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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

Views and Opinions.

Christian Virtues.

Christians are very fond of expressions which properly looked at throw a flood of light on the kind of mentality encouraged, if not induced by belief in Christian doctrines. We are all, for example, familiar with such expressions as "the Christian conscience" or "Christian virtues," as though the conscience possessed by a Christian were of necessity different in kind from that possessed by other people, and as though Christianity had some peculiar right to the common virtues of everyday life—almost, as I have so often said, as though it had invented all the virtues and then secured a patent right over them for ever. Such expressions are interesting for various reasons. Among other things they help to show the scale of virtues believed in by the average Christian. On the principle of where a man's treasure lies there also lies his deepest interests, one is able to mark what Christians consider the graver evils, and what kind of impetus they would really give towards securing the mental and moral health of the general community.

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Faith-Healing.

An illustration of the quality of the Christian mind may be found in a comment of the *Church Times* on the question of faith-healing. As most of our readers know, a committee of medical men recently sat to examine an alleged cure which occurred at Lourdes. They returned a verdict of "not proven," although had the cure been genuine and complete that would have mattered but little. There are many thousands who go to Lourdes, and it would indeed be strange if among these some one or two did not claim to have benefited from the intercession of the Virgin. Quite as large a proportion claim to have received benefits from all sorts of quack remedies, patent pills which at best contain nothing that is harmful, electric belts which are as effective as though one were to rub one's back up and down the post of an electric street light, etc. That people can believe in such cases, and never think that if the Virgin really does exercise curative powers at Lourdes there should be very few failures, instead of there being very few "cures," is proof of the kind of mind that goes to the make-up of a sincere Christian; and that a committee of medical men should solemnly enquire into it, and then return the mild verdict of "not proven," is evidence of the fear that professional men have of affronting the Church by quite plain speaking. It is fairly certain that the private and full opinion of these medical experts would be different reading.

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Christ and the Doctors.

But the comment of the *Church Times* on the matter is that "the normal channel through which the healing mercy of Christ now reaches the sufferer is the medical profession"; and it thinks that between the medical profession and the Church there should be no rivalry, "or faith will become credulity and science will drift into blind materialism." Now that is very "slim." It is the first time we have noted it being authoritatively declared that "the healing [illegible] of Christ" is now exercised by medical men, and that Christ has abdicated in their favour. And what one would like to know is from where the *Church Times* got the news of the abdication? In the New Testament Jesus Christ is represented as curing diseases by faith, and the cure of sickness by the same method was given by him to his disciples. All the historic Churches have accepted the legacy, while Christian annals are full of records of diseases healed directly by the power of Jesus. More than that, because of the power of Jesus, the developments of medical and surgical science were obstructed, and the practice of medical men sometimes prohibited. It is left for the *Church Times* to discover that Christ now works his miracles through medical men. The latter are quite ignorant of it, but the *Church Times* says it is so, and it begs the clergy to recognize this lest "faith becomes credulity and science drifts into blind materialism. Had the *Church Times* spokon quite frankly it would have said that as it no longer paid to claim that Jesus cured diseases, it would be well to recognize that that part of the religious game was up, and they must now bend their energies to getting medical and scientific men generally to find some place for Christianity in their scheme of things. It is a pity that the early Christian Church did not recognize that the healing power of Jesus worked through the medical profession. The sanitary and medical science of antiquity might then have been suffered to continue, instead of their being suppressed to make the way clear for the ignorance and filth of early and mediaeval Christianity, with the diseases which it brought in its train.

* * *

Lowering the Moral Standard.

Another instance of the Christian mind is supplied in the same issue of the *Church Times*, although in this case the editor quotes to condemn, not to approve. The Rev. Morton Stanley, a Kingston Congregational minister, has been lecturing on the drink question. In the course of his speech he said: "If there are two grocers for you to deal with, and one has a licence, you should go to the other. He is living a Christian life." On this the *Church Times* says, with sound common sense: "He may go on sanding his sugar, if he will, and underpaying the unfortunate young

lady whom, as Mr. Chesterton says, 'he sometimes keeps in a cage.' These things do not matter. But damnation is assured if he deals in Tarragona Port. This sort of talk would be wicked if it were not so idiotic." That is quite sensible, but the source of the common-sense treatment of Mr. Stanley is that the *Church Times* takes a different point of view from the parson with regard to the place of drink in the Christian scheme of things. It does not believe that "Our Lord" forbade the use of intoxicating liquors. Mr. Stanley, because he happens to believe that the use of intoxicating liquors is a "sin," believes that Jesus was a prohibitionist. So it happens that Mr. Stanley and the editor of the *Church Times* differ in their view of what constitutes a Christian. There is nothing new in thus clothing one's personal predilection in a Christian garb, and exalting it into a test of faith. They all do it. It is part of the distortion of the moral sense induced by Christianity.

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Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

That is the essence of the whole question, and that is what the *Church Times* quite fails to see. Why laugh at a man's salvation depending upon whether he sells a bottle of the harmless Gilbey or not? If Christianity is correct, does not a man's salvation depend upon whether he believes in a number of quite absurd and essentially unbelievable doctrines? Is it not part of the historic teaching of Christianity that the unbeliever, the "scoffer" at Jesus, but whose life may be otherwise quite admirable, will be damned, while the grocer who has adulterated his goods, the employer who has sweated his workpeople, the landlord who has rack-rented his tenants, will, provided they have believed truly in the Lord, find salvation? Would men like Mr. Stanley talk in the idiotic way in which they do talk unless they had lived under the narrowing and distorting influence of Christian teaching? If they had been brought up under a reasonable system, if they had been taught to measure the goodness and badness of actions in terms of consequences here, instead of in terms of salvation in some other life, if they had been taught to esteem men and women because of what they are instead of by what they believe, would such absurdities as those noted have been possible? The political disaster of the conquest of Western Europe by Christianity is pretty clear, but the moral disaster was not the less sweeping. Its ascetic tendencies caused it to restrict the very meaning of the word "moral" until it came to carry in the popular consciousness, not the old Pagan meaning of the straight man, one who did his duty all round, but the one who avoided sexual looseness. And on the other hand it so emphasized the value of belief that no matter how vile a character a man might be he would be saved because of his belief, and no matter how worthy a character he would be damned because of his unbelief. Of course, Christianity talked much about love and brotherhood, but it is surely not without cause that the people who have talked most about these things have been foremost in the world's history for sustained hatreds, quarrelsomeness, international plunder and dishonesty, and general uncharitableness. That such a state of things continued century after century is not accidental. It cannot be accidental. It is the normal fruit of a system that could not but distort the moral sense, and which enabled men to gratify their most vindictive passions under the guise of religious devotion. I believe with the New Testament that you cannot gather grapes from thistles. That is one reason why I never expect to find intellectual integrity and moral wholesomeness flourish under the influence of the Christian religion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Biology of Prayer."

I.

THE *Church Times*, being the organ of the Catholic Party in the Church of England, naturally provides its readers, week by week, with carefully selected samples of the teaching of that school on all sorts of religious subjects. Just now a course of sermons on the "Biology of Prayer" is being supplied by the Rev. T. H. Passmore, M.A., vicar of St. John's, Great Marlborough Street, W. Why the reverend gentleman so christens the series we cannot imagine, because, as everybody is aware, "biology" is a term which signifies the science of life and living organisms, or, in other words, the study of living matter as distinguished from not-living matter, so-called. We fail to discern any connection whatever between biology and prayer; but this is a point that concerns Mr. Passmore much more than it does ourselves. Our business is with the sermons themselves, not their general title. What the "Anglo-Catholic Pulpit" department of the *Church Times* undertakes to give us, in the series of discourses under consideration, is the orthodox doctrine of "prayer." The first sermon in the issue for July 18 treats of prayer "as a law"; and on reading it we are struck, first of all, with Mr. Passmore's fondness for strange, unfamiliar, high-sounding words, such as "motivity," "actinic," "penultimating," and, secondly, with the vagueness, wideness, and wildness of his definitions. Take the following passage:—

> Greatly I seem to see Prayer's horizons widen. I see Prayer as the whole system of antiphony, of appeal and answer, that like the ether, clamps all spheres in one, and in which all worlds consist. Nothing else could be, if Christ the Head has drawn up prayer into himself. There is neither speech nor language where Prayer's voice is not heard. Prayer is under the raised stone, within the cloven wood.
>
> Where the white hand of Moses from the bough
> Puts forth, and Jesus from the ground suspires, there is Prayer.

Can anybody tell us what exactly that extract means? We can see quite clearly that Mr. Passmore's object is to show that prayer is an essential law at work throughout the universe; but he does not seem to realize that in trying to do so he robs prayer of its religious significance. To such robbery we have absolutely no objection to offer, only we cannot get rid of the fact that he who commits it is a minister of the Christian Gospel in which a fundamentally different view of prayer is unmistakably taught.

Mr. Passmore's chief fault is that he can be at once a scientific evolutionist and an orthodox Catholic believer. Science and theology are eternally irreconcilable. If the one is true the other is of grim necessity false. As for as the preacher's science goes we heartily accompany him. Omitting certain phrases, we are in glad agreement with the following eloquent passage:—

> I see the plant's root striking down into the soil and sucking up into its highter organism the stark mineral stuffs of the earth, till the sod.....comes alive and spreads thankful leaves to the sun. I see, next, the beast feeding on the plant, in witless quest of the chemical nourishment it cannot fix for itself, yet lifting thereby the vegetable, as the vegetable lifted the mineral, into its own yet loftier sphere. I see man, the blind high-priest of Becoming, penultimating the ascent, drawing up as his food the baser flesh into union with human soul.

For "penultimating the ascent" we would substitute "consummating the ascent," as a more scientific characterization of the evolutionary process so far as we know it. "Baser," too, is an unscientific adjective to qualify "flesh."

Of prayer in its religious sense, there is no trace whatever in Nature. She holds no benefits which can be had for the asking. She listens to no prayer, and has no forgiveness to grant. No sooner do we enter the religious world than the situation wholly changes. In the presence of God all men instantly become mendicants. Mr. Passmore pooh-poohs this by declaring that "to confine it (prayer) to asking would be to pauperize the sons of God; it would make both worlds a Ghetto of beggars." Unfortunately for him, both the Bible and the whole history of the Church firmly testify against the truth of his declaration. Jesus was represented as saying: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth" (Mat. vii, 7). In John's Gospel we read: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do." Even in the Epistle of James (i, 5-8) we find these words: "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." In the Pauline Epistles mankind is described as utterly and eternally lost, through its terrible fall in Adam. God's only begotten Son, his heart overflowing with pity and love, comes down to earth to purchase our redemption by dying a horrible death on the Cross. But though already fully paid for it shall not be ours until we have faith and humbly ask for it. Such is the Christian doctrine of salvation as interpreted in all the Creed; such are the only terms on which its innumerable blessings can be possessed and enjoyed. Man's sole attitude before God must be one of pure receptivity. Surely Mr. Passmore must be familiar with the well-known hymn, "Rock of Ages," found in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, and especially with the following verse, in which the believing sinner is made to say:—

> Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to thy Cross I cling;
> Naked, come to Thee for dress;
> Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
> Foul, I to the Fountain fly;
> Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

The mischief with Mr. Passmore is that he is constantly losing himself between his science and his theology. He utterly ignores the distinction drawn by theology between the natural and supernatural, or between the natural and the spiritual. Take the following instance:—

> All prayer, we find, is conditioned by a principle of *mutual advantage*. Nowhere in Nature is prayer a mere mendicancy. That which asks has ever something to give; some warranty of use or merit or beauty, some cause shown why the answer should be deemed worth while.....Everywhere is give-and-take; no mumping or cadging or living on alms in God's world. If the dam nourish her young, it is in fee of the call of their love and the promise of her kind's survival in them. If I prune my vines or water my roses, I look to my usury of colour and fragrance and fruit; my stalled beast pays me rent with his labour, my dog appeals to me for my care with the fidelity in his eyes. There is no Poor Law in the universe, and no living on the rates. The very parasite has his uses. Universal Prayer there is but the praying hands are never empty; the prayer is recommended by Sacrifice.

Now however true and finely expressed those observations may be in themselves, the one unequivocal thing about them is that they have not the remotest bearing on Christian prayer. For prayer, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, there is neither room nor use in Nature. In Christianity, however, the most prominent feature of prayer is supplication. St. Paul tells us that he always made supplication to God with joy, and he exhorts his readers thus: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. iv, 6). Yes, verily, Christians do seem to live on alms doled out to them in answer to their prayers. Such is the creed they profess to hold and to live by, though however tenaciously they may cling to it theoretically, in practice they give it the lie direct every hour of the day. In reality, it is an idiotic creed, at Meredith points out in his beautiful ode to France:—

> The Mother of the many Laughters might
> Call one poor shade of laughter in the light
> Of her unwavering lamp to mark what things
> The world puts faith in, careless of the truth:
> What silly puppet bodies danced on strings,
> Attached by credence, we appear in sooth,
> Demanding intercession, direct aid,
> When the whole tragic tale hangs on a broken blade.

That is the psychology of Christian prayer, and the only possible conclusion to which we must inevitably come is that prayer, so far from bieng a law, is a positive violation of law. The law of our own being bids us deliver ourselves from whatever evils afflict us; and the voice of this law is clearly echoed by all other laws of Nature, with the result that our only duty consists in rendering glad obedience to this universal voice. Such is the direct teaching of every department of science. The present writer makes the confession that if such a miracle could happen as his conversion to Christianity, it would be the Catholic version of it that he should most unhesitatingly choose, for that is the most reason-benumbing and emotionally soothing Faith ever invented; but in that humanly impossible event he would be ethically compelled to forswear science absolutely and for ever. By trying his best to be honestly loyal to both Mr. Passmore evinces the fact that, in the deepest sense, it turns out that he is true to neither. We have rejected Christianity, with its immoral doctrine of prayer, in order to be free to study and follow Nature; ignorance of whose laws has hitherto been the supreme "bane of bliss and source of woe" in this world.

J. T. Lloyd.

Byron and the Bigots.

> He who fights with priests may make up his mind to have his poor, good name torn and befouled by the most infamous lies and the most cutting slanders.—*Heinrich Heine.*
>
> Alas! for the rarity
> Of Christian charity.
> —*Thomas Hood.*

When Byron died, a hundred years ago, the ecclesiastical authorities refused the great European poet burial in Westminster Abbey. Following the recent centenary celebrations, a request was made to the present Dean of Westminster that he would allow a tablet to the memory of Byron to be placed in the Poets' Corner in the Abbey. This request was also refused, although the application was supported by Mr. Thomas Hardy, our greatest living novelist; Mr. Edward Gosse, a poet and critic of rare distinction; and also by such distinguished statesmen as Lord Balfour, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George. In refusing, the Dean gave his reasons for such an act, the chief being that Byron—

> Partly by his own openly dissolute life and partly by the influence of licentious verse, earned a world-wide reputation for immorality among English-speaking people. A man who outraged the laws of our Divine Lord and whose treatment of women

violated the Christian principles of purity and honour should not be commemorated in Westminster Abbey.

Poor Byron! Apparently he is damned and done for, because he committed the same offence as Charles the Second, George the Fourth, and Edward the Sixth, all of whom were not only heads of the Anglican Church, but Defenders of the Faith of Christ. The ecclesiastical authorities never pointed the finger of scorn at them, but always treated them as vice-regents of God. As for Byron's verse, it is certainly a little late in the day to suggest that the saucy rhetoric of *Beppo*, *The Vision of Judgment*, and *Don Juan* ever caused one Christian soul to dance the primrose path to perdition.

Indeed, we might venture to ask when did the Church authorities assert their principles with regard to burial in the Abbey? William Congreve and Mrs. Aphra Behn have both been accused of being very licentious writers by generations of literary critics; yet they are both buried within the sacred precincts of Westminster, and no Dean has suggested that their ashes should be removed. The present Dean has certainly chosen an easy, if unpleasant, manner of dealing with an unwelcome request. Perhaps he remembered that when the poet Swinburne died, and a request for burial was made, the official reply was that the Abbey was already too crowded. It was, indeed, so crowded that a few days later room was found for the remains of the wife of one of their own archdeacons, and several burials have taken place since that time.

Althought the Dean of Westminster does not admit the soft impeachment, Byron's offence consists in his being a Freethinker. Had Byron been a Christian, he might have had as many wives as Solomon, or been as murderous as David—"the man after God's own heart." But any stick is good enough for a wretched infidel. It is because Byron was a rebel that the hostility of the Church of Christ pursues him a hundred years after his death. Christian priests never forgive free enquiry into their faith. Byron tells us that all forms of faith are of equal uselessness:—

> Foul superstition, howsoe'er disguised—
> Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
> For whatsoever symbol thou art prized—
> Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss,
> What from true worship's gold can separate thy dross?

The Vision of Judgment, in which Byron's genius for satire has full force, is startling in its blasphemy. From its audacious opening, with the angels singing out of tune, to its close with old King George the Third practising a hymn, it is full of mordant satire of the Christian religion. Every epithet hits, every line that does not convulse with laughter, stings, like the innocent question of Saint Peter's: "What George? What King?"

In the preface to *Cain*, a poem as full of profanity as an egg is full of meat, Byron remarks sardonically that it is difficult to make the Devil "talk like a clergyman," and that he has endeavoured to restrain His Satanic Majesty within the bounds of "spiritual politeness."

Childe Harold is saturated with the Nature-worship of Rousseau, the same Jean Jacques whose books were solemnly condemned by the Archbishop of Paris. In this rare atmosphere the petty religions of man all dwindle and disappear, "like snow upon the desert's dusty face"—

> Even gods must yield; religions take their turn;
> 'Twas Jove's, 'tis Mahomet's, and other creeds,
> Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
> Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds— [reeds.
> Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is built on

Byron may have dreamed, like so many poets, of immortality; he certainly did not believe in it. How finely he apostrophizes this longing:—

> Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?
> Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies,
> That little word saith more than thousand homilies.

He uttered a predominant mood when he wrote:—

> My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
> Earth, sea, stars, all that springs from the great whole
> Who hath produced, and will receive my soul.

Is it not clear that Byron's offence is his Freethought? The great poet has no room for priests or priestcraft. The Dean's pious insults represent the last fruit of bigotry. Once, priests showed their hatred by means of scaffolds, stakes, prisons, and torture-chambers. Latterly, they express their malevolence by means of libel, slander, and all uncharitableness. Time, in this particular instance, will adjust the balance, for, after the lapse of years, Byron's name will be loved, whilst the name of his traducer will be a word of no meaning, and as forgotten as the snows of yesteryear. For it is quite certain that the civilization of a nation is judged by its great poets, and not by its petty priests, who, however saintly, are but a survival from the ages of faith and ignorance.

Mimnermus.

East and West.

II.

(*Continued from page 491.*)

> The "civilized" nations of the world, with their blockades, their poison gases, their bombs, submarines, and negro armies, will probably destroy each other within the next hundred years, leaving the stage to those whose pacifism has kept them alive, though poor and powerless. If China can avoid being goaded into war, her oppressors may wear themselves out in the end, and leave the Chinese free to pursue humane ends, instead of the war and rapine and destruction which all white nations love.—*Bertrand Russell, "The Problem of China,"* p. 16.

> A well-known and justly highly-esteemed diplomat said to me one day in Pekin: "If a man had in his private capacity engaged in such transactions [as the European Powers had perpetrated] with the East, he would be blackballed from any decent club."—*George Lynch, "The War of the Civilizations,* p. 218.

M. Hovelaque noticed with astonishment that beyond the Straits of Malacca beasts as well as men have slanting eyes, like the strange Malayan bear. To the European the landscapes painted by Chinese and Japanese artists, with their disconcerting perspectives, appear distorted and unreal, the result of a traditional convention, or a drunken dream, and yet he tells us—

> The eye meets them continually in China, unchanged, but real; and through some queer effects of light, some fantastic toppling of the rocks, zigzagging of the trees and unexpected forms, all alike reel through space.[1]

The European looks down with disdain upon the coloured races; even the exquisite art of the Chinese and Japanese did not avail to place them upon a level with Europe. Upon this point, as Bertrand Russell observes—

> At the time of the Renaissance Europe would not have been in any way the superior of the Celestial Empire. There is a museum in Peking where, side by side with good Chinese art, may be seen the presents which Louis XIV made to the Emperor when he wished to impress him with the splendour of *Le Roi Soliel*. Compared to the Chinese things surrounding them, they are tawdry and barbaric. (*Bertrand Russell, "The Problem of China,"* p. 51.)

Even the highest achievements in art, literature, or mode of life, could not gain the respect, or toler-

[1] Emile Hovelaque, *China*, preface, p. x.

ance, of the Christian nations. But when Japan, grasping the situation, and refusing to take the arrogance and rapacity of the Christian nations lying down, adopted modern arms and explosives and proved that she could use them as effectively as her Christian teachers, then the European nations recognized her equality and held out the hand of fellowship. And now they have taught Japan to fight, they tremble before the spectre of her obtaining control of China and arming her millions for a war of revenge upon Europe, for the extortions and humiliations which that country has suffered at European hands.

European nations unquestionably believe that they represent the highest type of civilization. The noble result towards which creation has been groaning hitherto. Tennyson gained great glory among the Victorians by proclaiming it in *Locksley Hall*—

> But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Forward, forward let us range,
> Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathy.

An Oriental would place an interrogation mark against every one of these statements. He asks: "Are we any happier for this rage for change, and progress, and speed?" M. Hovelaque and Bertrand Russell, who are both familiar with China (Bertrand Russell having filled the post of Professor of Philosophy in the University of Pekin) enable us to see ourselves and our activities through Chinese eyes. Chinese society is purely agricultural, says M. Hovelaque, and "seems to him more human, milder than our industrial civilization founded on social inequality, pitiless competition and strife."[2] China is self-sufficient, she produces everything she requires, therefore she has no need of outlets for trade. As the Chinaman sees it, says M. Hovelaque—

> The European States are condemned to trade, to expansion, to mutual jealousy, to imperialism, to aggression, to militarism, under penalty of death or decay. They do not produce what they need for their subsistence, and what they do produce they cannot consume. They must at all costs acquire outlets and colonies. They have acquired them at the cannon's mouth. Their greedy and brutal policy, from which the Chinaman has suffered so much in the past, seem to him to lead necessarily to "colonial" wars which are simply massacres, or to that "peaceful penetration" whose surest methods of action are in the end theft, murder and incendarism.....the greater appears their precarious prosperity the more closely does it skirt ruin. Enormous anonymous forces—inhuman trusts, companies, capitalisms—are substituted everywhere for human relationships between men. (p. 264.)

The town life, artificial and enervating, with its gigantic factories, drawing the population from the healthy life of the countryside and creating a miserable proletariate, among which abound the tuberculous, the alcoholic, the syphilitic, from which proceed the criminal and the unemployable; in fact, the C.3 population that the army tests revealed during the great war. M. Hovelaque continues thus:—

> To the Chinaman all Western life seems to rest on an unconscious lie, on a fundamental error which dehumanizes it. Between its religion and its practice, between the principles of right, justice, humanity, equality, and Christianity which it professes and those which it applies to others, the division is complete; between the selfish ends it seeks and the disinterested ends of every true civilization there is complete opposition: its natural workings spontaneously create injustice, a wealth and a poverty which are alike exorbitant, class hatred, mutual contempt and misunderstanding, castes of rich and poor more rigidly closed against each other than those of India, a scientific barbarism, a moral anarchy worse than the savagery of the uncivilized. The reproach we cast at Germany, which was the finished model of this barbarism, the Chinaman casts at all Europe, because at bottom it seems to him that Germany's ideal of material greatness has corrupted all the West. All over Asia these things were passionately repeated to me.

Our ugly factories, our monstrous towns, all our life, are as much an offence to the eye as our conduct is to the mind. And what confirms him in his criticism is that he sees the West is coming to the same conclusions as the East "A profound disquiet gnaws at the heart of Europe. Western man has long chafed against the society which civilization has made for him." This discord increases from decade to decade. All our greatest writers are found arrayed against our mode of life. To quote Mr. Hovelaque again:—

> All that counts in modern literature, from Carlyle and Ruskin, Wells and Shaw in England, to Tolstoy and Dostoievsky in Russia, Ibsen in Norway, Anatole France with us, is a denunciation of social lies. Our great writers, whom the East reads greedily, are prophets as vehement as the seers of Israel, and their inspiration has the same root: inexorable hatred of the thing that is, an infinite aspiration towards its destruction and towards a new order. (*China*, p. 267.)

M. Hovelaque shows what the educated Asiatic thinks of our boasted civilization by quoting the following from the Japanese writer, Okakura Kakuzo, who declares in his book, *Ideals of the West*:—

> The individuals who go to the making up of the great machine of so-called modern civilization become the slaves of mechanical habit and are ruthlessly dominated by the monster they have created. In spite of the vaunted freedom of the West, true individuality is destroyed in the competition for wealth and happiness and contentment are sacrificed to an incessant craving for more. The West takes pride in its emancipation from mediaeval superstition, but what of that idolatrous worship of wealth that has taken its place? What sufferings and discontent lie hidden behind the gorgeous mask of the present? The voice of Socialism is a wail over the agonies of Western economics—the tragedy of Capital and Labour.

That is how the dwellers in the Far East visualize us. Not as the vaunted "heir of all the Ages," the beneficent teacher and uplifter of lower civilizations, the bearer of "the white man's burden," and all the rest of the camouflage under cover of which we grab the land of the black, yellow, and brown races where they are too weak to resist.

It is true that there is much the Asiatic could learn from us with advantage. Sanitation, for instance; there is no main drainage system in China. Decaying vegetable and animal matter litter the streets. That which our drains carry away the Chinaman carefully collects and uses to manure the land, and it is met with in the narrow streets at all hours, swinging in recepticals borne on bamboo poles. An Englishman must hold his nose in Chinese towns, but the Chinese do not seem to notice it.

Much is made of the cruelty and callousness of the Chinese, and their use of torture to obtain evidence in criminal proceedings. As to this general indifference to cruelty, it may be said that the Chinese nervous system does not appear to be so sensitive to pain or injury as ours. For instance, surgeons who have practised in China tell us that when a Chinaman has consented, or wishes to undergo an operation with-

[2] *China*, p. 263.

out chloroform, he will stoically endure, without a struggle or a murmur, pain so intense that no normal European could endure it; therefore their punishments have to be correspondingly severe to produce any effect. Secondly, the Chinese are in the same stage as we were during the Middle Ages when torture was applied to elicit evidence, just as it was in China before the establishment of the Republic, and for precisely the same reason, namely, that it was considered vital that a man should confess his crime before being condemned, therefore, that being the aim in view, the readiest means in stubborn cases was the application of torture.

As to the morbid desire to see torture applied, the Chinese are certainly no worse than the Christian populations of the Middle Ages. We have just been reading Professor Huizinga's just published book, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, who tells us that the late Middle Ages became "the special period of judicial cruelty," and observes:—

> What strikes us in this judicial cruelty and in the joy the people felt at it, is rather brutality than perversity. Torture and executions are enjoyed by the spectators like an entertainment at a fair. The citizens of Mons bought a brigand, at far too high a price, for the pleasure of seeing him quartered, "at which the people rejoiced more than if a new holy body had risen from the dead." The people of Bruges, in 1488, during the captivity of Maximilian, king of the Romans, cannot get their fill of seeing the tortures inflicted, on a high platform in the middle of the market-place, on the magistrates suspected of treason. The unfortunates are refused the death-blow which they implore, that the people may feast again upon their torments. (p. 15.)

It would be difficult to beat this lust for cruelty in Chinese, Pagan, or any other annals. Let the Christian apologist bear it in mind when he is animadverting upon the "thumbs down" of the Roman Circus.

(*To be Concluded.*) W. Mann.

Next Door to the Vicarage.

As I tripp'd from my doorway last Sunday
(Like the Jew-god at rest I have *one* day)
A fresh cigarette,
("Prayer Book?"—No, sir!) I met
A madam as merry as Monday.

From her eyes came a bright little volley
Of—What's that? You say it was folly?
Tut! Petticoat Jack
Might squirm and look black;
Glance for glance I return'd her, as jolly.

To my landlady's nipper: "Ma chère!
Is 't the wife of the Vicar 'cross there?"
Sally said, "No:
The housekeeper."
So!
I murmured. *Then, Parson, beware!*

"The wife of the Vicar is thin,
And taller," said Sally.
No sin,
But the housekeeper's lips
I'll wager he sips
If he married the tall one for tin.

In the week, as it chanced, I pass'd by her
—The Vicar's own lady; quite nigh her;
And, if rightly I spy,
In a witching blue eye
Was a flash of unorthodox fire.

'Tis Sunday again: and to-day
Past my window she walks on her way;
With a hell of a sparkle,
Her eyes glint and darkle;
And—where is the Vicar, I pray?
Perhaps to that other sweet mortal
He is preaching of Heav'n's guarded portal.
I know nothing of that;
So, your Rev'rence, my hat!
But, Venus! the dames are immortal.

H. Barber.

Acid Drops.

Canon Manning, Rector of Barnet, has been informed by the doctors that he has cancer on the liver. The Bishop of St. Alban's has issued an appeal to the diocese to pray for the recovery of Canon Manning, and says he regards this as a challenge to our faith. According to a daily paper people are now praying hard informing the Lord that the Rector of Barnet has cancer of liver, and that he ought to cure him—the first of which he should know, and the second of which he should do without being told. It is part of his business, and forms one of the reasons for his existence.

But Canon Manning's faith in the Lord is not above suspicion. For he is in a nursing establishment, with two doctors in attendance, and also a nurse. Fancy! Two doctors and a nurse to help God Almighty cure a case of sickness, when he used to do this kind of thing centuries ago "all on his own." How have the mighty fallen. And the Lord, in his wisdom, must know that if Canon Manning recovers the ungodly will scoff and say it is due to the doctors. But if the Canon dies, the godly will not blame the Lord for not answering their prayers. Really pious people are not built that way. Whether the Lord does anything or nothing, injures or helps, they still thank him. And the Bishop of London—rash man—advises his brother Bishops to think! But he probably knows they will not do it.

At the International Advertising Convention at Wembley the question of the advisability of advertising religion was discussed by several speakers. "I have seen it suggested," said Mr. B. Whitworth Hird, "that if you were to spend £100,000 in popularizing some such slogan as 'Go to church,' in the same way as we are told to 'Eat more fruit,' the result would be crowded churches everywhere." He suggested, however, that such an appeal would not yield very good results, and that the increase in attendance would not exceed 5 per cent. of the previous Sunday. We think that this is very probable, although the force of long-continued suggestion, such as extensive and intensive advertising supplies, can produce curious results. For example, we think it probable that the Y.M.C.A. has benefited considerably in more ways than one from the use of the red triangle. At least great numbers of people who would otherwise never have given a moment's thought to that organization now know of it because of advertisement.

Mr. James Wright Brown, editor of the *Editor and Publisher*, of New York, did not agree with the Rev. Tom Sykes, it appears. He maintained that the publication of Church advertisements in all newspapers would prove to be highly desirable and beneficial. A great Church existed to-day outside the Churches, he remarked, a great body of Christian people who were not in any way affiliated with the established Churches. The newspapers had won the confidence of this great multitude and possessed its goodwill and interest. Therefore the Gospel message should be proclaimed through the columns of the newspapers. Church advertising, like other advertising, should be placed on a regular schedule, and should be published consistently, persistently, and consecutively. We think that the reverend gentleman is the wiser of the two—perhaps because he knows more about the article to be boomed than does the editor. In the first place, to advertise religion "consistently and persistently" through the ordinary publicity channels would be to place it on the level of secular proprietary articles, such as brands of tobacco, soaps, beef extracts, and patent medicines. And religion must, at all costs, keep itself

aloof from the world of practical, useful, everyday things. Once generate the habit of judging it on its merits and without any pious prejudice, and its day is over. Furthermore, as any one connected with advertisement will tell you, it only pays to advertise persistently over long periods when the article for sale is really worth the price asked. It is no good persuading a person to purchase a sample if the purchaser is not going to get value for money. No stable connection can be built up, even by extensive advertisement, unless the article supplies a genuine need, and is worth what is charged for it to the general public. And it is just here that religion, however it may be advertised, must fail. It supplies no real need—to the normal adult, we mean—nor does it offer any tangible return for the time spent in divine service. Advertisements may get a few curious souls to decide to attend a service, but no advertising, we are certain would induce them to attend regularly Sunday after Sunday. A few people attend church regularly because of strange religious convictions which the normal person finds hard to understand and sympathize with. A greater number attend because it is the conventional thing to do, or because it is a method of killing a few hours on Sunday. And a minority attend to hear good music. But the general non-church-going public are in no way appealed to by divine service. It satisfies no natural craving, gives no æsthetic satisfaction, and has no social significance. And these people, we submit, cannot be coerced into spending some of their scant leisure each week in a rather stuffy building, listening to addresses that are largely meaningless to them. No amount of advertisement can persuade them that they can get more solid enjoyment from a church service than they can get from a trip to the cinema, or by listening to a band in the park.

Then, also, there is the danger—from the priest's point of view—that modern methods of advertising may bring ridicule upon his superstitions. A correspondent to the *Weston Gazette* supplies a striking example of this. "We have in Weston," he says, "a minister who believes in unconventional publicity 'stunts' for drawing large congregations; at one time a common sight on the local hoarding was a poster: 'If you don't go to any church, try —— Street'"; or something like that. But I hope we shall be preserved from American methods of "drawing a house" by "live wire" sermon titles. One well-known American pastor recently preached a series of sermons with nursery rhymes titles, such as "Ride a Cock-Horse," and "Rub-a-dub-dub, Three Men in a Tub," and "Three Blind Mice"; whilst a collection of typical sermon titles given in a Brooklyn journal a few months ago included: "A Big Hug," "A Man with his Nose Out of Joint," "Ask Dad—he knows," "His Master's Voice," "Swat that Fly!" "Two Looks at Another Man's Wife," "Has God got your Number?" Ridicule is often a far more effective weapon than logical argument, and we fancy that such publicity would do religion far more harm than good.

During the controversy over the proposed commemoration tablet to Bryon in Westminster Abbey, we have heard many opinions for and against from the living. For the benefit of all we give Byron's own opinion of that place. Writing of the Marquis of Londonderry who was buried in the Abbey, the poet stated that this man was by law a felon or a madman, and he concludes by saying: "Let us hear no more of this man; and let Ireland remove the ashes of her Gratton from the sanctuary of Westminster. Shall the patriot of humanity repose by the Werther of politics!" Let the keepers of Westminster Abbey not flatter themselves too much, they might deny that which many do not want. If they could bury Byron's *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment* by allowing a tablet, they might grasp at the chance with both hands. Byron could afford to say and write what he thought; and we hope to live to see the day when this luxury will be the privilege of all. As Voltaire said: "The only consolation for living was to say what one thought"; but that wouldn't be very comfortable in a place like England, would it, Lord Dancsfort?

The *Leicester Pioneer* makes a mordant criticism of the Dean of Westminster's refusal to permit a tablet to be placed in the Abbey in commemoration of Byron, on the grounds of the poet's moral character. Few people, it says, care to face the question of morality with a frank and logical mind. It proceeds to relate the true story of a manufacturer who, prominent in the religious life of his city, and a liberal subscriber to church funds, was notorious for the low wages and long hours that prevailed in his factory. The article proceeds:—

> On one occasion several girls and women were dismissed and told that their services were no longer required. One of these dismissed girls, who up to the time of her dismissal bore a stainless character, subsequently "went on the street" because she could find no other way of getting a living. An elderly woman, who had been an employee of the firm for over 30 years, was so distracted by her dismissal that she committed suicide. That manufacturer died some years ago, and at his funeral several clergymen and public men paid a tribute to the "high moral character" of the deceased. He was the essence of morality, but the girl he drove on the street and the woman he drove to suicide were "sinners" in the eyes of the Church!

This story is typical of so-called Christian morality. No one would seek to defend whatever immorality Byron was guilty of, and the Church is fearless in its denunciation. But where denunciation would imply condemnation of our modern social system, and criticism of wealthy pillars of respectability and religion, the Churches are astute enough to maintain silence. They are prepared to indulge in maudlin sentimentalism over two such victims as those just referred to; but are exceedingly careful to ignore the question of why such tragedies occur in a civilized community.

Business men, politicians, and even preachers are beset in modern life by many temptations to pervert the truth, said the Rev. H. D. B. Major, of Ripon Hall, Oxford, in a sermon at Westminster Abbey recently. We like the example of Christian humility implied in the *even*.

A correspondent of the *Times* writes: "Christianity is simple only to 'babes.' The intellectualist must find it 'difficult,' because he forgets that he must bring to it something more than an acute mind." We are reminded of one of the late General Booth's *bon mots*: "We hope to make our next recruits from the intellectual classes."

A remarkable account of cures of diseases by means of intercession, the laying-on of hands, and anointing, was given at Christ Church, Westminster, recently by Mrs. Hankinson Cox, churchwarden at St. Benedict's, Norwich, where the vicar, the Rev. R. C. Griffiths, founded a spiritual healing centre two years ago. The cures of which she had first-hand knowledge included, she said, that of a clergyman, who was brought to the church in a stretcher. After being anointed he did not immediately improve; but in a year had completely recovered! In another case a cross-eyed woman was cured of her affliction. Mrs. Cox said that the patients must be willing to give up all sins and consecrate their lives to God. Considering that most harmless amusements, and mild vices such as smoking are included in the average Christian category of "sin," we fancy a good many people would rather remain cross-eyed than consecrate their lives to God.

A decrease in the number of local preachers has made the Methodists sit up. "Don't let the Labour Party capture the whole of our young men," urges one at the Wesleyan Conference. These ranters seem to be suffering from a lack of raw material at both ends.

The *Daily Express* is interested in air-raid shelters at a time when even army Generals are sceptical about the good results of their own profession. Our great anticipated experience is to hear a recruiting speech by a Bishop in a gas-mask, and, as the front will be all round us, we shall be there without going, which will save postage on socks for soldiers.

Mrs. Cecil Chesterton tells us in a Sunday paper "Why Women Love Mahon." And in the same paper the Right Rev. H. M. Burge, D.D., Bishop of Oxford, writes on "Doctors and Faith-Healing." And dog will eat dog, and the Freethinker be hated and feared for throwing overboard superstition two thousand years old, and appealing to the best in human life, instead of bawling the ridiculous old tune of "original sin."

Under the title of "The Present World," Dr. T. R. Glover contributes a column of something or other. He mentions St. Paul, Epaphroditus, Mark, Aristarchus, Luke and Demas, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Timothy, the Epicurean life, Wordsworth, Herrick, Nero, Socrates, Ovid, Samson, and Browning. The article is wearing the wrong hat, and is typical of the Doctor and his friends who wish to make the foot of mankind fit the ready-made theological boot.

The comman man can never do anything right. He is exhorted to increase and multiply; and Judge Cluer delivers himself of a homily on the "curse" of large families; and landlords specify "no familiy" when letting flats and dwellings; and Annie Besant was pelted with mud for anticipating the learned judge. The common man has got everything wrong; he is no match for the wily priest, until the common man adds common sense to his outfit and tells the priest to go to the place that the bogey-men built. He might then get a medal from Judge Cluer.

The *Daily Herald* admitted that there was no remedy for human nature. This is a statement as sweeping in generality as a storm in a desert. A correspondent, with an answer pat and just as sweeping, writes: "The remedy for fallen human nature is Christianity." And to prove that he knows what he is talking about, he adds, "There is no other." With statement and answer they can be left until past milking-time for many days.

Patriots were invited in their thousands to the Central Hall, Westminster, to protest against the removal of the Coronation Stone from Westminster Abbey. We had no idea that Scotland had run short of material for the making of haggis.

We hope that Admiral Sir James Startin brings more intelligence to bear on his duties as a naval officer than he does to his religious beliefs. Speaking at the Keswick Convention, he cited his war-experiences as to the value of prayer. On one occasion, while in a war-infested area, he insisted on his crew going to prayers. A German submarine attacked them, but did not hit them once. As we are left to imagine that this is the only time during the war when the German submarines failed to hit their mark, the incident is rather striking. On another occasion, while lying at the bottom of the sea, a British destroyer mistook them for a German craft and bombed them. But Sir James, equal to the situation, ordered the crew to prayers, and they were not hit. These, he said, were distinct answers to prayers. It is a pity that Sir James did not pray that the Lord would prevent British ships at any time firing on their own by mistake. Quite a number of casualties might have been avoided. But Sir James appears to have only prayed for himself. And the Lord did no more than he was asked to do. Selfish on the part of the sailor, and mean on the part of the Lord.

"Surely," said the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, "the close federation of millions of Methodists could do a deal to paralyse the blood-red hand of war and bring in an era of universal peace and goodwill." We agree, and have said as much in applying the same reason to all Christians. But Christian bodies only talk like this when war is not in being or is not imminent. When war is about, the chief concern of Methodists and other Christians is to see that they get a full share of whatever is going in the shape of official appointments and recognition, and anything else worth taking. If war was to occur to-morrow we should find the Methodists, as in the last war, full of that cheap and noisy "patriotism," which consists in flag-wagging, denunciation of the "enemy," and the suppression of any attempt to get the people to see that doing the best for one's country may often consist in running counter to popular passion, even during war-time. Christians could stop war to-morrow—if they would. But as usual the Churches only have time to denounce an evil which no one justifies, and to praise a virtue when no one questions it.

"Mr. Way of the Word," in the *Daily Herald,* is, we suspect, an iconoclast. At any rate, he has affirmed his bold belief that the Stone of Destiny isn't a stone at all, but a lump of petrified haggis! Furthermore he says it appears that the Stone of Destiny which is at present exercising the minds of some of our legislators, is the wrong one. "The real one is in Tara, Ireland, and that isn't the Stone of Destiny either. It's the stone of an Irish deity who was many fine things, but not Destiny." If "Mr. Way of the World" begins to write thus flippantly of things sacred he will, we anticipate, be sternly reprimanded by some of the religiously inclined readers of the *Herald.* But we should be inclined to agree with him if we had audacity enough to make jokes at Scotsmen's expense.

A protest against the exaction of a toll from the Druids before worshipping at the Druid Temple, Stonehenge, was made at a meeting of the South Hammersmith Labour Party. "This is the only place of worship in the land where payment is demanded for communion with God," the resolution declared. Seemingly the Druids are open and unashamed in exacting toll from the religious-minded. But we can asure the South Hammersmith Labour Party that Stonehenge is not the only place where priests make a living at the expense of devout folk. The only difference is that the average clergyman refuses to state openly that he is in religion for what he gets out of it.

Thousands of Catholics have arrived at Amsterdam from all parts of the world to attend the Twenty-Seventh International Eucharistic Congress. The main theme of the congress is "The Holy Eucharist and Atonement." Many of the high dignitaries of the Catholic Church will be present. One wonders whether these people who are meeting solemnly to discuss such a matter are aware that the world to-day is full of social and political problems, failure to solve which may bring our civilization down in ruins. But, then, the Catholic Church has always thrived at periods of social and political disintegration, such as followed the collapse of the Roman Empire. One can appreciate, therefore, their air of other-worldly detachment from the mundane problems which are occupying those who lack the spiritual insight into Nature.

Two Great Yarmouth children, aged 15 and 13 respectively, confessed recently at the local police court that they were unable to read the oath. It is gratifying in these circumstances to realize that these two illiterates have had the inestimable benefit of being born and reared in a Christian environment. It must be Christian, otherwise we should not possess police courts and criminal courts where witnesses are required to swear by Almighty God they will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. No loophole there for them to employ the Christian doctrine of double-truth. It is, we repeat, gratifying to know that this is a Christian land.

"Unless," says J. H. Oldham, in his *Christianity and the Race Problem,* "the Christian Church can exhibit a brotherhood as real as that of Islam, we cannot be surprised if the latter is more successful in winning the allegiance of Pagan peoples." The book is published by the Student Christian Movement, at 7s. 6d.

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.

Veritas.—We haven't read the book you name, and so cannot give an opinion, but it is probably a reliable summary of the present position. You will find two useful books, one dealing with the Old Testament and the other with the New, in the Home University Library.

H. Sharpe.—We do not know if it is true that Mahon took to reading "the cheaper variety of Atheistic literature," as a Sunday newspaper states. It is a safe thing for a journalist to say, anyway. In any case, the fact of Mahon having had a religious upbringing, and having devoted himself for years to Church work is unquestioned. And the historic connection is between the belief in religion and criminality, not between criminality and non-religion. We do not, of course, claim that non-religious people never commit crimes. That would be absurd. And Christians must not expect a monopoly of criminals.

O. Melton.—Article has been held over owing to pressure on space by others already in hand. We hope the Birmingham Branch will meet with every success in its winter work.

T. Mosley.—Glad you liked the articles on the nature of "Self." Hope to see you and other Nottingham friends during the autumn or winter.

Sine Cere.—We are sending the paper to the address given. Thanks for your interest in the matter.

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.

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

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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 at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

The *Two Worlds*, commenting on Lord Danesfort's Bill to prevent the teaching of blasphemy and sedition to all under 16 years of age, wobbles very curiously between the desire to protect religion from attack and the fear that the Bill might be used to attack Spiritualism. It says that "in so far as this is a Bill to prevent extremists from injuring either religion or the State, we have no objection to raise." But what we should like the *Two Worlds* to tell is the grounds on which anyone should be forbidden injuring religion, any more that he should be prevented injuring any other form of thought? And, after all, "religion" is a very elastic term. It may mean anything or nothing, and unless it means that anything that one cares to call religion must be protected from injury, it means that what is declared to be religion by the State must not be attacked without running the risk of fine and imprisonment. And in that case we are landed at last in the days of wholesale religious persecution.

Says our Spiritualistic contemporary: "The blasphemy laws should be repealed, as they only protect certain sects and imply State favouritism in religion. The common law is quite sufficiently strong to deal with any case of true blasphemy." The *Two Worlds* does not seem to realize that the objection lies against prosecution for blasphemy of any kind, true or false. Blasphemy—which implies some kind of comment on the deity which believers consider undesirable—is an offence that should be quite unknown to the law. Offences against the public order, etc., come under quite a different heading. And even seditious *teaching* is open to grave suspicion. In our opinion the very widest lattitude should be given to all criticism of both the State and of religion. To suppress one in the name of protection of the State, and the other in the name of protecting "true religion," is equally an act of tyranny. We are driven to the conclusion that the *Two Worlds* does not seriously disagree with the suppression of opinion so long as it does not agree with the opinion suppressed. For our part we disagree with the State suppressing opinion, whether the opinion be right or wrong. But, then, the *Freethinker* does not advocate religion—new or old.

Mr. Percy Ward, who was well known to English Freethinkers before he settled in the United States, writes us that he sails from New York for England on July 26, so he will be in this country by the time this is before our readers. Mr. Ward has been carrying on a successful lecturing campaign in Chicago; and is having a holiday in England. He will return to the States about the middle of October. It is fifteen years since Mr. Ward left this country; and he would be willing to visit some of the centres where he was previously known for lecturing purposes. His open dates run from September 14 to October 12. Branches that would like to hear Mr. Ward on the position of Freethought and Religion in America should write as early as possible. As he will be moving about, letters may be sent him care of this office.

We are glad to hear good reports of the meetings held in Finsbury Park by the new Branch. Mr. Corrigan appears to be the principal speaker there, and his lectures attract large and attentive audiences. There is also a steady sale of literature at these meetings, and the Secretary, Mr. L. Mason, is untiring in introducing the *Freethinker* and other literature to newcomers. This, in the long run, is bound to do good, although the results may not be immediately forthcoming. Mr. Mason has also been carrying on a house to house distribution of specimen copies of the paper. We greatly appreciate the help given in this way. With enough helpers, he writes us that he is prepared to undertake the sale of the paper in the main thoroughfares, which would be a splendid advertisement for this journal.

We are informed that *The Farmer's Wife*, at the Court Theatre, Sloane Square, is still playing to a good house. Our country readers who are visiting the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley would enjoy this comedy, and would not regret making the acquaintance of Churdles Ash. Mr. Eden Phillpotts has touched the spot with clean, wholesome humour, and if Mr. George Bernard Shaw will not give the world the "Tragedy" that it is waiting for, Mr. Phillpotts will have to do it. "If he's not my brother, he is somebody else's," was the remark of James McDonald, who befriended a man whom he thought was his brother. Mankind at present is:—

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born.

Come then, ye first men, and hasten the day, with the utterance of James McDonald as your guiding star.

We have been asked to announce that at the Annual Meeting of the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. Miss S. Dobson was elected Secretary for the coming year, and Mr. Ona Melton as President. Both are very ardent workers in the Freethought cause, and we wish them all good fortune in their offices. Freethought work calls for the best that is in one, and very often gets it.

The Glasgow Branch has arranged for an excursion to Cathkin Loch to-day (August 10), and will meet at the Burnside terminus at noon. Glasgow Freethinkers will please note.

We regret to see that there have been some displays of Christian hooliganism at some of Mr. Whitehead's meetings in Stockport. We understand that the offenders were, in the main, Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics are getting very active in their propaganda of late, which they have a perfect right to be, but they should realize that if hooliganism is to be the method adopted in order to silence criticism of their creed, the consequences may be unpleasant to themselves. And Freethinkers are not to be easily silenced by such tactics..

Bergson.

A great official picture is well worth studying, not for art, but for psychology.

First there is the furniture—official furniture—red carpets, Victorian sofas, stiff chairs; and then the occupants, all spangled and gilt and braided; and then the central figure, the Great Personage; the furniture would be inert without this evidence of life; the central figure, without these trappings, would be merely insignificant; the combination produces the effect that fills the beholder from the suburbs with awe and secures the continuity of our ever-blessed society.

And so it was when I first saw Bergson. The dais of the lecture-room of University College was filled with important professors, clad in their imposing garments which constitute the major part of their authority—these were the Victorian furniture—and standing in a sort of pulpit was a small, thin, delicate-looking Frenchman, who spoke English in a high, clear, but rather feeble voice.

His discourse was remarkable in this: That it had no continuity in the sense of proceeding from an ascertainable foundation and conducting the argument to a conclusion; he spoke rather by way of commonplaces, out of which now and then shone a shrewd and deep remark, or occasionally broke through, as from behind a curtain, a glint of something astonishing, whether of genius or of aberration depended on the demonstration, and of any form of demonstration or of reasonable establishment of his positions there was none.

This was my first view of Bergson; of that whole assembly—for the ordinary seats were thronged with distinguished people, and even with students—I was perhaps the only one on whom the beams of grace did not fall with salvation. I had early recognized this, and I had studied the audience with peculiar interest. They all wore those composed faces which we assume when we know that we are both superior and good, that look that a careful woman who is first cousin to a baronet impresses on her offspring as she turns them out for Sunday school. They were assiduous and devoted; but what rather disconcerted me was the fact that on the first formal utterance, and on all the commonplace passages, they bestowed the same attention, and the same mild incomprehension, as on the passages where Bergson said something notable, whether of insight or sheer mystification.

As to the professors, I will deal with some of them, say, Wildon Carr and Dawes Hicks, not in the way of slaying them individually, but of bunching them together, for it requires at least three of this type to make a respectable *corpus delicti*.

They are simply the bureaucrats of the trade of professorship, of no interest in themselves, but of great importance from the point of view of obstruction—but let me restrain myself. I will come to them in time.

For brevity now, and to serve as a guidance, I will say that the value of the whole system of Bergson is nil. It is not a true system, and it is not informed by any well-conceived principle, which enables it to be scientifically developed. In the search amid the overgrown mass of philosophical learning, it is well, I repeat, to look in each case for what I have called the "germinal idea"; once in possession of that clue the vision is made clearer.

A digression here will really save time. Macaulay said that, as in 1685, it was perilous to say a word against monarchy, thinking people found compensation in the disdain for the fundamental laws of science.

The principle at least holds to-day. It is true that, amongst the innumerable blessings which the Hanoverian line has showered on us, one remains unmistakably to their credit, they have emancipated us from the idea of there being any superior essence in royalty; but there are other superstitions still more tenacious. One of these is—I was almost about to write, such is the force of ancient opinions, Christianity; but that does not express it. The belief in Christianity is gone, but lack of faith may well consist with bigotry and intolerance; and that is the condition at which we have arrived.

There has been left in the human mind of these isles a vague something, compact of feudalism, of ecclesiasticism, of what has been called loyalty, of officialism, of opinion in the reputable quarters of the suburbs—this is the pith of it all—and this when re-acted on by the poets, chiefly the tame poets, and fermented by Lord Mayoral eulogies, whether—it does not matter—of Shakespeare, or Edward VII, or Darwin, or Marie Corelli, becomes elevated into a high-strung mood called "spirituality."

Now I had guessed that herein was the true source of the enthusiasm for Bergson, but I had plumed myself a little on my intuition, not to say Machiavellian cleverness, when, lo, I find that one of Bergson's disciples, a woman at that, Clarisse Coignet, comes out with the whole confession flat-footed in the very title of her book, *From Kant to Bergson: Reconciliation of Religion and Science in a new Spirituality*.

What is really at the bottom of the mind of the people indicated is the desire to recognize the glory of thought, to be in the march of ideas, and yet to hold securely to all their material advantages by fitting in to all the shams and humbugs of the political and spiritual life of the times. Adapting Macaulay: as it is now intellectually perilous to speak against Darwin, they disdain the application of the principles of science to their own fund of faith and possessions.

Bergson has written comparatively little—an extraordinarily shrewd man, Bergson—it is his followers who have been voluminous, and who have given us in place of Bergson's charming, shimmering style, with its false appearance of lucidity, rather wooden structures; but these have served to make the "boom."

From one to another they have played up by eulogizing each other's works, and by passing certificates of values, just as any one of Whitaker Wright's companies come to the aid of the balance sheet of any other at the right time, while the whole imposing edifice rested on no base of solid worth at all.

It is possible for a man to have written very little, and yet to have sent forth a few bold and fertile principles. That was the case of Descartes, and later of Galois, in mathematics, of Carnot in thermodynamics, and of Mendel in biology; but not of Bergson. He is certainly one of the best instructed of the philosophers, and it is meritorious in him that he has given some study to the exact sciences. But look at this critically. His method is not scientific. He talks of science, and he uses science by way of illustration;

but he does not give us a discourse in which that science enters into and supports his philosophy; he gives us science plus a philosophy. And when we disengage the philosophy from the descriptive talk and seek for a consistent body of thought, a development of his ideas in the manner, even remotely comparable, in which a Copernicus or a Galileo rises to conclusions, then the whole thing escapes us; we are really again in the Middle Ages, with their incomprehensible verbiage and their mysticism, which deceived even themselves.

And so with Bergson, instead of clear vision, capable analysis, the patient, resolute searching into the meanings of things, and finally the sense of order in a comprehensive view, we get the phrases that merely indicate his tentative efforts—" élan vital," " évolution créatrice," " l'energie spirituelle "—" to think matter," a false conception of science, and of separate sciences, and a philosophy that participates of art and of religion.

Here is a translation by Arthur Mitchell, of Harvard, a disciple :—

> But the line of evolution that ends in man is not the only one. Other paths divergent from it, other forms of consciousness have developed, which have not been able to free themselves from external restraints, or to regain control over themselves as the human intellect has done, but which, none the less, also express something as immanent and essential in the evolutionary movement. Suppose these other forms of consciousness brought together and amalgamated with intellect, would not the result be a consciousness as wide as life? And such a consciousness, turned around suddenly against the push of life which it feels behind, would have a vision of life complete—would it not? Even if the vision were fleeting.

There was a time, I confess, when I would have pondered long over the meaning of this last sentence, but I have learned by hard experience—it only means that Bergson has neither properly caught his idea, nor clearly expressed what he thought.

Or here, again, from *Creative Evolution* :—

> We will see that human intelligence feels at home as long as one leaves it among inert objects, but especially among the solids, where our action finds its fulcrum and our industry its instruments of work, and that our concepts have been formed by the image of the solids, and that our logic is above all the logic of the solids, that, by that very fact, our intelligence has succeeded in the field of geometry, where the relationship is revealed between our logic and inert matter, and where the intelligence has only to follow its natural movement, after the slightest contact with experience, in order to reach discovery after discovery in the certainty that experience marches behind it and will invariably confirm it.

Suppose that we express differently the truth that underlies this, we might say : Geometry deals mainly with straight lines and regular figures. The great processes of Nature, as in the phenomena of light, are related also to straight lines and regular figures. Therefore the study of geometry leads to inferences in optics. If, further, we observe similarities in the processes of light and electricity, for example, we may turn our mathematical instruments, highly developed in optics, to the study of electricity, with the expectation—realized in the event—of making new discoveries.

I ask, is not this clearer than Bergson's captious talk? And so I could, point and point, take up his criticisms, for example, of Herbert Spencer, whose fundamental enunciation he misconceives and travesties; or of Descartes, whose clear conceptions he renders obscure; or, again, point out his darkening of counsel in every realm—dreams, laughter, time and space—that he has touched. Those who are interested will find precisions in my *Principles of Psychology*.

But the fact is, the vice is in the grain. By his very method Bergson had lost from the beginning the chance of doing something valid and developmental in philosophy. He has but responded to a popular sentiment, and given to professors, devoid of original thought, the material they required to hide their limitations.

Arthur Lynch.

Where the Film Fails.

Action—Dramatic and Otherwise.

The storyteller is obliged to select the incidents relative to his tale out of the mass of material any life, imaginary or real, affords. He does this quite consciously, and he makes a better or worse story according to his choice of incident. A bad selection will allow the reader's attention to be distracted from the main incidents of the developing plot; a good choice will concentrate attention more and more as the story proceeds. The inclusion of unnecessary details will only make it more difficult to get a complete and immediate grasp of the story; they make the impression misty where it should be clear.

All this is quite elementary, but so much of a reader's attention can be wasted by the inclusion of such things as the details of a toilsome and possibly dangerous journey, the only object of which is to make the character arrive at a definite point at a precise moment.

To ensure that the full significance of the arrival formulates itself in the mind of the reader, this is frequently necessary. Otherwise the arm of coincidence, already sufficiently elastic, might be stretched to an impossible length, and the reader's imagination will refuse to accept what might have been stimulating.

The story, told upon the stage, does not make the same demand. It is unnecessary to present the difficulties of the journey to the eye of the audience, and it is often impossible to do so adequately. It is sufficient for the traveller's appearance at his entrance to indicate the state of dishevelment and exhaustion consequent upon the journey, and, indeed, the speed and manner of his entrance are even more suggestive that his appearance. The process of elimination in the dramatic mode of telling a story is even more exacting than in a story told verbally, either in speech or in writing. The stage and the actors allow the eye to assist the ear, and many things, emotions as well as incidents, can be indicated to the eye, which it is quite essential to describe fully in words before the imagination can reproduce the whole of the details of a written story.

The details of the journey cannot be shown upon the stage. The relevant details, of which the audience must be informed, are the crisis to be averted, the news of the crisis, the emotions aroused by the news, and the dangers and difficulties of the journey and its commencement. With the arrival—the commencement of the journey is obviously an exit, just as the arrival is an entrance—the difficulties and dangers will have been surmounted, and the imagination of the audience will readily envisage this. For the purposes of the stage the ear is able to assist the eye in addition to the eye assisting the ear.

The screen requires to visualize all the incidents of the story; here the eye is not to be assisted by the ear, and the description of the journey, necessary in the written story, but capable of elimination in the stage version, must actually be shown on the screen. If it is not shown, the difficulties and dangers which have been overcome will not reveal themselves to the audience. And a very definite time limit has been set to the duration of each incident shown by the

kinema, because the experts say that the attention of the audience can only be retained up to that limit of time. Consequently the crisis is shown, the receipt of the news is shown, the preparation for the journey, its difficulties and the manner of their surrender to the will of the traveller, and finally his arrival at the desired moment, but interspersed between all these scenes are " fade-throughs " of the continuance of the crisis, and its development to the prepared climax. This blending of the two ends of the event makes the conception of the complete incident incoherent and ineffective, but it seems to be the accepted manner of presentation, and is continued in spite of the element of amusment displayed by the audience.

So much for an important journey. By the three existing methods of telling a story, it is described completely in words, or it is presented partly in words and partly in action, or it is definitely presented to the eye in a series of pictures. Whichever of these three modes is used, the journey is sufficiently important to justify some stress being laid upon it, but if it is reduced to lower terms, what then?

A business man finds it necessary to visit another in the same town. He decides to do this. On the film this is what takes place. He is seen in his office; he decides to make the call. He leaves his office; descends to the level of the street in the lift; walks out of the building; gets into his car, or perhaps a public conveyance, alights at his destination, enters the building, ascends in the lift, goes into the outer office, gives his card to the boy, is shown into the office of the man he wants to see. All this makes film feet, and allows the several incidents to be presented successively with the brevity stated to be essential, but three parts of this action is not dramatic and is irrelevant.

A business call is sufficiently indicated in the interior of the office visited. A boy bringing in a card, a nod, and the boy ushers in the visitor. The detail is eliminated, and the necessity for the introduction of irrelevant motion is abolished. But the film is a motion picture, and must show continuous movement, so the introduction of the trivial and unessential details of locomotion is made. The more movement seen on the screen, the more dramatic the character of the story! One result of the quantity of movement shown on the screen is that film life appears to be led at an intolerable speed. There is no human being to whom so many events could happen without a nervous breakdown supervening.

On the other hand, if this constant and superfluous information about the methods of transportation adopted by the characters of the screen is omitted, a rather extraordinary effect is obtained. The whole play becomes a series of entrances and exits, left more or less unexplained by the sub-titles, even though these may run to a number of words that is quite unjustifiable. This is particularly evident in the adaptations of famous plays which are sometimes staged on the screen. The dramatic quality that is exactly conformable to its medium in the theatre is missing in the kinema version, or is so refined by a solution of the pertinent in a mass of impertinent happenings, that it ceases to be an effective method of presenting the story to the imagination of the audience.

But the film-makers have adopted this method of presentation, and it has become a sort of technique, although it makes the story more difficult to follow and less concentrated than it need be. The idea presumably is that the film is able to give details which cannot be given on the stage, but which are described there in the speeches of the actors. The kinema must present to the eye those things which are told to the audience by the actors in the theatre. In this way the imitation of life on the screen has more versimilitude than that of the stage; but it is questionable whether precise imitation of life is either possible or desirable.

Some difficulty arises from the film drama usually being presented in this manner, because the audience has become more or less accustomed to the introduction of large quanitites of mere movement unnecessary to the comprehension of the story, and, indeed, sometimes making it more difficult to understand, and it seems hopeless to attempt any other method. If some attempt to make a change is not made the film will continue to fail to be a real dramatic medium, not because it does not give the audience a dramatic story, but because it is too much preoccupied with such irrelevant details as travelling, pursuits, movement for its own sake, rather than for its relevance to the story.

The kinema is obliged to impress itself through action, but action may be dramatic or it may be mere movement, and the accepted technique of the film must be superseded before it can become truly dramatic. The effect of some actions is very great; that of others, nil; the necessity for kinema development is to ensure that its action is always effective, and its only line of progress is through the perfection of mime and gesture, rather than the quality of entrances and exits, and too much locomotion must certainly be eliminated.

G. E. Fussell.

Correspondence.

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY.

To the Editor of the " Freethinker."

Sir,—Will you allow a medical man who has had a good deal to do with the care and treatment of neuropaths and who has for many years carefully followed the " pro " and " con " arguments of Freudism to " butt into " this correspondence on " psycho-analysis," not with any object of lining up with Dr. Wohlgemuth—who is more than capable of laying about him with cudgels on his own behalf—but to sound a *caveat*, or rather a *caveat emptor*, to any reader who might be persuaded by Prince Hopkin's letter in your issue of July 27 into believing that " proofs of Freud's hypotheses " are to be found in Dr. Ernest Jones' works. The latter gentleman is a pillar of the psycho-analytic school, and I heartily endorse Mr. Hopkins' invitation to readers of the *Freethinker* to study his writings on the subject. As, however, your readers are not—like the majority of practising psycho-analysts—deficient in the sense of proportion, logic, criticism and, above all, of humour, I venture to prophecy they will find no proof of, and very little evidence for, many of the extravagant hypotheses of Freud and his apologists. Mr. Hopkins eulogizes Dr. Ernest Jones' writings as the heavy artillery of the psycho-analysts, so it will be well to examine some of the latter's armament. One of his latest utterances is the following gem :—

> We believe that every man cherishes in his unconscious (*sic*) the wish for sexual intimacy with his mother and the desire to remove by death any disturbing rival, particularly his father; the converse applies equally to the woman, the term " œdipus complex " being used in both cases. Such a statement, abhorrent as it must sound, is nevertheless the core of psycho-analysis, and inseparable from it.

His general argument backing up this grotesque hypothesis may be tabulated thus :—

(a) There is universal *conscious* horror of incest among mankind.

(b) A corresponding universal code of severe laws to prevent the crime of incest has, in consequence, arisen.

(c) Laws of this kind are made only for crimes towards which a general inclination exists.

(d) Psycho-Analysts indicates there is a strong and universal *unconscious* inclination towards incest.

Any reader dissatisfied with such circuitous argumentation is naïvely referred for further evidence to the "extensive psycho-analytical literature dealing with it." It has been my misfortune to have had to wade through a very great proportion of the pornographic rubbish that, under the pretentious covering of psycho-analysis, passes muster with the superficial and uncritical for scientific investigation, but I have as yet seen no proof and but the flimsiest evidence of the absurd hypothsis just alluded to. The very phrase "œdipus complex" that psycho-analysts are so fond of mouthing is, as every student of the Classics knows, ridiculously inapposite. Far from cherishing any wish, conscious or unconscious, to indulge in sexual intercourse with his mother and to slay his father, the Theban hero exemplified abject horror and disgust at the mere suggestion. When the oracle informed him he was destined to commit such abominations, he at once fled in terror from Polybus and Merope, who had brought him up from a child to believe they were his own parents. The fact that at some subsequent dates he quarrelled with and slew a stranger who turned out to be his father Laius, and that, as a reward for solving the Sphinx's riddle, and so freeing the country from the monster, he was presented by the grateful people of Thebes with the beautiful Iocaste as a wife, who, after bearing him four children, was discovered to be his own mother, is no evidence of conscious or unconscious homicidal or incestuous inclinations.

As a further example of the loose rein with which many psycho-analysts ride their hobbies to death, let me call attention to the latest theory of the cause of sea-sickness as put forward by Dr. W. H. B. Stoddart, author of *Mind and its Disorders*. According to this psycho-analyst sea-sickness is an effect of an association, on the part of the sufferer, of his or her mother with the sea. The sea is, in short, to use the jargon of the cult, the mother symbol. The rise and fall of the ship during a sea-voyage tends to remind the seasick individual, "in an unconscious way," (!) of the "respiratory rise and fall of the mother's breast while the child is taking food." The vomiting of sea-sickness is a mode of repressing this infantile memory!

These are fair and typical examples of the manner in which Freudians, by straining at the gnats of fact and swallowing the camels of distorted imaginings and fancies, reach their extraordinary conclusions.

I, for one, am immensely grateful that clear-headed thinkers such as Sir Bryan Donkin, Professor McBride, and Dr. Wohlgemuth have so ably and mercilessly analysed the psycho-analysts.

JAVALI.

SIR,—Educationalists used to believe in what is technically known as "formal training." It was held, for example, that learning poetry by heart was a good training for memory in general and would also improve memory for dates, or names, and so on. Now experimental psychology has exploded this theory, but if any confirmation of this were required, Mr. Prince Hopkins' letter in the *Freethinker* of July 27 would supply it. Since he is writing to you, Sir, I may reasonably assume that his mind has assumed a very critical attitude towards the Christian religion. From this the man in the street might infer that Mr. Hopkins' attitude would be just as critical towards other affairs of life, but his letter to you disproves it. Mr. Hopkins is as shocked at my attacking his psycho-analytic faith as the average Christian would be shocked at the pages of the *Freethinker*.

As to Mr. Hopkins' letter itself it is mere rhetoric, and consists of a string of misstatements. He says, in referring to Dr. Ernest Jones' writings: "It is simply extraordinary that.....Dr. Wohlgemuth.....should overlook this mine of facts, and ignore, as though it did not exist, the heavy artillery of his opponents." Only one statement could be more "extraordinary" than this, namely, that I had completely ignored Freud and his writings; for next to Freud, Ernest Jones is the most quoted writer in my book. There are no less than 17 references to him in the index!

A most "preposterous" statement of your correspondent is that I pick out here and there a careless piece of analysis by Freud and list them in a book. I have scanned most carefully all Freud's foundation-laying writings and closely scrutinized everything that was asserted as constituting proof. Every such "proof" I have examined and dissected and shown to be illusory; every piece of analogical reasoning which so easily impresses the untrained and superficial mind I have exposed and shown to be false. Freud's psychological knowledge I have shown to be of the flimsiest description. Freud's schema Mr. Hopkins has certainly been unable to understand, and he might have thought it too erudite and profound; but I assure him it is nothing of the sort; it is the height of absurdity—sheer nonsense.

Respecting my statement that I treated a dream which I had never dreamt in exactly the same way as Freud treats his dreams, Mr. Hopkins says: "The answer is that the treatment was *not* the same. It was a caricature. For the essence of Freud's association-method is that it must be spontaneous, unforced, free." Now I greatly doubt that Mr. Hopkins knows what he is talking about. But if he does, and if he knows what is meant by the term "free association," I refer him to the analysis of "little Hans," which received Freud's fullest approval, and of which sufficient extracts are given in my book. He will find that this method is there conspicuous by its absence. On the other hand, if he refers to my analysis of Pharaoh's dreams, he will find that I strictly adhered to it. This analysis was undertaken with no other purpose but to test Freud's theory; that it showed Psycho-analysis to be an absurdity, a silly farce, was the natural consequence. Mr. Hopkins' statement is therefore untrue.

I advise Mr. Hopkins to turn again to the Psycho-analytic Bible, Freud's *Traumdeutung*, Dream-analysis, and read it with the same critical mind as he has probably perused the "Holy Scriptures." Let him take nothing for granted, and not be led astray by spurious analogies, and if he should then still believe in his present faith—well, his case is hopeless.

A. WOHLGEMUTH.

OBSCURANTISM.

SIR,—Mr. Arthur Lynch's attack on the obscurantists will be welcomed by all who do not mistake obscurity for profundity. The glamour surrounding such names as Kant, Hegel, Goethe, Bradley and others, has, for too long, prevented common sense from getting to grips with these "great thinkers" airy nothings. Faced with such ponderous authorities the attitude of the common man has been like that of the old lady who thought Kruschen salts must be wonderful stuff because the advertisements spoke so well of it!

One has only to consider the reams of unintelligible drivel that has been written around the question of God's existence—the happy hunting-ground of the metaphysician—to realize the need for clear thinking and plain utterance. Herbert Spencer, with his "Unknowable"; Winwoode Reade and "God the Incomprehensible," who is "not a Mind, but something Higher than a Mind; not a Force, but something Higher than a Force; not a Being, but something Higher than a Being; something for which we have no words, something for which we have no ideas," etc.

This life is too short, sir, for us to waste valuable time and energy in endeavouring to penetrate metaphysical smoke-clouds, when there is so much real work to be done and so much real knowledge to be gained.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

THE BIRTH RATE.

SIR,—Mr. Pell quotes statistics, some of which are undoubtedly of very little value, but the deductions that he draws from them are still more questionable. Having shown that the birth rate almost invariably decreases and increases correlatively, he dogmatically deduces that we have passed the "optimumpoint," and leaves us to draw the inevitable conclusion that the birth rate cannot increase again until we are reduced to a state of much greater poverty and hardship than that under which we exist at present. He lightly dismisses the possibility that the greater knowledge of medical science, and the increased humanity of our present civilization may have been the cause of the lower death rate, and that the resultant increase of intelligence and growing sense of responsibility may have been the cause of the decline in the birth rate; and, as a refutation, digs up some ancient and contradictory statistics of very doubtful value, gratu-

itously dragging in the relative merits of the "thrifty Scots" and the "unthrifty English." His final deduction seems to be that "birth control propaganda" is useless, and that birth control depends upon contraceptives and is "absolutely indefensible."

Eugenists are generally agreed that birth control depends primarily on the degree of the general knowledge of medical and sexual science, and that contraceptives only play a secondary part.

Mr. Pell propounds a theory of absolute human impotency. He substitutes for the "Christian God," who "foreordains" and "predestines," an inflexible and inexorable law of evolution that ruthlessly annihilates the intellectual and highly cultured classes.

The Eugenist brings a message of hope and good cheer. He endeavours to take every possible advantage of the laws of nature and evolution and thereby to shape and control the destiny of mankind. Ona Melton.

MAHON'S RELIGION.

Sir,—In your issue of July 27, under "Acid Drops," you say: "A man is not a Christian because he is an admirable moral character, but because he believes..... There is nothing in religion to deter one who has strong criminal associations." A Christian is surely one who obeys Christ. Paul says: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8). Again: "The spirit lusts against the flesh, whose works are adultery, murder, and such like. But the fruit of the spirit is love, peace, self-control" (Gal. 5).

Christ says He will say at last to some preachers and miracle-workers who have been "lawless" (that is, loveless, for "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13)): "Depart from me, I never knew you" (Matt. 7). When Zaccheus accepted Christ, he dropped stealing, and the penitent thief left off railing.

Yet you say: "There is nothing in religion to deter one who has strong criminal associations." Is this statement correct? Thomas F. A. Winson.

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

The inclement weather, combined with Catholic hooliganism, made our missioner's visit to Stockport extremely lively. The police on one occasion refused to allow him to occupy a pitch, having allotted it to another speaker, and subsequently refused to interfere when the crowd showed signs of hostility. However, in spite of all these difficulties, five good meetings were held; and Mr. Whitehead realizes, we know, that opposition of this sort invariably reacts in our favour and advertises our cause very effectively. Much credit is due to the members of the Branch for their support and to Mr. Leech for his timely generosity. This week Mr. Whitehead is at Hull. We await with interest the result of the open-air experiment under the guidance of the new Branch. For further particulars, see Guide Notice.

PHILOSOPHIC RESIGNATION.

To be happy is to have measured happiness and one's own needs; there is no surer way of not quarrelling with life than not to expect too much from it. The universe is a fact: we do not control it, we have to accept it. Dry and bitter though they may be, these truths are not barren. It is something to have learnt that among the problems which have most engrossed the human mind there are some which have no solution, and even no meaning. And the acceptance of things as they are, the habit of taking them as the ineluctable conditions of life, is a pretty good teacher of resignation. If we do not suffer any the less, we are less irritated by suffering; anguish is no longer mingled with bitterness, regrets with anger. The protest of the human moral sense against the immorality of nature and history remains; this is desirable; but it loses the feverish and childish form of rebellion. "O Universe!" said *Saint* Marcus Aurelius, "what thou wilt, that will I also."—*Edmond Scherer.*

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.

INDOOR.

Metropolitan Secular Society.—The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday, at 8, at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

OUTDOOR.

Bethnal Green Branch N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. Marshall, a Lecture.

Finsbury Park.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

Finsbury Park Branch N.S.S. (Highbury Corner, Islington): Every Friday at 8 p.m., Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

Metropolitan Secular Society.—Freethought lectures and debates every evening in Hyde Park. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Beale, Hyatt, Harris, Hart, Keeling, Knubley, Saphin, Shaller, Dr. Stuart, M.A., Mr. Vincent, B.A., B.Sc., and Mr. Howell Smith.

North London Branch N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

South London Branch N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. C. Baker will lecture.

South Place Ethical Society.—Ramble: Dorking to Leith Hill. Conducted by Mr. F. M. Overy. Trains: Charing Cross 10.5 a.m., London Bridge (S.E. & C.R.) 10.11 a.m. Cheap return to Dorking Town 3s. Ramblers bring own lunch.

West Ham Branch N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Christian Kaleidoscope."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Bolton Secular Society (Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street): 2.15, Mr. William Addison, "The World's Saviour."

OUTDOOR.

Mr. Whitehead's Mission.—August 9, Hull—New Cross Street, near the Monument, at 7.30; August 10, The Pier, at 11; August 11 to 15, New Cross Street, near the Monument, at 7.30; August 16, and 23, Newcastle; August 30, Leeds. September 6, Wolverhampton; September 13 and 20, Swansea.

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

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