

FREETHINKER

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Reaction.—The Editor - - - - -	545
Lord Byron.—J. T. Lloyd - - - - -	546
In a Cathedral City.—Mimnermus - - - - -	547
Early English Freethought.—(The late) J. M. Wheeler -	548
One Night in August.—A. D. McLaren - - - - -	550
Heat Transference.—W. H. Morris - - - - -	554
"Lucifer."—Eustace Taine - - - - -	555
Religion and Morality.—Vincent J. Hands - - - - -	556
The Britisher's Art.—G. E. Fussell - - - - -	557
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

Reaction.

Very many times since the Armistice we have called attention to the reactionary temper which prevails all over Europe, and to some extent all over the world. And readers of this journal will hardly need telling that during the war period we warned all and sundry that this reaction was bound to come, and that when we had accomplished the comparatively easy task of winning the war we should be faced with the much harder work of winning the liberties which we had parted and getting back to a pre-war state of mind. The war came to an official end four years ago, but we have not yet reached a state of peace. We have conquered Prussianism, and there is nothing new in conquered territory being annexed. The fondness for suppressing things to which one is opposed—always a fairly vigorous aspect of human nature—was elevated to the level of a principle during the war, no considerable section of the public appeared to regret its departed freedom, and political parties of all kinds seem to take it for granted that it is justifiable, once power is achieved, to use it in order to suppress opposition. When the National Secular Society held its meeting, at South Place Institute, to protest against the iniquity of the Blasphemy Laws, the Rev. Stewart Headlam said he sometimes thought that when Bradlaugh died there died the last public man in England who had a real love of liberty for liberty's sake. We do not think the situation is quite so bad as that, but we are sure that Bradlaugh would open his eyes in amazement could he revisit us and see the altered state of affairs.

* * *

The Right to be Heard.

One might give many illustrations of the truth of what has been said; I will content myself with one that has been brought to my notice by one of my readers. It is well known that we have had for sale for some time a rather remarkable book by an American bishop—William Montgomery Brown. Dr. Brown is—for he has never resigned, although he has ceased preaching—a Bishop of the American Episcopal Church. Like many other clergymen he came to see that Christianity was false, but unlike many of them, he told the world what he had discovered, instead of remaining in the pulpit and keeping his

discovery to himself. The position Bishop Brown arrived at is described in his *Christianism and Communism*. It is a criticism from the point of view of Marxism. The book covers more than 200 pages, it is published at the author's expense, and it need hardly be said that at the published price the author cannot make anything out of it in the shape of profit. Our concern with the book and with the man rested, of course, with his anti-Christian attitude. The Marxian theory must take care of itself. But all the same we hope the time will never come when the *Freethinker* will refrain from standing up for the right of every opinion to be heard. The greatest bigot in the world wants his own opinion to be heard. The test of whether you are worth anything or not is "Will you champion the right of hearing for an opinion to which you are opposed?" Much as we dislike Christianity, and great as is our contempt for Christian doctrines, we hope that we shall never be found slow in championing the right of even Christians to a fair hearing. And the more absurd, the more "dangerous" an opinion, the greater the benefit society derives from its free expression. That is a principle very few advocate, but that is only a proof of how much the world has yet to learn.

* * *

True to Type.

During the later years of his public life it will be remembered that Mr. Bottomley made *John Bull* a vociferous champion of morality and religion. Now that its late editor has come to so inglorious an ending, it is evidently thought that it must be more religious and more moral than ever. And in these days nothing helps the circulation of a paper so much as hair-raising revelations, with the proper mixture of religion and morality. Mr. Bottomley and the late Lord Northcliffe are both evidence of this. So *John Bull* informs the world concerning Bishop Brown:—

A book by this subversive cleric, entitled *Communism and Christianity*, is now being sold in England, and is of such a character that it is astonishing it has not yet been suppressed by the authorities.

This renegade priest invites his readers to "Come over and help us make the world safe for industrial democracy by banishing the personal, conscious gods from the sky.....But in coming there is no need for leaving your church any more than there is for leaving your state.....I shall remain in both as long as the powers that be allow it....."

Now I quite agree that if a man no longer believes in Christianity he has no right to take money in the shape of salary, and he has no right to mislead others by pretending to believe it. But Bishop Brown does neither of these things. He does not take pay from the Church, he does not pretend to believe in Christianity, he has simply retained his title of bishop. I wonder whether it is that which annoys the very "good" editor of *John Bull*? It will be remembered during the war the pious Mr. Bottomley had one recipe for all who disagreed with him. They were to be taken to the Tower and shot. *John Bull* has changed editors, but the influence of the original one remains. May we suggest that this policy of super-

heated indignation at those who attack religion may not pay so well in the future as it has done in the past? And in *John Bull* it is likely to be more suspect than in even the chaste columns of the *Daily Mail*.

* * *

Banishing the Gods.

Consider the passage cited in order to harrow the feelings of *John Bull* readers. Bishop Brown actually invites people to "come over and help us make the world safe for industrial democracy by banishing the personal, conscious gods from the sky!" Horrible! One can faintly picture the burning indignation of the *John Bull* writer when he read that sentence. And yet, except that we have not limited the matter to "industrial democracy," it is only what the *Freethinker* has been saying for forty-two years. The world never will be safe for the development of a better humanity so long as the minds of men and women are obsessed with the belief in gods and all that this belief involves. Perhaps now that we have avowed this *John Bull* will next suggest that the *Freethinker* also should be "suppressed by the authorities." And we really do not see how Bishop Brown's *Christianism and Communism* can be suppressed unless the *Freethinker* is suppressed also. For we shall continue to offer the book for sale, and we fancy we shall shortly be sending for another consignment from America.

* * *

Depraving the Press.

It was the custom of the British Press in the old days to give the people news, and to restrict its own opinions of things to certain parts of the paper which the reader could either accept or reject. But that was before the days of Lord Northcliffe, of pious memory, than whom no man did more to lower the tone of the British newspaper. He taught people that it was little use appealing to the thoughtful and educated class. They were too few, and it was impossible to get a circulation of millions writing for them. To circulate a million you must write for the million. And that means you must be continually playing to passion, flattering prejudice, and keep your readers in a state of unthinking expectancy about revelations of exaggerated or manufactured evils. Lord Northcliffe and Horatio Bottomley, each in his own way, showed what a gold mine there was in exploiting the many and ignoring the few. That is really the pass to which we have been brought. The Press, which might become one of the most powerful of instruments for the elevation of the public mind—and which must be an instrument for its education in any event—has in the thirst for huge circulations turned itself largely into an instrument for depraving opinion. If it knows in which direction the truth lies, it takes care that the truth shall not be told. It should see in the case of a bishop who has seen the falsity of Christianity, and publicly says so, an example to be admired. What *John Bull* does is to clamour for his suppression. It might well commend his honesty to those of our own clergy who see all that Bishop Brown sees but have neither the courage nor the candour to say so.

* * *

A National Danger.

But we are not really concerned with *John Bull*. Its interest to us is that it is symptomatic of a certain unhealthy state of the public mind. *John Bull* says that the "poisonous propaganda must be stopped in England at any rate." Certainly, all poisonous propaganda should be stopped, and as soon as possible. We will do our best to help anyone to stop poisonous propaganda. But there is only one way in which it can be stopped, and that is by giving it the widest

publicity and affording it the fullest discussion. You cannot kill a poisonous opinion by imprisoning those who give it voice, or by attempts at suppression. All the repressive legislation of the past seven years has not killed a single opinion that was labelled poisonous. It has advertised them, and it has given them an added importance in the eyes of both those who believed in them and those who did not. What the public needs is not instigation to "suppress" this or that opinion, but information as to what these opinions are, the facts upon which they claim to be based, and the character of the deductions therefrom. And that is a great function which the Press of this country might well discharge. But it is precisely the function it ignores. What is called "the stunt Press," and there are few papers now—thanks to men of the Northcliffe and Bottomley stamp—that are free from this contagion, lives by appeals to prejudice, to ignorance, to sensationalism. Their interest lies not with what is true, but with what will serve their immediate purpose. And that is one of the gravest dangers before us to-day. I do not belittle the power of the Press; it is extremely powerful, if only because it serves as the chief source from which the general public derives information. But power is blind; whether it be good or bad depends upon the direction in which it is used. And a Press that builds up huge circulations on insincere appeals to ignorance, passion, and prejudice, is among the greatest disasters that can overtake a nation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Lord Byron.

I.

GEORGE GORDON NOEL, BYRON inherited his title of baron from a grand uncle, and the family had been in the enjoyment of nobility since 1643. The poet's accession to the peerage occurred in 1798, when he was ten years of age. He was born in Holles Street, London, on January 22, 1788, and his ancestry was certainly not one to be proud of. The grand uncle, whom he succeeded, was called the "wicked Lord Byron," on account of the horrible excesses in which he indulged at Newstead, to which he had retired in order to escape from the opprobrious attitude of the public towards him because he had taken the life of a friend and relative in a drunken orgy. His parents, also, were notorious for their lack of moral principles, his father being dissolute and constantly in debt, and his mother haughty and passionate. Neither had the least idea of how to bring up a child. Of course, all the Byrons were not bad, the poet's grandfather, the Admiral, for example, being highly respected for his virtues, and under Charles II a Lord Byron wrote verses himself and was a patron of literature generally.

Byron's early childhood was spent at Aberdeen, where he attended several schools. At thirteen he went to Harrow and remained there four years. He worked hard, though he devoted much time to play. He was passionately fond of history and acquired a wonderfully wide knowledge of it. There was no country about which he was wholly ignorant. He read translations of all the classics, and there was scarcely a living poet with whose works he was not familiar. As William Minto says: "Few boys left Harrow with such a store of useful learning." From Harrow, Byron entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where in three years he learned but little. Here he became profoundly addicted to physical exercises, such as riding, fencing, swimming, boxing, nor did he abstain from gaming and drinking. Mentally at Cambridge he made no progress worthy of mention, except that the bodily training he was so fond of was bound to prove of no mean service to him even intellectually. In

reality he was only two years at the University, for one year was spent at Southwell, where he got into close touch with the Pigotts, who did so much to awaken and develop his poetic impulses.

Byron had strong likes and dislikes. Even before he left Aberdeen he fell passionately in love with his cousin Mary Duff. Six years afterwards Miss Duff was married, and on hearing of it he almost lost his reason. Before he left for Harrow he had a love affair with another cousin, named Margaret Parker, and Miss Parker meant so much to him that he could neither eat nor sleep when there was a prospect of seeing her. A third sweetheart was Miss Chaworth, whose grandfather, his grand uncle, the "wicked Lord Byron" had killed. She rejected him, a fact the very thought of which never failed to throw him into a state of unspeakable sadness. He was capable also of forming intensely warm friendships. But he had his dislikes. An elderly lady who visited his mother, gave him some unforgettable offence which he most violently resented. She had peculiar views about the soul which she believed entered the moon at death. She repeated the same offence, and wild with rage he appeared before his nurse and denounced her in scathing terms, saying:—

In Nottingham County, there lives at Swan-green,
As curs'd an old lady as ever was seen ;
And when she does die, which I hope will be soon,
She firmly believes she will go to the moon.

It is not purposed in this article to relate the events of Byron's life from the time he left Cambridge in 1808 till he died in 1824. It is well known he had his full share of difficulties, suffering and sorrow ; that he made numerous mistakes of most of which he bitterly repented. His domestic troubles have never been satisfactorily explained, and probably never will be. It is all but universally admitted that he was his own worst critic, and, according to all available evidence, a shockingly unjust one. He magnified his vices and minimized his virtues. But his sympathies were democratic. Moore says:—

Of his charity and kind-heartedness, he left behind him at Southwell, as indeed at every place throughout life where he resided any time, the most cordial recollections. "He never," says a person who knew him intimately at this period, "met with objects of distress without affording them succour." Among many little traits of this nature, which his friends delight to tell, I select the following less as a proof of his generosity than from the interest which the simple incident itself, as connected with the name of Byron, presents. While yet a schoolboy, he happened to be in a bookseller's shop at Southwell when a poor woman came in to purchase a Bible. The price, she was told by the shopman, was eight shillings. "Ah, dear sir," she exclaimed, "I cannot pay such a price: I did not think it would cost half the money." The woman was then, with a look of disappointment, going away, when young Byron called her back, and made her a present of the Bible.

When we bear in mind that Byron was poor, and that even then his belief in the Bible was but slight, that gift betokened a really good heart. A talented young lady who was in extremely straightened circumstances through misfortunes which befell her, called on the poet to solicit his subscription to a volume of poems. She told her story with great sincerity, to which he listened with sympathetic attention. He addressed her "in words so fascinating and tones so gentle, that she hardly perceived he had been writing until he put a slip of paper into her hand, saying it was his subscription." Then he added: "But we are both young, and the world is very censorious ; and so if I were to take any active part in securing subscribers to your poems, I fear it would do you harm rather than good." Grateful for his wise

and encouraging words she left, but on opening the paper outside she discovered that it was a draft upon his banker for fifty pounds.

Byron was a genuine lover of dogs, and no such person can have a truly wicked heart. Everybody knows how he has immortalized his favourite dog "Boatswain" in verse. One of the anecdotes about the intelligence of this animal is most remarkable. Mrs. Byron had a saucy fox terrier called "Gilpin," who was perpetually at strife with "Boatswain"; and so ferocious was the former that it was feared he might ultimately kill the latter. Consequently Mrs. Byron sent "Gilpin" off to a tenant at Newstead. Just then Byron was obliged to go to Cambridge on business, and he left "Boatswain" and two other dogs in the charge of a servant till he returned. One morning "Boatswain" was missing and could not be found anywhere. Before evening "Boatswain" came back, accompanied by "Gilpin," whom he led to the kitchen fire, licking him, and showering upon him marks of his overflowing joy at having him back again. He had gone all the way to Newstead to fetch him, and afterwards the two dogs agreed beautifully together. At last "Boatswain" died, and the poet solemnly vowed that he should be buried at his side.

Though a nobleman Byron was a revolutionist, at heart a thoroughgoing social reformer. Wherever he resided, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, or Greece, he proved himself a friend of the people, a fierce hater of intolerance and persecution.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

In a Cathedral City.

Broad ideas are hated by partial ideas ; that is, in fact, the struggle of progress. —Victor Hugo.

Hail to the steadfast soul. —Matthew Arnold.

THE life of Harriet Martineau is the simple record of a quiet and useful existence devoted to the service of her fellows. It should prove of interest to those who never read the literary works of this remarkable woman. So far back as 1832 Lucy Aikin wrote to Dr. Channing: "You must know that a great, new light has arisen among English women." Lord Brougham, a still better authority, remarked to a friend about the same time: "There is at Norwich a deaf girl who is doing more good than any man in the country."

It was in that quiet cathedral city that Harriet Martineau was born. She has given us a picture of life in that backwater of society ; of its clerical exclusiveness, only modified by the social gatherings of a few cultured families, and by an infusion of French blood, the result of the refugees following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Martineaus themselves were among the "aliens" whom that intolerant measure drove to our then hospitable shores. At Norwich they had flourished for about a century, part of the family devoting itself to silk weaving, while others were doctors. Harriet's father died young, leaving a family of eight, of whom Harriet and her brother James the distinguished theologian, are both famous.

The evolution of Harriet's intellect is very interesting. She was barely of age when she published *Devotional Exercises for Young Persons*, a modest religious publication of the Unitarian School, in which she had been educated. It is a work of little value, but it was the harbinger of a splendid series of books which were destined to reflect glory upon her sex.

Soon there was a marked widening of subjects in her books. Works of fiction, travel, folk-lore, biography, and sociology, followed in rapid succession.

Her fertile pen even attempted a series of stories illustrating the working of the principles of Political Economy, which had been laid down in an abstract manner by Adam Smith, Bentham, and Romilly. These stories had a wide circulation, and were translated into several Continental languages. She found time for travel, visiting the United States, and meeting with a most cordial reception. On her return to this country, she associated herself with Charles Knight, the famous pioneer of cheap literature, and contributed a number of useful books to the popular series which earned for him a well-deserved reputation.

With the object of lightening her literary labours by variety, she next employed her busy pen on a series of tales for children, of which *The Settlers at Home* and *Feats on the Fiord* are still read. At the same time she produced two novels of a very marked character, called *Deerbrook* and *The Hour and the Man*, the latter dealing with Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haytian Rebellion. This latter work passed through many editions, and remains, perhaps, her most popular work.

Her health failed, and Lord Melbourne pressed upon her acceptance a Government pension, but she was too conscientious to accept it. In declining the honour, she pointed out that she could not take money from taxation which she had criticised adversely. Her illness lasted several years; but she even turned her misfortune to account by writing *Life in a Sick Room*, a work which proves her courage and serenity under affliction. Soon after her restoration to health, she varied the monotony of a laborious life by a visit to the Orient, and recorded her impressions in *Eastern Life*, a work of interest, for in it she declared her Freethought opinions.

During all these years her mind had been expanding, and the results of her mature thought were embodied in *Letters on Man's Nature and Development*, written conjointly with Henry George Atkinson, who was later a contributor to the *National Reformer* and other Secular journals. This volume revealed to all the world that Harriet Martineau was an Atheist. Nor was this her most notable contribution to Freethought literature, for three years later she introduced to the English-speaking world a version of Auguste Comte's epoch-making *Positive Philosophy*, a work destined to have an enormous effect on contemporary thought. While thus employed, she yet found time to write her *History of England During the Thirty Years' Peace*, which, characterized by clarity and impartiality, is, perhaps, the finest historical work written by a woman in our language.

From this time it was mainly as a leader-writer in the *Daily News* and as a contributor to *Once a Week* that her literary ability manifested itself. To the last, in spite of ill-health, she took the greatest interest in all movements for the bettering of Humanity. She lived through a long life, and sank calmly, full of years, into the grave, regretted and esteemed by all. Her tomb is built in the hearts of her fellow-soldiers in the Army of Human Liberation. MIMNERMUS.

There is something more or less wrong with us old European nations. The conditions of our existence are far too artificial and complicated, our food and mode of living are not really natural, and our social intercourse is not loving and benevolent. Everyone is polished and courteous enough, but no one has the courage to be cordial or sincere; so that the lot of an honest man whose inclinations and ideas are unsophisticated is by no means enviable. One cannot help often wishing that one had been born a so-called savage on some South Sea island, that one might have enjoyed a thoroughly unalloyed human existence.—Goethe.

Early English Freethought.

IV.

(Concluded from page 533.)

IN 1585 the Star Chamber was instituted. Through the instrumentality of Archbishop Whitgift, printing was restricted to London and the two universities. The number of printers was limited, and every publication had to receive the approbation of the Primate or the Bishop of London. These efforts to gag opinion were defied by "Martin Marprelate" with his private travelling press. Whether Henry Barrowe, Job Throckmorton, or some other, was the author of the Martin Marprelate tracts, they are deserving of mention both for asserting the liberty of the press and as an early instance of the effective employment of satire against ecclesiastical pretensions. Martin's "'pistles" against the "proud, popish, presumptuous, profane, paltry, pestilent, and pernicious prelates" were not without their influence in disenthraling the people from their ancient intellectual servitude to the hierarchy.

Browne, like Thomas Bilney, "that blessed martyr" as Latimer calls him, was a Norfolk preacher, and, probably from the settlement of the Dutch in Norwich, that part soon became a seat of heresy. The martyrs whose names are recorded as having been executed there, however, all bear sterling English names. Matthew Hamond, a ploughwright of Hither-set, near Norwich, comes first. Stowe tells us he was burnt to ashes in the castle ditch at Norwich (May 20, 1579) for denying Christ to be our Saviour, and saying that the New Testament was but a "storie" of men, or rather a mere fable. In 1583 John Lewes, "an obstinate heretic denying the Godhead of Christ, and holding other detestable heresies (much like his predecessor, Mathew Hamond), was burned at Norwich." Blomefield, in his *History of Norfolk*, tells us he "dyed obstinately without Repentance or any Speeche"; and, further, that in 1587 Peter Cole, of Ipswich, tanner, was also burnt to death in the castle ditch "for those abominable blasphemies"; and in 1588 Francis Ket, of Windham, Master of Arts, "was burned at the same place for the like heresies." This Ket was a relative of the famous rebel, Robert Ket, whose rising is so graphically described by Froude. Strype says Francis Ket "seems to have been a minister." Bishop Scambler, he informs us, summoned this heretic, "whose opinions were found so vile and horrible concerning Christ that the Bishop was forced to condemn him for a stubborn heretic." Ket was educated at Cambridge, and it is quite possible that he came in contact with Robert Greene, the poet, and Christopher Marlowe, whom Swinburne calls "the father of English tragedy and the creator of English blank verse."

Greene, a Norwich man, in his catchpenny *Groat-worth of Wit*, that "crazy death-bed wail of a weak and malignant spirit," in the passage immediately preceding his reference to that "upstart crow" Shakespeare, alludes to Marlowe as a companion in saying, "like the foole in his heart, there is no God." Vaughan of Golden Grove, a contemporary, says Marlowe wrote a book against the Trinity, and Thomas Beard, Oliver Cromwell's tutor, in his *Theatre of God's Judgments* (ch. xxiii), says Marlowe "denied God and his Son Christ, and not only in word blasphemed the Trinity, but also (as it is credibly reported) wrote books against it, affirming our Saviour to be but a deceiver, and Moses but a conjurer and seducer of the people, and the Holy Bible to be but vain and idle stories, and all religion but a device of policy." Probably these accusations were only founded upon a report which is to be found among the papers relating

to the Court of Chancery in the Harlein MS., which shows there was an attempt to incite a prosecution for blasphemy against Marlowe. Among the "horrible blasphemies" mentioned in this paper are his allegations that the Indians and other authors wrote of times preceding those of Adam; that Moses was but a juggler, and that one Heriott can do more than he; that the first beginning of religion was only to keep men in awe; that Christ was the son of a carpenter, and that "yf the Jewes among whome he was borne did crucify him, thei best knew him and whence he came"; that the sacraments would have been better administered in a tobacco "pype"; together with ribald allusions to the woman of Samaria and the apostles. It further alleges that one Richard Cholmelic hath confessed that he was persuaded by Marlowe's reason to become an Atheist, and that "almost in every company he commeth, persuadeth men to Atheisme." These charges were never sworn to on oath, and may be taken *cum grano salis*. Mr. E. A. Bullen, in his preface to Marlowe's works, says: "It is a comfort to know that the ruffian who drew up the charges, a certain 'Richard Bame,' was hanged at Tyburn on December, 1594." Whatever Marlowe's opinions, there can be no question about his daring genius. Of his influence upon succeeding poets Swinburne observes: "To none have so many of the greatest among them been so deeply and so directly indebted. Nor was ever any great writer's influence upon his fellows more utterly and unmingledly an influence for good."

If any man influenced Shakespeare, it was Marlowe. Did he influence his religious opinions? That Shakespeare was a Freethinker is argued by Mr. W. J. Birch in his *Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*. "It is hard, indeed, to say whether he had any religious belief or no. The religious phrases which are thinly scattered over his works are little more than expressions of a distant and imaginative reverence. But on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant. He is silent, and the doubt of Hamlet deepens his silence about the after-world. 'To die,' it may be, was to him as it was to Claudio, 'to go we know not whither.'" Often as his questionings turn to the riddle of life and death he leaves it a riddle to the last, without heeding the common theological solutions around him. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." It has been debated whether Shakespeare was a Catholic or a Protestant. No doubt he was a Catholic in the best sense, and for this reason his works have always been the opprobrium of pious Puritans. Human action and passion is his theme, as of all the other great Elizabethan dramatists, and they treat it without any reference to dogma or bias to any system of theology. Mazzini remarks:—

The divine power has scarcely ever any direct intervention in the Shakespearean drama. The fantastic element, so frequently introduced, if closely examined, will be found never to depart from the individual sphere. His supernatural apparitions are all of them simply personifications of popular superstition, or, like Caliban and Ariel, symbols of the duality of humanity; or, like the witches in *Macbeth*, the incarnations of human passions.

No student of that period who compares the state of England, with all its persecuting High Court of Commission and Star Chamber, with the devastating wars of religions which occupied France and Germany, can fail to see that in England there were a number of men of worth who cared little for the differences of Catholics and Protestants, and who were ready to acquiesce in persecution of either Jesuits or Separatists whose teachings tended to endanger the peace

and order of the realm. Outward conformity to the religion of the State was the desideratum.

The Elizabethan age, nevertheless, showed signs of free speculation. In 1572 we find grave Burleigh complaining of the queen's own household as "a coverture for no small number of *Epicures* and *Atheists*, because the court is not comprehended within a parish, but seemeth to be a lawless place." When Giordano Bruno visited England he numbered Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Fulke Greville among his friends. In 1584 Reginald Scot published his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, the first rational treatment of that question. Sir Walter Raleigh and Thomas Harriot, the mathematician, who accompanied him to Virginia, and who wrote the account of that country in Hakluyt's *Collection of the Early Voyages*, are set down by Aubrey in his *Lives as Deists*. Although Raleigh's writings abound with fine expressions of religious sentiment, it has been noticed they contain no allusion to the positive doctrines of Christianity. As Aubrey says, it was concluded "he was an A-Christ, not Atheist."

Bacon, writing to Burleigh, speaks of his philosophic studies as "my religion," and in regard to those studies bows theology out of court with an excessive graciousness which almost suggests a lurking mockery. In his essay morals are founded on human wants, and, though he cannot believe the universe is without a mind, he says:—

Atheism leaves a man to reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and everything that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men; hence, Atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the bounds of the present life.

Even Hooker, the master mind in the Church at that period, shows signs of rationalism, and links the laws of ecclesiastical polity as well as those of scripture to the unwritten laws which lie in human nature itself.

In 1605 Dr. John Dove wrote a *Confutation of Atheisme*. By his classing Holofernes Sennacherib and "Olimpius the Arrian" as Atheists, along with Lucian, Julian and Doletus [Étienne Dolet], "which called Moses, Helias, and Christ the three deceivers of the world," it does not appear that this doctor of divinity was very exact in his definitions. He would have Atheism rooted out of the land:—

And since the Church hath no other sword now but the censure of excommunication, which is so greatly despised, if it would please God to put it in the hearts of princes to strengthen excommunication with their princely authority, to add the sword of the kingdom to the key of the Church, not to suffer any person that is noted of impiety to dwell in the land, but to deliver him over to the hangman, whom the Church hath delivered to Satan.....and then I may use the phrase of the Holy Ghost, "Let his house be made a jakes" (Dan. 3).

That sanctified person, James I, was inclined to follow this advice. The Arminian treatise of Vorstius, *De Deo*, was burnt at St. Paul's Cross, and James hinted to the Dutch States "that as to the burning of Vorstius for his blasphemies and Atheism, he left them to their own Christian wisdom; but surely never heretic better deserved the flames." On March 18, 1612, Bartholomew Legate was burnt at Smithfield, and in the following month Edward Wightman was burnt at Lichfield for antitrinitarian heresy, Wightman being the last person burnt to death for his opinions in England. "God," observes Fuller, "may seem well pleased with this seasonable severity, for the fire thus kindled quickly went out for want of fuel." It, however, appears that these executions excited murmurs and sympathy: "Wherefore King James politically preferred that hereticks hereafter should silently

and privately waste themselves away in prison, rather than to grace them and amaze others with the solemnity of a publick Execution, which in popular judgments usurped the honour of a persecution"—so that the fires went out rather from policy than for want of fuel.

The reign of James was marked by an increased assertion of the divine right of kings joined with episcopal supremacy, ripening to a rude downfall under Cromwell. The royal enemy of witchcraft turned in the direction of Arminianism towards the end of his reign, and a school of Latitudinarians arose, assembling at Lord Falkland's, of which Hales and Chillingworth were the most distinguished members. Hales, at the Synod of Dort, "bade good-night to John Calvin." Chillingworth, converted first to Romanism and then back again to Anglicanism, in his *Religion of Protestants* contended that it was only necessary to believe what was plainly revealed, and ended so confirmed a Latitudinarian that he was looked upon by all the orthodox as a Socinian. Among those who, amid the conflict of sects, sought for a tenable position by discarding the disputed points and retaining only the elementary traits common to all faiths, must be mentioned Lord Herbert of Cherbury, usually called the father of the English Deists.

In his work *On Truth* he suggests that true religion must be universal, and he finds its attestation in truths intuitively perceived. Of such truths he enumerates five: the existence of God; the duty of worship; piety and virtue as the means thereof; repentance; and the existence of rewards and punishments both here and hereafter. His book on *The Religion of the Gentiles*, interesting as an early essay on comparative religion, betrays an equally crude conception of the primitive universality of Monotheism.

A far more vigorous thinker was Thomas Hobbes, the thoroughly English philosopher of Malmesbury. Hobbes was the first to place the basis of moral and political obligation in the experience of the race. His principal works, written amid the turmoil of the Commonwealth, show his love for order and stable government, and are chiefly noticeable to us by their deliberate subordination of religion to absolute civil power. Hobbes, as a man of the world, had noticed how the fanaticism of the Puritans and the sacerdotal claims of the hierarchy were alike opposed to national welfare. He interpreted literally the saying of Christ, My kingdom is not of this world. That he did not openly break with religion arose from the circumstances of the time. His principles tended to undermine it. Civil power was to determine all religious worship, and even the canonicity of books. He questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch before Spinoza, denied eternal punishment, questioned the personality of the devil, with arguments which equally apply to God, and pithily summed up the theological position by saying that superstition was religion out of fashion, religion superstition in fashion.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

One Night in August.

AUGUST 24-25, 1572, is one of the outstanding dates in the history of the Christian religion in France. Christians, and particularly Roman Catholics, piously preserve the memory of those who "served God in the fire." We Freethinkers, too, may perhaps derive profit from an occasional glance backwards. The saints and the martyrs of all the faiths are our concern.

The details of the carnival of blood known as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew need no rehearsal today. They may be found fully recounted in Henry White's monograph. The precise allocation of the

proportion of guilt to Catherine de' Medici and to Roman Catholic hatred of French Protestantism, and the question whether the massacre in the first instance represented popular feeling, are items of interest to the historian. To Freethinkers the all-important points to note are: (1) the officials of the organized Church had consistently proclaimed the orthodox view that it was right to exterminate heretics, and (2) the news of the carnage was received by the pontiff and the cardinals in Rome with expressions of unmingled joy. The solemn procession to the Church of San Marco and the thanksgiving service, the congratulations of Charles IX, and the pictures by Villari in the Sala Regia of the Vatican Palace—these are "presentations of Catholic truth" which do not belong to the domain of myth.

No doubt religion affects different natural dispositions in different way. In this connection some of the facts recorded by White are full of those human touches which figure so largely in the history of religious persecution. The infant child of one of the Huguenots "played with the beard and smiled in the face of the man who carried him." This infantile caress might have reached down to the heart of a Mohammedan, or even of a man who had lost his child-like faith in God and conscience. It only exasperated the bearded Christian. He "stabbed the child, and with an oath threw it into the Seine." Of the Huguenot women thrown into the river, one "clung for some time to the wooden piles of the bridge, and was killed at last with stones."

Among the representatives of art and letters who, in Paris or the Provinces, fell victims to the infuriated defenders of throne and altar, were: Pierre de la Ramée (Ramus), the humanist and mathematician; Pierre de la Place, the historian and jurist; Jean Goujon, the sculptor, known as "the French Pheidias"; and Claude Goudimel, the composer.

Can the world, or any part of it, ever again witness such scenes? No direct answer can be given to this question. M. l'Abbé Labourt, of the Collège Stanislas, declared last month that "Catholic opinion in France" is now "strong and coherent," and that the Church is gaining ground daily, especially among the young intellectuals. At home, we have the Catholic Truth Society, the Catholic Guild, and the League of Ransom, all working to restore the "age of faith" to a land which was Christian once—before it changed its traditions and worship. Some of their claims in the way of successful propaganda, like those of most men and women engaged in "reviving" things, are extravagant. Their arrogant assurance of ultimate victory is childish. But let us not, while discounting their pretensions, forget that there are still people in England who would fain save their souls. The Roman Catholics offer them a very "safe" religion. The Protestants did the same as long as they could.

All things are possible in a community that allows drift to take the place of vigilance in its mental and moral life. In every part of the civilized world, so-called, including the democracies, there have been of late noticeable reactions imposing serious restriction upon free speech. In 1922, in more than one country, the prison door has been opened to receive the "blasphemer." Twice within the past two months I have visited an English gaol and conversed with a fellow-creature who wore the garb of the broad arrow for the "crime" of heaping derision and contempt upon the Christian religion. Also, I have been officially notified that as I made my visits the occasion of Freethought propaganda, they will not be permitted in future. Probably Freethinkers never expected any serious protest against the blasphemy prosecutions from men of wealth and "standing." But those in the front rank, such as it is nowadays, of science and literature—what faith do they represent in 1922? A. D. McLAREN.

Acid Drops.

The religious organs last week contained lengthy notices of the recent meeting, in Copenhagen, of the World Alliance for the Promotion of International Friendship through the Churches. The keynote of the conference, we are told, was the need of the spirit of Christ and the brotherliness which it implied. The speeches were characteristically vague, they smacked of the phrasemonger throughout. This sort of appeal, divorced of intellectual penetration, creates an unhealthy atmosphere. Those who indulge in it, however earnest, have made but little headway in the direction of real international brotherhood. Professional peace-makers, pensioned officials of "brotherly love," merely cover over the hard facts of clashing human interests with a layer of rhetorical froth, and then pretend that they have solved the problem. It is the same type of mind that one sees reflected in the inane protest against allowing "intellectual difficulties" to deter one from accepting this or that form of religious creed.

Almost contemporaneously with this pious sentimentality about internationalism appear the comments in a section of our Press on the movement in China, which may be summed up as "China for the Chinese." We have long been at work here, saving souls and exploiting "concessions." Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa exclude Asiatics from their territories, and racial feeling against them sometimes runs very high. Yet when the Chinese retaliate, it is a menace to Christian civilization. We are indeed a nation of sportsmen—and dividend-hunters.

With its demand for uniformity in matters of faith and religious practice, Christianity itself is, and has always been, a stumbling block to true brotherhood, national and international. It is essentially a religion of authority, which is another way of saying that its validity does not rest solely upon human research and present-world interests. Its aim is to bolster up this authority by making others accept its theories, and thus shaping them all into a particular pattern. The human race has had concrete experience of the fraternal spirit which is the outgrowth of this aim.

The *Catholic Times* (August 12), is touched to the heart at the sight of Austria's present plight. Reduced from the head of a number of small nationalities, with a total population of fifty-five millions, to a state of six millions, her position is pitiable in the extreme. "What a revelation of the capacity of the men who control the destinies of Europe?" We admit we are not enamoured of these men and their capacities. But what of the hierarchy, Roman Catholic or Orthodox Greek, which for centuries exercised almost unlimited influence over the various nationalities in the late Danubian monarchy? The Church supported the monarch; the monarch supported the Church. In protestant Prussia the relationship between the State Church and the Hohenzollern was similar. The whole sorry plight of Central Europe to-day is an instructive comment on the capacity of autocracy plus superstition.

A glance at pre-war conditions in Russia prompts the same ideas in regard to capacity. The Lord Bishop of Taunton, speaking at Weston-super-Mare recently, on the occasion of the dedication of a mural tablet as a war memorial, said that "the whole world had been shaken by revolution which, under the pretext of the brotherhood of man, developed into Bolshevism, anarchy, and bloody strife." Was there no "bloody strife" in the days of the Tsar and the Patriarch? We say nothing of Rasputin, who received select guests in the neighbourhood of the Winter Palace. His lordship never heard of him, or of "Red Sunday" and "the Romanoffs' day." Perhaps he does not want to hear of them.

The *South London Press* (August 11) says that the clergy and Free Church ministers are "genuinely dis-

turbed by the action of the I.C.C. in sanctioning Sunday games in the parks." The Rev. F. R. Dickinson, Vicar of St. Jude's, Herne Hill, declares that Sunday is one of the entrenchments of Christianity, and that, in order to protect it, our forefathers enacted that on Sundays no shops or publichouses should be open, that no trams or trains should be run, and that no games should be played. One by one we have seen these rules altered. Mr. Dickinson is clearly a gentleman of considerable powers of observation. But he should not have omitted to mention that our forefathers also enforced attendance at the parish church on Sunday. We British have had our "age of faith," and our Sunday is among its most notable achievements.

The same reverend gentleman, inviting gifts of flowers for a war memorial, says that "artificial flowers should not be sent; they are not typical of the Resurrection." What is typical of the Resurrection? Does Mr. Dickinson imagine that the natural flower was once a dead flower, which has come to life again and maintained its continuity throughout the process?

The Free Churches intend to organize a campaign all over the country for the purpose of preventing any further extension of Sunday games, and of regaining, if possible, the ground lost. This last means stopping games where they are at present permitted. It is evident that members of councils, etc., will be bombarded with letters and deputations from chapel members, as the Free Church leaders say that members of councils are decided in their action by the opinions expressed by their constituents. This should give the key to those who are in favour of the moralization and humanization of Sunday. They also must see to it that their opinion is in favour of health-giving games on Sunday, and that they, too, have votes. In this matter the churches and chapels have an advantage in their compact organization, and in the way they can drill mothers' meetings and the like. We have not these advantages, but we should make our existence and our opinions felt.

One point that should be kept clearly before the public and before local legislators is that those who ask for Sunday are not desirous of interfering with the way in which other people care to spend their Sunday, or of exercising the slightest coercion upon them. All the coercion and all the interference come from the side of the Sabbatarians, and it is a monstrous claim on the part of a body of chapel-goers that they shall be permitted to force their views of how to spend the weekly day of rest upon the rest of the population. And next in point of strength should come the reminder of the positively demoralizing effect on the younger people of the way in which Sunday is used wherever Sabbatarianism rules. There is general testimony among chiefs of police that Sunday picture shows have had a marked effect in reducing hooliganism among young men and women, and clean, healthy games cannot but also act as a moralizing force. And it should also be impressed on the public mind that one of the causes of the increase of drunkenness in this country was the abolition of Sunday games during the Puritan ascendancy.

One of our readers in Ceylon sends us a batch of the *Buddhist Chronicle*, and we should like to make a lot of people in this country, particularly the supporters of missionary activities, read them. They would then realize how Christianity looks in the eyes of thoughtful and educated natives, and the possessors of another, and not necessarily worse civilization. But nothing is more difficult than to knock out of the head of the average white man the notion that the coloured man—whether brown or yellow—is of necessity his inferior, and that he is divinely appointed to rule them. The Ceylonese are evidently under no illusion with regard to Christianity. The writers in the *Chronicle* point with justice to the present state of Europe as decisive proof that Christianity does not and cannot civilize mankind. Moreover, there are some rather neat exposures of the lies told by missionaries concerning the Ceylonese in their anxiety to commend

Christianity to its white supporters. We can assure the *Chronicle* writers that these stories are very tame when compared with those retailed at home meetings.

In the *Star* "Alpha of the Plough" (A. G. Gardiner) takes the Rev. B. G. Bouchier to task for declaring that women are not capable of the grace of Holy Orders, and that they must be barred the pulpit. Mr. Gardiner asks what sex has to do with the matter, and says that Mr. Bouchier's doctrine was excusable when woman was the chattel of man—a little dearer than his horse, a little more treasured than his dog, and that a Church is doomed which shuts out women from its higher offices. Well, we believe the Church is doomed anyhow, and admitting women can only delay the hour of its destruction.

But having gone thus far Mr. Gardiner should have gone farther. He says, "It was the Church which should have taken the lead in repudiating the offensive doctrine of the inferiority of women." But how could the Church do that? Mr. Gardiner must know that this is strictly a Church doctrine, and it is based upon the clearest biblical teaching. It is the Bible which teaches the inferiority of women, and the Church simply followed on with the same teaching. The doctrine of the inferiority of women came into the Western world mainly through the influence of the Christian Church, and we have far more respect for men like Mr. Bouchier who, so long as they are in the Christian Church keep to the Church teaching, than we have for those who, finding that a particular teaching is losing its hold on the people, straightway denounce it as un-Christian. "Alpha of the Plough" would have performed a far better service to the public had he taken his courage in both hands and pointed out it was the Christian Church which women had to thank for the loss of liberty and status which they once had, and that this Church teaching is an essential part of any Christian teaching with a valid claim to intellectual honesty.

The *Record* (August 17), the organ of evangelical Anglicanism, pays a very high tribute to the late Lord Northcliffe, and particularly to his staunch imperialism. "He had no patience with Little Englanders." Exactly in the same way Germans, like Bernhardt and Reventlow, had no patience with Little Deutschlanders, and so of practically every imperialist in every "great" nation of Europe. Truly, a fine basis on which to erect the edifice of international brotherhood!

Naturally, the Roman Catholic organs extend a hearty welcome to Mr. G. K. Chesterton. He has now definitely taken his place as one of the flock. The *Christian World* says that he "he long since deserted his inspiring Liberal creed for a fervent faith in authority and ale." Evidently Mr. Chesterton finds bishop and bung more inspiring than a progressive revelation and cocoa.

"Protestantism seems to be passing." This statement does not emanate from the Catholic Truth Society, nor is it the utterance of a malicious Secularist. Its author is the Rev. E. Pell Edmunds, Anglican Rural Dean of Oswestry, who suggests that perhaps those who regard submission to the Pope as the "right course" are offering prudent counsel. But the subject, he says, is one for controversy. Well, Mr. Chesterton has learned to walk by faith, rather than by sight, and we believe Mr. Edmunds would find the same proceeding equally simple and comfortable.

The *Catholic Herald* (August 12) reports the cure at Lourdes of a French woman who suffered from disease of the spine, and was considered "outside the possibilities of science." On the same page is the report of the mass at Westminster Cathedral on August 8 for the victims of the disaster to the pilgrims' train. Did not Herbert Spencer regard a conception of the incongruous as the basis of humour?

An article in the *Christian World* deals with the problem of finding preachers to take the place of ministers on holiday, and the writer remarks that an American or Colonial always enjoys preaching to an English assembly. "The congregation are not critical, but exceedingly sympathetic." Quite. Are not the English said to be a simple-minded lot?

The Rev. Horace J. Dubery, pastor of Regent Baptist Church, Kennington Cross, was at one time a postman. He is now a minister of the gospel, a hymn-writer, and an artist. "The present attitude of the world gives Mr. Dubery little satisfaction." That is, indeed, a pessimistic attitude for one who views things from so many different standpoints. These jeremiads of the men of the cloth remind us somewhat vividly of the history of Ginx's Baby. Despite the philosophers, parsons, and even politicians, it grew up to man's estate. Then came the eager inquiry, "Good God! gentlemen, between you all, where has Ginx's Baby gone to?"

The bill-poster advertising the *Freethinker* on the hoardings in Weston-super-Mare has already been the cause of a considerable display of Christian venom in that town. "A Celtic Visitor," writing in the *Weston Mercury* (August 12), asks why, in so pious and respectable a centre of the faith, the authorities permit, "week after week, a most insidious attack on the Christian faith." The appeal to authority is typical. The only form of Christian apologetic that is effective is the brute force of organized superstition, and that isn't effective, either. An occasional blasphemy case, and such protests as "Celtic Visitor's," are perfectly intelligible to those who see them as part and parcel of one continuous record.

The Sacred Films, Incorporated, is the name of an American concern, which is about to present the Bible in the form of a motion picture serial. "A South American python was photographed for the scenes showing the temptation of Eve." This is an aspect of Christian doctrine which we are afraid is too often forgotten in this country. The second episode in this series shows the city of Enoch which Cain built (*Genesis iv*). A building corresponding to the biblical description has been "specially constructed in California." In another part of the States recently pictures were being sold depicting "the real city of God." America is the source of some wonderful theology, and is noted for the commercial spirit. The combination of the two qualities makes a choice product.

The number of civil marriages has increased noticeably of late, and the fact is causing manifest uneasiness in clerical circles. Marriage is one of the sacraments of the Church, and the pocketing of fees is one of the conventions recognized by the trained soul-saver. Here he never fails in achievement. He is ready, and even eager, to bury a dead infidel in the "sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection," and to draw the prescribed emolument for doing it.

In Inverness permission has been given to a band to play "sacred" music on Sunday. Hitherto that privilege has been restricted to the Salvation Army. The Scotch claim to be more musical than the English.

Providence no doubt lives in close intercourse with his appointed ministers; but he does not appear to be seriously interested in protecting his own consecrated buildings from the depredations of the thief. And yet he has many opportunities of observing what is going on. A silver communion set and other articles have recently been lifted from St. Saviour's, Putney. The beadle of Glasgow Cathedral has just been sentenced to sixty days' imprisonment for stealing £1 19s. 3d. from the offertory plate. Sixpences and threepenny-bits made up the bulk of this amount. Evidently the beadle is a man of broad tastes, who derives inspiration even from the smallest coin of the realm.

To Correspondents.

Those subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

C. BAKER.—Much obliged. Will send on review copy. Shall be interested in watching developments.

A. KELLY.—Charles Bradlaugh did discuss with Dr. A. J. Harrison we think on more than one occasion, and reports of the debate, or debates, were issued at the time. You would have to depend on getting second-hand copies.

PANSY BADGE.—Thanks for getting three new readers. Hope to hear of more. We are also pleased that the articles were of use. Make whatever use of them you please. They were written for use. Your letter is a good one, and will be useful if printed.

HUSTACE TAINÉ.—Thanks for article.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges: R. B. Harrison, 5s.; T. Saunders, 2s. 6d.

GRETA.—Thanks. We are quite better. Pleased you value the *Freethinker* so highly. We should like to see the paper have a larger circulation in Ireland. Perhaps this will be the case when things settle down a bit.

JOHN COLLIER (Birmingham).—Neither the Northcliffe nor any other section of the English Press is free in the sense of presenting all opinions honestly. Their power to-day consists largely in withholding publicity from hostile ideas and causes. See "Views and Opinions" in this issue.

SEAGULL (Dublin).—There is scope for freethought work in Ireland. Where is there not scope for it? You will find Gerald Massey's *The Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ* (6d., postage 1½d.) and G. W. Foote's *Who was the Father of Jesus?* (1d., postage ½d.) very useful. The Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs* and *The Jesus Problem* (both published by Watts & Co.) present a detailed treatment of the subject.

W. BANDIE.—There should be no trouble in newsagents in Aberdeen getting copies from their wholesale agents. We despatch a weekly supply, on sale or return, to Messrs. Menzies, and there should be no difficulty in getting all that is required from them; or they could be ordered from their railway bookstalls.

INDEPENDENT.—Certainly we may be wrong in thinking that there is nothing in your pamphlet that calls for special notice; but we must be the final judge on that point. And the subject of your pamphlet was discussed at length in our Correspondence columns some time since.

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—

The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

Foreign and Colonial.—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. George Whitehead had very successful meetings at Hammersmith last week, and at Peckham Rye on Sunday. He is holding meetings every night this week at Peckham Triangle up to, and including, Friday, August 25. From August 26 to September 3 he will be speaking at Plymouth. Then Stockport will be the scene of his operations, after which Leeds and Huddersfield will be visited. We hope Freethinkers in these districts will do all in their power to assure the success of Mr. Whitehead's campaign.

Mr. J. Fothergill, Secretary of the South Shields Branch, writes us that Mr. Whitehead's recent visit there is bearing fruit. For several Sunday evenings Mr. R. Atkinson has been lecturing on the Town Moor, Newcastle, to large and interested audiences. These meetings have proved that the public is quite ready for our message, if only it can be properly placed before them. Mr. Atkinson is, we understand, willing and anxious to help the work in other parts of Tyneside, and we hope that advantage will be taken of his readiness for the work. Mr. Atkinson is a young man, and we should like to see him kept busy, and as many others as possible.

The Committee of the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged an outing to Henley-in-Arden for to-day (August 27). Members and friends are invited to meet at Snow Hill Station at 10.15 a.m. and should provide their own lunch. Tea at the "Black Swan," Henley at 4.30 p.m., 1s. 3d. Return fare 3s. 4d. For friends in suburbs the times of departure are: Birmingham, Snow Hill, 10.25 a.m.; Bordesley, 10.28; Small Heath, 10.32; Tysley, 10.35; Spring Road, 10.38; Hall Green, 10.41.

The West Ham Branch has arranged for another "Ramble" to Loughton on Sunday next, September 3. The train will leave Stratford (G.E. Main Station) at 10.10. The party will be under the guidance of Mr. H. White. Tea will be arranged. There are some delightful rambles round Loughton, and given fine weather an enjoyable day is certain.

Mr. E. D. Side writes:—

I felt when I read Mr. Heaford's splendid tribute that I was a boy again with Heaford and father and my brothers in those delightful years. The Walworth Free-thought Institute sprang into life and lived a vigorous life. A large dancing class to bring in the young people, a Monthly Concert on Sunday carried on by the audience to get them to come to the (what was thought) wicked place; all free seats as father was the owner and freeholder, tea-parties, etc.—we had it full to overflowing. Standing and Mrs. Law both had their journals. The bookstall was a big one and spread books and tracts into many a hundred homes. The *Reformer* seemed to grow with us, as also other books.

Some members wished to build a hall of their own at Camberwell. They migrated! The split caused a weakness in both; divided we fell away gradually. The new secretary was not successful. But father still fought on, in and out of season. As a vestryman he had prayers taken as read at the Almshouses Committee, and as a Guardian, when the parson asked for a holiday, he proposed that he could go altogether and his money be spent on more beef for the inmates—it may sound puerile, but his sincerity and humour made a lasting impression on all who came in contact with him, for it was kindly, continual, and a blow straight from the shoulder at their "faith." He got more votes than anyone else in the Parish, and all knew him as an Atheist and trusted him.

It is a tribute to the memory of Mr. Side that his descendants are all keenly interested in promoting the Cause of Freethought.

We understand that Wednesday, August 23, was the date fixed for Mr. J. W. Gott's release from Wormwood Scrubs Gaol. As we go to press on Tuesday, we had not seen Mr. Gott in time to make any detailed reference to

his experiences and their general effect on him. We may have something more to say in our next.

We are asked to announce that Mr. Guy Aldred, who was sentenced to a term of imprisonment under the war legislation is now at liberty, and we have received an appeal for financial help in order to clear up the outstanding liabilities of the trial. There is a sum of just over £20 required, and those interested are asked to forward their subscriptions to Mr. C. Doran, 13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, who is acting as secretary.

We congratulate Belgian Freethinkers on the success of their thirty-fifth National Congress. *La Pensée* (Brussels, August 13) says that the organs of the clerical party have vented all the spleen at their command upon the Congress and its results—a first-class testimony to the good work that our Belgian friends are accomplishing. The same issue of our contemporary contains a letter from M. Eugène Hins, thanking the Congress for appointing him honorary president of the "Fédération Nationale." We regret to learn that the veteran champion of Free-thought has been indisposed.

Heat Transference.

(Concluded from page 540.)

III.—RADIATION.

In radiation heat travels through a vacuum, in a medium, without heating the medium. At the height of a few hundred miles the density of the atmosphere is practically nil; yet heat reaches us from the sun, through millions of miles of vacuous space. The particles of a hot body emit certain waves which carry off its heat energy. When these fall upon other matter, part of the energy they carry is absorbed, causing the molecules of the relatively cold body to oscillate more vigorously. The medium through which these waves travel is supposed to be ether, which receives, so to speak, a sort of series of impacts from the rapidly vibrating molecules of the hot body, which it conveys, in some manner, to the molecules of the cold body, which are then set into vibration by the impact.

As I have pointed out in earlier articles, there is a close relationship between radiant heat and light. Both travel with the same velocity, and both obey the same laws of reflection and refraction. Indeed, the only difference between the two is that radiant heat has a longer wave length than light. When a piece of metal is heated in a dark room it gives out long waves, produced by the relatively slow vibration of its molecules, which we detect as heat. As the temperature rises and the molecules oscillate more violently, the metal gives out shorter waves, which the eye perceives as a dull-red colour. At a higher temperature still the vibrations grow quicker and shorter waves are emitted, and a bright red colour is seen.

Heat radiation can be photographed, with suitable plates. Thus, a kettle of boiling water can be photographed as accurately in absolute darkness as it can in the light.

Bright polished surfaces are good reflectors of radiant heat, and therefore bad absorbers. Dull black bodies absorb heat readily, and also radiate it well. In general: *Good radiators are good absorbers, and vice versa.*

A body which emits as much radiation as it is possible to emit at a given temperature is called a *full radiator*. Full radiators absorb all radiation incident upon their surfaces and reflect none. (In practice it is impossible to obtain a *full radiator*. A hole in a box, blackened inside is a close approximation, however.)

Every known material absorbs some radiations. According to Prévost's *Theory of Exchanges* for every

case of temperature equilibrium, a body has a steady temperature when its losses due to emission are just balanced by radiation absorbed from the surrounding bodies. When a hot body, for example, is brought near a thermometer, each is emitting radiations, and the temperature of the thermometer rises because it receives more energy than it loses. If a block of ice is brought near it, the reverse effect is observed, because the thermometer is now losing more energy than it is receiving.

Stefan has shown that *the amount of radiation emitted by a body is proportional to the fourth of its absolute temperature.*

If a body allows radiations to pass through it, it is called *diathermanous*; if it does not, it is called *athermanous*. Air, certain dioxide, and rock salt, are examples of the first; alum is an example of the second. Glass keeps off the heat of a fire because of its diathermancy. But it is athermanous to heat from a source at a high temperature (such as the sun). This is a general rule: *The diathermancy of a body depends on the source which is giving out radiations.* It is due to the *selective absorption* of glass that the greenhouse is efficacious, and grows hotter and hotter when the sun is shining upon it. The short heat waves from the sun pass through the glass, and heat the earth and plants. But when they return to the glass as longer heat waves, they cannot pass through, and so the temperature of the greenhouse steadily rises.

Our knowledge of radiation enables us to determine the temperature of the celestial bodies. What is known as the *solar constant* (i.e., rate at which heat is received from the sun at the equator) can be determined.

It is one-third of a calorie per square centimetre per second. One calorie is the heat required to raise the temperature of one grain of water one degree Centigrade.

Hence, assuming that the heat gained from the sun by plants is equal to the heat which the sun is losing by radiation, the following results are obtained:—

Distance from sun	Temperature of a black body	Effects in deg. Cen.
3¼ million miles ...	1200 deg. Cen. ...	cast iron melts
23 " " ...	327 " " ...	lead melts
At Mercury ...	210 " " ...	tin melts
" Venus ...	85 " " ...	alcohol boils
" Earth ...	27 " " ...	hot day
" Mars ...	-30 " " ...	Arctic cold
" Neptune ...	-217 " " ...	nitrogen freezes

But, maybe, heat is being produced in the interior of the planets by disruption of radiative bodies, so that the results given above are not too certain. All we can say is that they are the minimum temperatures possible for certain effects.

W. H. MORRIS.

ATHEIST TO PANTHEIST.

No future, separate life—such is your creed—
But general life of which you grow a part;
A heart-beat of the universal heart;
A rose, perchance, or poor, unnoticed weed;
A fraction of the brilliance and the speed
Of starlit, gusty nights, when meteors dart
Down all the brightening wind; a pulse of Art;
A portion of man's speech, and actual deed;
And thus, absorbed in all-pervading God,
You think to live, conscious, yet knowing nought
Of all the past with pain and joyance fraught,—
An atom, where the atoms onward plod.
What you call God, I Nature name, and hence
Am Atheist; but where the difference?

—Philip Bourke Marston.

"Lucifer."

MANY religious works, and particularly those written by Catholics, are not only absurd but exceedingly dull. The book which this article concerns, it is true, is more than usually absurd, but it is also infinitely amusing. I refer to "*Lucifer*, compiled from original documents by Abbé Paul Sutter of the Diocese of Strasburg, translated into English by the Rev. Theophilus Borer." Indeed, I venture to predict that if the author of this very pious work turned playwright—slightly altering his style—his wealth would soon equal that of the Quaker cocoa merchants.

This book purports to be the true account of the well-known Illfurt (Alsace) case, in which two boys, Thiébaud and Joseph Burner, became "possessed with demons."

We are told that—

From September 25, 1865, the boys displayed most abnormal phenomena. Whilst lying on their backs they span round and round in circles like tops with great rapidity.....At other times they felt, all over their bodies, a painful pricking and stinging, and they pulled out from beneath their clothes, such a great quantity of feathers and seaweed as to cover therewith the whole floor.....and these feathers, which covered their bodies so mysteriously, gave out a frightful stench which made it necessary to destroy them. Strange to say, when they were burnt, they left no ashes behind.

This makes one wonder why scientists did not investigate the case, but no doubt the Holy Catholic Church saw to that!

Each of the boys was "inhabited" by two spirits. One of these declared that he was "a hellish chieftain commanding a legion of devils in the air, the immense number of which would obscure the light if they had bodies like men!" Here's a chance for Conan Doyle to show his genius—let him interview one of these naughty Aerials!

The two boys were visited by hundreds of people, and many marvellous conversions to the Christian faith are said to have resulted. Of these several instances are given:—

An officer of an African regiment quartered at Mulhouse came once to visit the boys. As soon as they saw him they roused his conscience with such a thorough examination in classical French that he was overcome and rushed away terrified. It was the occasion of his resuming religious duties after long neglect, and being sincerely converted.

We are informed, moreover, that many other persons were lectured on their various sins and bad habits. The Devil must be somewhat foolish if he allows his lieutenants to secure converts to the Christian faith!

In Chapter IV there is a very amusing account of Voltaire's fate. One of the devils is made to say:—

We received him with great pomp. We went in procession to meet him, but we held him fast! When he approached the gate of hell, he got frightened, and looked as though he wanted to retrace his steps; but he could not escape us, and we forced him to enter the firehole!

Poor Voltaire! Will no compassionate Christian pray for his soul?

As may be expected, the devils particularly loathed "spiritual weapons," and were so impolite as to describe "holy water" as "filth," churches as "swine-stalls," and priests as "dung-beetles" and "bawlers." No wonder the good Catholics were shocked, especially when one of them was told that they had "seen the rag-gatherers (so the Capuchin fathers were dubbed) and you have brought them money that they may make rubbish." "Rubbish," says the author, "is the abusive term in which the demon alluded to offerings for Masses!" Still, to my

mind, it was a very apt description of the "sacred rites" which are carried out by the Catholic Church (though being a "heretic" I suppose I know nothing about it.) What fine fortune-tellers these devils would have made, though! "Roll up, all your sins and vanities told for sixpence!"

These naughty spirits, too, are said to have carried out a very active campaign against persons they disliked. One Christian, the Mayor of Illfurt, a M. Tresch, is said to have had two calves die and a cow break its leg as a result of their animosity. But this was not all. In the month of May, 1868, M. Tresch had purchased a pig. The next day, the erstwhile healthy animal lost all appetite and began to pine away. The veterinary surgeon not being able to locate any disease, M. le Maire determined to investigate in other ways. He placed in the sty a blessed medal of St. Benedict. Immediately the animal was well again! At his next visit to the possessed boy, the enemy gave him a word of explanation. "I am not able to enter thy house any more," he said, "we are obliged to fly away over it." The Mayor had previously fallen down stairs and broken an arm—poor devil! Other men dropped dead or were stricken with madness as a result of these ambitious devils' efforts. Still, I shall certainly know how to cure influenza or toothache in future, and perhaps even the rate-collector will be scared away if I hang a sacred medal in my house.

To show that not Satan, but the Roman Catholic Church is all-powerful, however, one of the devils is made to say to the Mayor:—

Thy religion is the only true one! All others are false!.....I must also inform you that we have no power whatever—we demons—over people who think and act as you do. We are powerless against those who confess their sins with sorrow in their heart and receive worthily the body of Christ.

And although Christ is constantly referred to as "the dog," the Virgin Mary is always spoken of as "The Great Lady" by these "princes of darkness."

A more amusing and stupid method of propaganda cannot be imagined, especially when we read that Freemasons and Jews are "good people" in the Devil's eyes, and that they "save him a lot of trouble and gain many souls for him!" The narrative develops into real and unvarnished farce when one of the spirits declares that "the teaching of the Catholic Church as to hell is true; but hell-fire is far above what you can conceive it to be! Its heat is greater and more active! It causes indescribable agony!" Here is another fine example of the quality of the writing:—

In the living-room, where there was no oven, the heat occasionally became so unbearable that people expressed agonized amazement. Thereupon the evil spirit would say, "I am a good stoker, am I not?"

This trouble, like many others, was finally stopped by sprinkling "holy water" on the floor! It is evident, too, that some of the "great" Protestant preachers will have to look to their laurels in respect of "fire and brimstone" sermons. Listen to this:—

"Who has expelled you," the Sister asked, "from Heaven?"

"Michael!" cried the infuriated fiend. "Michael, the stinker!—with his sword!"

"What would you be prepared to do to go to Heaven?"

"I'd crawl," replied the spirit, "for a thousand years on points of needles, and slide on keenly sharpened knives!"

In 1869 "liturgical exorcisms" were carried out by priests, with the "result" that the "possessed boys" were "completely cured." This miracle, as might be expected, makes a delicious morsel of "light reading."

As for the truth of the story, the whole affair was exposed in several newspapers in 1868 and 1869, and a chapter of this very entertaining book is therefore devoted to sneering at those explanations which differ from its own.

One of the most amusing features of this precious publication, too, is the front cover, which is adorned with the naked figure of a man enveloped in flames, among which a snake-like figure is darting. The gentleman's head is ornamented with a dainty pair of horns, and, of course, beautifully pointed asses' ears. His hands, one of which is apparently inviting some unseen person into his abode, are provided with slender, crooked fingers, all of which, like his little beard, are also delicately pointed.

The writer, however, appears to have no knowledge of the art of writing, or even of punctuation. Italics and exclamation marks are his delight. I counted no fewer than eighteen of the latter on one page of two hundred words.

Altogether very funny and idiotic.

EUSTACE TAINE.

Religion and Morality.

IN the long-drawn martyrdom of man there is surely no more tragic blunder than the assumed necessary connection between religious belief and right conduct. This ghastly error has covered the earth with blood and has darkened the lives of some of our noblest men and women. The error arose—as most religious errors do—through the fear of primitive man; the heretic, the one who saw the folly and futility of established beliefs, was a tribal danger, his infidelity was likely to bring down the anger of the gods on the whole tribe, and so, to this day—despite the disillusionments of life and the great growth of infidelity in modern times—infidelity is still the unforgivable crime. Christians still endeavour to make it “unpleasant” for those who deny the “true faith,” and the Atheist is still looked upon as a moral monster—as if “Belief” was a moral rather than a mental state.

When one sees clearly—and, unfortunately, popular prejudice seems to obscure the vision of most people—the nature of belief, one realizes the folly of applying moral tests to mental states. It cannot be too often reiterated that even if all Christians, from Christ downwards, had all combined “the manners of a marquis with the morals of a Methodist,” and all of them had worn the white flower of a blameless life, it would have been no proof of the truth of Christian doctrines. Of course, it would be a formidable argument for its utility, especially if it could be shown that all “infidels” were people of warped moral nature and evil repute; but even if it could be shown that religious influence *everywhere* acted as a beneficial agency, it would still be only an inferential argument for the truth of religious doctrines.

In practice what do we find? We find that the facts support our thesis. If religious belief has no necessary relation to right conduct, then unbelief has no relation either; and we find, as we should expect, that there are good, bad, and indifferent in both camps. But, if the reader cares to consult such a work as the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought*, he will find that the “infidels” possess one quality which is conspicuously absent in the majority of “true believers,” and that is *moral courage*—and it may well prove to be that moral courage is the one quality that is necessary for the salvation of the race.

One must regretfully admit that a few of the world's

infidels—and it must not be forgotten that they were the world's *benefactors*—were not men of exemplary virtue; some of them lived in an age of a low morality, an age when religion was the dominant factor in life, and when superstition and passion drowned the voice of reason, and it is natural that their lives should not merit the universal approval of a more enlightened age, but I know of no infidel who does not, by comparison, stand head and shoulders above his traducers, whilst the majority of great heretics have been men and women whose personal lives compare very favourably with any Christian saint and whose *services to the human race* are immeasurably greater.

The facts of life are gradually disabusing the popular mind of many fallacies; people are realizing that those who “get religion” are still human, and that a parson is not necessarily good because he is a parson, any more than a policeman is a law-abiding citizen because he is paid to maintain it! Despite the favoured position held by Christianity in this country, it is the constant lament of the clergy that it is a difficult thing to live a Christian life, and that to carry one's religious principles into the workshop requires a degree of moral courage that few Christians possess. This is not because the workers are hostile to religion, on the contrary the man in the street who cares nothing about religion and religious observance often casts “the first stone” at the infidel who courageously avows his opinions. It is because the vigorous secular atmosphere of the work-shop is fatal to an artificial morality. The workers do not dislike goodness in their fellows, only the *profession* of it; they do not hate the decent-living fellow, they admire him; they respect the social virtues but have only contempt for the mock-virtues of the professed religionist. The introduction of a person as “a good Christian” has ceased to be a recommendation, for it is becoming increasingly more evident that, whereas many Christians have all the vices of their neighbours including the additional one of hypocrisy, many non-Christians lead lives that put their religious brethren to shame. People are seeing the error of connecting religion with morality, and if they do not as readily perceive the error of connecting infidelity with immorality it is because a dishonest time-serving clergy and a corrupt Press are still engaged in throwing dust in their eyes.

There are two ways of combating this: Firstly, it is the solemn duty of all who have the Freethought cause at heart to so order their individual lives that—like Cæsar's wife—they may be “above suspicion.” Secondly, it is essential to avow one's opinions, and in doing so to use clear-cut unambiguous language, and to adopt an uncompromising attitude on all matters of principle. The first is necessary to gain the good-will of worthy people; and as for the second—well, the paramount need of our time is for people who say what they mean and do not live in perpetual fear of “verbal bugbears.” In social movements one meets with all sorts and conditions of people, and a reputation of a high character gives one a prestige that nothing else can. Personally, I find it a little embarrassing to be “lauded to the skies” by reverend gentlemen and pious Christians on account of my “high ideals”; but it does not deceive me, for I know that they are going on to say that I am really a Christian—“more Christ-like than many professing Christians,” etc.—only I haven't yet realized the source of all my virtue! This gives me an opportunity to extol the merits of Atheism; and their shocked looks and incredulous smiles as they crane their heads forward to get a good look at this “monster in angel guise,” amuses me highly.

Let us live cleanly, and honestly avow our opinions, and our Cause is bound to prosper. Orthodoxy cannot then afford to damn men of our quality! If we have ceased to believe in a god, if we have ceased to order

our lives with our fingers crossed and one eye on Providence, let us acknowledge the fact and not shelter in the clouds of ambiguity, "letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I will' like the cat in the adage." If we do not believe in a God we are Atheists. Why then shelter behind a "reverent agnosticism?" We are opposed to a powerful and unscrupulous foe who is tolerant only so far as we force him to be. Let us see to it that we do not become too "respectable" to be effective.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

The Britisher's Art.

THE common characteristics of a race can be discovered in all of their pursuits. The lofty idealism, the mysticism, and the lack of the habit of practical affairs, characteristic of the East, is reflected in their art. Sufficient for them is the creation of a beautiful object. They can contemplate beauty and appreciate it. Similarly in the occident the varying characteristics of the races are illustrated. The wonderful products of Greece are less actually contemplative than those of the East, and coming down to modern times, the art of the Anglo-Saxon barely exists at all in a contemplative sense.

The Anglo-Saxon is a man of action; his is the habit of practical affairs carried to excess, and to him art is only remotely practical. He can only appreciate it when brought into this realm by some other circumstances than that of beauty. While beauty is largely a matter of fitness for the purpose in view, such an æsthetic value as is applied to a purpose cannot be wholly regarded as a work of art, it being largely utilitarian. The true work of art can have no value in practical affairs; it cannot be considered in the strict sense of the word utilitarian or practical, it is simply the creation of an æsthetic value which is dependent upon pleasure in its appreciation.

It seems, however, impossible for the Anglo-Saxon mind to acknowledge this fact. Beauty existing alone, satisfying in its own perfection, is not sufficient in the general way to stimulate the sense of even those professedly interested in art. It certainly does not make a strong appeal to the general public. To be appreciated by the action-loving practical Anglo-Saxon, a work of art must either be an engineering feat, like a 650 h.p. engine, which certainly has an æsthetic value in its application of fitness to purpose, or it must be beauty which is dependent upon human emotion, apart from merely æsthetic pleasure.

Perhaps this somewhat complex statement will be made more readily intelligible by saying that an object of beauty must tell a human story before it is readily appreciated and accepted by the great British public. Very few people for instance, would be left cold by a view of the Discobolus; it makes an immediate appeal to sportsman and æsthete alike. The action of the statuary is so perfect that we can easily realise what the man represented is doing. It contains besides its own inherent beauty, the story of the effort made in a struggle for supremacy, which cannot but make its appeal to the strife-loving, competing, surviving Anglo-Saxon.

It is doubtful whether Rodin's "Thinker" could make a similar appeal to the British public. Rugged and magnificent as that work is, it does not convey an immediate practical sense of action. The strife of action is there, but it is the action of thought and not physical action, and therefore more symbolical than is appreciated, generally speaking, in these isles. At the same time, this work shows the apparent interest of telling a story as well as of creating a thing of beauty, which seems ever present in the minds of artists and public alike in the Western countries.

In the realm of poetry, perhaps the most popular

form in Britain is narrative or ballad, which is sufficiently significant support of this complaint. In the East little gems of verse can be found which exist for the sake of their lyric beauty alone; they do not tell a story, although they sometimes paint a picture.

Besides this necessity for using some human activity in art, the Briton is liable not to be satisfied if his æsthetic values do not inculcate some moral purpose. The fusion of ethical and æsthetic values in this country is complete. An æsthetic value has no moral force, and the standard of judgment of any art which drags in morality to assist it, is bound to be fallacious. Art is outside and above morality; its duty is to produce pleasure and not ethical uplift.

It is perhaps impossible to expect a practical, efficient, action-loving race to hesitate in the stride of its progress to contemplate beauty, but even such a passionate, practical people as the British, would do well to consider whether in the hurry and bustle of mechanical civilization there is not something in the realm of practical affairs which brings a higher reward in its train than mere bustle, and whether that thing is not beauty which exists for itself alone.

Pleasure sought feverishly as a recreation from the bustle of civilized activity, is often found to become dull and uninteresting, merely because it is only another form of activity. The pleasure which can be gained from the contemplation of an æsthetic value is not so brief and ephemeral, and will be found ultimately to be more satisfying than mere factitious recreation.

The inclusion of a human story in a representation of art, certainly makes it interesting, but it also renders it liable to criticism from a human emotional point of view. If one disagrees with the story or the actors of the story, the artistic entity is condemned as false, and that alone is often the standard of æsthetic criticism in this country. If there is no story, this factor of criticism is obviously eliminated, and beauty can be recognized for the pleasure it gives, whether that pleasure be immediately painful or immediately joyous, and thus will be stimulated a really æsthetic sense in place of what is now, particularly in the Western races, a merely emotional judgment of what the artist is talking about rather than what he produces.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Correspondence.

IS THE HUMAN FORM INDECENT?
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your more logical readers will have been somewhat puzzled by your ridicule of those who object to ten-year-old boys capering about in the vicinity of water in a state of nature. For the question at once arises: Where do you draw the inevitable line? If boys may thus disport themselves why not girls? To say the least, girls' bodies are no more repulsive than boys', yet any attempt on their part to assert such "equal rights" would be promptly suppressed, as it was during the hot summer of 1911 at Hastings. Then, if boys of ten, why not men of twenty or forty, who are probably as pleasing, or revolting, to the eyes of grown women as boys are to girls. Why, in all such cases, should the delicacy or prudery of males be so carefully respected while no such regard is paid to the susceptibilities of females?

EVACUSTES A. PHIPSON.

A PRESSING PROBLEM.

SIR,—In her article on this subject Frances Prewett puts forward the Douglas scheme. Now quite a lot appeared in the *Labour Leader* on both sides of this question, all of which I read but was quite unable to understand. Nor does your contributor make it clear to me. I can see, however, where she makes some grave errors. For instance you cannot increase the purchasing power of the public so that it can obtain what doesn't exist. Bankers do not create credit. Credit is the result of prosperity

and peace. In so far as it exists bankers can manipulate it, but cannot create it.

I do not profess to be gifted in judging the details of economic matters. I must admit that my ideas are largely instinctive, but I have an idea that the scheme is pure nonsense. I hope, however, as the matter has been introduced into the *Freethinker* that some competent critic will be found to deal with it. It is not altogether unconnected with the law of population. Although I am a Socialist, I believe Socialism is impossible without birth control, and birth control ineffective to produce happiness minus Socialism. Our opponents are constantly offering us schemes like the Douglas and similar ones which appear about as likely as the extraction of sunbeams out of cucumbers.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

LIBERTY AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know the extent of liberty and freedom of opinion permitted by our newspapers, and to learn that nothing must be published against the interests of the bishops and the Church. The enclosed letter was sent for publication to five daily and one Sunday newspapers, but refused publication by all except the *Times*, which inserted some portions of it but omitted others and all mention of the presence of the bishops in the upper House. The newspapers were: *The Times*, *Daily News*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily Herald*, the *Star*, and the *Sunday Times*. W. W. HARDWICKE, M.D.

REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

SIR,—In reforming the House of Lords the chief points to be observed are: to get the best men possible to rule the country; to limit the creation of peers and titles to life only; and to get rid of the bishops from the House. The granting of titles in perpetuity to future generations as yet unborn for services rendered by their progenitor is both irrational and absurd. The presence of the bishops in what should be a secular assembly, unhampered in its legislation by clerical interference, is a relic of the priestly rule of the dark ages, and is not conducive to public welfare. Nowhere in the New Testament or in the history of apostolic times do we hear of the clergy assuming secular titles or rank. Their interests are opposed to the interests of the people, and are centred in the advancement of ecclesiastical power and the aggrandizement of their church; and their ideas are too dogmatic and narrow to support any legislation in which freedom, liberty, and progress are concerned. And these remarks also apply to the recent attempts on the part of the clergy to obtain admittance as members to the lower House, from which they were excluded for very good reasons, as reference to history will confirm. We frequently hear of appeals for more bishops. But if the bishops would confine their attention to their own work, and leave the settlement of the affairs of the State to the secular lords, we should hear less of such appeals. The clergy have now a "National Church Assembly," through which the voice of the Church can be heard when necessary.

To effect the necessary reforms, I suggest that the reconstituted House consist of 350 members, as follows:—

- (1) Life peers, chosen from:
 - (a) Present and past members of the lower House;
 - (b) From past Ministers of the Crown;
 - (c) From retired Judges of the Supreme and High Courts.

- (2) All first creations of existing hereditary peers.

Any remaining seats could be filled by selection from the hereditary peerage. But all future vacancies should be filled by peers elected for life only. Then as regards the bishops, I suggest the inclusion of a clause such as the following in any Act for the purpose: "That no person in Holy Orders shall (after the commencement of the Act) be a member of the House of Lords, nor shall assume or use any secular rank or title, or claim any secular right or privilege by virtue of his episcopal rank."

W. W. HARDWICKE.

[We do not know any period within the past sixty or seventy years when the general newspaper Press took such care that "dangerous" opinions should be excluded from its columns. The public is put off with miles of chatter on subjects that are of no consequence to anyone in particular. Give the public what they want was Lord Northcliffe's motto, and that has involved a progressive pauperization of both newspapers and the intelligence of the newspaper reading public.—Editor.]

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on post-card.

LONDON:

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THE "LAURIE" DISCUSSION CIRCLE: Every Thursday at the Laurie Arms Hotel, Crawford Place, W. Social reunion at 7.30 p.m. Chair taken at 8 p.m.

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BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park): 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, A Lecture; 6, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

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