

The
FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

VOL. XLVIII.—No. 7

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1928

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>A Plea for Persecution.—The Editor</i> - - - -	97
<i>Post-prandial Piety.—Mimnermus</i> - - - -	99
<i>A God in the Making.—H. B. Dodds</i> - - - -	100
<i>Hwuy-Ung Looks at Us.—E. J. Lamel</i> - - - -	101
<i>Mr. J. T. Lloyd.—Chapman Cohen</i> - - - -	105
<i>An Atheist Priest.—W. Mann</i> - - - -	106
<i>The Gates of Altitude.—Andrew Millar</i> - - - -	107
<i>Strange Tales.—Alan Tyndal</i> - - - -	108

*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

(Continued from page 82.)

A Plea for Persecution.

In its attempts to shield the Christian Church against the charge of persecution the *Church Times* adopts the arguments of the more unscrupulous Roman Catholic advocates, and makes the following statements:—

- (1) Persecution was something which was foreign to the early Church, but came into it from the Imperialism of ancient Rome.
- (2) The Canon Law of the Church did not decree the death penalty for heresy for more than a thousand years after the birth of Christ.
- (3) Laws against heresy were framed in order to protect the heretic from the fury of the mob, and the object of the medieval Inquisition was to protect the innocent and to regularize the course of justice.
- (4) The distinction between Catholic and Protestant persecution is that the former aimed at the salvation of souls and the conversion of the sinner, while Protestant persecution was in its character primarily political.

I am not quite sure what exactly is meant by saying that "The Roman Empire to the last struggled, as it had ever struggled, to establish religious uniformity by force." If it means the Roman Empire after it became Christian, the statement is true enough. But if the pagan Roman Empire is meant, nothing could be further from the truth. Pagan Rome was polytheistic, and polytheism has always been tolerant. How could it be otherwise? It had no single god which was the object of worship; and Rome in all its conquests made it the universal rule never to interfere with local religions, so long as they were not directed against the welfare of the State. It was for this reason that Druidism was suppressed in this country, not because it was another religion, but because it involved human sacrifices. But the New Testament alone should have shown the *Church Times* the policy of Rome. There was no

interference with the Jewish religion, however sternly Rome suppressed revolts that broke out among the Jews. As Professor Bury remarks, "The general rule of Roman policy was to tolerate throughout the Empire all religions and all opinions. Blasphemy was not punished." The splendid blasphemies of Lucian, which no one ever dreamed of suppressing, or of punishing the author for writing, are alone evidence of this. At no period of Christian rule, until the present day, would similar attacks on the Christian religion have escaped prosecution. There was a State religion, and the Emperor stood towards this as the Pontif, but the spirit of Rome was expressed by the Emperor Tiberius, "If the Gods are insulted, let them see to it themselves." It was left for the Christian Church to place its deity under the protection of the police.

* * *

The Growth of Intolerance.

The fact fronting the *Church Times* is that persecution for the expression of opinion became a settled fact in the Christian world. Where did it come from? It did not come from Greece, it did not come from Rome. Greece does present us with some cases of persecution for irreligious opinions, but it is quite certain it was not a settled policy, nor of frequent happening. And either a Greek or a Roman, could he have been brought back to the Christian world of the twelfth or thirteenth century, might well have wondered whether he had landed on another planet, or have concluded that the world had gone mad. The statement that the Church systematized persecution in order to protect the heretic from the lawless fury of the mob (which would have acted as Christian Americans do to-day in the United States in the case of negro burnings and lynchings), really confuses the point. Granted that this were so—I shall show presently that it was not the case—the question arises as to how a populace to whom this kind of religious savagery was unknown under the paganism of Greece and Rome, became infected with it under Christian rule.

The answer to this question is not hard to find. In the first place it brought with it the fierce monotheistic intolerance of the Jew. "Thou shalt have none other gods before me." The unbeliever, the blasphemer, the one who tried to entice another to worship strange gods was to be stoned to death. Then there was the doctrine of exclusive salvation. The great, the momentous thing was the salvation of one's own soul, and there was no name under heaven by which men could be saved but that of Jesus Christ. In spirit an Eastern creed, it brought with it the religious fanaticism of the East. It brought also with it a teaching that developed into the divinity of government. Again, if we turn to Greece and Rome, we find all sorts of theories of govern-

ment debated, and in Greece all kinds of experiments in government being tried; although the reformer may have run the risk of getting into trouble with the established order whenever he tried to modify it. But nowhere do we find in either Greece or Rome a religious sanctity surrounding it like a bulwark, and any attempt to discuss a change of the form of government treated as a religious offence, a "sin." The whole tendency of Christianity was thus to make for intolerance all round. Intolerance in religion, intolerance in morals, intolerance in politics. And the seeds of intolerance flourished the more rapidly because of the bitter opposition the Christian Church offered from the very outset of its existence to the intellectual side of the life of the pagan world. It habituated the people to intolerance in every direction; and made independence of thought the greatest of religious and social offences.

* * *

How Christians love one another!

The argument that the Church did not incorporate the death penalty for heresy in its earlier years, is as amusingly ingenuous as is the one that the first Christians did not take up the sword against Rome. Whenever did a small minority, struggling for existence, attempt to use force to compel a huge majority to come over to its side? The damning fact is that Christians used at all times every degree of force, from simple exclusion to torture and death, exactly in proportion to their strength. The bitterness of the controversy between Christians is evidenced in the New Testament itself. In the second century it was freely taught that the orthodox Christian should hold no kind of intercourse with the heretic and the unbeliever. St. Augustine tells how his mother, who became a Christian before himself, refused to eat at the same table as her unbelieving son. St. Ambrose, who is eulogized by the *Church Times* for his tolerance, championed the act of a Christian bishop who had burned down a Jewish synagogue, and berated the Government for ordering it to be rebuilt. Heresies were springing up on every hand, and mobs of fanatical Christians were engaged in fighting and brawling, each endeavouring to suppress the other. And where the endeavour is to suppress, it is plainly only a question of opportunity when the desire finds expression in enactment.

This opportunity came with the adoption of the Christian religion by Constantine. Directly after the Council of Nicea, we get the first legislation against heretics. The Manicheans, the Montanists, and other sects were prohibited and their property confiscated. A decree of 428 prohibited a batch of twenty-nine sects. These and similar acts of legislation were soon followed by the prohibition of heathen sacrifices, by the exclusion of pagans from public office, the closing of pagan temples and of pagan schools. With the last, went the rapid extinction of a whole system of education and the initiation of a systematic attack on science. To say that these acts were due to the Secular power and not to the Church is a mere subterfuge, it is as hypocritical as the Inquisition trying to shield itself from the accusation of burning men and women, on the ground that the Church merely judged the spiritual nature of the offence and left the State to apply the secular penalty. Fanatical Christians were behind all these acts. They demanded that the belief of all appointed to public office should be above suspicion, and that the magistrates count as one of their chief duties the extirpation of heresy. The Catholic Church was never content to exist as a Church under the control of the State. What it demanded was a State that should be

under the control of the Church. It fought for this for centuries. It claimed the right to make and unmake kings. And when the time was ripe it backed up its claims to temporal sovereignty by the production of a mass of forged documents—the Isidorian Decretals. To attempt to explain away persecution as due to the influence of the Secular State over the Church, is not merely false, it is ridiculously untrue.

* * *

The Snarl of the Wolf.

Bingham, in his *Antiquities*, thus sums up the various pains and penalties inflicted upon heretics and pagans following the accession of Constantine the Great, and within a period of about 200 years. All intercourse was forbidden with them. They were deprived of all offices of profit and honour under the State. They were unable to dispose of their property by will, or to receive property through the wills of others. They were unable to receive donations. Most of the heretical sects were deprived of the right of contracting, buying or selling. Special fines were imposed on them. They were proscribed, transported, or banished. They might be subjected to flogging, and were liable in certain cases to be put to death. That is not a bad list for a Church to sanction which, according to the *Church Times*, stood for toleration on the ground that religion was a voluntary matter. As a matter of fact there was never a time in the history of the Christian Church when religion was so regarded. Lecky sums up the situation thus:—

From the very moment the Church obtained civil power under Constantine, the general principle of coercion was admitted and acted on, both against the Jews, the heretics, and the pagans. [Of the Arians and the Donatists] Their churches were destroyed, their assemblies were forbidden, their writings burnt, and all who concealed their writings threatened with death. . . . The Theodosian code, which was compiled under Theodosius the younger, contains no less than sixty-six enactments against pagans, Jews, apostates, and magicians. . . . First the pagans were deprived of offices in the State; then their secret sacrifices were prohibited; then every kind of divination was forbidden; then the public sacrifices were suppressed, finally the temples were destroyed, their images broken, and the entire worship condemned.

That is not bad for a Church that only legalized persecution in order to protect heretics against the Christian mob. And the plea that while the Roman Church aimed at the salvation of the soul, the object of Protestant persecution was political in its aims, is as curious a reading of history as one would wish for. The aim of the Roman Church was all along to make the State subservient to the Church. It stopped short at nothing to secure this—forgery, excommunication, murder—nothing was too vile so long as the purpose of the Church was served. Protestantism, it is true, gave Europe a State Church, and that was because the Princes who took up the Protestant cause wished to make the Church a department of the State, and so worked as heartily for uniformity of belief—with the aid of the torturer and the hangman—as did the Roman Church. But the aim in the one case was as political as it was in the other. And there was the same religious zeal animating both. As a matter of historic fact, there is hardly an instance known where Christianity has established itself where its establishment was not due to the use of force. And in every case it is only by the exercise of coercion of some kind that its prestige has been maintained.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Post-prandial Piety.

"I wonder how often it is necessary to state something as self-evidently true before people begin to notice that it is self-evidently false."—G. K. Chesterton.

PIETY is of many kinds. There is the godly wonder in the heart of a poor Italian peasant at the sight of a stone statue of the Madonna shedding tears of real water. There is the pious sense of gratitude in a bookmaker at the end of a busy day at Kempton Park. There is the florid incontinence of a Labour Member of Parliament trying hard, by means of rhetoric, to capture the Nonconformist voters for Socialism. And there is also post-prandial piety, which, if the dinner be of seven courses, with wine, is apt to be unusually unctuous. Whereby hangs a tale to gladden the heart of a Freethinker.

During his recent tour in South America, the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, the famous politician, was entertained at a banquet by some olive-skinned officials of one of the South American Republics. Doubtless, there was a first-class display of hospitality. Oratorical bouquets were thrown at Mr. George. He was apostrophized, with Latin fervency, as the man who won the war, as a Liberal amongst Liberals and so forth, and so on; in the true traditions of European oratory, Leon Gambetta could hardly have done it more gracefully; Emilio Castelas would have admired the resonant polysyllables and the magniloquent phrases.

The obvious thing to be done in the circumstances was to return the flowers, with interest, if possible, but to return the floral tributes. But Mr. George wears his rue with a difference, and he chose a vastly different line. Instead of telling his hearers that the South American Republics were the eighth wonder of the world, which would have had the merit of being partially true, he chose to preach a Nonconformist sermon to the astonished diners. Admitting the soft impeachment that he was a Christian, he said no other principle save that of the Christian Faith raises man to the same degree above the wild beasts of the forest. It was magnificent as a homily, but it was not after-dinner speaking nicely calculated to make the meeting sing: "For he's a jolly good fellow," or its Spanish equivalent.

Try and imagine this scene, brother scoffers, worthy to be limned on canvas by the worthy Michelangelo himself. See the swarthy sons of South America, bon vivants, men of the world, men of affairs, each one a little Mussolini, used to handling opponents with a Spartan severity unknown in far-off Britain. Can you not see them? Men with brightly coloured uniforms, enough decorations to make a skipping-rope, and wearing moustachios like Arab horses' tails. Powerful, heavy-jowled men, innocent of the niceties of theology, and none the worse for it. And, by the side of each of these gaily dressed officials, was a beautiful lady, whose beauty and jewels "outshone the wealth of Ormuz or of Ind."

Into this innocent scene of festivity Mr. George dropped his theological bombshell, which was received without comment, and which is the most magnificent tribute to the gracious manners of these South American gentlemen. Mr. George's sudden assumption of the part of Saint George attacking the dragon of Freethought must have been extremely exhilarating, but the diners did not laugh. It was very amusing, but they did not even smile. As gentlemen, they let the incident pass as unnoticed. Mr. George was, in all probability, the first hard-shell Baptist they had ever met. Doubtless, they are not in extreme haste to meet another member of the same austere sect.

The small but fierce tribe of Christian Evidence exponents should be proud of their new ally, Mr. Lloyd George. But they must not plume themselves overmuch. Mr. George errs through entire innocence and not through wicked intent. Like that placid dachshund which Mark Twain once saw in the possession of a sportsman who was taking it out to hunt wild elephants, he lacks bitterness. Nevertheless, brother Freethinkers, I find myself in a rebellious mood. For there is an irritating air of dilettantism in Mr. George's propaganda, and a note of pious patronage. There is also an echo of the hard-shell Baptist manner, which has been described jocosely as the attitude of the President of the Immortals addressing a lodging-house flea. Post-prandial piety may be grateful reading to the sentimentalists who still cling to the name of Christian; but I imagine it will irritate rather than satisfy other readers of more virile intelligence.

Besides, Mr. George's homily is beautiful and ineffectual nonsense. Belief in the Christian Superstition alone did not make men more humane, otherwise Abyssinia would be on the same social level as France or Great Britain. Eastern Europe was the cradle of Christianity, and even to-day, in those lands of piety and piracy, human life is valued at about a dollar. Here in England, we are only just escaping from absolute savagery. Smithfield burnings, Tyburn hangings, cart-tail flogging of men, Bridewell floggings of women, and all the horrors of child-labour, took place in a Christian country. At the beginning of the nineteenth century death was the legal punishment in England for a multitude of petty crimes and offences. To steal a few shillingworth of goods from a shop, to pick a pocket, to kill a sheep, were offences considered as deserving of death as murder, treason, forgery, and robbery with violence. A humaner spirit in the country, voiced by such Freethinkers as Mackintosh and Romilly, led to a moral revolt against the severity of this penal code.

The struggle for the amendment of the criminal code was a struggle for the recognition of human life as a thing more precious than ribbons in a shop, or the life of a sheep, and it was a battle for civilization. The hearts of men were stirred, not by the lawn-sleeved bishops of the Established Christian Church, but by Freethinkers. They deserve much of the credit for the progressive measures passed by Parliament. To pretend that present-day humanism is due solely to the Christian Superstition is but to use the language of ignorance.

The Ecclesiastical Authorities have never been interested in the welfare of the people, unless it has been to their own direct advantage. They have always regarded themselves as the champion of the Established Church's temporal power rather than as preachers of humanism. Fifty years ago Lord Shaftesbury, himself a Churchman, asked the pointed question, "Of what use are the bishops in the House of Lords?" and the Parliamentary records of a hundred years supply the crushing answer.

Like the horse-leech, priests take but they do not give. When the Domesday survey was made in England in the reign of William the Conqueror, near a thousand years ago, there were three mills in Taunton paying tribute to the then Bishop of Winchester. To-day the owner of the town mill has to pay this annual tribute to that bishopric. There's a piece of priestly philanthropy in the best Christian tradition.

MIMNERMUS.

Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

A God in the Making.

"THE BROOK KERITH," by George Moore, tells how Jesus left the little community of Essenes, among whom he dwelt and made his appearance among the illiterate Galilean fishermen, and gained their adherence mainly by the glowing picture he put before them of the coming glory when he would return with God the Father to inaugurate a new Earth. And when his madness carried him into Jerusalem, and the priests eventually manœuvred his sentence by Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea begged his body off the Cross ere he had died, and nursed him back to life and sanity. He is smuggled away to the hills, where he resumes the office of shepherd, and, amid the loneliness of the uplands, reaches at last a mystical attitude towards nature poles asunder from his Messiah days. He sees God in everything; in the flowers, streams and grass, as well as in the mind of man. God requires neither love or worship. He sees God as the nebulous result of a sentimental wonder at the power manifested in nature; the outcome of a lack of knowledge concerning the power in question; the same that often comes through a deficiency of good red blood. Yet he was a modest, pleasing personality withal. When his days of mental stress and overthrow are brought to mind, he is self-condemnatory and ashamed of his claims to godship. He lives on until he has reached the half-century of life, beloved for his gentleness, his knowledge of sheep and his wise and kindly council. Then, no longer able, as in his younger days, to stand the strain of sleeping out on the Syrian hills, he hands over his flock to a youthful companion and settles down to pass the rest of his days in meditation among the brethren. He has kept locked in his bosom the secret of those far away days when he had begged permission to go down among the people with a message from God. The old Head of the religious community had thought, when Jesus, distraught, and Joseph of Arimathea, had made a reappearance in the retreat on the hills, that the ways of the world had disillusioned Jesus, and welcomed him back. Jesus is now on the point of confessing to the old man, frail and awaiting death. He wants to tell him that he is not fit to live among such truly religious men; that his presumption in taking on the mantle of the son of God is the unforgivable sin. But the old man is looking forward to sweet discourse with Jesus in the cool Syrian evenings, and begs him to forget the past.

Just then, flying from the persecution of the Jews, comes Paul of Tarsus to the little community above the brook Kerith. He is fanatical and contentious. He alone is possessed of the truth. After they have clothed and fed him, and washed his feet, they gather round to hear his story. He tells how when the news came of the risen Saviour he was filled with wrath, and having obtained legal sanction, he set out to harass the new religionists. And on the way a blinding flash of light from the heavens deprived him of sight, and a voice from out a cloud asked why he persecuted the Christ. He thereupon accepted the story of the witnesses to the resurrection, and set out on his travels preaching the glad tidings and establishing churches. He told of his quarrels with the apostles of Christ, claiming that his call to the ministry was superior to theirs. One of the brethren, Mathias, a man well versed in Greek philosophy, sought to confound him in the way of logic, but Paul strode through the argument and asserted that the Christ had risen; had he not, then his faith was a vain thing, and of no value. Jesus, standing by listening to the bigoted portrayal of his own youthful escapade

and sorrowing over the trouble that had come upon the people in consequence, was fain to step forward and let the truth in upon the origin of the new religion. As he proceeded, the glare that was to be kept alight down the centuries, came into Paul's eyes, and as proof after proof of his folly was piled up he rose and rushed from the place, shouting, "he is mad, he hath an evil spirit." Jesus found him next morning, behind a rock, with the signs of his recent paroxysm still upon him, and having succoured him, he led him upon the road to Cæsarea, having promised to put him in the way of safety. Jesus had decided to go to Jerusalem and let the priests know that the resurrection of the Messiah was a fraudulent thing, in the hope that they would cease the prosecution of the deluded peasants, and Paul, alive to the destructive effect the story would have on his own mission, tried with all manner of guile to put him off the idea, and succeeded. Jesus goes back to his meditations within sound of the brook Kerith; and Paul, with revived and eager spirit, goes forth to spread the grey breath of a bastard creed over the Earth.

That, in brief, is how George Moore clothes the spare figure of the Gospels with a semblance of life, and, as an interpretation of the Christian story, is much more reasonable than the recent attempts to blend the god and man in one and the same personality. Paul created his god in a spasm of delusion; he clung to his delusion so that the impact of reason made no impression on it, and his propagation of the creed was rooted in fanaticism and his own worldly interest. This phase of Mr. Moore's story has nineteen centuries of tragic experience behind it; there has always been a strain of selfish self-interest in the history of Christianity, and Christian fanaticism is a lively bantling despite the many years that has passed over its unlovely head. Nor is the author's portrayal of Jesus as a quiet, unassuming flockmaster, with a habit of philosophizing on the mystery of things in a pantheistical way, in conflict with probability. Granting that he lived, it is reasonable to assume that the disillusionment set up by his experience on the Cross would tend to bring his mental processes into an orderly sequence, and so further the plan of his benefactor to restore him to his friends among the Essenes.

The story is, however, a suggestive account of how gods are made. As far as Paul is concerned, the action is entirely in the sphere of unreason. He was greedy of the miraculous. He fastened on the wildly improbable idea of the Christ having risen from the dead and based his faith on that. M. A. Loisy, the eminent French theologian, has a somewhat similar predilection. He relies on the crucifixion. All is lost if that is given up. Gods grow naturally in minds of that calibre, and ritual comes up like the flowers in springtime. M. Loisy, in an otherwise placid temperament, finds room for disparagement of the upholders of the myth theory, and in that he is supported by Sir J. G. Frazer, who says, in the introduction to Dr. Couchand's book on the *Enigma of Jesus*, that he does not subscribe to the myth theory on the ground that it raises more difficulties than it solves. It is a bare statement, no details being given, but if the myth theory explains all the other gods of mankind, why should Sir J. G. Frazer boggle at it explaining this particular one? There is nothing unique about the Christian god; he carries on his front the myth-marks of the others. The great anthropologist permits himself to say that bitterness permeates the writings of the myth theorists, and that might indicate in what way the subject of Jesus is approached by him; he

does not seem to be handling it in the spirit of science, but in terms of social prejudice.

George Moore, the best of literary stylists and storytellers, dowers Paul with abundant vitality and makes him the real founder of Christianity, but New Testament criticism whittles the fiery apostle down to a mere cipher with hardly a rag to cover his nakedness. Van Manen, a Dutch critic, has dissolved him into thin air, and students, other than mere traditionalists, reject his claims freely. But whether he wrote or not, the Christ took shape in the documents ascribed to him, and the creed associated with the name of Jesus grew up there. Gods expand in such an atmosphere of credulity and wonder. Christianity got a good start, and when the secular arm was enlisted in its cause, the death and resurrection of the Christ was established until the coming of the sceptics. They reversed the process, and the saviour god is now being resolved into his constituent parts, but if he is to be no more in the future than the veriest shadow of a shade, I for one, prefer him as the dark-tanned son of the hills, portrayed by George Moore, to the meek, emaciated figure, as pictured in Christian art on the Cross.

H. B. DODDS.

Hwuy-Ung Looks at Us.

HWUY-UNG was a Chinese gentleman of the class of the *literati*, and a Mandarin of the Fourth Button. Desirous of studying the strange manners of the European "foreign devils" at first hand in their natural habitat, he voyaged to Australia, the nearest country suitable for his purpose. His impressions were related in a series of letters written to his brother in China, Tseng Ching, also a scholar. They have been translated into English by Tseng Ching, edited by Mr. J. A. Makepeace, a Methodist missionary, and published by Messrs. Chatto and Windus, under the title of *A Chinaman's Opinion of Us and of His Own Country*. Hwuy-Ung stayed in Australia for some considerable time, where he perfected his English, but the letters were, of course, written in Chinese.

I can well imagine the sort of man Hwuy-Ung was, dignified, courteous, observant, with a keen sense of humour, typical, in short, of his class. His letters are, indeed humorous, and this quality is enhanced by the quaint English of Tseng Ching, which, however, Mr. Makepeace "regularizes" in some places, particularly the discussions on religion, in order to make their meaning more clear.

Hwuy-Ung has much to say on other matters besides religion that is worthy of note. For example, the modern novel that forms the mental pabulum of nine-tenths of the reading public and obfuscates their reasoning powers almost as much as does religion. He is staying with his cousin, Chek, whose Australian-born children obtained this literature:—

Eh-mi and Meh-li borrow-lend me books they measure top-good. They but not please me; they not give good examples of filial piety, of noble actions, nor maxims of the Sages, nor teaching of Nature's wonders. They have same subject time-time. Man and woman who speak-mouth of great love, being willing die one for other—and not do one thing. He is same man in the ten books; top powerful but mild as young lamb to her; to rival fierce as grizzly bear. His hair is mane of the black lion; his eyes are as the gazelle, have times darting fire. He is nine parts tranquil as frozen stream; but roused, a destructive torrent. The woman also tall, of noble but tender nature, strong but yielding will, proud but humble. Her eyes have heaven's blue colour, her hair is virgin gold, her brow is alabaster, her cheek roses dipped in milk, her mouth—ai!

description too long!—her lips coral, teeth pearls, neck like swan. Thus vertex beauty you find solely in these books. Man and woman have ten thousand virtues, vices not single one. This not usual with live people. Destiny raises myriad barriers between them—jealousy, envy, deceit, poverty, and persecution make them victims. Below time they have victory over enemies, starvation, wounds, obstacles and trials, finally meet more fresh and handsome then above time and are knotted. Ten books end thus. Marriage be finish of story, for what reason? . . . Thus I not have interest, but put away book gently on shelf, below reading five, seven pages . . . I not feel more wise, more charitable, more happy. Books of this nature not have truth nor morality; they describe details of sex-passions like the lightning-shadow pictures (kinemas) and stir up mud in clear pool of the mind. The pencil's use should be for cleansing thought; not be dipped in dirt to sully it.

So with the kinema:—

Great is power of these pictures. They can teach many good deeds and renovate virtue. They can give examples of filial piety and love of parents for children. Of charity, of pity, of help to the poor . . . It is vertex means for education, for knowing about countries and foreigners, and thus not despise them. Great power for instructing children be honest, truthful, kind-hearted. But this top good instruction I not time-time see at here; character of the people not improved by pictures in Mei-li-pang (Melbourne). You see men and women half-naked, embracing and kissing . . . One while time I go away having shame . . . Yet at here many small boys and mosquito girls with foolish parents who not think of harm to children. Ai-ya! Stupidity is twin-brother to crime. You will see at these pictures thieves at half-night opening from iron cash-boxes, bullies using violence, murder done, seduction of friend's wife, drunken orgies, brigands stealing horses. The ten vices of humanity are displayed and criminals are heroes simple boys imitate . . . Cause of this is to make money. People's good not matter if they pay. Low class are many and have middle-mind for these pictures; so halls are full and good much cash received. If only virtue pictures displayed, halls not full and little cash received. This not true means for civilization.

But Hwuy-Ung has not had the blessing of a Christian education. If the efforts of the missionaries in China are successful, the Chinese will in time come to appreciate the dirt and indecency of much of what passes for literature and art in those countries which have been properly taught by the churches and their clergy.

In the last few sentences quoted above, however, Hwuy-Ung touches the root of the matter. For this and other similar reasons he concludes that our religion is not Christianity at all. He is evidently under the misapprehension, heathen that he is, that Christian precept and practice should, more or less, go together. He can, nevertheless, see through the hypocrisy of the Christian "shepherds."

These men brought the Holy Book in one hand and opium in the other. Millions of our people are slaves to the drug. Yet the foreign shepherds tell us that their Son of God taught them to "overcome evil with good," and "unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other." Gautama Buddha, whom many of our countrymen follow, also said, "Overcome anger with kindness, wickedness with good actions." . . . I middle-believe that some who look solemn and repeat precept for others to practise are laughing within themselves . . . There are many with the countenance of a Buddha have the heart of a snake.

Our real religion he believes to be Mammonism, and our professions of Christianity mere verbal hypocrisy. In this he is undoubtedly right. Christ is reputed to

have said, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Throughout its entire, lurid history Christendom has shown most unmistakably which it prefers and has definitely chosen. Thus Hwuy-Ung, commenting upon the "new-*hear* papers" (newspapers):—

New-*hear* paper is index of thought occupying mind of the people; by it you measure occupation, habits, character and amusements. In this city are two papers appearing upper half day; one is liberal for middle-class and labour men, other is conservative for rich class. One number for people striving for money; two number for people having money and wanting more. Two papers time-time rival. One say black is white colour; other say white black colour . . . One paper I buy has sixteen pages for each day; on Worship Day has twenty-eight pages; in truth is big to cause wonder. Each page has nine columns; thus for twenty-eight pages, 252 columns. Number of columns for buying-selling, 122; new-*hear* (news) of O-sei-lia (Australia) and Nu-si-lan (New Zealand) twenty-six; of Ying-ka-li (England) seven; for literary subjects, twenty-five; sports and amusements, twenty; other columns for births, deaths and marriages; for religious notices and other subjects, remainder. Foreign new-*hear*, one column! Thus, result of examination is, half of people's thoughts dwell on buying-selling—*Money*. For what reason paper not called "Money Paper"? New-*hear* occupy only half of quarter of space. And foreign new-*hear*? Of other countries people in this place can know what thing? This has not reason. . . . One class with lightning-shadow pictures and novels; this feeding greedy, least-cultured public coarse sweets and meats highly seasoned, bad for digestion. We not want read details of cut-up body in box found in river; nor of murderer of three wives he buried in lime, with barrel awaiting four number; nor of indecent particulars of divorce case. But this through goading desire for money. For mysteries, horrors and scandals are treasures for paper owners; are more readers . . . In my poor opinion is nobler duty for those forming people's taste and judgment to raise them to brighter plane; not to pander to depraved inclinations. Money—the untiring, ravening hunt for it—is cause of nine parts of wrong-doing . . . I see men in streets of Mei-li-pang hurrying on with faces anxious and careworn, willing slaves of the Demon Gold they worship by day and dream in black night, with faculties chained to the task—*ai-ya!* . . . They acquire wealth; but in truth are poor . . . Nine parts of crime caused by desire for money or equivalent . . . Not having money, a man sage, virtuous and learned is disregarded and shunned; for his garments are old and worn, his dwelling is mean, his heart expended—he can what do? Having money, though man illiterate and stupid, is praised and sought; his garments are new and elegant, his mansion is grand, his manner arrogant—he what not can do? Is some excuse for poor man if tempted by crime to struggle out of morass of misery; knowing that with money he may avert crime's consequence. A great poet of the Ying Nation said:—

"Get place and wealth, if possible, with grace;
If not, by any means get wealth and place."

The struggle to obtain money by trade is cause of nations' crimes. I not give-say details; I but give examples: forcing us to accept opium from In-di; obliging us to open ports to trade; Ying cotton forced on In-di; conquests of many countries to find new markets. Thus with nations, so with men.

It is obvious from all this that Hwuy-Ung is far from the redeeming light that is shed by the blood of the Lamb, as I once heard a Salvationist orator express it. Hence, when he comes to discuss matters of religion with a Christian clergyman, the latter finds him a tough proposition. That a Methodist missionary should publish these conversations, and not suppress them after the time-honoured Christian

custom, as he admits he had a mind to do, is rather remarkable. He evidently does not appreciate the deadliness of Hwuy-Ung's criticisms, for he says in a footnote: "Hwuy-Ung shows, I am grieved to say, that the darkness that enshrouds him has not as yet been dispelled by the glorious light of faith. I had doubts about including this and others of his letters . . . Knowing the value an exposition of the theology of the Chinese *literati* would be to missionaries seeking to bring the lost sheep to the fold, I have not excluded these letters, as they themselves may suggest a means of combating some of the false notions therein included."

E. J. LAMEL.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

England 1928! The Bishop of Liverpool, Dr. David, has requested the churches in his diocese to offer special prayers for finer weather. Now we wonder whether Dr. David really imagines that special prayers in the diocese of Liverpool will have any effect in altering the state of the weather? Assuming he does, will anyone be good enough to tell us the difference between the mentality of Dr. David and that of a South Sea Islander? If he does not believe this, is it any more than a piece of elaborate humbug? And we beg to again observe that the case of a man ordering his subordinate medicine-men to pray for an alteration in the weather occurs in England in 1928! And there are some who are under the delusion that we are a civilized people! These people forget their Dr. Davids.

King Charles's head is not in it with those people who seem determined to claim the New Testament on behalf of everything with which they agree. Thus, Dr. Warshaw, speaking at a meeting of the Anti-Vivisection Society at Cheltenham, said that "Nothing was permissible to be done in the name of science, which was against the moral law as interpreted in the gospels." As it stands, the rule is sheer nonsense. To say that a thing is wrong because it is condemned in the New Testament is pure bigotry, and of the most ignorant kind. And we would like to know, just where does the New Testament, or the Gospels, inculcate kindness to animals? The gospels are concerned with the soul of man, not the souls of animals. And there is St. Paul's contemptuous "Doth God care for oxen?" Why cannot these people rest their case upon plain reasoning, instead of a basis of superstition?

In another issue of the same journal from which the above is taken, we note some comments by the Hon. Stephen Coleridge on the funeral of Thomas Hardy in Westminster Abbey. The following passages are noteworthy:—

The burial of Thomas Hardy . . . with a ritual that promised a sure and certain resurrection of those ashes, constituted a celebration of the triumph of our traditional religion over the psychology and philosophy that permeated all the writings of the living author.

His stories were the literary expressions of a world where Darwin had given us a past of squalid degradation, and Herbert Spencer had given us a future of the unknowable. Yet, no sooner is he dead, than the old order steps in, and with a mighty assertion of overwhelming power and authority, religion asserts its dominion over sterile reason, and with one accord the nation carries his ashes into that majestic temple of adoration of a living God.

So it will always be.

What fustian! And what a demonstration of the appalling consequences of religious belief! The reading of a service above the dead body of a man who did not believe in the religion it represents is a "triumph," "a mighty assertion of overwhelming power and authority"! There was the same assertion of over-

whelming power and authority when in earlier centuries the Christian Church dug the bodies of dead heretics from the grave and burned them. A religion that inspired a proper sense of decency, and just a little sense of self-respect would have been ashamed to act in the way applauded by Mr. Coleridge. It would have shown that it had self-respect for the dead by declining to mumble its formulas over the body of a man who did not believe in them. Mr. Coleridge thinks it a triumph. He says it will always be so. We hope not. We are sanguine enough to believe that one of these days even Christianity will not be permitted to insult the dead and to outrage the feelings of the decent among the living by these exhibitions of "overwhelming power and authority." All round decency and Christian belief appear to be almost incompatible things.

According to an advertisement of the Soldiers' Christian Association, soldiers stationed in China are earnestly asking for the prayers of Christian people. The soldiers, it appears, are Christian men, members of the S.C.A., who seek to win the heathen for Christ not only by the example of their lives, but also by faithful preaching of the Gospel. (N.B.—Donations gratefully received). We should say that men trained in the use of death-dealing weapons, and sent to China to use such weapons against the heathen, are just the right men to impress the heathen by the example of their Christian lives, and to preach the teaching of the pacifist Jesus. Onward, Christian soldiers! Bayonet and Bible—what a typical Christian combination. We hope to see some more of these delicious advertisements of the S.C.A.

Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, writes in a manual issued by the Board:—

The health and well-being of the child is the primary foundation of its education. Physical health is, of course, not everything, but it is the first thing needful. If we have it, many things are possible; if we have it not, many things are impossible . . . Thus the physical health and condition of the child are . . . the basis upon which all mental education must necessarily be founded.

This indicates the distance the Christian world has travelled from the degraded notions about the vileness of man's body, cherished and taught by generations of filthy monks and lousy "saints." It says something for the way in which Christian teaching and ideas have permeated the national mind, that, two thousand years after, Christian Sir George Newman finds it necessary to write as he does.

Mr. Robert Lynd, of the *Daily News*, says that the Englishman has left the thinking of the nation to be done mainly by a long series of men of genius who were much more capable of thinking than himself. In the result, the national brain thought just as hard as the national brain of any other country, while individual brains confined themselves to ordinary affairs. On the whole, says Mr. Lynd, this system worked well. It saved the country from that pestilence which has appeared in the modern world—the plague of people incapable of thinking, who, without thinking, talk the jargon of thought. There has, he declares, never been so much jargon of thought as there is in the world at the present time, whether in psychology, politics, or the criticism of the arts. Mr. Lynd's reminder is a timely one. An interesting speculation is: What is the cause of this modern pestilence? We suggest that the people of this generation have just escaped one pestilence—the jargon of religious and foggy religious thinking. Being Christian bred, they have received no training in analytical or discriminative thinking. Hence they have fallen easy victims to this new pestilence—the jargon of thought.

Mr. Lynd adds that:—

One of the chief problems of modern education is how to teach human beings to think in such a way that they will not learn only the jargon of thought.

We suggest that the experiment might be tried of excluding religious teaching from all schools. That would allow time in the curriculum for some instruction in and exercise of the art of reasoning and scientific thinking. We are, of course, supposing that the teachers are capable of giving such instruction. At present they are, in the mass, merely experts in purveying second-hand information. Of teaching to think they have small notion.

Anglican and Free Churches, together with the Salvation Army, are uniting in a visitation of Egham (a Surrey town with a population of 13,000), in order to discover what children do not attend any Church or Sunday School. A section of the parish is allotted to each local church, and when the inquisition is finished, each "delinquent" child will be invited to attend some particular church or Sunday school. This Paul Pry arrangement is what our godly friends call "an increase campaign." It ought to be fruitful, if mention is made of the annual school treat, and the various bun-struggles and other refined and spiritual amusements that now-a-days are part of tactics of "catching 'em young."

Apropos of the amalgamation of the *Daily News* and the *Westminster Gazette*, our sacred contemporary, the *Methodist Times*, says that in daily journalism the inevitable road seems to be that of immense combines with tentacles in all big towns. The future is to be a feverish competition which, no matter how splendid the ideals of individual proprietors, cannot fail to find repercussion in the too often soulless stunting which seems essential to the achievement of million circulations. This, says the Methodist paper, is one more potent reason for a strong, independent, fearless weekly Press, both secular and religious. With the Free Press must rest the custodianship of all that is unassociated with the sordid elements of contemporary English life. Unhampered by the demands of gramophone journalism it can and must bring to bear upon the problems of the day a calm judgment and a shrewd commentary, supporting without fear or favour all that serves to enrich and exalt the life of the community. With most of what the *Methodist Times* says, the *Freethinker* agrees; it is, after all, but an echo of what has been said here for many years past. But we certainly do not endorse our Christian friend's footnote that, "it is for such a witness that we stand, with our contemporaries, in the Religious Press." That is mere claptrap. The Religious Press has concerned itself only with the free expression of Christian views, and usually, of denominational views. It has never advocated or supported the unfettered expression of each and every kind of opinion, nor the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, which are an insult to every real lover of free speech and intellectual freedom. In light of these facts, the Religious Press's claims to be the champion of free opinion is about the limit of impudence.

A pious reporter has been visiting New Cross Wesleyan Church. He liked the hopeful way in which the minister talked—despite a church debt of £1,400 accumulated during the past twenty years. And despite, we presume, since it is mentioned, the fact that the Church stands next to a big cinema which is open twice on Sunday and draws some 4,000 people; not forgetting, too, the Sunday League concerts at a big theatre a short distance away. Everybody to whom the reporter spoke said things were improving, and that they looked hopefully to the future. Pious hope is no doubt a useful commodity, but it doesn't empty big cinemas and fill a church.

Writing to the Press, Dr. G. Arbour Stephens draws attention to the fact that Oxford University and Cambridge University have recently been placed in the list of bodies receiving Government grants, and that both Universities discriminate against women, the former by limiting the entries of women, and the latter by refusing degrees to women. He suggests that

either the grants should be withdrawn or the Universities should cease their unfair discrimination. Evidently Cambridge as well as Oxford merits the derisive description, "a home of lost causes." Perhaps the explanation may be that the spirit of the early monkish students—steeped in the anti-feminine lore of dear old St. Paul—still lingers in the walls of our ancient seats of learning. We wonder whether the learned gentlemen responsible for the Universities can tell us the Latin for: The times are perpetually changing, and we with the times.

Dinsdale T. Young is, according to a pious paper, the great Methodist whose personality and preaching fills to overflowing, night after night, the mighty Central Hall, Westminster. Here are some specimens of what the mob likes to hear:—

Think of others, and you will be bright . . . Be kind to Christ. How unkind we have been to Christ—how unkind! . . . Fathers and mothers, train your child early to be kind to Christ. He deserves all our kindness. Belief. That is what we want in the Churches to-day. We have plenty of sceptics, plenty of critics, plenty of people who are simply asking questions.

How unkind!

"Clergy and ministers of religion generally are human beings, and very few of them entirely sanctified," says a Methodist parson. This sounds almost too good to be true.

The Rev. W. Russell Maltby (Wesleyan Methodist) thinks that controversy about religion is not necessarily an evil thing. "It is when truth is in debate and things are hotly affirmed and hotly denied, that the world begins to think that matters of importance are at stake." This is apropos of the dog-fight which is raging in Anglican Church kennels, with the Free Church mongrels barking outside. If by "the world" the reverend gentleman means the great number of people outside the churches, we doubt whether these will be so foolish as to imagine that important matters are at stake, however hot may be the argument. As Mr. Maltby points out, the real controversy in the prayer-book excitement turns on the questions of the authority of the Church, the powers of a priesthood, and the place of sacraments. It is the truths about these that is in debate. It is Christian truth—that's all. And, as "the world" has begun to acquire some sense of proportion, it is not at all likely to think that these matters of Christian truth are of real importance. So, however noisy the fight, it will be confined to the kennels, and "the world" will continue on its exasperatingly indifferent way.

Five persons were summoned for brawling in St. Cuthbert's Church, Darwen. They may perceive, or they may not—the one-sided and lop-sided state of inspiration, six feet above contradiction.

Fifty-six thousand names are engraved on the Menin Gate Memorial. That is about the number of professional Christians in this country paid to teach the gospel of "love one another." That they stood on their heads during the war is the finest compliment to their real value; that they gained exemption proved their anxiety to avoid a journey to that other country on which they are experts.

Mr. A. L. Braine writes suggesting that if the claims of vivisectors be sound, and by experimenting on living animals knowledge is obtained which leads to the cure of disease amongst humans, there seems an excellent chance here for God to do something. He might "inspire" someone to discover the cure of disease without its involving the suffering of animals. Religious anti-vivisectors tell us that vivisection is against the will of God, and if that is the case, it is surprising that he does not prevent his will being thwarted in this way. Mr. Braine has made a palpable hit.

Lady A. Bailey, the aviator, has been asked by a teachers' journal, what was her favourite subject at school. She replied: "History . . . Truth is stranger than fiction and far more interesting." We shouldn't care to agree that the "truth" as given in a school history book, or in the history of the Jews called the Bible, is stranger than fiction. We should prefer to say that the one has too much resemblance to the other for any substantial difference to be noticed.

In education, says the Duchess of Atholl, as in our national life, we have succeeded in evolving an order of freedom that is entirely consistent with our national character. No doubt. The next step is to evolve a system of education that will encourage mental freedom or intellectual independence. That education would not be consistent with the national character, but no doubt the character would grow to it when the schools employing such a system of education had trained a generation or two.

A wayside pulpit poster declares: "A trouble may be an opportunity hiding behind a shadow." The trouble our Anglican Church friends are now experiencing over the new Prayer Book may be that kind of opportunity. It may give the general public an opportunity of realizing how inherently stupid are Christian beliefs and practices.

The actor's vocation, says Canon Hussen, is a God-given one as much as the priest's. The Canon, it will be noted, gives the actor a pat on the back, and hands himself one at the same time. He says in effect, "Yours is a splendid vocation, but don't forget mine is, too." We daresay the Canon will not mind our pointing out to the actor that the priestly benediction must not encourage him to practice his God-given vocation on a Sunday, and during church hours. For the Sabbath was made for the priest's God-given vocation only. Other people with God-given vocations must "keep off the grass."

Awake! O Preachers! Sermons are dry as dust, and milk-and-watery. The people want uplifting and inspiring addresses. They want their doubts and difficulties solved; they need assistance in their problems. No wonder the Churches are emptying and the young people becoming careless of church attendance. It is a reader of a daily paper who is exhorting, and wanting, and lamenting thus. He, or she, is a pathetic example of the dwindling few who believe that parsons are heaven-sent leaders of mankind.

Texts from the Koran which have long swung from the minarets of mosques in Turkey have in many instances been replaced by an invitation to "Buy Turkish Products." Alas, how materialistic all the nations are becoming! Minarets and churches will soon be used as picture palaces if this wicked old world degenerates much more, and priests will be glad of a job to sell programmes and chocolates.

In the *Schoolmistress* appears the following:—

None amongst us will deny that the authorized version of the Bible is the priceless heritage of every English child, whatever relation that book may bear to the religion of his parents. It is to our language what the gold reserve is to our far-flung system of money and credit. But more than a rich treasury of language, it is a library of books superlative in human interest, as well as the vehicle of the greatest ethical system known to this old world.

It seems odd that though the Bible is so rich a treasury of the English language, no great writer has ever thought fit to convey his ideas in the diction of the Bible. As for the "greatest ethical system," etc., it appears to have made a sad ethical mess of human affairs. We hope the good Lord has no more of the same kind to dump upon a suffering world.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

ALL Freethinkers will learn with the deepest regret of the death of Mr. J. T. Lloyd. At the beginning of December he experienced a cerebral hæmorrhage, and from the outset of the attack failed to make headway against it. For the last fortnight of his existence he had only occasional spasms of lucidity, and for some days before his death he was quite oblivious to those around him. The end came on the evening of February 1. He was in his 78th year.

There was no man in the Freethought movement who held the warm affection of all who knew him more whole-heartedly than he did. More than a quarter of a century ago he gave up one of the most popular churches in Johannesburg as a consequence of his growing disbelief in the doctrines he was expected to teach. He might, following the example of so many others, have watered down the doctrines, explained away some difficulties, closed his eyes to others, and remained to the end the recipient of a good salary, and in full enjoyment of place and power. But that was a policy entirely foreign to his nature. What he believed he taught, what he taught he believed. Twenty-five years ago he joined the National Secular Society, content to take soldier's rations when these were available, and cheerfully going without when they were not. He never boasted of what he had done; it was, to him, the path to duty, and he followed it unflinchingly.

He made friends in his new surroundings rapidly and kept them permanently. His sympathies were wide and his nature gentle. There was, indeed, a strange and almost womanly sensitiveness in his nature. One would have expected a man who had so decisively, and so unhesitatingly, and against the advice of his friends, come out of the Church in which he held so prominent a place, and who had straightway joined the ranks of militant Freethought, one would have expected in such a man something of the delight in mental warfare that coarser characters find in physical conflict. But this was not the case. He took little personal pleasure in conflict, although he never avoided it when it came. His interest lay entirely in the desire to get the truth, his ambition to pass that truth on to others.

All this showed a character as worthy as it is rare. I knew him from his first entrance into the movement, and never found cause for anything but respect and affection. His loyalty was most marked; along with a certain physical timidity, he possessed a mental courage of the first order. In conversation he was modest and unassuming, never assertive, always ready to listen with attention and patience to the opinions of others. To the end he retained a simplicity of manner that must have endeared him to all with whom he came into contact.

For some years his age prevented his appearing on the public platform, although his pen continued active in these columns until this last attack. But there were always enquiries about him, all over the country, and there was never any mistaking the affection that inspired them. More of the world's goods the Church might have given him, but a truer affection and admiration no man in any party ever had—or better deserved.

His funeral took place on Tuesday, February 7, at Paddington Cemetery. There was a large gathering of friends at the grave side, in spite of the short notice circumstances permitted. An address was delivered by the undersigned, a report of which will appear in next week's issue. CHAPMAN COHEN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS:

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that a 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.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Dr. C. M. Beadnell, 6s. 6d.; J. Wearing, 1s.; T. Taylor, 1s.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—The Secretary of the N.S.S. wishes to acknowledge the following donations: Mr. A. B. Moss, 2s.; Mr. J. Pendlebury, 5s.; Mrs. I. J. King, 8s.; West Ham Branch, 10s. 6d.

T. WRIGHT.—Sorry for delay. The General Secretary is writing you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings at West Pelton and Chester-le-Street on Sunday last. Mr. Brown occupied the chair in the afternoon and Mr. Dufty in the evening. The Chester-le-Street Branch is full of "go," and it is planning an extended campaign for the coming summer. There were a large number of visitors from the surrounding districts at both Mr. Cohen's meetings, and he was very pleased to renew acquaintance with so many old friends.

Next week (February 19) Mr. Cohen will visit Nottingham. In the afternoon, at 2.30, he will speak at the Cosmopolitan Debating Society, on "The Priest and the Child." In the evening he will lecture at the Victoria Baths, Sneinton, on "What Would the World Gain from Unbelief?" Nottingham friends can help by advertising the meeting among their Christian friends.

The tickets for the N.S.S. Social and Dance at Hill's Restaurant on Saturday, March 3, are now on sale. The price, including refreshments, is 2s., and those who wish for tickets should apply at once, or they may meet with an "all sold," reply. Applications should be made to the Secretary of the N.S.S., Mr. F. Mann, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

To-day (February 12) Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture in the Bristol Street Schools, Birmingham, at 6.30, on "Some Important Lessons from History." We hope that Birmingham friends will make the meeting as widely known as possible.

A notice of Mr. Lloyd's death which appeared in some of the London papers, brought a number of letters to the office, expressing regrets at the news, and all of them paying the highest of compliments to his personal character. There are few men who have better deserved the kind things said about him.

Once again we beg to call the attention of our friends to the desirability of introducing this paper to as many new readers as is possible. We are constantly getting new readers in this way, and the possibilities here are endless. We will send the paper to any address for six weeks on receipt of 3d. in stamps, and to those who care to distribute copies we will send a parcel on request.

We must crave the indulgence of correspondents this week. Mr. Cohen was away in Chester-le-Street on Sunday, which meant an arrival in London towards Monday evening. Then Tuesday, which is always a crowded day, had to be broken in order to attend the funeral of Mr. Lloyd, and deliver an address. Then another rush back to the office to make the final preparations for the paper going to press, and to write a few lines on the funeral itself. So some things simply have to wait until next week.

An Atheist Priest.

LOOKING, rather hopelessly, through the contents page of that sterile theological desert, *The Hibbert Journal*, for January, we lit on the title "An Atheist Curé," by J. M. Thompson, M.A., Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford.

Turning to the article in question, we find, as we expected, that it refers to Jean Meslier, Curé (parish priest) of the little parish of Etrépigny and But, in the Ardennes, not far from Sedan. The curé was known as a solitary man who lived very simply, sharing the little he had with the poor, and showing more than common sympathy with the social wrongs of his parishioners. His duties as a priest he performed as a matter of routine, without enthusiasm and in a perfunctory manner. All the rest of his time he spent reading learned books, and writing, always writing.

One day, in the Spring of the year 1729, the villagers woke up to learn, to their sorrow, that their good curé was dead. Two neighbouring priests, friends of his, were communicated with to arrange his affairs, and eventually he was buried in the Sacristy. It was then that the result of all the reading and writing was discovered. On his study table was found three manuscript copies, in Meslier's beautiful fine writing, of a work entitled *Mon Testament*, each consisting of 366 pages. One of them was directed to his parishioners, upon the cover of which he had written, that what he had not dared to say during his life should be revealed after he was dead.

The two friends realized that the manuscript could not safely be published, and nothing more was heard of it for six years, when Theriot, in 1735, brought it to the notice of Voltaire. Many manuscript copies were made, by 1762 one hundred were said to be in circulation in Paris. Voltaire thought the time had now come to give the work wider publicity, but thought the work, as it stood, much too long and boring. Voltaire was a good judge, for he could say more in one page than most men could say in a chapter, or some in a volume. So he selected all that he considered worth reading in the original, mostly concentrating on Meslier's attack on miracles, which forms only one section of the whole work, and published it under the title *Extrait des sentiments du Curé Meslier*.

The book was condemned, placed on the Index, and publicly burnt by order of the Paris Parlement; but this encouraged rather than restricted the circulation, for within six months a second edition of 5,000 copies was issued and many subsequent reprints appeared.

Meanwhile the 100 manuscript copies of the com-

plete work had disappeared, probably destroyed by fanatics, with the exception of one copy, which turned up in Holland in 1862, and was published by the Dutch Rationalists in 1864. So says Mr. Thompson. They have a copy of this published at Amsterdam (it is in French), at the British Museum, but I find they have another copy of it, also in French; the catalogue gives the date within brackets [1766] which indicates that the date is not printed in the work itself, but has been discovered by the cataloguer; there is no indication of the place of publication, which we can quite understand, as the work was condemned by Parlement. No translation of the work has ever been made into English, so far as I can ascertain; there is no translation in the British Museum. Mr. Thompson says that Holbach issued a selection called *Bons Sens du Curé Meslier*. This is an error a great many have fallen into, *Bon Sens* (Good Sense) is an excellent abridgement, distinguished for its clearness and precision, of Mirabaud's *System of Nature*, which, says Morley, "gathered up all the scattered explosives of the criticism of the century into one thundering engine of revolt and destruction."¹ Baron d'Holbach was the author of both works. He fathered the *System of Nature* upon Mirabaud, a perpetual secretary of the French Academy, who had been dead ten years. In like manner he made the dead Curé, Meslier, the author of *Bon Sens*. Holbach wrote under many names, it was a necessity in those days, if one wished to avoid the dungeon or the stake; of all the forty or fifty works attributed to Holbach, not one appeared under his own name during his life.

But to return to Meslier's *Testament*, of which Mr. Thompson gives a very good summary. The Preface consists of a denunciation of the government. He cries:—

Are you surprised, poor people, that you have so much evil and so much pain to lament in your lives? It is because you, and you alone, like the labourers in the parable, bear the burden and heat of the day; it is because you, and those like you, carry on your backs the whole load of the State—not only your kings and princes, your principal tyrants, but all the nobility too, all the clergy, all the monks, all the lawyers, all the soldiers, all the tax-gatherers, all the excise officers, and in fact all the idlers and useless people in the world.

Our painters and preachers, he goes on, represent devils as being utterly ugly, hideous and deformed: "They ought rather to represent them as resembling those fine nobles and gentlemen, those handsome dames and young ladies, whom you can see any day, so expensively dressed, so smartly turned out, so well curled and powdered and scented, sparkling with gold and silver and precious stones. These are your real he-devils and she-devils: they, and none else, are your arch-enemies, the authors of your greatest ills."

"In the eyes of nature," he writes, "all men are equal. They have all the same right to live and move upon the earth, to enjoy their natural liberty, and to share the produce of the ground, so long as they work usefully for the provision of what is necessary and beneficial for life." He denounces as an abuse: "the private ownership of the produce and riches of the soil. Instead of this, men ought to share and to enjoy them in common—all those, I mean, who live in the same place or the same district."

After this preface the work falls into eight parts, each part devoted to a separate "proof of the vanity and falseness of religions." To the modern reader, says Mr. Thompson, the whole book is a surprise.

¹ J. Morley: *Diderot*. Vol. 2, page 155.

That it should have been written by a curé who passed for orthodox "a generation before the Rationalist movement of the mid-eighteenth century; and that it should strike so at the roots of the whole social and religious system of its time—all this can hardly fail to make the *Testament* of Jean Meslier remarkable even in a remarkable century." "The peculiarity of his case was the completeness with which he had ceased to believe. There is no "penumbra" in his thought, no reservation in his denials; he has swung right round from orthodoxy through agnosticism to atheism."

Of the Christian miracles, he declares, even assuming their reality, they did no permanent good: "The first, finest and greatest of his miracles would have been to make all men wise and perfect in body and mind." That: "my-Christ-worshipping friends, is the first and finest, the most glorious and advantageous, the chief and most necessary miracle of all, that your so-called Christ ought to have done." He denounces the folly of Christians who believe "that their God the Father should have refused to make His peace with men otherwise than by the punishment and Death of His Divine Son!" What Christian dare "take no thought for the morrow," or rely upon the promise, "ask and ye shall obtain"? Has Faith ever "removed mountains"? He is offended by the saying that "the lust of the eye" is equivalent to adultery; by the command to "turn the other cheek," to "bear the cross," and to "resist not evil." "Did Don Quixote himself ever say anything more extravagant?"

As to the idea of God, this goes to the root of the whole matter. All the abuses arising through the alliance of Church and State are founded upon the belief in an omnipotent and perfect God; but this belief is the profoundest error of all. Meslier counters the argument of the supposed universal belief in God with his own experience of the common people. He finds everywhere, below the surface of religious conformity, an instinctive repugnance to religious belief, and declares: "The natural man feels a secret repugnance and hostility to it." "How could anything be created out of nothing?" he asks, "Might not Nature have existed from all eternity?" "How can anyone reconcile the belief in an almighty, wise, and good God with the present state of the world? If a father, who could rule his family, ruled it so; if a doctor, who could heal his patients, healed them so—what should we say of him? Or, if it is all men's fault, why does not God make His will clearly known?" As for the Soul, Meslier believes that soul and body are a single whole, growing, changing and dying together, and that there is no future life. In conclusion, Mr. Thompson observes: "There are no atheists nowadays,' one commonly hears. But does not this mean that the idea of God has so changed and widened its content that every believer in a 'Life-force,' in a 'power-that-on-the-whole-makes-for-good,' or indeed, in any kind of 'uplift' that he considers worth living for, can call himself a theist? Most of us, perhaps, still hold to the belief in immortality; but not with our minds, which cannot make any consistent or credible idea of it; only with our fears and our desires." And the *Testament* of Jean Meslier has done much to bring about this state of affairs.

W. MANN.

MAN A MACHINE.

The world is as fit for living things as living things are fit for it; the fitness of the environment is one part of a reciprocal relationship of which the fitness of the organism is the other.—*Joseph Needham.*

"The Gates of Altitude."

Far past the gates of altitude on the summit of Everest lie what remains of two heroic souls, immortal now with Henry Hudson, Captain Scott, and Sir John Franklin. There are heights on the mental plane and rigours as severe. The same spirit animated both. "It is a calumny on men," says Carlyle, "to say they are roused to action by ease, indulgence, hope of reward. Difficulty, abnegation, death, are the allurements that act upon the heart of man." Not Leopardi alone, not the great scholar only, but unlearned, unhistoric, common folk, if sane and thoughtful, must learn with the poet "To see all naked truth and to envisage circumstance all calm; that is the top of sovereignty." Amongst the many such the Leopardis are not the exception but the rule. The quality of pessimism varying with individual men and circumstances and, like "human nature," not the simple thing so many good people imagine.

SINCE I wrote and Mr. Repton replied about Leopardi readers of the *Freethinker* will have passed on to other things, even so, sic transit gloria mundi—confound this pessimism! Mr. Repton is tolerant, good-natured, almost sympathetic, but, as a molehill to a mountain, "Mount Blanc to Primrose Hill," just a little cheeky and jocose. Dante, our own John Milton and Shakespeare have been dismissed in the same way by facile scribes. The critics go, the constellations remain, even a Machiavelli. J. M. Robertson has on occasion countered this ominous comet of pessimism, necessarily in a larger, more philosophic way than Mr. Repton (who is, at most, no bigger than I). I would strongly recommend to friend Repton and others like-minded—hoping I do not flatter them—a parallel study of Leopardi and Robertson on the same subject—say one at least of the essays in J. M. Robertson's *Modern Humanists*; but wherein, it seems to me, the fine English critic falls a little short of a full grasp of the Italian pessimist. Progress, the growing good of the world, science and invention, have done much and may do more to make life happier. Leopardi was not blind to these and other aspects of human existence. He praised them sincerely, but the ordinary and confirmed pessimism, with a too magnanimous, yet strongly wilful nature, of a man I know has culminated in mere paralysis of will and left an apparently stooping, placative, invertebrate mind and body of what was once a man—and what a man! But such spirit is immortal, only hidden under the wreckage of time and change and fortune. Let lesser spirits beware of such when they rouse to action! But in spite of life-long illness, and only in the shadow of death; why, not even then; where was the paralysis of Leopardi's mind? . . . But on reading Mr. Repton's remarks on a profound and peerless spirit, again "the comedy overwhelms the tragedy." There is laughter in the world after all! One learns at last to tolerate all sorts of people. Mr. Repton would strangle him for saying it, but this implies exactly what the Master said it did. The great Italian never needed violent or sensational language to express his meaning; and that is always clear as noon, if revealing the darkness of the abyss. He saw beyond the so-called and much-hoped-for "perfection" of mankind, as he smiled that sad, wise smile (!) at the fury of calculations for the perfection of political systems, and the happiness of peoples, from Solon to our own day! "It may be, as Carlyle said, and countless others, even Mr. Repton, all corroborating Leopardi, that the people are "mostly fools"; and it is not the fools who are unhappy; so most people when they hear of Leopardi will decry him. The late "George Underwood," whom Mr. Repton knew well, and whose mantle William Repton may be supposed to wear—with a difference—or on whose shoulders it has chanced to fall, a world too wide—would, as others have, dealt in better spirit with my "Simplicities." A Sussex "rustic" has done better than all in a dear and beautiful letter, a pearl of price compared with the jocose journalese of the "critique" under review—"Of all the cants that are canted in this canting world, if the cant of hypocrisy be the worst, surely the cant of criticism

is the most tormenting." (Sterne.) But Mr. Repton merely "blathers" as would a thousand other London scribes on the same subject, as they do in the cant of religion. My Sussex rustic by his moonlit mill stream, admiring

The moon's rimpled face in the wave,
comes directly to the heart of the matter:—

"You, my dear sir," he writes, out of the unknown, "raise a great question in your article of December 25, 1927, namely: Is there a limit to truth-telling? For whether there should or should not be a limit, circumstances have practically forced me to put a severe restraint upon myself. To speak the truth, as I conceive it, would cause many of those dear to me great mental anguish. My truth would be to them but blasphemy and sin; unable to grasp my vision they would be rendered extremely unhappy and so I curb my tongue, and act a lie. But what you really mean is, I think, whether we should try and delude ourselves and drug our minds against plain facts. The latter course seems to me the way of a mental coward. How can a thoughtful mind be blind to the great fact of mortality? It is this fact that raises from commonness the meanest and most monotonous acts of our life . . . I cannot delude myself; and cling the closer to my loved ones as for ever recurs this thought of death . . . I rejoice in the beauty of a day in Spring, the resurrection of the earth. My pen cannot describe the beauty of such a day . . . Each season of the year brings fresh and changing beauties to a thoughtful mind. Yet the more lovely the day, the more am I filled with sadness. I must think of the time when I shall be swept away by the floods of time; when generations in their turn shall arise and go their destined way . . . Yet the fact of my individual annihilation is not always:—

A Lama brooding over life

And nearer brought with every breath:

sometimes, amid life's troubles, death has worn a friendly countenance . . ."

For the sake of brevity and confidence the full beauty of the original letter is a little lost. Another even younger man, a shining one, came to the pessimist's brink in his famous sonnet . . .

Then on the shores of the wide world
I stand alone and think,
Till love and fame to nothingness do shrink,

And another:—

Me who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of the earth.

And countless others. In short, to repudiate pessimism is to repudiate the best, at least the intensest, quality of poetry and philosophy. As our Sussex friend says: "It is this fact (mortality) that raises from commonness the meanest and most monotonous acts of our life." The author of *Materialism Re-stated* has suggested the same many times. And just by the way, I procured seven or eight copies of that work to circulate a good thing, even passing on my own copy. How was that for "mental health," even in a pessimist? In a further letter from the South of England—what rare spirits here and there in the ranks of Freethought!—the same friend refers to Mr. Repton's slating of Leopardi and his disciple:—

"I was rather surprised," he writes, "to notice in the week's *Freethinker*, the rather superior tone of William Repton's article. He writes: 'I want someone to help me to live, to square up to life.' Is Mr. Repton a child, then, that he needs someone to help him to live? Or is it the purpose of Leopardi to help him or anyone else to live? Are not rather Leopardi's writings the work of a man of genius interpreting life as he, with his keener, more penetrating vision, sees it? What has he, or any great writer, Shakespeare, for instance, to do with helping people to live? Is it their task to drape the naked figure of truth with the garments of illusion, or turn its dignified form into a scarecrow to arouse the laughter of fools? Again, to quote from the critic—'Those who are seeking something positive?' Positive! What could have been more positive to me than the ever-present pathos, tragedy, of life? . . .

Should we not seek first the riches of intellect, for in the things of the intellect I have an enduring wealth that cannot fail me whilst 'I am I.' But material riches

are uncertain and may fail me at any moment. What more positive doctrine could I possibly have had, can you tell me, my friend?

G. J. Holyoake writes *The Logic of Death*, and rounds it off completely with "lies down to pleasant dreams!" But the gentle Oliver said: "Philosophy triumphs over past and future evils, but present evils triumph over philosophy." Leopardi had simply shed all his illusions. William Repton retains most of his. Happy man! Our Sussex friend, evidently a trained reader, writer, and thinker, would seem to be dwelling nearer those mental Gates of Altitude than the hasty critic of Leopardian pessimism. These Gates once passed, there is no return. The heaven of the happy and the stupid lies far below. Still, Leopardi did admit that the Reptons of his day were the wiser men. Nor did he "say it with sneers," albeit with a gentle irony, as one would encourage a precocious child, yet with sad, prophetic reservations. The question still remains: How far, even in the pages of the *Freethinker*, should we admit for ourselves, or impart to others, our common-sense convictions about life?

ANDREW MILLAR.

Strange Tales.

THERE appears to be a lot of pother caused by the appearance of the new film, "King of Kings." Really, we are becoming too fastidious.

One has only to open the sacred volume and turn to Kings, where we may find any number of incidents admirably suited to the most ambitious efforts of Hollywood.

Take the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings for instance, and where will you find a more dramatic episode in all Charlie Chaplin's career? They say that truth is stranger than fiction, and, as this is God's own truth, vouched for by all the contemporary historians of the time, included in Holy Writ, used regularly by preachers of the Gospel as a means whereby souls may be saved, it may be well for us to ponder the story. It may be for our eternal welfare.

Elijah the Tishbite vaults rather suddenly into the limelight. Ahab was the reigning monarch in Israel at the time, and, if we may believe the record, was no better than he should have been. One cannot help wondering why these people should have such propensities for going astray. They had nothing to gain, and everything to lose. Over and over again they had unmistakable evidence that Jehovah was the one true God, and that Baal, Ashtoreth and the rest were mere imitation josses—Brummagem made—yet these fatuous people were always turning up, "And they did evil in the sight of the Lord." It must have been "original sin," or perhaps Jezebel was at the bottom.

Elijah had perfectly indubitable proof that his Maker had called him. The little incident with the widow and her bare cupboard, which equals in interest the larder attributed to Mother Hubbard, is sufficient to show the Lord was on his side every time. Fed by ravens, and able to resuscitate a corpse, Elijah felt himself the very man to pose as a weather-prophet. He was in charge of the bureau for three years. Palestine went "dry" during that period.

Jericho had just been built. It was in charge of one Segub—a name to conjure with—and Ahab, with his partiality for Baal and Jezebel would have liked Elijah to have gone there.

Instead, he arranged a meeting, and Ahab's first remark was: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" But Elijah was ready for him. He challenged 450 prophets of Baal to meet him on Mount Carmel.

Now this is where the cinema might prove useful and interesting. 450 to 1 is long odds. Elijah must have been pretty sure of his ground before venturing on that trial. What would happen if he failed? Supposing the fire did not come from heaven when he called! As the Scotsmen say, "It was an awfu' risk."

However it "came off." Not for nothing had the jackdaws ministered to him by the brook Cherith! Not for nothing had he helped the widow to gather two sticks! He had kept the floods back for three years,

and a card was up his sleeve regarding one of the bullocks.

Somehow Baal was off duty that day. Elijah taunted his prophets by asking them to call louder. They chorused in unison and out of it, cut themselves, and behaved generally like idiots, but to no purpose. Never a flash from the steely sky.

Then Elijah got to work. Drenching the altar with bucketsful of water, he prepared his bullock, and with becoming reverence called on Jehovah to display his power. The record does not say whether he gave the Lord a time-limit, but the next minute must have been tense.

It all came right in the end. In the simple words of scripture, "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench."

Everybody admitted the Lord had made a clean job of it.

It was a kind of "walk-over" for Elijah, and little remained for him to do. He very mercifully "put out of pain" all the prophets of Baal at the brook Kishon. Kishon ran red that day, but a lot of these prophets were already bled. Then he said to Ahab, "Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain."

After drawing fire from heaven it was now his duty to find rain. Seven times he looked for it from Mount Carmel observatory. Then, as his servant said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand," and, of course, the welcome rain fell in torrents.

As a fitting climax to the picture, I like to think of him after these exploits, when "the hand of the Lord was on him; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

ALAN TYNDAL.

A Song of the Deposited Prayer Book.

(With apologies to Gilbert and Sullivan.)

First chorus of wild men:—

A put-back-the-clock new book,
A bring-in-the-Jesuit book,
A plainly papistical, grossly sophistical,
Most anti-scriptural book.

A turn-us-all-out new book,
A down-with-the-Gospel book,
A give-in-to-mummery-idols-and-flummery,
Ruin to souls new book.

Second chorus of wild men:—

A bait-on-the-hook new book,
A thank-you-for-nothing new book,
A part-sentimental, part-oriental,
And part-made-in-Germany book.

A pickle-the-rod new book,
A put-us-in-quod new book,
A no-comprehensiveness, full of offensiveness,
Anti-devotional book.

Chorus of Bishops:—

Our noble deposited book,
Our complete (copyright) book,
Our most diplomatical, anti-fanatical,
Protestant-Catholic book.

Our twenty years' thought new book,
Our prayerfully-planned new book,
Our no-change-doctrinal, or quite semi-final,
Our richly enriched new book.

Our please-be-good-boys new book,
Our don't-make-a-noise new book,
Our why-can't-you-risk-a-bit, trust the
Episcopate,
Save-the-Establishment Book.

QUACK QUACK.

Correspondence.

ZENO'S PROBLEM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I wrote a letter to the *Freethinker* of January 8, 1928, as a protest against such books as *Towards the Answer*, which claim to be, and may be accepted by some as scientific. Of course, Mr. Boyd Freeman's or Zeno's trains, as the case may be, are not real trains. Mr. Boyd Freeman (January 15), calmly annihilates the "definite proportionate distance" between two trains. Does he mean a collision?

I mentioned Einstein, as he states that his theory is applicable to real things; Einstein's laws have universal validity.

How far can Mr. Boyd Freeman's mathematician travel in a mathematician's train. I cannot imagine him going very far.

Now as to télépathy. Everyone is anxious to know if such a thing exists. Does Mr. Boyd Freeman help? He advises me to visit several mediums successively. In his book, he states, "it is almost an invariable rule that close acquaintance is followed by scepticism" (page 45). And now "Sceptics, even if they refrain from sceptical speech . . . still cannot help their hidden scepticism from passing telepathically, it acts as a counter suggestion," and so "wrecks the show." The more one tries, the more sceptical one becomes, and the more one is sceptical the more mediums must one consult. Is this Mr. Freeman's paradox?

QUERULOUS.

RELIGION AND THE PRESS.

SIR,—The article in the *Freethinker*, dated February 5, by Mimnermus, on "The Pious Press Gang," recalls a paragraph written in the *Daily News* of January 17, by Robert Lynd, as follows:—

When the casket had been committed to the grave, "Lead Kindly Light" was sung, a hymn that seemed all the more moving because it was sung over the ashes of a man who looked back so longingly to the days when he was able to share its faith.

Surely an uncalled-for insult to the character and intellect of Hardy, who had grown out of the childish beliefs, still entertained by Robert Lynd.

A letter asking for Robert Lynd's authority for such a statement met with no response or publicity. Nor was a reply made to the question: "Would Robert Lynd like to know, that at his own funeral somebody would refer to him as 'a man who looked back longingly to the days when he was able to believe in Santa Claus'?"

A. E. HAMBROOK.

Obituary.

MR. RICHARD BARTLE JONES.

WE regret to report the death of Mr. Richard Bartle Jones, of Nantymoel, South Wales, which occurred on Thursday, January 26, in the sixtieth year of his age. Mr. Jones was a valiant Freethinker, and in spite of his isolation among Christians, he availed himself of every opportunity to promote the interests of the cause. Unaided, he thought himself free from superstition; and his wife and family, left free to choose their path, later followed his example. His fine personal character secured him the respect of the Christians amongst whom he lived, and in spite of his educational difficulties as a working miner, his considerable intellectual attainments exacted the admiration of his most scholarly acquaintances. Mr. Jones was laid to rest in Blaenogwr Cemetery, on Tuesday, January 31, when a Secular Burial Service was read by the General Secretary of the N.S.S. in the presence of four or five hundred people. Mr. J. Webber, well-known in local political circles, said a few words in personal tribute to his dead friend. That so many persons who did not share his religious opinions should

have stood by his graveside in the heavy rain, and, belying the expectations of the sexton and the police, have listened quietly to the first Secular Service they ever heard, is proof of the respect in which the deceased was held by those who knew his courage under the stress and pain of illness, the quiet nobility of his whole life. He leaves Freethought poorer by his death, and we tender to his bereaved wife and family our sincere sympathy.—F. M.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

ONE must give every credit to Father Vincent McNabb, that he, at least, is not afraid of meeting the lions—or are they really lambs?—in their own den. A priest of his reputation is generally a very busy man, and it must mean a great deal for him to give up a Sunday evening to a debate—even when the subject is such an interesting one as Free Will and Determinism. His opponent was Mr. T. F. Palmer, and with such redoubtable combatants in the field, a large audience gathered and a most interesting and informative discussion took place, in which, during the evening, other speakers joined.

Father McNabb took his stand mostly from the commonsense point of view—the view of the average man or woman of the poorer classes, as against a purely scientific disquisition on the strict and literal interpretation of the words and their meanings used in the debate. He was humorous and homely in his illustrations. Mr. Palmer kept the issue on more strictly scientific lines, which seemed to show that whatever “free will” was, there was precious little of it in evidence in our daily life. The subsequent discussion did not reveal a single “free willer” (strictly speaking) and it certainly was surprising no other Roman Catholic seconded his chief. The question that was left open—perhaps it can be settled in these pages—was whether St. Thomas Aquinas was or was not a Determinist?

To-night Mr. R. B. Kerr is giving his lecture “Is Progress a Reality?” in place of Mr. Whitehead, who will speak next week.—H.C.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH.

LAST Sunday, prior to the lecture, the chairman referred to the death of Mr. J. T. Lloyd, and paid tribute to his sterling qualities, and the great loss to the Society and Freethought generally.

Dr. Carmichael concluded his course of lectures on Materialism Re-stated. He dealt with the subject of Reality, and it was gratifying to note the lively interest shown by the audience. The Branch is very much indebted to Dr. Carmichael for his very capable and interesting explanation of the points raised in Mr. Cohen's book.

To-day, in default of a lecture unfortunately cancelled, there will be a discussion on Freethought Topics, and it is hoped that all who are specially interested in particular aspects of Freethought, will share some of their views with us to-night.—A.J.

PIONEER LEAFLETS

WHAT WILL YOU PUT IN ITS PLACE? By CHAPMAN COHEN.

WHAT IS THE USE OF THE CLERGY? By CHAPMAN COHEN.

PECULIAR CHRISTIANS. By CHAPMAN COHEN.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE. By A. D. McLAREN.

DOES GOD CARE? By W. MANN.

DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH?

Price 1/6 per 100, postage 3d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by the first post on Tuesday and be marked “Lecture Notice,” if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (Emerson Club, 1 Little George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in French, by Monsieur Thiery, on “Rabelais.” All are invited.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of North End Road, opposite Walham Green Church): Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. F. Bryant and F. Moister.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. R. B. Kerr—“Is Progress a Reality?”

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. P. J. Hand—“Can God be known through the exercise of Reason alone?”

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Harry Snell, M.P.—“The Place of Education in Personal and Social Development.”

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, Mr. W. Haslam Mills—“Some Changes in the Public Life of England.”

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34, George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Mr. Botting—“The Story of Primitive Man.” Thursday, 7.30 p.m., Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road. Admission 1s.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Jackson (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Messrs. Shaller and Hart. Freethought Meetings every Wednesday and Friday in Hyde Park at 7.30. Various lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools): 6.30, Mr. G. Whitehead—“Some Important Lessons from History.”

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Harry Watson—“As I was Saying.” Saturday, February 18, a Social and Dance will be held in the D. & F. Cafe, Glasgow Cross. High Tea will be served at 7 p.m. Tickets: Adults, 2s. 6d.; Juveniles, 1s. 3d. Tickets can be had from the Bookstall at the Sunday Meeting. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 p.m., in the Hall, at 83 Ingram Street.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone gate): 6.30, H. W. Nevinson—“England.”

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30—Discussion on Freethought Topics.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): E. Egerton Stafford (Liverpool)—3.0, “Atheism”; 6.30, “Christ in China.” Questions and Discussion.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (4 Swilly Road Plymouth): Tuesday, February 14, at 7.0 p.m. Members' Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Meetings held in the Bull Ring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 7 p.m.

BOARD-RESIDENCE in nice road. Near City, Victoria and London Bridge trains. Anerley (Penge and Crystal Palace) districts. Quiet home, good table. Box 652, Freethinker, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1½d. stamp to:—
J. R. HOLMES, East Hannay, Wantage, Berks.
(Established nearly Forty Years.)

After Labour

of preparing patterns, prices, price lists and the other paraphernalia connected with making it easy and convenient for you to buy from advertisers in the *Freethinker*, it is pleasant to think that we can rely upon you for the only recompense we seek, which is, in the first place, that you will carefully read the following prices.



SUPERB EBORAC SUITINGS

Readymade Suits—
Men's, 69s.; Youths' from 51s.;
Boys' from 31s.

Suits to Special Measures—
Men's, 77s.; Youths' from 58s.;
Boys' from 34s.

FAMED B SERGES

Readymade Suits—
Men's from 63s.; Youth's from 48s.;
Boys' from 28s.

Suits to Special Measures—
Men's from 71s.; Youths' from 52s.
Boys' from 31s.

Very attractive these prices, are they not? What you get for your money is still more so. Judge for yourself from the patterns we shall send you upon receipt of your postcard. Even then, of course, you can know the high grade of our workmanship only by wearing our clothes. However, the next thing is showing you patterns. Please write for them to-day.

Something Restful

there is in the thought that we can offer the goods we sell of every kind and nature to fellow readers of the *Freethinker*, fellow members of the N.S.S., and fellow workers for the welfare and the advancement of the "best of causes." In the whole world there is no better market to sell in—NOR a more desirable one to buy in.

PYJAMAS

Block and Fancy Stripe Designs

	Per suit s. d.
BUXTON Twill Ceylonette	10 6
P225 Union Flannel	12 0
PENARTH " "	15 0
LOWESTOFT " "	18 0
PENSHURST Fine Twill	
Ceylon - - -	18 0
PYCHLEY Fine Union	
Flannel - - -	21 0

All of above carefully selected for present wear, and all by one of the very best makers. Give chest measurement when ordering. Send cash with order—we pay postages. Goods exchanged, or money refunded, if not satisfactory.



MACCONNELL & MABE, Ltd., New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

HALDEMAN-JULIUS

LITTLE BLUE BOOKS by JOSEPH McCABE

LIST OF 48 TITLES:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Debate on Spiritualism. Conan Doyle and Do We Need Religion? [Joseph McCabe].
The Absurdities of Christian Science.
Myths of Religious Statistics.
Religion's Failure to Combat Crime.
My Twelve Years in a Monastery.
The Future of Religion.
The Revolt against Religion.
The Origin of Religion.
The World's Great Religions.
The Myth of Immortality.
The Futility of Belief in God.
The Human Origin of Morals.
The Forgery of the Old Testament.
Morals in Ancient Babylon.
Religion and Morals in Ancient Egypt.
Life and Morals in Greece and Rome.
Phallic Elements in Religion.
Did Jesus Ever Live?
The Sources of Christian Morality.
Pagan Christs.
The Myth of the Resurrection.
Legends of Saints and Martyrs.
How Christianity "Triumphed." | The Evolution of Christian Doctrine.
The Degradation of Woman.
Christianity and Slavery.
The Church and the School.
The Dark Ages.
New Light on Witchcraft.
The Horrors of the Inquisition.
Medieval Art and the Church.
The Moorish Civilisation in Spain.
The Renaissance: A European Awakening.
The Reformation and Protestant Reaction.
The Truth about Galileo and Medieval Science.
The Jesuits: Religious Rogues.
The Churches and Modern Progress.
Seven Infidel U.S. Presidents.
Thomas Paine's Revolt against the Bible.
The Conflict between Science and Religion.
Robert G. Ingersoll: Benevolent Agnostic.
Christianity and Philanthropy.
Religion in the Great Poets.
The Triumph of Materialism.
The Beliefs of Scientists.
The Failure of Christian Missions.
The Lies of Religious Literature. |
|---|--|

ONLY 3d. EACH. Post free 3½d.

Complete Set 12/6. Post free.

Specimen copy on application (with 1½d. stamp) to—

Mr. G. K. HOLLIDAY, 82 ERIDGE ROAD, THORNTON HEATH, Surrey.

TWO FREETHINKING BOOKS by C. R. BOYD FREEMAN

BY THOR, NO!

Usual Price 6/- : Special price 3/-
Postage 3d.

TOWARDS THE ANSWER.

Usual price 4/6 : Special price 2/3
Postage 2d.

Proceeds of Sales will be given to the "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

A Book with a Purpose.

Critical Aphorisms

COLLECTED BY

J. A. FALLOWS, M.A.

A BOOK of brief pithy sayings, which give in a few lines what so often takes pages to tell. The essence of what virile thinkers of many ages have to say on life, while avoiding sugary commonplaces and stale platitudes. There is material for an essay on every page, and a thought provoker in every paragraph.

Price One Shilling.

Postage 1d. extra.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

MORE BARGAINS IN BOOKS!!

TABOO AND GENETICS

A Study of the Biological, Sociological, and Psychological Foundation of the Family; a Treatise showing the previous Unscientific Treatment of the Sex Problem in Social Relationships.

BY

M. M. KNIGHT, Ph.D.

IVA LOWTHER PETERS, Ph.D. AND

PHYLLIS BLANCHARD, Ph.D.

Published 10s. 6d. PRICE 4s. Postage 5½d.

WITHIN THE ATOM

A popular outline of our present knowledge of physics.

By JOHN MILLS

Published at 6/-. Price 3/-. Postage 4½d.

The Psychology of Social Life

A Materialistic study. An important and suggestive treatise.

By CHARLES PLATT, M.D., PH.D.

Published at 12/6. Price 4/6. Postage 5½d.

OUR FEAR COMPLEXES

An important psychological study.

By E. H. WILLIAMS & E. B. HOAG

Published at 7/6. Price 3/-. Postage 4½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

Materialism Re-stated

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

A CLEAR and concise statement of one of the most important issues in the history of science and philosophy. In view of the mis-statements and mis-representations of Materialism, and the current controversy on the bearings of scientific teaching on religious doctrines, there is great need for a work of this description. It bids fair to take its place with the same author's *Determinism or Free Will?*

Contains Chapters on:

A QUESTION OF PREJUDICE—SOME CRITICS OF MATERIALISM—MATERIALISM IN HISTORY—WHAT IS MATERIALISM?—SCIENCE AND PSEUDO-SCIENCE—ON CAUSE AND EFFECT—THE PROBLEM OF PERSONALITY.

Cloth bound, price 2/3. Postage 2½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

New Work by CHAPMAN COHEN

Essays in Freethinking

(SECOND SERIES)

Contents:

RELIGION AND OPINION—A MARTYR OF SCIENCE—RELIGION AND SEX—THE HAPPY ATHEIST—VULGAR FREETHINKERS—RELIGION AND THE STAGE—THE BENEFITS OF HUMOUR—THE CLERGY AND PARLIAMENT—ON FINDING GOD—VICE AND VIRTUE—TRUTH WILL OUT—THE GOSPEL OF PAIN—WAR AND WAR MEMORIALS—CHRISTIAN PESSIMISM—GOD'S WILL—WHY WE LAUGH—Etc., Etc.

Cloth Gilt, 2/6

Postage 2½d.

Vols. I and II of "Essays in Freethinking" will be sent post free for 5/-.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.