Thanks for cutting. Anyone but a clergyman would be ashamed to have soldiers *ordered* to attend Church. But the average parson does not mind from what motive a man attends Church, or by what force he is dragged there. His main concern is a congregation.

E. MILLARD.—Thanks for return of MSS. Our apologies for the error.

B. JENKINS (Kenya).—We have very pleasant recollections of our meeting in London. When are we to expect another visit?

MR. J. H. ETHERIDGE, of Kenya Colony, in sending his contribution to the *Freethinker* Fund, suggests that the name of the place from which the donation comes—when out of Britain, should be printed in order to show "the wide sympathy with the Cause." We usually do this, although it may have been omitted in some cases. The *Freethinker*, we are pleased to say has its readers in all parts of the world, and the editor's writings have been translated into many languages. But we wish, with Mr. Etheridge, that the number of subscribers abroad were greater than they are.

M. FELDMAN.—A very good letter, but one must not expect fair play from newspapers where Freethought is concerned. As we said an editor is quite as safe in printing the heresies of Mr. Wells. But other people, other rules.

N. A. SMITH AND A. DOBBIN.—Much obliged for your effort in getting a new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

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

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

We take this opportunity of thanking all those who have sent us New Year's greetings. They have been of the kindest and most cheerful character, and full of appreciation for what we have been able to do. These letters will act as constant incitement to continue doing what we have always aimed at, that of giving the Freethought movement of our best. And Freethought is worthy of the best of the best of men and women.

We are desirous of inspecting as complete a collection of the *Republican*, a periodical issued by George Standing. If any of our readers happen to possess them we should be greatly favoured if he or she would oblige by allowing us to see them. They will be returned speedily, and every care will be taken of them.

We hope that our friends are calling the attention of probable subscribers to our offer to send the *Freethinker* post free for 15s. Until the end of March each new subscriber will have the privilege of selecting five shillings-worth of Pioneer Press literature without further charge.

We have mentioned that the edition of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, issued by the Pioneer Press—250 pages, at the price of fourpence—is now nearly out of print. It is the cheapest complete edition ever printed, and was, of course, published at a heavy loss, but it has done its work, as the book has always done. We hope to be able to issue another edition of the same book at the same price. But the times now are harder. An announcement will be made as early as possible.

One of our readers, Mr. G. Taylor, of Southend-on-Sea, writes us that he has always found the *Age of Reason* of great service in approaching orthodox Christians. He says, "I believe that Paine's work will outlive the Bible." In a sense it has outlived the Bible, for the Bible that Paine attacked is now abandoned by the vast majority of educated Christians. Of course, the Bible is still with us, and in sermons and to audiences who may be counted upon as not too wide-awake, it is quoted as though the science and history of the Bible—to say nothing of the ethics—of the Bible had never been questioned. But the Bible of Paine's time is to the educated and intelligent person as dead as a door nail. Unfortunately, there are still vast numbers of people who need this lesson driving home. And for these there is no other book quite so effective as *The Age of Reason*.

Will Cardiff Freethinkers interested in the formation of a Branch of the National Secular Society in Cardiff attend at The Left Book Club Rooms, 6 Fitzalan Place, Cardiff, at 3.30 p.m., on Sunday, January 14, when it is hoped the preliminaries to the formation will be completed. Wales is not too well represented on the Freethought map, and here is an opportunity to improve on that position.

The Bible College of Wales is situated in Swansea. The Director is the Rev. Rees Howells. This gentleman recently reported, as evidence that prayers are answered, that one day the College prayed for £100, and by the same day's post a cheque for £100 was received from Chicago. Now that is what one may call a real proof of an answer to prayer. On the day the prayer was offered it was transmitted, by God, one presumes, to Chicago, and God also managed to hurry up the post so that the cheque was received in Swansea, from Chicago, on the same day. That settles it. Nothing but the power of a number one quality God could have done the trick.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Freedom of thought in one sense, which many freely be regarded as the strictest sense of the words, everyone has and nobody can restrict. The Holy Office may forbid a man to utter any doctrine of which it does not approve, but no power that priest or tyrant has ever wielded can limit the Freedom of a man's inmost soul. And under oppression and mid bigotry, the closed lips of the intellectual rebel have often smiled bitterly, but proudly conscious of a freedom which even the stone walls and iron bars cannot limit or confine. But to think what may be uttered becomes a torture which eats away the soul, and the intellect which is shut up in its own dark chamber tends to pine away and perish, missing alike the fresh air of controversy and the sunshine of human sympathy. Indirectly, if not directly, even this sad privilege of freedom of thought is destroyed by freedom of utterance. And in any sense of the words which goes beyond the merely negative one—that which goes on in one's mind cannot be directly controlled by others—freedom of thought is destroyed by systematic repression of freedom of utterance cannot exist except in a stimulating intellectual atmosphere. For freedom of thought, in the positive sense, of the development of intellectual capacity and the earnest pursuit of truth, implies the existence of a good system of education, of a high average of intellectual culture in at least some class of the community, and of the possibility of a satisfactory career for those who devote themselves to intellectual pursuits.

D. G. Ritchie, "*Natural Rights*," p. 148.

The Factory of Fables

Nothing useful can be poured into a vessel that is already full of what is useless. We must first empty out what is useless.—*Tolstoy*.

ALTHOUGH this country is supposed to be civilized, there is a huge mass of silly superstition in our midst. How frequently do we meet seemingly sane people who will not dine with a party of thirteen, or even live in a house with that enumeration. Others "touch wood" on certain occasions, and will not walk under a ladder. Airmen and motorists carry mascots, and some sailors will not go to sea without a "baby's caul." Seafaring men are more than usually superstitious, and will pay anything up to five pounds for a caul, which is a test of their sincerity and their knowledge.

These examples do not exhaust the matter of silly superstition. In the same category belong the fraudulent and ridiculous cults of faith-healing and necromancy. Indeed, there is not a town in the country where fortune-telling is not practised, and the charges range from shillings for shop-assistants and servant-girls to guineas for society women and men of some position. There is money in the sorry game, too. For some time I had an office, above which a lady fortune-teller practised her calling. Daily, a score or more of deluded people mounted the stairs, and consulted the oracle. Some were silly women anxious about love affairs, but others were business men who willingly spent a guinea for advice about a proposed deal, or an extension of their own business. The lady oracle made £600 yearly, and had a brother who practised similarly in the West-End of London, and who made about £2,000 annually.

Now, no one with even an elementary knowledge of science could believe this occult rubbish, for such it is. Yet the dupes paid their money in all innocence, and were cheerfully exploited by a well-dressed, oily-tongued mountebank. People sit at the feet of faith-healing charlatans and pay comparatively large sums of money for treatment. In one Police Court case, an out-of-work plumber's assistant started as a "healer," and was making a four-figure salary when he was pulled up short by the authorities.

Science teaches that everything should be brought to the touchstone of reason. Of what use is our boasted national education if it leaves the rising generation at the absolute mercy of the first humbug who has the audacity to exploit them? The answer to this paradox is that real education has very powerful enemies. It may advance from victory to victory, it may enlist the keenest intellects of our time in its service, but it also runs counter to some very powerful vested interests, whose very existence depends upon keeping the majority of the people in a state of ignorance. To paraphrase a passage from the Sacred Book of these people: Lest the people eat of the tree of knowledge, and become as one of us.

What a comment on our boasted democracy! National education has been sacrificed to Priestcraft. For the clergy, of whom there are 40,000 in this country exert great control of education. Their advice to the unfortunate scholars in the elementary schools may be summed up in the phrase: "Keep Things As They Are." It is this constant reactionary attitude which makes the English people the most Chinese. Parodying the words of Kingsley, they seem to say—

Be dumb, sweet pupils, and let who can be clever.
Do as you're told, and waste time all day long,

And thus make your pastors' lives for ever
One grand sweet song.

Education has been hampered by the quarrels of the clergy themselves. The teachings of the Established Church are considered by the Nonconformists to be wrong and harmful, whilst the instruction given by Dissenters is pronounced by Churchmen to be heretical and dangerous. Roman Catholics and Jews, in their turn, consider that Anglicans and Free Churchmen are both so obnoxious that they provide their own schools. What is the final outcome of it all? During the Great War an exhibition was held in London consisting almost entirely of charms, sacred emblems, amulets, and other curious objects, worn by soldiers, sailors, and civilians to avert death, ward off disease, and bring good fortune. There were many hundreds of exhibits, the whole forming a most ironic criticism, not only of popular education, but of our boasted Christian civilization itself.

Education must be planned on scientific lines, and not be based upon ancient prejudices. For science, in the last analysis, is simply ordered knowledge. And science believes in the dry light of reason. Under our present clerically-controlled educational system, pupils face the world ignorant of many things they should know. They provide themselves with a faith as they buy a cheap pair of spectacles at a chain-store. They do not care whether it is true, if it helps them to see what they want to see. Hence the huge success of the humbugs and the charlatans, who fool and exploit them to the top of their bent.

What is the solution of this tremendous problem? It lies in the secularizing of education, and the inclusion of scientific teaching in the school programme. No one has so much interest in the demand for pork sausages as the pig, and Progressives everywhere should see that our educational system is overhauled in the interests of the masses of the population, and not remain a happy hunting-ground for the exploiters. Science has no quarrel with the maxim, "seek the happiness of the greatest number," but it reminds us that the greatest number are still being exploited, and are unable to speak or act for themselves. Racial progress is too valuable an affair to be bound up with Stone Age ethics and social crudities. Our civilization should be a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. Instead of which it is far too like the lattling of horrible monsters in the primeval slime. The slums mock the bishops' palaces; the underfed and unemployed shame the millionaires. Democracy cannot flourish the insignia of Clericalism.

MIMNERMUS

Twenty Five Years Ago

WHAT sort of moral discipline will the War exert on Germany? Will being conquered make them love their conquerors? Will it crush German national aspirations? Look at the history of Poland, Finland and Ireland, and then see whether national aspirations are likely to be crushed, or even altered, because superior brute force is brought to bear upon them. In all probability, no other country in Europe has been so often invaded and conquered as Germany has been. Bismarck once said that the French had occupied Berlin quite a score of times. Did that prevent Prussian militarism developing? On the contrary; it served to create it. The one certain historic fact is that the application of military force to an alien country either involves a constant dose of foreign militarism or the creation of a native militarism. The defeat of German militarism by the Allies is well within the bounds of probability. To crush it—to kill it—is quite a different question.

The Swine

"Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you" (Lev. xi. 8), is one of the Levitical laws which has been more honoured in the breach than the observance. How many pigs are consumed in this world I know not, but in the British Isles we devour not less than 10,000,000 of them per annum. This morning's paper (October 9), speaking of the possible ruin of Denmark's trade if the present war continues for long, tells us that the Danes export 65,000 pigs a week to the English market—3,380,000 annually—and that this is about half of our bacon imports. And as our own live stock pigs number somewhere about 4,000,000 our consumption must be over 10,000,000 per annum.

This Levitical Law was held very fanatically by the Hebrews. In the Maccabees we are told that when old Eleazar was taken by the servants of Antiochus Epiphanes, he was vehemently urged to taste swine's flesh, or at least to pretend to taste it. They opened his mouth by force to compel him to eat of it, but he chose rather to suffer death than to break the law of God and to give offence to the weaker people of his nation. Porphyry tells us that the Hebrews and the Phœnicians abstained from pork because there was none in their country. A saying of Falstaff's—"Lord, Lord, how the world is given to lying!"—is ever present with me when reading history.

In the Middle Ages, animals, in many ways, were treated like human beings. A pig, charged with committing a crime, was taken to Court, tried by law and, if convicted, was condemned to be hanged just like a human being.

The entry of the pig into Scotland, about 1720, gave rise to some strange adventures. (Hone Vol. II., pp. 1114-15). The "Gudeman o' the Brow," Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, received the present of a young swine from a distance. Left loose one day, this strange beast strayed across the Lochar into the parish of Carlavroc and nearly frightened a woman, herding cattle, to death. She ran screaming home telling the neighbours that "There was a deil come out of the sea with two horns in his head and chased her roaring and gaping all the way at her heels, and she was sure it was not far off." Whereupon a man named Wills Tom, an old schoolmaster, said if he could see it he would "cunger the deil" and got a Bible and an old sword. The pig immediately started behind his back with a loud grumph which put him into such a fright he was obliged to be carried from the field half dead. This is followed by a series of similar events.

To the Irish the pig was "The gentleman that pays the rint." For long he was the chief source of their income.

In my youth the pig was nearly as important. Bacon, boiled with potatoes and cabbage, formed our mid-day meal all the year through. Only on Sundays, highdays and holidays did we taste a little beef or mutton.

The feeding of the young pigs, every morning, was a pleasant task. The big ones always seemed so hungry and never content until they got both feet into the trough to the exclusion of their little brothers. So human were they!

The adult pig had better table manners. Accumulating adipose tissue bred in him a polite indifference. To linger over his meals, and grunt his satisfaction with life generally, while his back was being lovingly scratched seemed, to him, the aim and end of existence—the pig ideal!

The day on which his uneventful history closed was a red letter one. On that day he seemed to sense our evil intentions. To catch him and lead him out of

his sty was difficult, and accompanied always by a loud-voiced, whining protest. Finally led to the slaughter, felled with a mall, throat cut, and held till loss of blood made longer struggle impossible, we left him to spend his last few moments in peace, while we retired and partook of refreshments. Our elders indulged in a little whisky—probably as a nerve deadener—and we had lemonade and a piece of cake. Feeling that the dead pig had now forgiven us, we resumed our duties. He had, with our help, been translated to a higher sphere. In the language of our school grammar: he had escaped positive pig, become comparative pork, and, we hoped, was destined to arrive at superlative bacon.

The body was now scalded, scraped, then hung up and disembowelled. The cutting of it up for curing with salt we left to our elders, and joined the women-folk mincing oddments, like lights (lungs) liver, etc. Then first we made the white puddins and syne we made the black O! This done, we were commissioned, communistically, to take a few spare-ribs and a puddin' to each householder in the village. The "wetting of the pig's head with whisky," and the observance of a few old customs seemed all regarded as necessary, if an effective result was expected.

A few old sows, with large umbrella-shaped ears, prowling about the farm-yard, were always chastized by the old farmer, in passing, because, said he, "if they are not doing mischief they're on their way to do it." To me they seemed prototypes of the four beasts mentioned in Revelations, just as the elders in our Presbyterian Church were associated in my boyish brain with the four and twenty elders.

Neither in Religion, nor in Folk-Lore, does the pig play any great part.

Folk-lore: Fishermen, on our Yorkshire Coast, if their path was crossed by a swine, first thing in the morning, were unwilling to go to sea that day.

Meeting a sow with a litter of pigs when going on a journey was a lucky encounter.

Pigs running wild, with straws in their mouths, before a storm, are said to see the wind.

Religion: Rings were put in pigs' noses to keep them from rooting. In Solomon's day jewels of gold were used, probably when he was entertaining the Queen of Sheba. Women, be they dark or fair, had very little "discretion" to allow him to do so.

The throwing of swine before human pearls (at banquets) may be a pleasing experience. But who would throw pearls before swine?

Pigs were held to be particularly attractive to devils. At their own request they were permitted to enter the Gaderene swine. The reason that the swine objected, on this occasion, and committed suicide was, in the opinion of Père Bougeant, because they were already possessed of devils.

St. Anthony's power of curing pigs is an interesting legend. "A bell was tied round the neck of a pig, and it was maintained at the common charge of the parish." It became known as the "Tantony Pig."

Is the pig fit for human food?

Who shall decide when doctors disagree?

Why, simple casuists like you and me! (Pope)

If the eating of swine's flesh agrees with you and me, what matters it if all Harley Street condemns it? If it does not agree with us, the doctor who tells us to persist in eating it is an M.D. (mentally defective). Many of them merit this degree!

Many to-day in observance of the old Levitical Law refuse to eat the swine. And some there are who will not eat it for other reasons. Which leads me to conclude with the Apostle's sensible opinion:—

"There is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." (Rom., xiv. 14). GEORGE WALLACE

Puritanism in Wales

Most readers of the *Freethinker* are aware of the effect of Puritanism in England and Scotland, but perhaps do not know that its influence has been most pronounced in Wales. Puritanism never conquered the whole of England and Scotland, but when it reached Wales it became the sole religion of Welshmen.

England and Scotland have always had their share of Catholics, and different types of Protestants. But in Wales, even at the present day, 86 per cent of the people are Nonconformists of various sorts. The others are mostly Anglicans.

Without going too far back into history and discussing the Celtic and Catholic Churches in Wales, it might be said that until the time of Henry the Eighth Wales was a Catholic country.

A little must be said about the political condition of Wales. After the conquest of Llewelyn Fawr in 1283, Wales lost its independence, and except for a short time under Owain Glyndwr (Owen Glendower) had agreed to accept the suzerainty of the English Kings. From the fall of Llewelyn to the time of Henry the Eighth Wales led a troubled existence, torn between the petty warfare of Welsh chieftains and Norman lords. Eventually this ceased when a Welshman, Henry ap Owain Tudor became King of England.

Many Welshmen accompanied Henry to England and obtained important posts about the court. But his son, Henry the Eighth, fearing that Wales might send another rival, united Wales to England in the Act of Union. (1536). This divided Wales into counties and allowed representation in the English Parliament.

The Act has tremendous repercussions in Wales. It broke up the Welsh social organism of the clan, a similar system that prevailed in the Highlands of Scotland and the West of Ireland until the eighteenth century. Socially, the country became divided into landowner and tenants instead of chief and clansmen.

When Henry the Eighth declared himself head of the Church of England and "liquidated" the monasteries, Wales suffered to the same extent as England. Many zealous Welsh Catholics fled abroad. In Elizabeth's time the Welsh influence at court was still strong. One Welshman boasted at this time that all the canons, ecclesiastical and lay, were all Welshmen. A Welsh college was founded at Oxford, Jesus College. Any reader of Shakespeare will notice his familiarity with Welsh types—Sir Hugh Evans, the Welsh parson, Captain Fluellen, etc.

As the Church of England was formed it included the Church in Wales. The Bible was translated into Welsh, firstly by William Salesbury, and a more adequate translation by Bishop Morgan of Llandaff.

Therefore it can be said the Church in Wales was in contact with the people and, so far as religion has served a need, it sufficed. But with the advent of the Stuart's there came a change. Welsh influence disappeared from the court and its place was taken by the Scots.

Also as the appointment of officials in the Church was in the hands of the King, men were chosen more for political than religious reasons. Thus we had the spectacle of bishops and clergymen holding office in Wales who knew not a word of Welsh, and hardly ever lived in their diocese or parish. An example is given in the Introduction to Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, by Chapman Cohen—Bishop Watson of Llandaff who hardly ever lived in his diocese, and could not speak Welsh.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Welsh nobility and gentry had become Anglicized. Thus the religious and cultural life of Wales fell more

and more into neglect. The lack of roads in Wales also prevented contact with the people of England with the consequence that life stagnated, and the now almost dried up trickle of spiritual life seemed fated to stop entirely.

It was indeed one of the most miserable and melancholy periods in Welsh history. In the Middle Ages the Welsh-speaking nobles had fostered Welsh poetry and song by patronizing the bards and native Welsh scholars. Now without these patrons Welsh village and peasant life sank deeper and deeper into a pit of decay and despair.

Then came the religious revival of John Wesley in England in the eighteenth century. This was introduced to Wales by Howell Harris and the other Welsh followers of Wesley. The Welsh took to his teachings like a duck to water. The country folk banded themselves together and built their little chapels out of their humble savings.

What politics had commenced, Puritanism finished. The quick, responsive Welsh mind soaked up the arid waters of Nonconformist theology like a sponge. It produced a revolution in thought, outlook and conduct.

Music was abandoned; a blight fell on the Welsh mind. In the seventeenth century the Welsh people might have been considered a gay, lively people, delighting in music, dancing and laughter. By the end of the eighteenth they were gloomy, morose and sternly religious.

Puritanism had conquered. Not because it appeals to the Welsh mind and temperament; far from it. It is interesting to compare in this respect Puritanism in Scotland and Wales. The Scots have logical minds. Puritanism in Scotland produced Calvinism and predestination. In Wales it brought in a profound melancholy and sadness. Everyone knew they were going to hell, but they were still sorry about it.

Any sort of beauty and sweetness in life was sacrificed to the "Lord God of Hosts." Chapels of remarkable ugliness were erected all over the land. Two things stand out in Wales; the beauty of the hills, and the horrid architecture of the average Welsh place of worship. The chapels were, of course, resisted by the Church in Wales, and the landowning class, but they had neglected the common people too long for their opposition to have any effect.

English readers will remember that in De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, he relates how he travelled in Wales and made the acquaintance of the younger members of a Welsh country family. They were able to speak English, and De Quincey spent a pleasant time in their company, until the old folk returned. They had been to a religious conference and were filled with pious gloom. When De Quincey spoke to them they replied in surly tones, "Din Saesneg." (No English).

It was considered righteous amongst the Godly to assume a morose and gloomy countenance and to be abrupt and short in manner and speech. Needless to say there was no intellectual life unless reading the Bible came under that heading. Some of the Nonconformist preachers were men of character, but their characters were formed in a narrow mould.

The little reading and writing in Welsh were almost entirely religious. And the only music produced was Welsh hymns. The hymns of the period serve as a clue to the general temper. They are filled with an almost ineffable melancholy; an unutterable mournful yearning for something irretrievably lost. No one who has been brought up on a musical diet of Welsh hymns can ever forget them. Those who are not used to them, and have not been inoculated with the virus in childhood find them unbearably sad.

But fortunately forces were being put into opera-

tion that were going to change all this. The nineteenth century with its immense commercial, industrial and political developments did not pass Wales by. It brought Wales back into the stream of life. The narrow, rigid fetters of Puritanism slowly bent and broke. Other ideas besides religious became current thought coin. Secular music won its recognition and Welshmen found there were other things in life.

Until to-day the Nonconformist churches seem to be in a process of dissolution. In the last fifty years they have gradually become more liberal. The churches are teaching certain humanistic and progressive ideas that are not strictly religious. Freethought is making a little—a very little—headway, but with the future that is for others to decide.

IDRIS LL. ABRAHAM

Correspondence

SEMI-FASCIST FINLAND

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—As you accuse me of presenting certain facts in a misleading manner, and then in your rejoinder to my letter admonish me for something else I did not actually write—added to which there are a few misprints—the readers of this controversy will, I hope, excuse me if at times I re-state what I wrote in my previous letter.

First, one small point—I did know that an old-age pension scheme was to come into force in a few months, and I "plead guilty" to the crime of forgetting to mention it.

With regard to the expulsion of the 23 Communist Deputies elected in 1929, I did not write that the rest of the Finnish Parliament (a majority of Social Democrats and Farmers) was ruled by "big business." What happened on this occasion was that 12,000 armed members of the Lappo Fascist Movement—which was built up and used by reactionary industrialists—marched on Helsinki, using the typically jingo slogan "Religion and Homeland," and demanded the expulsion of the Communists and the banning of their press.

Because, no doubt, the Social Democrats "feared bloodshed," this reactionary coup was allowed to succeed—and the Finns were "taught a lesson" for being so ignorant as to have voted for the Godless Communists.

"It should be said that Communists are not expelled the country," you note. I fail to see, Sir, any democratic virtue in this restraint; a Government cannot expel its opposition *en masse*, for there are immigration and other restrictions outside its boundaries that make wholesale export of populations impracticable. "They may not form a party," you continue; which is a confession and an illustration of the fact that Finland is—at the time of writing—a semi-Fascist country. You give the reasons that the Communists intended to overthrow the State by violence and plotted to give power in Finland to a foreign nation. There are always "reasons" for the suppression of opinion, and no matter who gives them, they are always the same—the suppressed persons are "a danger to the State."

Two years ago the Finnish Government was negotiating with the Nazi Government to lease Petsamo, ice-free port near Soviet Murmansk, to Germany—nominally for a fishery concession, but in reality for a submarine base for use against the U.S.S.R.; a proposal which was cancelled because of public outcry. This summer, too, the Cajander Government attempted to get League sanction for the fortification with Sweden of the Aaland Isles—a threat to Russia.

It is not at all stupid to say that Finland represented a threat to the Soviet Union. As long as April 17, 1919, the *Times* wrote:—

So far as stamping out the Bolshevik is concerned, we might as well send expeditions to Honolulu as to the White Sea. If we look at the map, we shall find that the

best approach to Petrograd is from the Baltic, and that the shortest and easiest route is through Finland. . . . Finland is the key to Petrograd and Petrograd is the key to Moscow.

The geography is the same as in 1919; the only thing that has changed is the name, Petrograd, to Leningrad. We know, also, that since then the Anti-Communist forces have become seriously alarmed—and desperate, even—at the success of what they contemptuously term "the Russian Experiment."

Russia tried to negotiate with Finland, as she had with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, but in the midst of the talks found the Finnish attitude suddenly change. Then came the frontier incidents, but still M. Molotov only made proposals, not demands. (Before anyone jumps at my throat with tales of massings of Red troops on borders, let him read the exchange of notes between M. Molotov and the Finnish Minister in Moscow, M. Yrjoe-Kosinen—and also the expressions of satisfaction and even gratitude from the rulers of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and their press at the conclusions of agreements between these countries and the U.S.S.R.)

Russia by her quick moves not only forestalled the Anti-Soviet intriguers in Finland (not all Finns), but is helping the Finnish people to free themselves. With the ordinary press full of stories of babies being bombed by Soviet airmen, and workers' districts being deliberately machine-gunned, most people find it difficult to think that the Russians are actually helping the Finnish people. I would ask you, Sir, and readers of the *Freethinker* to look closely at these reports. Photographs, for instance, in our national press of "bombed" Helsinki have been proved to be fakes.

Finally, Sir, you hint that I am obedient to M. Stalin's word. I am not a Communist, and I am obedient to no one—which is why I was nearly thrown out of the Labour Party not long ago. We are Freethinkers, accustomed to examine evidence, being guided by reason and not being swayed by mass suggestion; the political equivalent of the clerical hierarchy has planned its propaganda so that there is a mass suggestion that Godless Russia is the source of all "evil," and that it is sacrilege to dispute this. Do not let us be doped by this political incense.

CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL

[We have been compelled to shorten Mr. Brunel's letter by two small paragraphs and two lines, but this does not, we think, remove anything of importance. There is need only for a few brief comments on his letter.

We do not accept Mr. Brunel's presentation of Finnish affairs in the past as correct. They are partial and one-sided. But, in any case, we fail to see how the events of eleven or twelve years ago in Finland serve as a justification for Russia's invasion of Finland in 1939. Unless defiance of Russia is the Communist equivalent of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

We dissent from Mr. Brunel's implied division of the Finnish and others peoples, into Fascists and Communists. Finland has never had but a small number of Communists, and their leader, Kuusinen, Secretary of the Communist International, has been resident in Russia for many years, and now appears, in the guise of leader of the Finnish people, he was—one suspects—elected by Russia.

There is a very important distinction between suppressing an opinion and the State suppressing a party organized for the purpose of inviting a foreign power to take control. The truth of the charge is that the fictitious new Government, with its comparative handful of Finnish followers is completely under Russian control. No country in the world, certainly not Russia, would permit a society formed for the purpose of inviting foreign intervention to exist.

Par 5. What is there unusual in a country fortifying itself against attack? And in what way does Finland threaten Russia in protecting itself against invasion? One need only look at the map to see that Stalin's demands placed Finland completely at his mercy.

Par. 7. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania were not in a position to refuse Stalin's "suggestions." Had they been able to resist, would they have done so? Mr. Brunel appears to think they would not. Stalin agrees with him. Hitler's leadership is very clear here.

Stalin is in Finland to help the Finnish people to secure their freedom. That is the reason why Hitler went to Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc. But if Stalin is helping to

Finnish people at their request, to freedom, who is it that is fighting Russia, and at present holding her huge army in check? What and where is, to quote a pro-Russian paper, "the Finnish army supported by Russian troops?" The Hitlerian technique is unmistakable.

Par. 5. How does Mr. Brunel know that the probable lease of fishing rights at Petsamo to Berlin some time ago was intended for that port to be a jumping off place for an attack on Russia? We believe Russia leases some fishing grounds to Japan. What sinister purpose had Russia in doing this? Or can it be that Russia is the one country in the world that is devoid of sinister purposes?

Finally, I am not opposed to the Russian experiment at home. On the contrary I have viewed it with sympathy, and have protested against the manoeuvres of this and other countries against Russia, while pointing out the immense improvements achieved. But I am not an idolator, and I know that the Russia of Lenin has become the Russia of Stalin, and I feel that no greater dastardly attack was ever made by one country on another than that of Russia on Finland.—C.C.]

SHAKESPEARE AND DE VERE

SIR,—Mr. Cutner is mistaken. I really have no prejudice against Bacon; in fact, I am rather partial to the Bacon of the Essays. And as for bacon with a small b—but I must not be frivolous. My contention was that as the arguments adduced for de Vere were the same as those brought forward for Bacon (Mr. Cutner denies this, but he has not shown wherein they differ), two books published some years ago by J. M. Robertson and Andrew Lang, which, in my opinion, for what it is worth, finally disposed of the Baconian claims, might have some bearing on the present Oxford case. Mr. Cutner seems to be developing a habit of misrepresenting his opponents (what greater misrepresentation could there be than that of calling J. M. R. a dethroner of Shakespeare?) and of calling them names, both regrettable tendencies.

He trots out a list of "eminent Shakespearean (he means anti-Shakespearean) lawyers and scholars," who were "staggered" by Shakespeare's legal knowledge, without mentioning the much longer list of those who were not staggered, knowing that an equal or greater knowledge can be found in the works of most of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

Mr. Cutner seems to be annoyed because I said he had a hankering after Baconism. Well, he said that he did not consider that Mr. Robertson had entirely demolished the Baconian heresy, so I assumed that he held some of it at least to be still undemolished. Anyway, I apologize.

Now, if Mr. Cutner would write us an article expounding the Oxford case, and showing in what way it differs from the Bacon one, I am sure we should all be greatly edified.

A. W. DAVIS

NATURE AND NURTURE

SIR,—Mr. Thornewell, by way of "avoiding a controversy," writes "to show that there is another side to the question."

He does not write "with any idea of starting a discussion," nor, perhaps, of following one, as he has already let me deal with Gray and Anastasi without rejoinder.

He pictures me as a condescending individual who "has offered to lend him books." This is quite untrue. I have never even entertained the idea. Between complete strangers it would be a sickening patronage. The only explanation I can offer for such a queer statement is that I said, "If I wish to champion the cause of Nature v. Nurture, I shall not be unwilling to lend him Haldane, for the latter makes so many important concessions," i.e., if the opponents of eugenics wish to use Haldane in support of their case, so much the better for the other side.

Unlike Mr. Thornewell I desire to promote discussion, and that is why I have tried to present fairly the pros and cons of eugenics. My own verdict is not the reason I have given more pros than cons. My verdict is what it is because I find more pros than cons. I have tried to act as a judge and not as a propagandist. And I have not scared readers with Mr. Thornewell's Frequency

Curves because I have indicated where the mathematics of inheritance may be consulted if desired.

G. H. TAYLOR

Obituary

ARTHUR BROWN

ON Saturday, December 30, the remains of Arthur Brown were interred in the quiet churchyard at Ramsdell near Basingstoke. In his eightieth year at the time of death, he was well known in the village for his independence of thought and outlook on life and living, unselfishness, and readiness to help his fellows. For many years he had been a reader of the *Freethinker*, and remained loyal to his Freethought principles to the end. The wintry conditions seemed to add to the quiet dignity of the last scene in the churchyard, where before an assembly of relatives, friends, and villagers, a Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES. Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, near Camden Town Underground Station): 7.30, Annual Business Meeting. Members only.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandria Hotel, opposite Clapham Common Underground Station): 7.30, Mr. F. A. Ridley—"Christianity and War."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Rt. Hon. Lord Snell, P.C., C.B.E.—"The New Year, What will it Bring?"

OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon until 6 p.m. Various Speakers.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street): 7.0, Mr. T. L. Smith—"The Need of the Hour."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool): 7.0, Miss Dora Seed—A Lecture.

TEES-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Hall, Leeds Street, Stockton): 7.15—A Lecture.

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge, and that human effort should be wholly directed towards its improvement: it asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

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