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## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Farce, Fraud and Folly—The Editor</i>	593
<i>The Manfulness of Massey—Mimmermus</i>	595
<i>The Conflict of Creeds in XVI. Century France</i>	
T. F. Palmer	596
<i>Emotion in Apes—G. H. Taylor</i>	597
<i>The Function of the Clergy—T. H. Elstob</i>	598
<i>Contentment—Geo. B. Lissenden</i>	599
<i>The Problem of Style—S.H.</i>	602
<i>Books Worth While</i>	603
<i>A New Philosophy of Life—Theodore Shroeder</i>	604
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

## Views and Opinions

### Farce, Fraud and Folly

THE farce of a National Day of Prayer was duly arranged, staged and performed—with the usual consequences. Farce is the kindlier word, but it is not comprehensive enough. Fraud covers more of the ground, but to make the situation descriptively accurate we must add folly, which is consonant with sincerity, and it would be foolish to assert that there are not among us large numbers who still display that type of primitive intelligence which in spite of education—from the elementary schools to the universities is still with us. For there is after all no substantial difference between prostrating oneself before a carved idol in the South Seas and kneeling in prayer in St. Paul's or Westminster Cathedral. The primitive savage and the modern Archbishop and Cardinal are at one with their lavish praise of the national Joss, who appears to have the same appetite for flattery that a schoolboy has for toffee. The Prayer Book with its "O Almighty God, King of Kings and governor of all things save and deliver us from the hands of our enemies, abate their pride," does not materially differ in its substance from the prayer of the Zulus when going out to meet their enemies. The difference lies in the quality of the sincerity of the displayed in the two cases.

It says something that this time the papers having duly advertised that the Day of Prayer was going to happen, actually ignored it—or nearly so when it did take place. Some of the papers ignored it altogether, others reported it, but the report was more of a slight than leaving it severely alone would have been. The *Daily Telegraph*, which has tolerably open columns for some very absurd aspects of theology—Christian theology—gave seven and a half lines (narrow measure) to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and exactly the same amount to Cardinal Hinsley. Knowing each of these men (from their speeches) I do not for a moment suggest that they deserved more than the space given, I am surprised only that so respectable a paper as the *Telegraph* should have treated God's two chief representatives in this country with such scant ceremony—

even though one of them disputes the representative character of the other. There is one explanation of the silence of the press that suggests itself. To put it mildly, and from the religious point of view, heaven seems to have grossly misunderstood the purport of these organized efforts of national prayer. Each time they have been succeeded by a disaster of some sort to us or our allies. The first—a very lengthy one lasting over a week, and on the non-stop pattern, led to the disaster of Munich, which gave Hitler a commanding position in Europe, sapped the confidence of the smaller States of Europe in the Allies, and gave Germany huge stocks of arms and the possession of Czechoslovakia. The second reply was the desertion of the King of Belgium with his Army, and also to the disaster of Dunkirk, partly retrieved by the heroism of the British and French forces, and the courage of seamen and others who took part in the rescue of the troops, but which again presented Hitler with an immense quantity of arms. The third day of prayer was promptly followed by the collapse of France, and then came the fourth, and last one—up to date. The reply to this was prompt. The strength of the German attack on London was increased, and has developed in ferocity since. My familiarity with the ways of God is not so intimate as those of Messrs. Hinsley and the Archbishop of Canterbury, but it does look as though either the Lord is getting restive under the importunities of his worshippers, or that he completely misunderstands the aims and hopes of those who pray. It has been suggested that our tactics should be altered, and that the King should lead a day of prayer for Germany. Why should we bear all the consequences of annoying God Almighty?

One thought strikes us, and we admit it for all it is worth. The Archbishop of Canterbury said that September 8 was a fitting time for God's intercession since it was the first Sunday in a new year of war. That, to use a phrase that is popular with those of limited vocabulary, is intriguing. Does Dr. Lang regard the war as a kind of annual "beanfeast," but thinks the jollification is being prolonged overmuch? Or does he think that the Lord has not yet discovered that there is a world war in being, and that the Day of Prayer is a reminder to him that it is time he took a hand in the proceedings? Of course the earth is a very small speck in this universe of ours, and it is just possible that God's attention has been so much in demand in other directions that this twirling travelling speck of cosmic dust may have escaped notice. In that case we suggest that a straightforward message to the Lord on the lines of something like the following might be sent: "Referring to our messages of various dates, we beg to inform you that no reply, favourable to ourselves, has been received. What has been done is to supply something for which no request has been made, and which is in direct contradiction to what was ordered. In terms of our longstanding agreement we are willing that thine

shall be the glory; but it is quite clear that ours ought to be the profit. At present we have had nothing but losses in response to our requests."

\* \* \*

#### For those who Believe

But "prayer brings comfort to many suffering souls." Unquestionably. Never yet was an imposture practised or a delusion existing that did not please those on whom it imposed. A delusion is only operative so long as its nature is undetected. Men have given their lives as a consequence of their belief in that which has no existence outside the range of their own imagination. Hysterics have died showing the symptoms of diseases they did not have, and part of the tragedy that lies before all competent medical men is that they must often humour the fancies and delusions of their patient in order to effect a cure. Many men or women will find their troubles reduced in size and poignancy by a confidential chat with a friend, and finding comfort in a conversation with a God is an example of exactly the same kind of phenomena. No Freethinker who understands the case against religion and for a scientific Freethought would dream of denying that religious ceremonies bring comfort to those who practise them with sincerity. But the strength of the Freethought case is that it is able to explain away the illusion of a God listening to prayers by reducing religious beliefs their purely human basis.

But unfortunately it is not possible to disregard the fraud and deliberate dishonesty that lies behind much of modern professional religion. A Church is a sacred building, especially dedicated to the service of God. It is governed by men who have been specially called by God to their post. But to-day hundreds, probably thousands of Churches, have their services with an altar surrounded with sand bags, and bombproof shelters are provided for worshippers while an air raid is in progress. Advertisements are hung outside Churches giving notice of the time of services, but accompanying them is the directions telling the worshippers where they may rush from their prayers in the House of God, and find shelter in a dug-out which has never been consecrated, built by all sorts of men, and where Holy Water is displaced by tea or a whisky flask.

There are, I suspect, almost as many Cinemas in this country as Churches and other places of worship. The former are protected by prayers, and it is to God's interest to preserve them. There are no prayers said in cinemas before a performance, and we are assured by many, on account of their being open on Sunday, they are a direct threat to the belief in God. But the proportion of cinemas damaged is not very much greater than Churches. Several Churches have been hit in my own neighbourhood, but my own house has hitherto, although in a well and regularly bombed district, up to the time of writing these lines, escaped even the breaking of a window. And yet there is enough explosive matter in my library to blow up all the Churches in Christendom. King George the Sixth was at the coronation corroboree at Westminster solemnly converted by the magic of the Archbishop into a semi-deity, but with a raid on he properly seeks shelter just as though he were an ordinary unsanctified dustman.

Among all the plans that have been devised to secure a more rapid supply of armaments no one has suggested prayer as a method of increasing the output. And if it were proposed that each man and woman engaged in making or preparing weapons of war should have one hour per day to petition the aid of the deity, the reply would certainly be that we cannot afford to waste so many hours of labour. Not even Cardinal Hinsley would support such a proposal. Of course a

man of the type of character as Lord Halifax might again remind us that we could form praying circles, but when he made his well-known suggestion that we should do so and pray daily it was with the proviso that it should be done by those who had nothing else to do. The King attended service on the National Day of Prayer (as one monarch to another), and afterwards inspected some of the Horse Guards. We dare wager that if he had to choose between more prayers and more Guardsmen, he would vote with both hands in favour of more soldiers.

I have headed these notes Farce, Fraud and Folly because I believe this accurately sums up the situation, and puts those who indulge in prayer in their proper categories. Prayer is one of the earlier manifestations of religious belief, and there it manifests itself in two forms. First, it often has a coercive semi-magical value in inducing the god to whom it is directed to do what is required. In such cases it is not easy to distinguish a prayer from a magical spell. But as the spell loses its potency the helplessness of man throws him back on petitioning the god who has charge of the rain or the crops, or who may help to satisfy human needs and desires. And this note of helplessness continues until to-day. Men never pray for what they can obtain or accomplish for themselves, neither do they pray for the obviously helpless. Men do pray for recovery from a fever, because the cause and the cure of fevers are obscure, at least to the patient and probably to the doctor. But who prays for a leg that has been cut off to be put on again? Dr. Inge says that the very definite promises made by Jesus with regard to prayer appear to be contradicted by experience. "Appears" is a very mild term. They have been contradicted by the common sense of human experience. They belong to the phase of experience which may well be characterized as Folly.

After folly comes fraud, for every priesthood the world has known sooner or later tries to perpetuate the folly on which they live by the fraud they practise. Gibbon said that in the later days of ancient Rome, two Augurs (priests) could not pass each other in the street without a smile. If that is not the case to-day, it is not because there is less fraud, but because the modern priest has better control over his facial muscles. Roman Catholic practise is full of methods of obtaining patronage and support that if practised in the secular business world would land a man in prison. Protestant priests are not quite so flagrant in their practice, but in substance it falls well into line with the older priesthood. How many clergymen offer prayers for rain, knowing quite well that they might as well stand on their heads and whistle "Pop goes the Weasel." How many have taken part in this ridiculous National Day of Prayer who realize as well as we do that prayer has no more effect on the course of this war than has the carrying of a rabbit's foot? How many of our teachers of religion are there who talk of the power of prayer when they are quite aware that it is no more than a game of self-deception, even when it is honestly made? It is at that stage that fraud commands the stage, and it is in that condition that the majority of the more intelligent of our clergy are to-day.

Folly, Farce and Fraud I think correctly describes the history of prayer. It was folly, but unavoidable folly when our primitive ancestors knelt in fear and believed they could by their adulation get something they needed. It was, and is, fraud when educated priests, living in a scientific era, frame and use, formulae which properly belong to the Stone Age. And it is folly to find a nation that is struggling for its continued existence, falling back upon prayers and petitions that are worthy only of savages.

## The Manfulness of Massey

The genius that can stand alone  
As the minority of one,  
Or with the faithful few be found  
Working and waiting till the rest come round.

Gerald Massey

GERALD MASSEY, poet, reformer and scholar, had a very interesting career. To use Browning's expressive phrase, he was "ever a fighter." He fought every day of his long life, which was prolonged beyond the usual span, and his sword was in his hand until the day of his death. Massey's early life is the grimmest of comments on "the good, old days." Son of a bargeman, he was born in the grip of poverty. At an age when fortunate children were at school, he was working in a mill for eleven hours daily at the weekly wage of one shilling. This was not the worst. He became a stow-plaiter, and for three years lived in the shadow of starvation, often prostrated by illness. Writing of that awful, early life of his, he said afterwards, "I had no childhood." Think of it! The author of those beautiful and tender poems, "Babe Christabel," and "The Mother's Idol Broken," "had no childhood." It is a tragedy "too deep for tears."

In spite of all drawbacks young Massey learned to read and write, and became familiar with *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. Brave, old Bunyan and unabashed Defoe are not bad schoolmasters for a quick, intelligent boy, for they wrote their books in two languages, in literature and in life. At fifteen years of age Massey came to London and became an errand-boy. In the great Metropolis books were procurable, and his literary appetite was voracious. He read everything he could lay his hands on, "going without meals to buy books, and without sleep to read them." What a picture of the past, the old days of storm and peril, when the pioneers arose almost every day to meet a fresh difficulty or a new danger. For Massey lived right through a stern period of English liberty. It was during this time that he laid the foundations of that wide knowledge which later made him one of the noted critics and scholars of his time.

The revolutionary movements of 1848 greatly impressed Massey, and many of his verses are the direct outcome of this time of struggle. Republicanism was in the air, and he became a Republican. At twenty-one he was editing the *Spirit of Freedom*, a revolutionary paper, mainly written by himself. Then he contributed to Thomas Cooper's Journal, and other Democratic periodicals. He became known, and numbered among his associates Charles Kingsley the novelist, and F. D. Maurice, the friend of Tennyson.

Massey's first book of verse was issued when he was but nineteen years of age. Later came his *Voices of Freedom*, which showed a notable advance. Hepworth Dixon of the *Athenæum* was attracted by the fiery "Song of a Red Republican," and recognized it as the work of a man who had something to say and could say it well. Among the admirers which Massey's poems won for him were Landor, Ruskin, Tennyson and Lytton. A greater honour awaited him, for "George Eliot" made him her model for the hero of "Felix Holt," which was like having his name written in gold on the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

It was *Babe Christabel* which made Massey famous. With this he stormed the bastions of success. Landor praised it, and the author was hailed as a rising star. Next, the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny roused the poet, and he never sang so finely as in his *War Waits*, a volume worth reprinting. He was never so near being a great poet. One of his poems, "Scarlett's Three Hundred," indeed, challenges comparison

with Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade."

It was at this period that Massey's life altered its direction. In the maturity of his poetic power, he deliberately put aside the laurel wreath and the applause of literature, and devoted himself to the nobler work of the emancipation of his fellows. He turned away from verse-writing and put all his energies to a scholarly and philosophic exposure of the greatest religious fraud of all the ages. His books, *The Book of Beginnings*, *The Natural Genius*, *Ancient Egypt*, *The Light of the World*, are works of scholarship and have to be reckoned with. In thousands of pages Massey shows Ancient Egypt as the Motherland of Superstition, and points out clearly that the holy mother and child, the one a virgin and the other a god, were worshipped in Egypt many centuries before the Christian Era. In a pregnant passage in *The Natural Genesis*, Massey says:—

The writer has not only shown that the current theology is, but also how it has been, falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man and ignorantly mistaking these for divine revelations.

It was by no means an easy or a profitable task that the poet-scholar had imposed upon himself. In the noble dedicatory verses of *The Natural Genesis* he shows, with real pathos, the isolation of a scholar's life. He compares himself to a diver whose friends and relatives watch anxiously for his return:—

Year after year went by,  
And watchers wondered when  
The diver to their welcoming cry  
Of joy, would rise again.

And still rolled on Times wave,  
That shortened as it passed;  
The ground is getting toward the grave  
That I have reached at last.

Child after child would say—  
"Ah! when his work is done,  
Father will come with us and play"  
'Tis done. And playtime's gone.

A willing slave for years,  
I strove to set men free;  
Mine were the labours, hopes, and fears,  
Be theirs the victory.

Writing to Dr. E. B. Aveling, and referring to G. W. Foote, Massey said: "I fight the same battle as himself, although with a somewhat different weapon." Massey wished clearly to be reckoned as a fellow-soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity. Yet at his death, the "glorious free press of England" concealed entirely that the scholar-poet was a Freethinker. One specially "Liberal" newspaper proudly claimed him as a "Christian-Socialist." The plain truth is that Massey spent half of a very lengthy life in showing the mythical and legendary nature of the Christian Religion. And he did wisely. The instinct of Massey's maturity, which led him to forsake the slopes of Parnassus for the battlefield of Freethought, was a perfectly sound one. His poetry largely belongs to the Victorian era of the nineteenth century, but his exhaustive and scholarly criticism of Christianity has helped materially, to widen knowledge and to hasten the dawn of Freedom. Through all the charlatanism of superstition he went his quiet way making notes. Far off, the murmurs of the busy and noisy world sounded but dimly; but he wrote his books and brought his knowledge to his fellow men. He was content, for he knew that he worked at the looms of the future.

MIMNERMUS

## The Conflict of Creeds in XVI Century France

APART from the heresy trials and executions, the English Reformation was effected with comparatively little bloodshed. But on the Continent, in the Netherlands, France and Germany, the revolt against Rome was the occasion of a sacrifice of human life on a stupendous scale, especially in the Thirty Years' War which devastated and demoralized Germany from 1618 to 1648.

In adjoining France, religious conflicts cursed the country from 1559 to 1598. Protestants termed Huguenots became noticeable especially in cities among workmen and traders and, it is said, that nearly half a million of these dissidents existed in 1558. Their numbers rapidly increased and the erection and organization of their churches were directed by Calvin himself. But their enmity towards their Catholic neighbours soon manifested itself in conflict. As Dr. J. P. Whitney states in his *History of the Reformation* (Church Historical Society, New Edition, 1940, 12s. 6d.): "A statue of the Madonna was mutilated (1528) and placards coarsely denouncing the Mass were posted up (1534): the passions of hostile mobs were stirred. There were mutterings of storms to come. Some twenty-three were executed: Louis de Berquin, a well-known scholar . . . had been in trouble over the possession of heretical books (1523): he was thrown into prison (1528), then released by the King, but burnt later on. A liberal grant of money from the Church, and the hope of help from Lutherans in Germany were pushing the monarch in different directions. Flirtation with heretics abroad, joined with a real passion for the wealthy orthodox at home made for instability in a sovereign's rule."

So much for the consistency of his most Christian Majesty, Francis I., in whose reign the shameful harriving of the inoffensive Waldenses in Provence took place. But the vindictive and intolerant clergy were mainly responsible for their sufferings and sacrifice at the stake. For when Francis was inclined to protect them, their clerical detractors accused these harmless heretics of treason and other crimes against the State. So some 3,000 men, women and children were slaughtered; some of the men were sentenced to the galleys, while other survivors fled to Switzerland.

When Francis was at variance with the Catholic Emperor, Charles V., he favoured toleration, but when they composed their quarrels, heresy hunts and executions were the fashion. With Francis' death, his successor Henry II., intensified the persecutions his father had begun and many Protestants went to the stake.

Nevertheless, heresy increased. Calvin despatched 100 well-trained pastors to preach his doctrines. Among the converts were several influential notabilities including Louis de Condé and scions of the Bourbon family.

On the other side, the powerful Guise family played a pronounced part in the impending tragedy. The murder a member of their group by a Huguenot firebrand intensified the hatred of the Guises towards their enemies, for the assassin under torture implicated Beza—a prominent Calvinist—and the Huguenot Admiral Coligny in the crime. Thus the path was well prepared for the calamities to come.

The Catholic party fanned the flame, and in 1562 the Duke of Guise with his armed retainers burst into an unauthorized assembly at Vassy, slaughtered twenty Huguenot worshippers and maltreated many more. Open warfare resulted. Condé, the Protestant leader occupied Orleans and converted it into a centre of military operations. The Calvinists were massacred in several cities including Toulouse, and the Parliament of Paris outlawed them. Yet, despite trampling soldiers,

there were interludes of peace and efforts were made to arrange a settlement.

Plots and counter plots abounded. Both national and international interests were involved. With the death of Henry II., and the accession of his son, his widow, Catherine de Medici became the real ruler of France. A worldly-wise woman, she played off one faction against another until the complexities of conflicting interests culminated in the revolting massacre of Bartholomew in 1572.

Faced with the danger of Civil War, Catherine strove to preserve peace by skilfully balancing the contending parties. She called de l'Hôpital to her aid in the interests of toleration, while the more enlightened members of the Parliament of Paris recommended banishment instead of burning as a punishment for heresy. But the death penalty was still imposed, and the orthodox rabble sometimes took the law into their own hands, while Calvinist mobs desecrated and despoiled churches, the famous Abbey at Caen suffering severely.

Now, however, even the Guise Cardinal of Lorraine advocated clemency, and Coligny presented a petition urging the cessation of persecution and the right to erect Huguenot temples. The Chancellor, l'Hôpital also favoured toleration at a gathering of the States-General in 1560, while the Church was assailed as a too-wealthy and masterful institution, and the payment of Crown debts from Church revenues was proposed.

Francis II. died in 1560, and his heir was a mere child of ten. Catherine, his mother, remained the real sovereign, although the boy Charles IX. was nominally King. Confronting the Queen, however, stood Admiral Coligny, a distinguished commander, a patriot, and a devoted adherent of Calvinism. Moreover, a marriage between Catherine's daughter and the Protestant Henry of Navarre was duly celebrated in Paris in 1572, and the optimists hailed this union as the harbinger of serener days. But Coligny's growing influence over the young king induced Catherine to procure the Admiral's death, but the shots of the hired assassin were ineffective and Coligny recovered from his wounds.

This atrocity infuriated the Admiral's adherents, and reprisals were instantly demanded. All hope for tranquility was abandoned, so Catherine and her advisers elaborated a more extensive scheme. All the Huguenot leaders, save the younger Condé and Navarre were singled out for destruction. The King reluctantly consented, and the holocaust commenced on St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1572. In Whitney's words: "The Duke of Guise himself saw to the murder of the wounded Admiral; the King with the hysterical passion of a convert, shot Huguenots from his window, and a general massacre went on in the city all day. Then, by royal order, the same bloodshed followed in cities from Meaux to Toulouse. There was a greatness and yet a vagueness about the number slain which deepened the horror, felt and expressed in many lands except in Italy, Spain and Switzerland. Estimates of the number vary from 10,000 to 100,000 (which is far too high); the smaller number is nearer the mark: in Paris itself about 2,000 perished."

This dastardly deed completely failed to achieve its intended effect. Calculated, as it was, in cold blood and relentlessly executed, this wholesale carnage, instead of removing differences, deeply embittered every relation between the conflicting cults. The Papacy was apparently unaware of the projected massacre until its occurrence, but greatly rejoiced when the truth was made known. The Holy Father, Gregory XIII. wished to illuminate Rome in celebration of the massacre, but was restrained from this by the remonstrances

of the French Ambassador. Still, the Pope welcomed the atrocity as a divine deliverance.

The surviving Huguenots prepared their defences and hostilities began. Catherine, however, was anxious for peace, so terms were submitted and the Peace of La Rochelle was signed. A modicum of liberty was granted, but political dissensions and sectarian rancour soon occasioned further bloodshed. The Duke of Guise and his brother, the Cardinal, were murdered by their political rivals in 1588. Catherine died shortly afterwards, and her then reigning son, Henry III. was stabbed to death by a Dominican fanatic in 1589. This tragedy terminated the inglorious line of the Valois rulers of France.

Henry of Navarre became the leading aspirant to the vacant throne. In a State distracted by personal, political and religious animosities, a professed Protestant prince had almost insuperable difficulties to surmount. Henry's sagacious adviser, the convinced Calvinist, Sulley, in view of the perplexities of the situation, counselled his master to publicly recant his theological opinions. So it was officially announced that Henry decided to become a convert to Catholicism. Then, having signed his Abjuration, he was solemnly received into the Roman Church by the Archbishop of Bourges in 1593. Clerical opposition gradually faded away in France, and although the Pope somewhat tardily and suspiciously accepted the Absolution and Reception, the city after acknowledging Henry who, in February, 1574, marched into Paris as sovereign, a success regarded as well worth a Mass.

Henry IV. pursued a conciliatory policy and strove for religious peace. But many Huguenots, despite the larger liberties accorded them, were seething with resentment and disappointment. Still, although they practically raised a standard of rebellion, the philosophic Henry ignored their truculent conduct, and trusted in the powers of negotiation to produce appeasement. This took place at a time when the Huguenots had greatly decreased in number, but from this Conference emerged the celebrated Edict of Nantes.

Many Catholics regarded the Edict with sullen resentment and dislike. Its liberal provisions conceded ampler freedom of worship, assembly and service to heretics, than orthodoxy favoured. The Huguenots were now fully entitled to all civic rights and protection, while every trading and industrial facility was afforded them.

With all his all-too human frailties Henry IV. of France well merits the late Professor Stubbs' eulogium, "that he had a true love for his people, and a clear perception of all their best interests. To them he was a good King, the only good King since St. Louis."

Henry of Navarre's able and upright minister, the Duke of Sulley did his utmost to restore France to a state of prosperity. But sectarian fanaticism, venom and folly craved one more victim and the tolerant Henry IV. was stabbed to death by the demented Ravaillac, on his way to a visit to Sulley. But Henry's life and tragic death were not in vain, and at a later day, the enlightened and astute Richelieu successfully resumed the policy pursued by his murdered predecessor.

T. F. PALMER

## Emotion in Apes

WHEN he fired a gun Kohler saw his animals turn their backs and raise their arms protectively in human fashion. This turning away at 180 degrees was the characteristic response for fear. On the other hand anger (thwarted movement) directed the ape towards the object. For instance, a growling dog on the other side of the bars had stones thrown at it by the apes, the stones hitting the bars. Tschego, a non-thrower, was evidently approaching the throwing stage, since she tore grass up and dashed her blanket about. She understood the use to which stones could be put. On account of her size Kohler used stones as the safest means of punishing her; she sometimes ran up to him, took the stone from him, coolly threw it to the ground and walked away. In Chica's case, stone-throwing was a favourite outlet for emotion, and when overjoyed she would playfully hurl them at Tschego's ample back.

In fire the apes found an object interesting but unpleasant to approach too near; they therefore poked it with sticks. This going for the spatial direction of what excites emotion was evident when an ape was isolated from his comrades. Displaying signs of grief he would extend his arms towards the others or even hurl objects imploringly. Isolated from the rest, but in sight and easy reach of them, Sultan threw pebbles towards, not at, Tschego, who had often shared fruit with him. He would also push twigs towards her with a stick.

Apes separated from the little community would risk their lives to get back, and quite lose their appetite. If they hear him the others show sympathy, but they are still a group and therefore not much upset. If they neither see nor hear him they will not worry about his absence.

It is not the fact that the isolated ape is shut up by himself that makes him want to get back. If the group is shut up in a cage and the isolated one outside, he still does his utmost to get in with them.

There is great mutual joy on the return of a wanderer, especially if the latter is the leader. Nevertheless the apes would be more urgently concerned about buried fruit rather than about an absent comrade.

If an excluded animal pleads for food the others will be generous according to mood. As at other times they will break a banana in half for another ape. In the interests of an experiment Sultan especially would be isolated, and in the interests of science would also have to fast a little occasionally. Tschego was seen to feed him until her sexual cold phase began. During her sexual flow, with sex quiescent her temper became more amiable. Grande, the next oldest, remained sexually indifferent to the males, and was thus left alone by them sexually, though they remained good playfellows.

The behaviour of the chimpanzees showed them capable of a good deal of affection, not only for an ape friend but also for Kohler. They were more prone to side with their own kind against Kohler than *vice versa*. They would howl if he struck one of their number, and if the offence took place outside their stockade they would rush angrily to the rails. Hearing Kohler punishing some ape out of sight Konsul came running round at the cries of distress, and this little male especially would hit out at a man. (A cock will also dash up belligerently to the chaser of hens, but usually has not the courage to attack.)

Kohler found that the most trivial causes, or even the pretence at a blow, would sometimes cause a frightful collective demonstration. Once Kana, who had been playing happily with him a minute before, sprang at his neck.

Every new ruler, when he has ceased to wield the new broom, tends to become either a king stork that does mischief, or a king log that does nothing.

Herbert Spencer

The intelligent Sultan was quick to make capital out of this general readiness to take the part of an imagined victim. He would adopt the role of the wronged, and with great acting ability would deliberately incite the others to a demonstration of fury. He would hop about, choking with his glottal cramp, screaming and whining, especially to the big Tschego, and when they came to his aid he would shriek challengingly at the innocent Kohler or some other selected victim.

Much of Sultan's behaviour was vicious, and not less so as it approached human standards. We all know the human failing of "taking it out of the office boy." When very young, Sultan was not able to tackle Kohler, and so he vented his anger on his disliked Chica!

Sultan also provides an interesting exception to the general characteristic of defending a comrade against Kohler. He would leap angrily at an animal scolded by Kohler, and would sometimes attack it afterwards. This may have been love for Kohler, but more probably it was the old human failing which seeks some object on which to vent moral indignation. Humans have always loved to be morally indignant! The psychoanalyst might call it a sacrifice to the Super-Ego, and I see no reason why such picturesque terminology should not be accepted as an exact label for the prosaic workings of the mind.

Towards Kohler the animals normally had warm feelings: one of them, rapped for the first time, was heartbroken and threw her arms round his neck till she was forgiven and petted. Some, after having raged at being punished, would later come up very close to him and beg forgiveness, pressing his fingers to their lips. Each morning the animals gave him an impetuous greeting. Was it mere "cupboard love"? Then why did they not immediately make for the food, instead of first romping about him in joy while the breakfast waited? When the job of feeding them was taken over by someone else, Kohler still stood above him in their affections.

Apes have been found to classify humans just as they classify themselves. Put together at random, apes have been observed to show, in a short time, bosses and semi-bosses, friendships and even quite detailed social relations. Their feelings about human beings can be tested by the latter having sham fights in view of the apes. If their man is seen to be getting the worst of it they whine in dismay, and likewise exult when he appears victorious. Usually the keeper is for them socially superior to the experimenter, and the latter above any stranger that might be introduced. When Kohler shouted to some people to go away the apes were vehemently on his side, though they had taken no notice of the people before.

Two newcomers, Nueva and Koko, had inadvertently been left out overnight and there was a very cold rain. Hearing their cries Kohler went to let them into their sleeping quarters. Before they went in, and in spite of the rain, they embraced him warmly in gratitude. It is most evident, then, that an emotional state can push practical advantage into the background. How a rigidly mechanical behaviourist psychology would deal with this situation is uncertain. The ape mind, let alone the human, is seen to be capable of a richness of experience not allowed for on narrow behaviourist data.

Pathetic incidents occurred also in the painful and fatal illness of little Konsul, who had not an enemy in the stockade. Once during a slight temporary recovery he was allowed to hobble as best he could to the others, who at once manifested great concern. Over-taxing his now feeble strength he collapsed. Both Rana and Tercera, themselves two of the least intelligent of the animals, attempted most gently to lift him to his feet. Tercera was extremely maternal, and in

the end Rana was the last to fondle the dead body of the little friend who had accepted her when she had been generally rejected by the others.

G. H. TAYLOR

(To be concluded)

## The Function of the Clergy

"THE Yankee at the Court of King Arthur" had the quite exceptional good fortune to knock up against St. Simon Stylites. The Yankee was a cute boy, and he had not observed this unpleasant saint standing on his column for more than a couple of minutes before he noticed that the Saint's habit of transferring his weight rhythmically from one foot to another was one of the most useful motions in practical mechanics. So Mark Twain describes how the Boss had a system of cords attached to Simon's feet and a sewing machine operated by him. People in the days of King Arthur were prejudiced against the use of under-garments so Twain describes how St. Simon was instrumental in turning out plain shirts for the men and a more ornate affair for the women, by the million, thus instituting an excellent habit and making a fine practical use of the saint, a process less ingenious minds would have despaired of.

The story comes into one's mind at the present day when many people are raising the old question (with slightly different implications): What is the use of the Clergy? The Clergy are exempted in this war from actual physical combat, and when it is the duty of all good men and true to come to the aid of the country, the man who can *think* of practical schemes is himself by way of becoming a benefactor. And yet, taking the claims of the clergy at a small fraction of their face value, they should be indeed a very pleasant help in time of trouble.

Take for instance the food supply. The Bishop of Ely told us about a year ago, at a time of disappointment with the crops in East Anglia, that it appeared that a malignant spirit was interfering with the harvests in that area. What was required, it was obvious, was the proper religious approach, so that the work of the devil, and his regiments, could be combated and brought to nought. *Exorcism*, in short. Well, this exorcising was once a prominent clerical function which has regrettably been allowed to fall into disuse. The Exorcist was a bug in the Holy Roman Church, and enjoyed a special office. His duties are now carried on by the general priesthood, a regrettable lack of concentration which in the present circumstances we can plainly see the evil of. If the idea of the Bishop of Ely is true, or even partially true, the exorcising of the evil spirits that interfere with our food supplies should be restored to the body politic as a major religious function. We are so continually being told that there are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. All right then, give the Bishop of Ely, and those who think with him, his chance. Give him a Special Department in the Government Offices, roll-top desk and carpet complete, and let him get on with it. Any kind of experiment is worth trying once, and negative results can be as valuable on occasions as positive ones. In the event of failure, man's energies can be transferred promptly to more remunerative channels.

And those of our dear Bishops who exercise their craft each year in blessing the nets. Cannot something be done with them? In the North of England particularly, but in fishing ports all over the country, the ceremony of blessing the nets by Church high functionaries goes on annually, and we presume that results accrue from the display. The increase in the herring

and mackerel catch cannot be proved, but then we are frequently being reminded that man cannot be saved by logic. A passion for figure's argues an unhelpful type of mind. So another office could be instituted. The Blessing of the Nets Department, and the cleric could have one more opportunity of showing his fighting weight.

And Lord Halifax should be taken seriously. He is a serious man. If there is anything at all in what he suggests, then his praying circles should be instituted on a huge scale, and another Roll Top Desk brought into requisition at Whitehall; one more carpet should be indented for. And when they are about it, this isolation of the prayer department should be in the nature of a *controlled* experiment run in a scientific way so that the results would be for all time demonstrable, and the sceptical confounded. A minor result, but valuable! And the *major* result! What an opportunity!

But this is submitting God to scientific experiment, we will be told. Professor Tyndall was a scientific man who was willing to learn, and a couple of generations ago he suggested that, in our hospitals, wards should be cut off from the main building, and all patients, if there were any, who were willing to submit their fate to Prayer, should be kept rigidly to these wards. Then the results could be observed, put in a notebook, coned, and conclusions come to. A perfectly straightforward experiment but, my word, how religious people did wriggle. "Are we going to submit God to a scientific experiment? Gentlemen, we are not. With all respect, we do object."

And yet God himself did not object to scientific experiment. Elijah was a Man of God and he saw the value of it, being an honest man in that respect at least. He was chief actor in a praying competition with the prophets of Baal. Right well did he stick up for the Father of Jesus, he put all his money on him, cheerfully. The followers of Baal prayed for fire from Heaven, and they prayed hard did these Baal-ites. Cutting themselves with knives till the blood gushed out upon them. But this didn't impress Elijah. He walked up and down amongst them mocking them and suggesting that their God was on holiday. It is from this object lesson of Elijah, the representative of God, that Christians have learned the lesson of respect for other men's beliefs, so noticeable in them in the pages of history, a characteristic which has existed unto the present day. In response to the prayers of Elijah, when his turn came God sent down lashings of fire.

So the Father of Jesus sent down fire from heaven, and the prophets of Baal couldn't manage one little flame. God spoke in answer to Elijah. God took care that Elijah was justified and Elijah was so cock-a-hoop about it, so much the more respectful about the wrong beliefs of other religious people, that he set upon the priests of Baal, and murdered the lot. "See that not one escape."

Yes, it is evident that God himself, the real God, chief partner in the Trinity, is quite ready to submit himself to scientific experiment. It is therefore just a piece of characteristic impudence in our clergy to pretend that a little science in these matters would be objected to by the first person in the Trinity and object so strongly that he would send even more horrible things upon this earth of our to show how annoyed he was.

These are the times, surely, for trying out these clerical claims. In the National interest, Lord Halifax should be removed from his present office and appointed Chief Liaison Office with God. Quite an important job it would be. And even sceptics, in the interests of truth, would have no objection to Lord Halifax having a very nice room, something special in Roll Tops, and a particularly pretty carpet.

T. H. ELSTOB

## Contentment

CONTENTMENT is a disease which afflicts the majority of us. We naturally incline to the easy way of life, rest on our oars and often—drift!

When we are young we think much more of enjoying ourselves, as we see other youngsters doing, than devoting our time and attention to serious matters, and the habit which we thus acquire remains with most of us throughout our lives. But we have to pay for this in the long run, because it often happens that contentment breeds indolence and laziness—if not apathy—and then the disease is likely to become fatal. The Romans are said in the end to have suffered from this affliction—with dire consequences.

The truth is an easy life is not good for any man—good, that is, in the sense of enabling him to achieve that which is best in him. As individuals or peoples we all require an occasional stimulant—something, that is to say, which compels us, perhaps even against our will, to be ever watchful and combative, if not actually engaged in open rebellion and warfare. Warfare here, needless to say, is meant to imply mental and not physical combat. To be at variance with some one, and occasionally to cross swords with him, good humouredly and understandingly, is helpful to every man. By that means we can rub off the rough corners of our minds and sharpen our wits.

For example, the subject for discussion may be religion—about which our opponent appears to know so little, and about which we think we know so much. We have a real, good verbal tussle with him, but make no headway—or so we think—because his beliefs are obviously ingrained in him, and he sticks to them through thick and thin and in spite of all that we say. Or the topic may be capitalism or socialism, or one of the many other "isms" that are debated from time to time when men are in an argumentative mood. But the ultimate effect of the argument, either upon our opponent or ourselves, can very rarely be measured, exactly. We may start out to convert someone else to our way of thinking, only to be converted to his! Many a one has got to grips with Freethought with the object of sounding its death-knell and left the contest a wiser and better man.

That is one of the benefits of study—no matter whether this takes the form of open and friendly debate, the reading of books or any other human effort: at the outset we may have some fixed idea in our heads, and feel quite sure that all that we have to do is to listen to what the other man has to say on the subject to realize the strength of our own position, only to find that eventually, well, our case isn't quite so unassailable as we thought it was.

Of course, there is no such thing as finality—or even truth, for what we commonly call "truth" is but the sum-total of our knowledge at the moment and must, therefore, be open to revision in the light of any new knowledge that may come our way. For that reason we cannot, generally speaking, be dogmatic. Admittedly, we can take our stand upon known facts, and be quite safe with those for the while. For instance, we may to-day declare with safety that the earth goes round the sun, and deny what was once held to be an unquestionable fact, namely, that the sun goes round the earth; we can now also say with confidence that this planet on which we live is but one of very many, and not entirely on its own in a limited space, as was once taught and firmly believed.

But we live in an ever-changing world, a world in which almost everything and everybody is being submitted to a laboratory test, as it were. And so long as men and their moods and motives, as well as everything with which they are concerned, are being thus

studied in groups and in isolation, measured and analysed with increasing accuracy, just so long must we exercise caution when trying to come to a conclusion. And whatever conclusion we come to we must always be prepared to abandon it if the advance of science makes this necessary.

Contentment leads to stagnation and decay; whereas discontentment makes for enlightenment and progress. But discontentment must be intelligently directed into channels which have been sounded and charted if any real and lasting good is to be effected. We have only to think of some of the foolish things that we ourselves have done, and to look around and about us and denote what other people are doing right under our very eyes, to be convinced of this.

Ever since the world began there has been a struggle between the contents and the discontents, between those who were satisfied with things as they were, and those who were keen upon some reform—Buddha, Confucius, and Christ, as ancients, and Paine and Carlyle and Darwin, Foote and Bradlaugh, as moderns, spring instantly to one's mind in this connexion—and whenever the reformer has seen the light, as it were, and given the proper direction to his followers, or rather, indicated what is likely to be the result if they adopt a different course of thought and action, humanity has benefited. Every reform that has so far been effected has been the outcome of a clash of ideas, a collision between the discontents and the contents, and whenever and wherever there is dissatisfaction with the established order of things, there is evidence of a desire for betterment.

GEO. B. LISSENDEN

## Acid Drops

A Preacher's Trade Union is being formed on such lines as to make it possible for it to be affiliated to the Trade Union Congress. The principal in this attempt is the Rev. Robert Dobie, and he explains that the idea is "to show that we have an identity of interest with workers." But the only feature we perceive in common with the "workers," is the desire to see that the "lower" orders of the clergy get a living wage. This is a quite legitimate desire, although it does not show much confidence in the text, the Lord will provide.

But one weapon wielded by the Trades Unions is the right to strike. How will that affect the Preacher's Union? Will they also go on strike? And will the general public be so eager for "spiritual ministrations," that it will be very much angered if the Preachers do not preach? Somehow we cannot picture the public seriously disturbed by the fact that a number of Ministers are on strike. And if the Preachers do not use the right to strike, the principal weapon of the Trades Union will be lacking.

The Vatican is seriously concerned about the existence of its organ the *Osservatore Romano*. It is believed that it may be suppressed if it does not commit suicide. So it is expected that it will be replaced by a daily paper, edited by Jesuits. Well the Vatican has had to do with the suppression of large numbers of books and pamphlets in its time, and it may be well for it to have a dose of its own medicine.

The *Church Times* now admits pathetically that the Army has not been captured by the Church. "Ecclesiastical authority has entirely failed," it wails, "to secure in all camps even that modicum of opportunity for worship which is pledged by law in King's Regulations." And it adds:—

Nearly everything seems to depend in practice on the spiritual keenness of the local commanding officer, or the capacity of the local chaplain—if any—to persuade him up to a sense of his men's religious obligations. Some commanders are a source of unflinching spiritual strength. Others are merely cells for secularism. . . .

and so on. This is extremely good news—it is certainly a splendid thing to learn that after all some commanding officers

are cells of "secularism." And we hope that every Freethinker in the Army will take advantage of such chances to protest against the absurdity of sending unbelievers to religious services which they rightly despise.

In *Barbarians and Philistines*, the author, Mr. T. C. Worsley, we are pleased to note, attacks public schools; and in his ideal school religion would not be taught at all except if necessary "the Scriptures be taught as literature." "Let the righteous capture the children if they can in their Sunday schools," he adds, "and preach to them there if they will listen. . . . The average public schoolboy believes in nothing at all. . . ."—while in schools "Christianity means nothing." As Mr. Worsley was a schoolmaster himself it must be presumed that he knows what he is talking about. But it makes very painful reading for those who believe that our young generation will see a revival of Christianity, and who still delude themselves that the world will surely go back to the very primitive type of religious nonsense believed in by Paul and Jesus.

The Bible—that is the whole unadulterated Bible—seems to be having a very rough time these days. Faced with the fact that nobody ever reads it, desperate efforts are being made to bring its "beauties" before the average man and woman in the shape of "The Bible as Literature," or "The Bible for Business Men," or similar compilations. The latest, edited by Arthur Burrell, "is a war-time issue of shortened Scriptures which claims to give the essential, proverbial, and memorable parts of the Authorized Version." It need hardly be said that this "Shorter Bible" omits dozens of the passages which other people would call "memorable, proverbial, and essential," and in any case we wonder who wants to read it or buy it? The Bible-lover insists upon an abridged version; and wild horses would not make most people these days read a shorter version except as "literature"—or for fun.

Something ought to be done with the "Thought for the Day horror," the B.B.C. has inflicted on the world of listeners. It has had several new ones lately but they appear to be escapes from some home for the mentally deficient. Even a woman was tried for a week. Perhaps this was done to prove that if men can be stupid and boring so can women. But for childish commonplaces, cheap evangelistic propaganda, and religious platitudes nothing like it has ever been put before the world by a public, in substance, a national institution. It is enough to make one fancy that this 7.55 religious talk is controlled by Goebbels, who is using the B.B.C. to prove to the world that even though the British can fight, the nation is mentally decrepit. We can stand the nightly bombing, but to have this concentrated idiocy put upon one morning after morning is enough to break down anyone's nerve.

It may be asked, Why listen? The answer is supplied by the religious, but dishonest cunning of the B.B.C. If it had this exhibition of religious idiocy at the beginning or end of the day the directors of religion are quite aware that very few would listen to it. If it preceded or followed a not generally attractive item the same result would follow. If before the seven o'clock news those who were up would be busy in other directions. But the eight o'clock news in these days is an item that practically all can listen to. But the most important items of the news occur at the beginning, and to make sure this is not missed all listeners turn on a few minutes before time. And then they rush right into the middle of this religious slush and its semi-moronic owner. It is the vilest outrage of the war.

The 6 o'clock evening service at Westminster Abbey is to be discontinued owing to war conditions. This, so soon after the National Day of Prayer is disastrous. Things are going from bad to worse. Altars are sandbagged, valuable fittings are taken out of the Churches and hidden away, Churches are bombed as frequently as any other building, the King who ordered a Day of Prayer just escaped being bombed in his own dwelling-place, and now it is announced that a six o'clock service is abandoned although cinemas are open later—without God's protection. It looks as though God is one of the casualties of the war.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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

## Sugar Plums

Last week's issue of the *Freethinker* was produced under very trying conditions. There was not time even to correct the proofs properly, and we can rely upon the goodwill of all our readers to overlook faults that occurred. There has also been, we know, delays in delivery. All we can say on that head is that the paper left the office at the usual time. If those who have not received their copies by the time this issue is in their hands, will let us know, we will do what we can, so far as spare copies go, to make good their loss.

The *Freethinker* office is intact at the time of writing, but we are still, owing to interruption in the supply of gas, unable to use the linotype machine. This has involved getting the composition done outside, that greatly increases the cost of production, but we are not stopping at that. The paper must go on, and we are quite sure we can rely upon the help of all our friends when necessary. It is a trying time for all of us, so trying that it has relieved us of some source of anxiety. With the country split up into safe and unsafe areas, one might worry over taking the best precautions to avoid injury, but with every place, or nearly so, exposed to a bomb we are relieved from wondering and worrying which is the best place to be. As a matter of fact some of our writing this week has been done to the accompaniment of the droning of enemy aeroplanes and the crashing of enemy bombs only a few doors away.

Mr. A. W. Millward writes:—

I note that you have recently completed your seventy-second birthday. Many happy returns! May you continue for many years as young in mind and as agile with your pen as you are to-day. Years do not count so much in the realm in which you hold sway.

I have read that Sophocles was over 80 when he wrote *Oedipus* and there are, of course, many others.

May you pass safely through this troubled time, and still be able to lend a hand in shaping public opinion when war ceases and the struggle becomes in a sense, even more serious. And let us dare to hope that you may preside again at an International Freethought Congress!

## SPECIAL

WE leave the Sugar Plums concerning the *Freethinker* as written. But the information therein is not up to date. When we reached the office on Tuesday morning we found that a “Molotov cocktail” had set the upper floor of the building on fire. This was extinguished at the cost of burning out that floor. Unfortunately the deluge of water pumped on the fire involved a complete flooding of the rest of the building. Extensive damage was done to the machine room, the books, pamphlets, and paper. In the circumstances it was found impossible to issue the paper on the usual day. It was issued on Thursday, and we hope that readers will get their copies before the week-end. We cannot say at the moment the financial consequences of what has occurred, but they will be heavy, we shall be able to make a more complete statement next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Mr. J. T. Brighton, who has been for some years conducting very successful Freethought meetings in Durham and Northumberland, has made his first appearance in a police court, and we take it that by now the police wish he hadn't. Mr. Brighton was summoned at Blyth Police Court for holding a meeting in the public highway, and being in a restricted area without a permit. Owing to the short notice given, and the interruptions of communications from London authorizing Mr. Brighton to employ legal representation did not reach Blyth in time, and Mr. Brighton proceeded to defend himself. From the brief report we have, he appears to have done it well and successfully. The police were discountenanced and the summons dismissed.

Both the policeman and the Inspector of police appear to be rather curious persons—the one for reporting the matter, the other for sanctioning a summons. The meeting was quiet and orderly, and Mr. Brighton was a frequent visitor to the town. The policeman told the court that he would not have interfered had Mr. Brighton been there on business, which is ridiculous, since that would not cover a man being there if the war restrictions prohibited him. And the Police Inspector impressed upon the Court that Mr. Brighton was lecturing against religion, which is not yet an offence in this country. That was a piece of sheer impertinence, emphasized by the fact that in reply to Mr. Brighton's questions it was admitted that preachers of religion were permitted to come and go quite freely. In the end the case was dismissed, and Mr. Brighton is not likely to be further interfered with. A more stupid action by the police it is difficult to conceive. As it is we congratulate Mr. Brighton on his management of the case, and the Magistrate on his refusal to permit his court to be made the vehicle for religious intolerance.

We have often pointed out that between German Fascism and the Roman Catholic system there is little fundamental difference, allowing, of course, for the unparalleled bestiality of the Nazis. But there is the same moulding of the child from its infancy to the purposes of the Church, the same denial—where possible—of the right to freedom of speech and thought, the same suppression of all teachings contrary to the doctrines of the Church, and the same use of lying, forgery and misrepresentation. In fact there is not one feature of Nazism that is not embodied in the Roman Church. Nor must it be forgotten that no body of people were more sustained in the prevention of an Alliance with Atheistic Russia, which would have prevented the disaster of providing Spain as a ground to train German airmen, and which led to Munich and strengthening of Hitlerism. Nor will Freethinkers forget the vile lies of the Roman Catholic Church in England concerning the International Freethought Congress and its frantic attempts to get the meetings suppressed. In this campaign Cardinal Hinsley, and Captain Ramsay (at present in prison under the Defence Laws) were two of the most prominent personages.

In view of what we have been saying for some time the following from the *Church Times* for September 3, is worth noting:—

We have been sorrowfully compelled, because we are the one newspaper in this country not to be accused either of anti-Catholic prejudice or of being influenced by the astute Roman propaganda that affects most secular newspapers, to emphasize the disastrous semi-alliance of the Vatican with the Totalitarian Powers. Roman Catholic newspapers in this country have either wisely avoided any reference to our summary of incontrovertible facts, or have commented on it with flatulent impertinence. The hopeless failure of the Vatican as an instrument of international decency is the most tragic feature of this tragic age. That is a fact which no man, who is neither purblind nor a conscious liar, can deny. And we welcome the fact that the distinguished Non-conformist divine, whose pen-name of Ilico in the *British Weekly* is a thin veil of his identity, is exactly of our opinion. In his last week's article, he says, writing of the Popes blessing of General Franco: "It suggests once again that Roman Catholics are disposed to identify the material and temporal advantages of the Roman Church with the cause of true religion. Further, the present Pope apparently is at one with the policy of his predecessor in approving—at least in public (for he is not without a conscience)—the Italian rape of Abyssinia. . . . My impression is that the sympathies of the present Pope are with our cause (in a broad sense) 'democratic'; but is he, perhaps the prisoner of his own ecclesiastical system as well as of Signor Mussolini?"

A curious story is told in the *Sunderland Echo* for September 3. The Rev. T. H. Henderson applied for a caterer's licence to supply breakfasts to 30 or 40 members of the congregation of All Saints Church. The congregation had a breakfast of sausage and eggs, and paid for it. The Minister of the Church said that if they did not give the breakfasts the Church would not get the congregation. The licence was refused. Now in the days of Jesus Christ no difficulty would have appeared. For Jesus fed a multitude of men and women with bread and fish (we presume he would have found it quite as easy to supply sausages and eggs) and at the end of the feast there was far more food left over than there was at the commencement of the feast. Now if this could be done for All Saints Church the breakfasts to the congregation could be given free, and the increased quantity of food could be given to outsiders. What a chance for Lord Woolton, our Food Controller to settle the problem of feeding the people during the war?

## The Problem of Style

To many readers it may seem the most utter waste of time and energy to discuss the problem of literary style in days so fraught with peril as the present. Yet the fact remains that only things of the mind serve to distinguish civilization from barbarism, and, in such leisure as the war effort leaves to us, we can assist in keeping the flag of civilization flying by devoting our thoughts to those matters of permanent interest in which we should have found mental stimulus in peacetime. Besides, readers of the *Freethinker* must be interested in the every day problem of literary style, for have they not, in Chapman Cohen, an editor whose own style—forthright, blunt, and honest—is a perfect reflection of his personality? And have not all Englishmen in these days discovered, in the fighting speeches of Mr. Churchill, the supreme advantage of having a Prime Minister who is a master of the written and the spoken word?

But what I think needs emphasis in this matter of style is that a real master of written English is not the person who, by involved, meticulously-written sentences somehow contrives to express his meaning with accuracy. The master of English is not the man whose writing at once "hits you in the eye" and makes you want to say to yourself: "This man can write!" The true master of style is the man whose work is done unobtrusively, whose books you read, following the story, essay, or whatever it is, without once thinking that the style is brilliant, and only realizing at the end of the

work, when you have put it down, how neatly the whole matter has been expressed, and how little the writer has intruded himself between his story or his argument and his reader. Mr. Somerset Maugham, for instance, is probably the finest stylist writing to-day, yet there are few readers who could lay their fingers on one little trick which distinguishes a Somerset Maugham short story from one by anyone of a dozen of his contemporaries. Or—to take another example—Mr. Thomas Burke's little masterpiece, *Murder at Elstree*, is a triumph of style. (It is now available, I am glad to see, in a sixpenny edition). That book is written in quite a subdued fashion, and perhaps as a result, it has never achieved anything like the popularity of one of Mr. Burke's earlier works, *Limchouse Nights*. Yet the later book is, by every possible literary criterion, a far superior work of art.

Another stylist master is Mr. Arthur Machen, who has never received the praise that is his due. He will be known to many readers as the author of the short story which originally gave rise to the legend of the "Angels of Mons," which was so attractive to our clerical friends in the course of the last war. Mr. Machen is a High Churchman, I should add; but I feel that even he must have derived considerable amusement from the way in which his little story was unanimously, or all but unanimously, adopted by the clergy as a slice of life. Actually, the books which best represent Mr. Machen's style are *Far-Off Things* and *Things Near and Far*—volumes of rambling reminiscence such as most writers would like to produce, but all too few succeed in bringing to a satisfactory conclusion.

Or, pursuing this problem of style a little farther, consider Mr. Oliver Onions. *In Accordance with the Evidence* is a book which has never received its due meed of praise. Brilliantly written, but again in a style which does not obtrude, it may be regarded as the predecessor of the works of "Francis Hes," and other criminological novelists of recent years.

Why, however, are not these brilliant stylists acknowledged by the public? Why are their peculiar excellences so frequently hidden? The answer is not easy to give, for every sensitive person can see the way in which they have evolved their style into an instrument welded to do their will. It must surely be because so few truly sensitive artists are sufficiently acquainted with the subtle arts of the propagandist and the publicity-hunter. Marie Corelli sold in her hundreds of thousands; so did Hall Caine; so do certain writers of the present day who must be nameless here, the libel laws being what they are. The reason why such purveyors of literary trash succeed, while many a brilliant writer fails, lies in the different use of publicity. A writer who never compromises, who calls a spade a spade, no matter though he offend sections of religious or moral opinion, will not achieve great commercial success though he write never so brilliantly. Another writer who panders to the low taste of the religious public will be acknowledged as a master, and even occasional critics writing in advanced journals will praise them, not seeing the neat way in which the over-praised have tied the hands of religious critics and so secured a wrong position in the world of letters.

But once again it should be stated emphatically that the problem of literary style is not merely a problem of the expression of personality through the printed word. The late A. R. Orage once told me that in his opinion there was a correct word for every literary situation, just as there was a correct formula for every mathematical situation. When those correct words are chosen and placed in their correct order, we secure a perfect piece of prose. That may seem a counsel of perfection, but it is not difficult to see that it is an ideal at which all may aim. Few, of course, will succeed in

hitting that narrow target, but all will be the better for trying. R. L. Stevenson, in one of his essays, has described how he played the "sedulous ape," attempting to imitate the styles of the masters. Yet one does not write like Carlyle or Ruskin by trying to imitate him. In fact, R.L.S. did not, when he came to maturity, write like any of the people he tried to imitate. Rather did he evolve a singularly perfect style of his own.

But let us not be misled. The perfect style is the style which most clearly and simply expresses the author's meaning. Only by being careful to express one's meaning exactly can one arrive at a typical style of one's own. Many people never reach that point. Few are both simple and unmistakable. And of those fewer still will achieve the commercial success which, in a world better ordered than that in which we live, would be the reward of supreme mastery of a difficult art.

S.H.

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## Books Worth While

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*Chaos in Asia*, by Hallett Abend (The Bodley Head, 10s. 6d.)

With war raging at our very doors we are inclined to forget that, except for the Great War, the greatest conflict the world has known in the twentieth century, is now being waged in Asia, and that the future history of the world may be even more influenced by the issue of that struggle, than by events now happening in Europe.

Many books have been written on the subject of the Chinese-Japanese conflagration, mostly dealing with actual hostilities, and frequently written by representatives of American and European papers who have very little knowledge of the East.

This is a book of quite a different character. Mr. Abend is the American correspondent of the *New York Times*, and the author of *Tortured China*. He writes with over 13 years' first-hand knowledge of Eastern Asia. He tells us little about the actual fighting, but his is one of the most revealing and interesting books on the causes political, economic, and racial, which have led up to the present struggle.

Mr. Abend has tried to be, and to a great extent, has succeeded in being, impartial, for although his sympathies lie very much with the Chinese, he does, at the same time, state the Japanese arguments fairly. He shows that the deliberate forcing of opium on the Chinese people, the appalling increase in prostitution, the tyranny and tortures, are not so much the fault of the Government in Japan, but due to the fact that the army completely overrides civil authority; and that the Japanese who are, in their own country, naturally a polite and kindly people, when put into uniform and landed in China, become entirely changed.

Mr. Abend says "China continues to battle grimly—obviously in self-defence. Japan fights on with equal grimness for aims not yet definitely disclosed, but stated in such vague terms as 'The establishment of a new order in East Asia.' The new order has already arrived. It is poverty, desolation, hatred and chaos."

There is hardly a phase of political and financial considerations in connexion with this war that Mr. Abend misses. In his summing up he says that, "no matter who wins, the day when European and American powers can exploit China for territorial rights are finished. If Japan wins, these relics of the days of China's tutelage will be quickly abolished, and if China wins, her leaders and her people flushed with victory, will demand complete and unimpaired sovereignty on their own soil."

Miss Phyllis Bottome, author of *Mortal Storm*, *Private Worlds*, etc., has written a most revealing book on the life of Alfred Adler. Anything she wrote would be worth reading, but the compiling of this work must have been a labour of love. For years both Miss Bottome and her husband, Captain Forber Dennis, have made a study of psychology, and were both great personal friends of Adler's, as well as being devoted followers. Miss Bottome says: "Adler was a master of paradox, a philosopher amongst psychiatrists and a psychiatrist among philosophers." She deals with the essential difference between the Freudian view of psycho-analysis and that of Adler, and tells of the break between the two, and the unhappiness caused by it to Adler who was a man of extremely sensitive nature.

Explaining Adler's views of his philosophy she says: "Adler believed in every individual's right to create life. He viewed with deep apprehension any attempt to standardize or force the mind of human beings into a mould or to take away from them their personal responsibility for every act." She also stresses the epoch-making importance of Adler's work in relation to child psychology.

Doctor Frank Plewa, one of Adler's band of psychologists, explained why Adler lacked a great deal of the professional support he should have had. He said: "One of the greatest difficulties to the spread of individual psychology is still that doctors are prevented from having an exclusive use of it. They do not want to share their knowledge of it with the laity. Freudians escape this problem, for their heavy and prolonged training is far too complicated a business for the laity to follow; but Individual Psychology, though far harder in practice, is superficially much easier for the man in the street to understand, and Adler imposed no intellectual tests upon his students. He felt that medical men wanted to turn themselves into a priesthood over his psychology. They tried to keep the knowledge of psychology to themselves instead of imparting it to their patients, and they also wanted to run away with Adler's ideas and turn them out with their own imprint upon them."

Miss Bottome paints a wonderful personal life of the great Austrian and running right through his teachings is a delightful sense of humour and a simplicity of character that must have made him a very lovable and loved man. It is interesting, for example, to know that he was a keen picture fan, and that he considered the Marx Brothers and Charlie Chaplin to be geniuses of the first water: nothing ever entertained him so much as people behaving in an unexpected manner.

F. A. HORNIBROOK

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## Things Worth Knowing

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ORPHEUS AND CHRIST.

In the latter half of the first century before Christ, Judea was surrounded by Dionysiac religion. Phœnician coins of Sidon, Berytus and Orthosia show a divine figure like the Phœnician god Esmun represented as Dionysus. The Nabateans, whose dominions stretched from Arabia to Damascus, worshipped a god named Dusares, who for many reasons which I cannot explain now seems to have been the Orphic Dionysus. In the age of Jesus, Asia Minor was filled with Orphic brotherhoods named *speirai*. Tarsus was very well acquainted with Orphic myths and creeds, and worshipped Sandan, a dying and resurrected god who bore some resemblance to the Orphic Dionysus. On the whole, Judea was, as I have said, surrounded in the last century before Christ by a Dionysiac and Orphic girdle. . . .

The whole problem of the relation between Orphism and Paulism is surprisingly simple, notwithstanding its theological and confessional ramifications; it consists chiefly in a comparison between the Orphic Zagreus and the Pauline Christ. The points in the myth which must be taken into consideration here are the following: (1) Zagreus is the son of Zeus, (2) The Titans kill him, (3) Zeus calls him back to life, (4) He takes him into heaven, (5) He gives him the kingdom. No one would deny that these points agree perfectly with the Pauline Christ, the Son of God, who was killed, resurrected, ascended to heaven, and received the kingdom. The only point of difference is that Zagreus was torn to pieces and Christ was crucified.

Surprisingly enough, the Christians of the first century were perfectly aware of the existence of striking similarities between Zagreus and Christ, without, of course, being able to explain them in a scientific way. For Justin Martyr it seemed convenient not to pass over in silence a fact which might deeply affect the faith of Christians, and he therefore explained the points of connexion between Zagreus and Christ by supposing that the commentators of ancient poets, having known through prophets the future advent of the Saviour, invented the myth of Zagreus in order to make people consider the Saviour himself a mythical person. And struck by the fact that a well-known prophecy of *Genesis*, referred by Christians to the Saviour contains some elements which undoubtedly might be connected with Dionysus, he explains this agreement (by saying) that demons had invented the passion of Dionysus according to this prophecy in order to bring Christians to doubt the Saviour. And he adds that the demons did not dare to take over the one thing different in the story of Christ and the myth of Dionysus, that is, the crucifixion. In other words, Justin Martyr gives evidence that the Christians of the first century were perfectly aware of a fact which modern scholars are accustomed to deny; I mean the agreement between the myth of Dionysus and the story Christ. . . .

Now let us try to approach the mystical side of the problem. The Orphic communion with God includes the following elements. (1) The human soul suffers from the sin inherited from the Titans, which dwells in the body. (2) It delivers itself from the original sin by getting rid of the bodily prison and attaining divine life. (3) This new birth is achieved by means of communion with Dionysus, that is, by dying with him and coming back to life with him. This process is considered a real happening. The communion with Zagreus becomes a real event in human life; mystic death and resurrection are considered as real as actual death. At the bottom of the whole process lies the belief that the death and resurrection of Dionysus were historical facts; to speak properly, that Dionysus himself was an historical person. This is a point of primary importance for anyone who wishes to understand the origin of the Orphic communion. And there is no reason for doubting that the Greeks ever considered Dionysus' death as a myth. At Delphi the tomb was shown where his body was buried. From a mythological point of view the believers in Dionysus can be aptly compared with Christian believers who consider the death of Christ to be an historical event. . . .

Taking for granted that the history of Zagreus' death was for the Orphic as certain as Jesus' death for Christians, we must see the similarity between the Orphic and the Christian communion. Both assumed that man suffered from original inherited sin; both asserted that the original sin can be blotted out by dying and being resurrected in communion with a divine being who dies and comes to life again. In both cases an historical event, which in the opinion of believers really happened, becomes a spiritual event for every man at all times. . . . According to St. Paul, deliverance from the

flesh can be attained during life by means of baptism and in the after life by means of death. The Orphic is born again through communion with Zagreus; The Christian believer is born again through communion with Christ. . . . Through the mystery, men turn from the Titanic to the Dionysiac nature; through baptism men turn from the physical to the spiritual.

The Titanic inheritance is, like the Adamic sin, not the consequence of an individual fault, but a permanent weakness in the body, connected with the very nature of man. For Orphism, as for Paulinism, the aim of the spiritual experience is to deliver souls from the burden of the flesh and bring them into contact with God.

From *Orpheus to Paul* (1930)  
by VICTOR MACCHIORO, pp. 187-194.

## A New Philosophy of Life

FIRST of all let us get away from the unconscious habit of building a philosophy *as if* it must be a metaphysical derivative from some ancient theology. It is hoped that we can all become free from the morbid need for some super-human or super-natural affiliation, which is always used *as if* to ease some inferiority feelings. With so much accomplished, the following statement will carry the implication that it is an imperfect attempt to build a philosophy as a synthesis of the sciences. Because of the space limitations imposed by the editor, the present statement can be only suggestive, and must be expressed only in very general and abstract terms. The nature of this philosophy requires that we build it from the relatively simple and commonplace toward the highly complex and all-inclusive. Having cleared the path, let us now travel in the direction indicated.

First of all, every such philosophy of life must be in harmony with all the best scientific information at our command. Being thus based upon nature's habits, and dominated by a desire to conform only to them, such a philosophy ignores the supernatural and all its sanctions, gods, and goblins.

"But, that is not new!" No? Well, wait a minute. The novelty may begin when we treat, as a part of natural science, our very modern and still very imperfect knowledge of human nature. In so far as that is scientific it has disclosed something of constancy in the mental processes of the human animal; and in the circumstances which seem largely to control the human behaviour, in body, emotions and intellect. Here science has no meaning if there is "freedom of the will"; that is: if there are uncaused mental states which can produce otherwise uncaused human-action. Accordingly, when we have reached this stage of evolution, then our psychologic limitations and imperatives demand that the new philosophy must be built upon the unproved assumption of a complete and rigid psychologic determinism. "That, too, has been said before." Yes, but has anyone built a philosophy of life by carrying that presupposition to the whole of its logical conclusions? Anyhow, I have not found such.

The first important consequence of this attitude is the abolishing of all moral valuations, judgments and duties, and treating them as mere neurotic symptoms. The kind of sanction offered for our moral values is wholly immaterial. In the ordinary relations of living, our moral judgments are practically always emotionally toned, and for the most part unconsciously conditioned. All these will be replaced by a phycho-evolutionary classification. The most important new factor in that kind of judgment is the classification of people according to their relative healthy-mindedness, and according to the relative maturity of their impulses, and of the

intellectual methods by which the impulses make themselves effective in action and thought.

As applied to "crime" or the more invasive of anti-social conduct, this means the elimination of both the spirit and the fact of all punishment. There will be no definite or punitive sentence passed on any convict. Instead there will be an investigation as to all possible personal causes for the anti-social attitude and conduct, and an effort will be made to remove those causes. For punishment we attempt to substitute hospital treatment (both mental and physical) and education. We never ask, what shall we do to the convict, but what can we do for him? Can we feed him, cure him, and educate him so as to eliminate the anti-social trend? If not, then he will be up for life, but under intelligent and sympathetic custodians. If we can restore or build him to a pro-social human being, we will do so as quickly as possible, and then give freedom. There is no relationship between the gravity of the offense and the period of detention.

For the same reason we will abolish all current conceptions of education, and the present mental hygiene racket. Instead we will introduce a real mental hygiene as part of the process of getting rid of all schemes of moralistic (that is, neurotic) character-development. The new education will be a discipline for the maturing of the impulses and the intellectual methods of the pupils. This maturing discipline also becomes a substitute for all of that window-dressing-culturine, which now passes for education.

We no longer think of "pleasure" in the usual way. The chief aim of life is not a larger quantity of infantile pleasure, nor an intensification of neurotic joys. On the contrary we think of pleasure as expressing varying degrees of maturity. When one proposes some line of conduct as a means to greater joys, we look behind the acts proposed, to discover what state of mind is necessary to make them appear pleasurable. Is it infantile, that is, the mere pursuit of sensation, feeling and fantasy as ends in themselves? Or is it childish, which is infantilism with exhibitionism added? Or is it adolescent, that is, sex for its own sake? Or is it one of several more mature stages, which make the proposed pursuit pleasurable? When dominated by this new philosophy, we always derive the most desired satisfaction from those experiences which gratify the maturest parts of our nature; or those which contribute most to the further maturing of our impulses and our intellectual methods.

Now let us become a little more specific. The maturest persons make all other pursuits of pleasure incidental and secondary to the pleasures derived from further acceleration of the maturing process. Then those pleasures are most sought after, which can come to us only through quite mature impulses, and by the use of very mature intellectual methods. These pleasures are preferred, because they always carry with them a maximum of comfort in our most thorough adaptation to the greatest number of nature's processes. This always implies a minimum of hurt, from the failure to make a perfect adaptation to "natural law," so-called. Again: Those experiences which accelerate our further maturing are eagerly sought, because by that token they improve our future adaptations, and therefore add to the more improved quality of the future pleasures.

By such reasoning I was induced to take a long historic retrospect, with the quest of an evolutionary psychologist. It has already been said that the end of every sane and scientific philosophy of life should be a more complete adjustment to nature's habits, including those of the human animals. But these animals are now coming to be seen as being in the process of a never-ending psycho-evolutionary change. Therefore, we must also adjust to that psychologic evolution, if we

would avoid the more serious internal personal conflicts, and the resulting social revolutions, racial conflicts and international wars. Moralistic and pacifistic preaching will always remain futile.

The limitation of our thinking faculties are such that we cannot conceive of limits, either in time or space, from beyond which there is no common factor of existence with our own; or from beyond which no influence can affect us. With our growing awareness of what is going on in this world, our consciousness of human relations and interdependence can no longer be limited to our family, our club, our church, our town, county, state or national affiliations. The controls of our attitudes and conduct come through the depths of our impulsive nature. It includes far more of "unconscious" determinants than of present conscious ones. But most people will not yet act *as if* that were true, because this would require a modification of their infantile habits, and we have been educated to glorify them, instead of desiring to outgrow them. Although we may not yet have come to understand any previously unconscious drives within us, nevertheless, if we are intelligent at all, we must believe that some such unknown influences exist. Then we will try to get acquainted with their effect, the laws of their procedure, and the means for their modification, when that is desirable. So then the unknown controls for our thinking and conduct become an endless quest in the borderland between our greater ignorance and the unknowable absolute.

When we have progressed so far, we will have outgrown the old blindness of that infantile and pathologic sentimentalism which expresses itself in the "brotherhood of man," and the superstitious mandate to love our sadistic neighbour as ourselves. Instead we see a unity among all humans, which is based upon a knowledge of our common psychological processes and interdependence.

Our psycho-evolutionary rating is not made according to what people profess, believe, or do. On the contrary, we are more concerned with the psychologic *how* and *why* of their professions, beliefs and conduct. We know full well that a phonograph, a parrot, a high-grade idiot, a moron, a psycho-neurotic, a lunatic, and a very sane scientist who is psychologically most mature, can all affirm their belief in the same words of some creedal statement. We are also very sure that the inner cause for such affirmation and its inner meaning and value, differ according to each different origin for the pronouncement. Therefore we do not judge politicians, preachers or any one else by their word alone, or even by their acts. On the contrary, we study the whole of the impulsive nature and mental content behind their words and deeds, and make a psycho-evolutionary classification of the man according to such a rating of his personality taken as a whole.

Because of the relative unimportance that we now attach to doctrinal professions, and because of the dynamic aspect of our psychological theories, I conceive it to be a silly performance when people try to produce a permanent peace among nations, economic classes, different races, etc., solely by means of pedagogic indoctrination. The importance given to such pedagogic theories is psychologically identified with the mystic's belief in the relative omnipotence of thought, and his delusional slogan that "thoughts are things." A historic retrospect confirms my contrary psychologic theory, which, however, is not derived from history, but from studies in psychology.

When we are dominated by such a concept of universal determinism, and interdependence, as has been suggested then we can no longer think of any social group as being merely the numerical total of so many independent persons. Even those who are within the same racial, social, economic or political group cannot be

thought of as being united only by the common factors of their like materialistic surroundings. Now, human beings are thought of as having also a certain psychologic element of unification. First of all this is based upon a common psycho-biologic inheritance and evolution. From this come our many unavoidably similar emotional responses, to the expression of emotions by other beings. This element of suggestibility exists in all of us to some degree. In very many persons it acquires morbid intensities and other unusual characteristics. It is upon this mental pathology that all neurotic leaders of our moron civilisation depend, for the relief of their inferiority feeling. Because they cannot give up their infantile lust for power, all their social remedies remain futile. Through our common sensitiveness to suggestion, as well as to its common dependence upon the same bio-chemical, radio-active and evolutionary laws, and the same natural sources of sustenance, it comes that in some degree of directness and remoteness we are all psychologically interdependent.

THEODORE SCHROEDER

(To be concluded)

## Correspondence

SWINBURNE'S "POSSESSION"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Did Minnermus, in his recent article, forget Swinburne's *affaire* with the much-married beauty Ida Isaacs Menkin? The poet described the female Mazeppa as, my "present possessor," and deplored her untimely death in these words: "It was a great shock to me, and a real grief. I was in for some days. She was very lovable."

I have a photograph which represents the pair with hands clasped, Menkin seated and regarding Swinburne, who stands before her, with apparent adoration. Swinburne named his "possessor," *The Delight of the World*, a skit on Halman Hunt's metricious picture "The Light of the World." The late Mr. Watts-Dunton often told me that Swinburne's *Affaires* were, perforce, Platonic.

EDGAR SYERS

[This letter should have appeared earlier.—ED.]

## Obituary

MR. COLIN MCCOLL

FREETHOUGHT in Manchester is the poorer by the death of Mr. Colin McColl on September 8. Mr. McColl has been in ill-health for some time, and when last in Manchester (at the Annual Conference), we paid him a hurried visit, and found him very ill but as cheery as one could wish. We fancy he had little hope of recovery, but he faced the inevitable as one would expect a genuine Freethinker to do. For many years he was a hard worker—as was also his wife—in connexion with the Manchester Branch, one of those steadfast individuals to whom Freethought owes so much, and certainly much more than is generally recognized. He leaves a wife and children, and they will have as one of their prized possessions the memory of a man who ranked Freethought as the greatest thing for which one may fight. Many will have benefited from his life, to whom his name will mean nothing. The world is the better for his having lived.—C.C.

MRS. J. E. SOMERVILLE

IT is with deep regret that we have to announce the death of Mrs. J. E. Somerville, a staunch and worthy Freethinker and member of the N.S.S. for many years. Quiet and sympathetic by nature, the misfortunes of others always received a kind consideration, whilst her own were minimised and lightly held. Many will remember her as the very efficient accompanist at the Socials held under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive. Our sincere sympathy goes out to her husband and family. Fortu-

nately Mr. Clayton was able to read a Secular Service at the Carlton Crematorium, Blackpool, where the last rites took place on Thursday, September 12.—R.H.R.

ROBERT HARDING

THE remains of Robert Harding were cremated at Golders Green Crematorium, on Monday, September 16. Returning from a shelter after an air raid he went to bed and died in his sleep. He was in his 80th year. A man of strong character and intellect he was the friend of all humanitarian causes and enthusiastic in their service. Contributions from his pen occasionally appear in the *Freethinker*, and he was a constant reader of the paper up till the time of his death. At the crematorium, before an assembly of members and friends of the family, Secular addresses were given by Mr. Manson, Mr. Fletcher, and the General Secretary of the N.S.S.—R.H.R.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 7.30, Thursday, Mr. E. C. Saphin and supporting speakers. Sunday, 3.0, until dusk, various speakers.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLYTH (The Market): 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton. CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 7.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

COLNE: 7.30, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton. EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mrs. M. I. Whitefield.

FOULRIDGE: 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton. HASLINGDEN: 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton. NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton. NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

## Freethinkers and the Forces

FREETHINKERS liable for services in H.M. Forces should clearly understand their rights with regard to religion.

They should insist upon their own statement of Atheist, Agnostic, Rationalist, or non-religious being accepted, without modification, and duly recorded on the official papers.

If the person recording—usually an N.C.O. is not aware of the recruit's rights and refuses to accept the recruit's own statement, he should insist upon the matter being referred to the officer in charge. If the recruit's legal right is not then admitted, information should be sent to the General Secretary N.S.S. without delay. In all cases hitherto reported by the Society to the Army, Navy and Air Force authorities a satisfactory reply has been received.

Finally, a man serving in any of the Forces has the right at any time to have the description of himself with regard to religion altered should any change of opinion on his part have taken place.

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