

The
FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Vol. XLIX.—No. 12

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 1929

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>One of Our Critics.—The Editor</i> - - - -	- 177
<i>The Faith of a Flapper.—Mimmermus</i> - - - -	- 179
<i>Religious Fanaticism.—W. Mann</i> - - - -	- 180
<i>Burns in a New Role.—Joseph Bryce</i> - - - -	- 181
<i>"Do the Dead Live?"—E. Egerton Stafford</i> - - - -	- 186
<i>A Recently Extinct Race.—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - -	- 187
<i>Address Delivered at the Cremation of Daisy Price</i> - - - -	- 188
<i>Books and Life.—William Repton</i> - - - -	- 189

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

Views and Opinions.

One of Our Critics.

In the course of a year I receive shoals of congratulatory letters concerning the *Freethinker*, very few of which I publish, although I appreciate them fully. I more often publish those that fall foul of the paper, provided they are couched in decent language, and contain a complaint that has a show of reason. Mere abuse goes into the W.P.B. Some of it is quite amusing, but hardly worth printing. As a break in the complimentary letters, I received one the other day in which the writer expressed his intention of breaking with the *Freethinker*, deeply anxious as he is for the cause of "Rationalism." He finds some parts of the *Freethinker* "dignified, powerful, fiery"; but there are other parts that fill him with disgust, so much so that he would not mind how soon the *Freethinker* "fizzled out altogether." A "finicky" kind of a gentleman, evidently, otherwise he might overlook the parts of the *Freethinker* that "fill him with disgust," for the sake of the other parts that are "powerful, dignified and fiery," and with which he professes himself delighted. One cannot hope to please a man who does not care how soon a paper dies because there are some parts he does not like. He might as well refuse to dine because there is one course which he does not care for.

Here is his indictment:—

What do your people mean by "Christian," that you charge at it as often as you wag it in front of your nose (which you do as often as possible) like a bull at a red rag. You seem to have some sort of a notion that a "Christian" is a more definite and (less) variable thing than eggs or butter. I suppose you would allow that there might be good eggs or butter, and bad; but all Christians are—anything abusive you care to think. Candidly, Sir, it's silly, disgustingly silly. Christianity means many vague things, and if you do not know that many of these vague things are noble, and admitted even by the N.S.S. to be worthy ideals for man, you are simply ignorant . . . No man in his senses would maintain that a conscientious attempt to live a Christian life

(vague as that is) would make a human being a brute. Plenty of vile things have been done by Christians; they have been done in spite of Christianity, because savage human nature was too strong for gentle civilized ideals . . . The impression the *Freethinker* gives me on this question of "Christians" and "Jesus," is that it is as hopelessly stupid, muddle-headed, and bigoted as the worst Christian I have ever met.

Now there is the head and front of our offending set forth with all due circumstance; and as the writer does not mince matters, I trust he will not mind my saying—I can assure him in all kindness and without the least taint of temper—that if I were to adjudicate in a competition for ignorance of history and of Christianity, of human nature and of social evolution, I should without hesitation award him first prize without reading the other essays. He evidently does not know what Christianity is; he does not know what Freethought is; he does not understand the nature of social development; and in spite of his professed love for "Rationalism," he does not appreciate the nature of the fight we are waging. For his benefit, and for the benefit of those who are like-minded, I will prove what I have said.

* * *

What is Christianity?

To be quite clear, I begin by saying categorically that I deny altogether that a real Christian is a good man, affirming on the contrary that good men are good in proportion as they are bad Christians. I deny that most of the vile things done by Christians have been done in spite of their Christianity, but affirm that they have usually been done because of their Christianity. I deny that there are any beautiful things taught by Christianity, as such, although I do admit that Christianity has been compelled to teach many decent things from sheer pressure of civilized life. And I say that the man who does not see that Christianity ought to be fought—whether he has the courage or the inclination to fight it himself or not—ought to join a Church at once. He is of small use anywhere else.

My critic sees many decent men and women who call themselves Christian, and he apparently accepts their explanation that they are decent because they believe in Christianity. That is very, very shallow. It might strike him, on reflection, that with every Christian there is usually a man or a woman in the neighbourhood, and if their goodness is a product of their Christian belief, what is due to their being men and women? Surely manhood and womanhood are something more than mere pegs on which to drape Christian virtues. Again, there are many good things taught by Christianity, or by the Christian Church, and we are asked to admire them as Christian products. But, once more, Christianity and the Christian Church had to exist among men

and women living in society, and is therefore subject, to some extent, to the same forces that play upon and mould human nature. A religion that runs counter to the conditions that make for the preservation of society must either modify its teaching, or the society in which, and on which, it lives will die out. No parasite can afford to kill its host. If my critic will look up some history of Christianity and note what happened to the teaching of celibacy, the end of the world, infant damnation, eternal hell, etc., he will see that either these things had to be modified or society would have been dissolved. On the positive side, also, a religion that does not incorporate in itself some of the more elementary social and necessary virtues, will soon find itself neglected. Again, if the writer of the above letter will note how Christians have over and over again advocated reforms and ideas, after having strenuously opposed them, he will find plenty of illustrations. So the real basis for these things is not Christianity, it is not the Church, it is human society. The parasite must accommodate itself to its host, even though it may be feeding upon its life blood. I am making the thing as simple as possible because, to use my critic's language, he appears to be on this topic "simply ignorant," and I would deal with ignorance as tenderly as possible.

* * *

What Christianity Did.

Yet once again. Plenty of vile things have been done by Christians, and plenty of good ones; and it would be unscientific, having declared that the good things were due to human nature working through Christianity, not to admit that the bad things spring from the same source. When our critic comes to know something of Freethought he will know that we do not credit Christianity with creating either vice or virtue. Both are social products. What we charge Christianity with is distorting the sense of right and wrong, labelling vices as virtues, and virtues as vices, and in the name of religion giving evil practices a moral justification. Christianity did not create intolerance, but it taught men that it was a moral and religious duty to suppress the heretic. It did not create the obscene virtue of celibacy, but, building on the example of Jesus, it made it the supreme virtue. It did not create lying, but it did make lying in the interests of religion a permissible, even a desirable quality. Want of space makes me limit the list. But I want to point out that these things did not develop because "savage human nature was too strong for gentle civilized ideals," they grew weaker because civilized human nature was too strong for Christian teaching.

What is a genuine Christian life? Judging from my critic, one would take it as the embodiment of all the virtues. But if we are to take the New Testament as a guide it means a belief in all kinds of supernaturalism; it means turning one cheek when the other is smitten, taking no thought for the morrow, trusting to faith to cure disease, belief in a heaven and a hell; with a general trust in God to do for us what he does for the birds of the air, not recognizing that the birds of the air are killed by the thousand because God really does not look after them. It is admitted that these alleged beautiful aspects of Christianity are vague; I would add, so vague that one can make them what one pleases, from burning a heretic to feeding the hungry.

* * *

The Lion and the Lamb.

Apparently my critic believes that if the *Freethinker* ceases to say hard things about Christianity,

ceases to point out its faults, or to dwell upon its historic sins, its actual wrong-doing to-day, and enlarges on the mythical beauty of certain aspects of Christianity, and faces the world with a mouthful of moral platitudes that were hoary with age before Christianity was heard of, we shall bring Christians over in crowds. Oh, the simplicity of it! There is nothing the Churches would like better than to find the *Freethinker* dwelling upon the beauties of Christianity—that are not there—and upon the idealism of Jesus, which is purely imaginary. Of all the stupidities one could hold, that of believing the world will be saved by the mouthing of moral platitudes is about the silliest. Herbert Spencer says sarcastically that having noted that two thousand years of preaching morality from the pulpit has failed to save the world, let us try now preaching it from the platform. And he rightly gives it as an example of our unfitness for the understanding of social science. Of course we dwell upon the evils of Christianity. With the whole press afraid to do so, with an army of parsons systematically lying on behalf of this creed, with authors afraid to tell the truth about the influence of Christianity in history, is it too much to have one journal in the whole of Britain that keeps these neglected truths in front of the people? Seventy thousand preachers, with countless papers, are continuously singing the excellencies of Christianity, and we are asked to join in the chorus and so bring all Christians over to our side. I wonder whether this gentleman has ever read the story of a young lady of Riga who went out with a tiger?

But is the *Freethinker* always dwelling upon the evils of Christianity, and nothing else? That, to borrow a phrase from Richard Jeffries, is an interested superstition. The *Freethinker* has existed for forty-eight years. It is the oldest Freethinking paper in Europe. During its history, it has done more damage to Christianity than any other periodical that has ever existed. It has been plain in speech and uncompromising in its advocacy. Its enemies, unable to meet its attack, fell back upon the false and foolish retort that it was coarse, destructive, and unscholarly. This came not merely from Christians, but from those "respectable" and timid Freethinkers who thought far more of gaining the good word of a Christian than of the Cause in which they professed to believe. But let anyone look back upon those forty-eight volumes of the *Freethinker*, and say if any Freethinking or other paper has ever surpassed it in excellence or in the positive and genuinely scholarly character of its articles. It has never made a mere parade of learning. That class of writer was never welcomed in its columns. It has worked for a scientific understanding of religion, of ethics, and of man. But it has been plain and direct. Thomas Paine would have been forgiven writing the *Age of Reason* if it had been in Latin—or in an English that was about as understandable as Greek to the man in the street, and published at a guinea. The *Freethinker* would have been forgiven if it had confused its readers with a pretended scholarship, and thought more of gaining a compliment from Christians than it did of exposing the hollowness of their creed. There is no journal that has been less publicly recognized in the Christian world than the *Freethinker*, and few have exercised a deeper influence for a genuine humanization of life. So I am afraid we must risk the loss of a subscriber and just carry on.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

On all occasions it is well to be a little more than tolerant, especially when a wiser and better man than ourselves thinks differently from us.—*Landor*.

The Faith of a Flapper.

"Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be Atheist."—Coleridge.

GENERATIONS ago, Sir Thomas Browne, a learned physician, wrote *Religio Medici*, a book which survives on account of the author's felicities of language. In more recent times Richard Le Gallienne published his *Religion of a Literary Man*, another work in which jewelled diction atoned for its author's theological shortcomings. Now, at long last, Miss Ursula Bloom, a budding novelist, rushes into print with an article entitled "Why I Believe in God," published in *Britannia*, March 1 last.

Miss Bloom has numerous qualifications for this confession of faith. She is so very young that she gives one the impression of a bright young thing, born in a ginger-beer bottle, who has never looked over the edge. However, she possesses sufficient imagination to write stories which her publisher describes as brilliant, and she has had the inestimable experience of being brought up by the author of *The Sorrows of Satan*, a work of art which provoked a naughty French critic to describe it as "a dictionary with the diarrhoea." With these special qualifications, Miss Bloom should be capable of almost anything, because her courage appears to be in inverse ratio to her knowledge. Indeed, Miss Bloom's courage almost entitles her to the Victoria Cross, an honour hitherto reserved for mere men for conspicuous bravery on the field of battle.

Aggressive from the start, Miss Bloom commences her apologia with the words: "I believe in God because I am conscious of His presence." You see, the lady has "found God"; or, perhaps, "God" has found the lady. Maybe, they have found each other. And the mutual recognition of two such distinguished personalities is an event of newspaper importance. But before this touching introduction has faded out on the film, the young novelist startles her audience with the caption: "We are all born with the god instinct."

Now, how does our young friend know this? There are about fifteen hundred millions of human beings alive at present, without counting the majority who have ceased to live. Miss Bloom probably knows about fifty people, a dozen intimately, and the rest casually. I don't suppose that she was nursemaid even to the fifty folks. But Miss Bloom is adamant. Folks are born religious, and there's an end of it. It reminds one of Macaulay's penny-plain and twopence-coloured manner, which provoked one fellow-writer to respond: "I wish I were as cocksure of one thing, as Tom Macaulay is of everything."

However, long-suffering Freethinkers must take Miss Bloom as she is. Here are her reasons for her belief:—

"I believe in God because of the power of prayer. I have prayed and my demands have been granted to me. They were the wrong demands, and they have been given me but always in a shroud."

This grows more and more interesting. The Christian deity has often been referred to as "the Man of Sorrows," but never as a jester, yet Miss Bloom suggests that she petitioned the Throne of Grace, obtained what she wanted, and found there was "a catch in it." Her robust belief recalls the story of the old countrywoman who was told by the vicar that she ought to be very thankful to Providence for the blessings of a long life. "So I am!" replied the old woman, "but He does take it out of me in rheumatics." Miss Bloom appears to be in

the same unhappy position of getting so much more than she bargained for. It does not disturb her faith, which is as sturdy as that of the coloured Christians of Carolina, U.S.A.

Such filmy-eyed innocence is rarer in England, but Miss Bloom is nothing if not unsophisticated. For example, she has never heard of Freethinkers and Freethought, and, presumably, has never come in contact with the pamphlets and lecturers of the Christian Evidence Society. It is extraordinary, for she is said to be the adopted daughter of Marie Corelli, who wrote a novel called *The Mighty Atom*, in which naughty materialists were treated with high-sniffing contempt and derision. Evidently, her foster-mother's books are not the only ones she has overlooked in her desire for knowledge and the faith to move mountains and publishers.

Hearken to the stern notes of young Miss Bloom.

"I have yet to meet an Atheist. It is a phase people, especially young people, adopt, but it is seldom in their hearts. In my opinion the Atheist is not."

Atheists are a much-maligned race. Tens of thousands of the clergy class them below the worst murderers in criminality, and exhaust the language of vituperation in describing them. Then, a flighty young person such as Miss Bloom declares definitely: "I believe there ain't no sich persons." It only serves to show, beyond cavil and dispute, what a respectable and restricted circle our young friend moves in.

Of course, Miss Bloom, being a brilliant novelist, and hoping, doubtless, one day to surpass her foster-mother in popularity, must wear her "rue with a difference." She says:—

"The Bible does not bias me. I accept its mythical legends as very beautiful fairy tales . . . I have no creed. I have never found a creed."

Notice the preponderance of "I's," like "quills upon the fretful porcupine." It all "all my I." Indeed, there is little likelihood of much "bias" coming from the Christian Bible, for Miss Bloom knows so little of it, although she professes to "accept its mythical legends as very beautiful fairy tales." Not interesting, but "very beautiful" fairy tales, mark you. And these stories include accounts of the massacre of the innocents; the ten plagues of Egypt; the drowning of the entire world, and the damnation of the human race. If Miss Bloom regards such things as being "very beautiful," to what heights of hysterical enthusiasm would a perusal of "The Newgate Calendar" lead her. It looks as if a young person may be a brilliant novelist, with hopes of being a "best-seller," and not know the difference between beauty and barbarism, beauty and bestiality.

Even the greenest and youngest of us cannot know everything. Miss Bloom, who has sufficient religion to insult Freethinkers, but not enough to join a church, is astonished at the quarrels and dissensions of pious people. She cannot understand why Roman Catholics look sideways at Protestants, and why Christadelphians assume superior airs in the presence of Muggletonians. It pains her to observe that Hindoos should "knife" Mohammedans, and that members of the Greek Church should "picket" the bagmen of the Bible Societies. She thinks, in the innocence of her young mind, that they all worship the same deity, and that they should all kiss and be friends.

When Miss Bloom grows up, if she ever does such a cruel thing, she will find out that there are many bibles, many religions, and gods past the counting. Every religion has an organized system of priestcraft, and the reason why priests hate one another

is precisely the reason why rival tradesmen dislike one another.

There is a whole world of difference between the Freethinker, who labours for rational progress, and the innocent young lady-writer who turns pious for half an hour, to bolster up the delusions of faith. Christians everywhere are surrounded by the waters of Rationalism, and stand a bad chance of drowning. And the matter will not be unduly prolonged because a young person essays the part of Peter Pan's sister, and seeks to sweep back the Atlantic with a spade and pail.

MIMNERMUS.

Religious Fanaticism.

(Concluded from page 165.)

MANY of these early American sects were highly excitable and unbalanced, and naturally so, from the very nature of their teachings. Many of them believed that the second coming of Christ was close at hand, and might happen at any moment, which induced an excited and high-strung nervous tension easily panic-stricken and liable to be stampeded.

Then came the religious revivals that periodically swept over the country like prairie fires. That started by Jonathan Edwards—the stern preacher of the reality of eternal punishment in its most terrifying form—between 1735 and 1740, was one of the first. In 1801 a frenzied revival broke out in Kentucky:—

Camp meetings were held in the woods, to which people flocked by hundreds, and even thousands; women and small children fell down in convulsions, foaming at the mouth and uttering strange cries under the influence of their excitement. "They lie as though they were dead for some time, without pulse or breath . . .," wrote an eye-witness. "To prevent their being trodden underfoot by the multitude, they are collected together and laid out in order in two squares of the meeting house, where, like so many dead corpses, they cover a considerable part of the floor . . . No sex or colour, class or description were exempt from the pervading influence of the Spirit; even from the age of eight months to sixty years . . . Groanings, shoutings and speaking with tongues were constant occurrences, and the preachers would at times creep along the ground, crying out that they were 'the old serpent who had tempted Eve,' and exhorting their hearers to 'agonize' and be saved. Amid all this turmoil the people of the lonely country places found some of the emotional outlet, and even some of the intellectual interest which they lacked in the ordinary course of their lives, and they 'agonized' and 'repented' with a will."—(Ray Strachey: *Religious Fanaticism*. p. 50.)

This was followed, in 1813, by the Finney Revival, which, says the same author, "swept over state after state, sowing strange seeds; and it lasted nearly four years. The districts which were affected came to be known as 'the burnt districts,' and the people who lived in them passed their days in a state of constant emotional excitement." (p. 54.)

Spasmodic revivals went on all over the States during the next thirty years; the most famous being that of Nettleton's Revival of 1817. Later on, Moody and Sankey, and Torrey and Alexander, operated both here and in the States. The latest in the line of succession is the amiable Mrs. Aimée McPherson, the "evangelist with the sex appeal," whose attempt to evangelize London, last year, was such a conspicuous failure; even the Press, so servile to religious sentiment, admitted it. The "sex appeal," is a poor substitute for the terror of hell-fire, which has always been the driving force behind every successful revival.

We have said that Mrs. Ray Strachey's book, *Religious Fanaticism*, helps to explain the present strength of Fundamentalism in the United States; and the sudden rise and rapid progress of Spiritualism in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Fundamentalists, as we have seen, are the lineal descendants of the puritan early settlers, the much vaunted "Pilgrim Fathers," whose antiquated beliefs have been preserved and revived by ever recurring revivals.

The rise of Spiritualism, however, had a different origin. Of course, a movement like Spiritualism does not spring up suddenly, without preparation, any more than does a religion, or a Revolution. These movements are not made, they grow. They crystallize out of previous beliefs, and the soil has been well prepared to receive the seed when it arrives.

The beginning of modern Spiritualism is traced by all historians, on both sides of the question, to the spirit-rappings attributed to the Fox sisters in America, in the middle of the nineteenth century. But long before this, as we have seen, there had arrived many curious sects, other than the puritans, from other countries, mostly German and Scandinavian.

Many of the founders of sects professed to have been in communication with spiritual beings, and to have received, in a state of trance, revelations from the other world, and familiarized the people with the idea of the possibility of communicating with spirits. The Shakers and Swedenborgians played a large part in this preparation. The Swedenborgians were a small sect attracting little attention, and confined chiefly to Scandinavians, until Andrew Jackson Davies, the "Poughkeepsie Seer," brought it into prominence. He claimed to have received revelations from the Spirit World, during a state of trance, which he published in four huge volumes, under the title of *The Great Harmonia*, which was published, "with a great flourish of trumpets," says Mrs. Strachey, in 1847. The special public who had been excited by the previous movements was still in a state of eager uncertainty about the truth: "*The Great Harmonia*, therefore, had an immense success, and its author was hailed as the greatest writer in America, and the most inspired teacher of all time. Davis, a little unsettled by so much praise, kept his inspiration moving. He speedily 'outgrew' his master, and plunged off, unaided, into the realm of Spiritualism, where he finally foundered and sank." (p. 90.) The same writer continues:—

The impetus which Spiritualism received from this mountebank prophet by no means passed away with his personal influence. All over the countryside simple people began to see ghosts, and mediums of every kind made their appearance. The famous Fox sisters, Kate and Maggie, inaugurated the era of "rappings" at Rochester in 1850 . . . Conjurers, mesmerists, and possessors of second sight, sprang up on every hand, and the practice of necromancy returned. The age-old longing of mankind to penetrate the mystery of death, set the feet of the people in strange ways, and credulity slipped over the bounds of reason, and opened the gates to madness and imposture of every kind. Nothing checked the mania where once it had found a place. Every kind of ingenious sophistry was invoked to explain away discrepancies and failures . . . Automatic writing produced a great crop of literature; and table-turning, mysterious touches in the darkness, angelic visitations, and plain old-fashioned ghosts appear on every side. (p. 91.)

And there had been outbreaks of Spiritualism even before this, for: "It is interesting to notice that an outbreak of Spiritualism among the Shakers had preceded the Swedenborgian approach by several years. Between 1837 and 1844—that is to say, at the time

when the Fourierite Movement was beginning—the Shakers were attacked by a horde of spirits who tried to find expression through their mouths. These excellent and simple people firmly believed that the spirits were real." (p. 92.)

Thus both Spiritualism and Fundamentalism are children of the same mother—Christianity. Let us hope they are the last.

W. MANN.

Burns in a New Role.

IN a short prize essay on "Thomas Hardy, his philosophy and creed," recently published in a quarterly review, the essayist says that "Hardy was not even in the most liberal sense of the word a Christian." The statement seems to be made with a kind of wistful regret that the Christian mantle could not be used to cloak the errors of his heterodoxy. The author has also to painfully record that he had "no belief in a just, and omnipotent ruler of the universe"; and quotes Hardy as writing in his diary: "I have been looking for God fifty years, and I think that if He had existed I should have found Him." Still, this lady writer might have remembered that to the Christian apologist all things are possible. Many theological rebels, who have roamed the hills of Freethought all their lifetime, have, at last, had their dead bodies dragged into the Christian camp. The proper thing to do, if "the most liberal sense of the word" proves an obstacle, is to ignore all definitions, and substitute some other sense—or nonsense—that is sufficiently vague, not only to include the reverent agnostic, but the militant Freethinker as well. The latest victim of the practice of body-snatching is Robert Burns, the immortal bard of Scotland, who is now claimed to have been a "deeply religious man."

* * *

A new feature in our local evening paper is an "Epilogue," or sermonette, published every Saturday night, for the benefit of the religious section of its readers. It is set out in rather attractive style and varied type, and is mostly interesting on account of the things it doesn't say.

Some little time ago, the subject was "Burns' Religion," and, of course, it was necessary to make it appear that the bard was a very religious person. One of the things that had to be admitted was, that Burns had no earthly use for "the God that was preached from the pulpits of Ayrshire a century and a half ago." It was this God, we are told, and his ghastly hell, that sent Cowper (and countless others) to the asylum. Burns, however, managed to keep out of the asylum, and retain his sanity, by refusing allegiance to such an ogre. Still, notwithstanding Burns' neglect of public worship and the means of grace, this religious instructor claims that he was a "deeply religious man." It is true, of course, that he was a bit unfortunate in his many love affairs, and that most of his biting sarcasms were directed against the Church and its doctrines, but, at bottom, he was a deeply religious man.

It is known that some who have gone to church to scoff, have remained to pray; but Burns, if he ever went to pray, certainly came away to scoff. But, for a' that, he was a deeply religious man!

If the most liberal sense of the word Christian was not wide enough to include Thomas Hardy, still less, we think, can it be claimed to admit Robert Burns. But this does not deter our apologist. "Burns was a humanist through and through"—and therefore a deeply religious person, and a Christian. On this basis of humanism, perhaps, after all, we may be entitled to add Hardy and others to the list. In

his *Pioneer Humanists*, J. M. Robertson includes the name of Edward Gibbon; but perhaps it would be asking too much of this newspaper writer to claim Gibbon as a Christian.

Inferentially, we are told that the God who reigned supreme in Burns' day, is happily now no more; He is numbered among the host of dead gods whose bones lie strewn along the pathway of human history. He was omnipotent and all-powerful while he reigned, but in a practically single-handed combat, Burns killed him. This is rather a significant admission, for this reason. The Christian believer has always clung stubbornly to the belief that his God is unchangeable, and has existed from all eternity. The symbol of the "everlasting hills" was to him the assurance that God was the same yesterday, today, and forever.

"Change and decay in all around I see,
O Thou, who changest not,
Abide with me."

The Freethinker has always pointed out that the conception of God varied according to the moral standard of each succeeding generation, but, to the Christian, nurtured in the belief of God's unchanging nature, this has been a truth almost impossible to realize. So ingrained had this idea become by constant repetition from generation to generation, that it seemed as if the Freethinker had set himself an impossible task in insisting upon the mortality of the gods. But now, at last, this truth is filtering down into popular thought, not through the medium of the pulpit, but in the pages of its boasted ally, the modern newspaper. If the God of one generation can be dismissed as too brutal and revolting to the quickened moral sense of a later generation, what guarantee is there that his successor will meet with a better fate?

I might suggest to the Christian apologist that a very good case might be made out for the religious proclivities of that detested little beastie—the louse. The question whether animals have souls has lately been discussed in the public press; one clergyman being certain that his little dog possessed a soul, and that it would continue to be his faithful companion in the after-life. And if animals and other creatures have souls; there is no reason why its possession should be denied to the humble louse. Indeed, the evidence in the case of the louse is even stronger than in the case of most animals. Readers of Burns may remember his lines "To a Louse," that was observed on a lady's bonnet in church. The very fact of its being seen on her bonnet is itself rather a significant one. The lady doubtless, had other apparel where it could have nestled with greater warmth and comfort, and the presumption is that it chose her bonnet the better to hear the sermon. This must surely have been in Burns' mind as he watched the upward struggles of the little creature, remarking:—

Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
'Till ye've got on it.
The very tapmost towering height
O Miss's bonnet.

Again, we know how, during the middle (and other ages) these lice infested in multitudes the garments of the Christian saints. The cloister was their chosen habitation, where they doubtless listened with ecstatic joy to the ringing of the church bells, and the chanting of the monkish prayers. And then, too, a correspondent in the *Freethinker* recently stated that they had been found clinging to the mean raiment of the Buddhist religious order in the far East. Thus the case for the universality of religion among lice is, I think, a fairly strong one. When we find them in such places as far apart as Ayrshire in Scotland, and Rangoon in Burma, delighting to dwell in a religious

environment, the conclusion seems inevitable that they not only have souls to save, but that they voluntarily seek the means of grace, with a view to their spiritual edification. It is true, of course, that no poetic louse has ever written anything like *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, or the *Hymn in Prospect of Death*; but then neither have any of them ever been guilty of uttering any of those stinging jibes and sarcasms against the Church and its theology, with which Burns goaded the unco' guid of his day. The Christian apologist may have some difficulty in finding a definition of religion sufficiently vague to include Burns, but none of us can reasonably dispute his claim to the possession of the humble louse. And if the clergymen I have mentioned should find his little dog trotting at his heels in the streets of the New Jerusalem, I am sure that he will occasionally encounter in the silent watches of the night, his little friend, the humble louse.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Acid Drops.

We are not protesting against the conduct of the B.B.C., because protests are useless, and the only way to reform it is for Freethinkers to make it quite plain that the present policy is quite unprofitable. The aim of the B.B.C. in converting itself into a champion of Christianity is entirely that of "spool"; and as no principle inspired its conduct in the first place, an appeal to principle falls on deaf ears. So we are just noting as an item of news that as one of its speakers—upholding Christianity, of course—recently emphasized the importance of the issue between Christianity and Secularism, one of our readers, Mr. A. W. Coleman, wrote congratulating the speaker on his opinion, but suggesting that, in view of the policy of the B.B.C., "An institution which, at the instigation of a committee of some half dozen frightened parsons, adopts such a contemptible attitude, has no right to call itself British. You might adopt the style and title of 'The Christian and General Broadcasting Company.'" But we doubt whether it has enough moral courage to do this.

A more likely line would be for self-respecting men to refuse to speak at all until a fairer policy is adopted. As it is, we are surprised that a speaker will submit the MSS. of his speech for approval or revision to the Committee of this trading concern. A man who cannot be trusted to express himself with decency ought not to be asked to speak, and a self-respecting man should at once put his foot down on this kind of censorship. Imagine a society which permits one man to emphasize the importance of the issue between Secularism and Christianity, and at the same time says it will not permit the Secularist case against Christianity to be heard, but the Christian case against Secularism must be given repeated and full publicity. But we are neither disappointed nor alarmed. Secularism has grown to strength in the face of the united opposition of the press and the Churches, and its growth is not likely to be checked by the miserable efforts of the B.B.C., with its ruling committee of parsons. By pressure we have driven it to forsake its initial avowal of impartiality, and to confess its Christian missionary character. Perhaps the creation of a larger number of Freethinkers may compel it one day to a honesty for which it evidently has no native inclination.

On the other hand, there are coming in protests from others than Freethinkers, against the dose of religion served out by the B.B.C. In the *Daily Mail*, Mr. Hodges, of Chelmsford, writes as one who holds Christian views, but says:—

Sunday is the only day on which the average man is free to listen with perfect relaxation, and what does he get? Nothing at all till 3.30 p.m. Then starts a long, wearisome programme of cantatas, services, and other religious items.

I, too, hold average Christian views, but we are living

in the year 1929, and surely religion when "rammed down our throats" to such an extent, has an adverse effect on the listener?

The fact is that the tales told by the B.B.C. about the requests for religious services were quite false. It was just the resolve of one or two at the head, acting under pressure from a number of parsons, that has made the Sunday programme the most ridiculous thing in the Broadcast world. The B.B.C. dare not submit the question to a vote of its subscribers, because it knows full well that a majority would be dead against it. It can only go on giving more and more religion, and then telling "yarns" about the demand for it, and produce letters from the mouthpieces of parsons that they wish it continued. We challenge the B.B.C. to have all the letters it receives overlooked by an independent committee. That would soon expose the whole game.

Says the Rev. T. A. Jeffries: "Science changes more than most things, because it is finding its way deeper and deeper into that which abides. And Christianity must change, not so much because past ages were wrong, as because they were incomplete, and we must ever press on nearer to the eternal truth." The curious thing is that Christianity wouldn't have thought of changing if science had not begun "finding its way deeper and deeper into that which abides." Science starts probing into the truth of things, and religion suddenly discovers that her revealed "truths" need re-interpreting, recasting, and the Lord knows what. Very odd.

In two pamphlets concerning the security of perfect health through prayer, the Rev. Sheldon Knapp sets forth his belief that: "in all normal cases, worn-out powers and old age not being involved, if I am sick and unable to do my work, God surely wills my healing." We like the careful phrasing of Mr. Knapp's doctrine. A sick person having tried the prayer system of cure and having achieved no results, might naturally complain that the system had failed. In that event, Mr. Knapp need only retort that God did not "will" a healing, or that the patient lacked faith. But we cannot quite follow Mr. Knapp's excepting "worn-out powers and old age." We could understand this if sickness is cured by nature alone. But to Mr. Knapp there is a God behind nature, who "wills" sickness or recovery, and who therefore interferes with nature. And if God can will recovery in one direction, why not in every direction? Another point, suppose a young patient gets better without using the prayer system. Does God will that? If he does, prayers seem unnecessary. For in that case God obviously wills what he thinks is best irrespective of prayerful requests.

There is quite a pretty little quarrel going on between the two Branches of the Christian Scientists. One lot, when it says that all disease is an illusion, and which says that right belief will cure disease, means what it says, and discards doctors altogether, and leaves it to God—and the undertaker. The other lot also believes that right belief will cure disease; but where it will not, believes in calling in a doctor. There appears to be a very extensive controversial literature about, one half accusing the other half of departing from the true principles of Christian Science in resorting to medical aid, which is met with the retort that Mrs. Eddy herself believed in calling in doctors and using drugs where "mental healing" failed, and charges the "die-hards" with being responsible for thousands of deaths, and with circulating lies concerning the beliefs and practices of the sainted Mrs. Eddy. Neither side appears to lack funds, and indeed nothing of a religious kind, no matter how idiotic, fails to find fools with plenty of money to back it up.

We suppose that the more orthodox Christians will smile at the Christian Scientist who believes in mental healing, when it acts, but calls in a doctor in case it does not. But his own practice is exactly on all-fours with this practice. Christian Science roots itself in the Christian belief that Jesus Christ meant what he said

when he told his followers that—"in my name," they should cure every kind of disease, and in the New Testament teaching that the prayer of faith should cure the sick. But the Christian no more trusts to the Lord than does the reforming Christian Scientist. He believes quite earnestly that faith will cure disease, but asks a doctor to stand by in case the Lord is busily engaged elsewhere. It is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other, and the general folly of Christian teaching is responsible for both.

Manchester City Council has rejected a proposal for games in the public parks on Sunday after one p.m. Another victory for Satan, who finds some mischief for idle hands (and brains) to do!

The British and Foreign Bible Society's new Secretary is the Rev. A. H. Wilkinson, of Chester. A contemporary says of Mr. Wilkinson that, at the outbreak of war, he volunteered as an ordinary soldier, but was rejected as a clergyman. We presume that the rejection is a convincing piece of evidence that God does answer prayer. Mr. Wilkinson will, we hope, make good use of it when persuading doubters.

The Church, says the Rev. F. L. Wiseman, has been under a cloud of criticism for some time, but some of the derogatory things are now being said by people inside as well as those outside. And unfortunately Christian people, he says, have allowed the criticism from without to dampen their spirits. They must beware of the spirit of depression. Quite so. Let the depressed cheer themselves with the thought of the joyful Sundays they spend all day in church, while hundreds of thousands of the ungodly are lugubriously desecrating the Sabbath. Another joyful thought for the depressed is that wonderful revival of religion which would materialize if only the masses were not so very indifferent to the "glad tidings."

Says the Archbishop of York: "That anyone thirty years of age should really care more about what happens in the athletic world than, say, in the League of Nations, is a public disaster and a private calamity." There is much truth in this. But can one expect anything better? The majority of people have had a Christian training, and that does not tend to make people develop any kind of reflective capacity in regard to things that really matter.

Mr. H. W. Housefold, Secretary to the Gloucester Education Committee, exhorts people to "think for yourselves, but with humility." We should prefer to invite them to think for themselves, and to have the courage to voice their convictions. Thinkers who are too humble about their opinions and convictions to tell the world about them, help to keep wrong notions from being supplanted by good notions.

The Carnegie Trust has granted £35,000 towards 125 playing-fields schemes, and in addition, the National Playing Fields Association have given £15,000. If, as a pious weekly says, the street as a playground is frequently the cause of juvenile delinquency, may we suggest that all the playing-fields newly opened shall be available on Sunday, in order that fullest use can be made of them to prevent delinquency?

Sir Alan Cobham hopes that in eighteen months' time people will be able to leave London by air and be in Central Africa in seven days. There's no need to wait so long. One can get the Central Africa atmosphere any Sunday at the House of God.

Says the Rev. R. Morton Stanley: "It is as much the duty of a church to form a football club as to hold a prayer-meeting." Well, not so much a duty, as a necessity. Nowadays, the churches' only hope of retaining the young people's allegiance is to organize as many different secular amusements and clubs as possible. Take away the secular activities of the churches, and

what an exodus of young people there would be! The parsons know as well as we do that it is not love of Jesus that keeps youthful members attached to churches.

At a meeting of Wesleyan laymen, Mr. Lindsay Blee said he would like to see in the Training Colleges the endowment of a Professorship of Joy, the duties of which would be to instruct the students to serve the Lord with gladness. This seems to suggest that theological students do not, at present, regard serving God as a glad job; else why the need for a joy expert?

Freezing of the water in an acetylene lamp is an "act of God." The magistrates at West Ham Police Court decided so the other day, when a cyclist was charged with riding after dark without a light. Following the precedent established by another court, the case was dismissed, but the defendant was instructed to pay 2s. 6d. costs. That was a right and proper decision. Obviously it was unfair to fine the cyclist for something for which God was responsible. And since it is agreed that God was to blame, the Church is clearly the proper party to pay these "costs." For does not the Church claim to be God's representative on earth? If this be so, the Church is under a moral obligation to pay. It is against divine and human justice to force the innocent victim of a prank of God to suffer thereby.

There is among English people, asserts the Rev. H. L. Simpson (Congregational), a profound religious sense and a very deep religious hunger. One piece of evidence for this assumption is:—

Never in my life have I been asked by so many different kinds of secular papers to give them articles on religion, and the editors are not more philanthropic than you or I. They realize that the masses of men today are hungry for some simple presentation of religious truth. I know there is a growing impatience of creed and dogma, an alarming readiness to part with the Lord's Day . . . In spite of it all, there is even among those who hold aloof from the Church of Christ a sense of spiritual values.

As regards the alleged hunger for newspaper articles on religion, what are the facts? Some time ago, a number of advertising managers and journalists employed by religious journals met together, and having admitted the widespread indifference to religion and the slump in Church patronage among the masses, discussed what advertising could do towards altering this sad state of affairs. No doubt in private, and in consultation with the Press Bureaux of the various Churches, they debated ways and means of achieving their object, namely, arousing interest in religion. Immediately following these discussions some big newspapers started religious articles and religious debates. What is obvious from all this is that non-pious newspaper readers, who are in the majority, did not bombard editors with requests for articles to satisfy "spiritual hunger," but that the articles were printed with the object of exciting interest in religion.

It may be retorted that hard-headed editors are not the men to give their public what that public doesn't want. But all newspapers have a certain proportion of pious readers, and editors have no objection to pandering to such readers' tastes. There is, however, another consideration that would influence editors and newspaper proprietors. This age is one of unrest, rejection of tradition and authority, and dissatisfaction with "things as they are." The fact is not at all pleasing to various vested interests and institutions. The big newspaper proprietors are in no wise anxious to antagonize these interests and institutions. They are also well aware that religion can very effectively divert the energies of the masses into "harmless" channels, or dope the masses into the desired state of obedience. Hence, the newspaper owners and editors are quite willing to assist the Churches in the task of arousing interest in religion.

What a failure this religious advertising stunt has proved to be! One thing is certain—advertising of religion hasn't produced a widespread craving for religion. Church patronage hasn't increased. Thousands

of parents don't trouble to send their children to Sunday-school, nor have them baptized or "confirmed." The Lord's Day is increasingly used as a holiday, and there is a growing demand for rational amusement and recreation on Sunday. The Rev. M. Simpson may think there is a widespread "spiritual hunger," but the masses have a queer way of revealing their possession of it.

The *New Chronicle* (of Christian education) says that the "service of youth" (meaning, the kidnapping of youth) has been called the Church's key industry. And no Church can afford to neglect a key industry or leave it to chance. All this has reference to the decline in Sunday-school scholars. Our contemporary is deeply depressed. Young lives, it says, in increasing numbers are going without the sanctions and inspirations of religion, without the fortifying and enriching fellowship of the Church. The Bible to them will be a closed book. The Sabbath will be spent in the pursuit of pleasure, and that means infinite impoverishment; for national well-being demands a day of rest and worship.

According to the *New Chronicle*, the present age is a restless and dangerous one for youth. There is no word of peace, no power of healing, only power to distract. Decreases from Sunday school and Church "means more victims." And moral tragedies increase as religion and its sanctions are forsaken. Eighty per cent of the crime in America is committed by youths and men who have had no religious education. Therefore, the alarming number of children growing up without religious teaching is a matter of most serious portent. Our contemporary should cheer up. Things are never so black as they are painted—especially when an interested party applies the black paint with a white-wash brush, and no scruples about truth.

Speaking at Birmingham about the local Wesleyan Mission to youth, the Rev. A. F. Wass said:—

We are told that only two in ten of the children in our schools will be held in Church membership, that only one in ten in the land will be members of the Church. The Birmingham Education Committee tells us that only 50 per cent of the elementary school children here have any association with any Church, institute, club . . . after leaving school. It is said that only one in a hundred is converted after the age of twenty, and only one in a thousand after the age of thirty. The hope of the Church lies in the appeal to youth . . .

Besides the inference drawn by Mr. Wass, there are others. One is, that to judge by the large number of children who reject all connexion with the Church, their "natural instinct" for religion is not very lively, and they appear destitute of any hunger for religion. A second is, that the better educated and more mentally alert children of to-day are far less easily caught by the Churches than were their parents. A third inference is, that the Churches' chief hope of kidnapping young clients lies in getting the religious dope accepted before the youthful intelligence matures and the reflective powers develop. "Catch 'em young!" is the Churches' maxim. What does it imply?—that the irrationalities of the Christian religion are unacceptable to the mature adult intelligence.

A "declaration" concerning the gambling habit has been circulated to the Press. Some of the signatories are: Prof. Gilbert Murray, Dr. Cyril Norwood (of Harrow), Dr. Ernest Barker, the Rev. Prof. Peake, the Chief Rabbi, Miss Bondfield, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. B. Seeborn Rowntree and Mr. Walter Runciman. The declaration, after referring to the danger which the habit threatens the national life, argues that gambling is the perverted expression of a natural instinct.

The deeds of daring and adventure which command our admiration are those undertaken for worthy ends, and carried out not only with courage but intelligence. There is no kinship between these and the blind trust to chance. It is, however, in the dullness and monotony of life for many that gambling often finds its root.

Opportunities for the wholesome use of leisure must be afforded for all. We cannot stress too strongly the importance of providing more parks and open spaces where young people may themselves play the games of which at present they are perforce spectators. Equally we would emphasize the value of those organizations which encourage a wide range of interests, hobbies, and pursuits. We call our fellow-citizens not only to discourage the gambling habit by influence and example, but also to unite in the effort to provide for all the means of healthy sport and recreation and conditions of life less drab and burdensome.

We invite the signatories to note the obvious—that the English Sabbath is the one day of the week when millions of people are exposed to greatest boredom. On Sunday it is that, by order of the Churches, whatever facilities there are for wholesome recreation and amusement are withheld from the masses, who therefore are most likely to fly to gambling and other doubtful pastimes to combat boredom. It is all very well to suggest providing more and wider facilities for wholesome recreation. But why not make better use of the present facilities on the day when they are most needed and serve their most useful purpose? If the signatories would like to undertake a "deed of daring," we suggest they should advocate the Sunday opening of parks and open spaces for every kind of recreation, as a counter-move to the gambling habit. This would certainly be a deed of daring for most of the signatories. They would have to face the bitter opposition and spiteful vituperation of Sabbatarian fanatics.

In the *Evening News*, March 11, the Rev. J. C. Harwick states that:—

The week-end habit, following upon the unsettlement of traditional ideas and customs caused by the war, has certainly reduced church-going to a minimum. If present tendencies proceed unchecked for another ten or twenty years, that custom may become merely a memory.

Such frankness qualifies the gentleman to leave the Church and do something useful in the world, and he need not wait for another twenty years.

Apparently "gravelled for matter," Dr. Pollock, the Bishop of Norwich, occupies a good space in the *Daily Mail*, with "Does the Gallows Reform?" It has fallen to the Bishop's lot to confirm two men before they were executed, and he believed that both men were "reformed" between their sentence and their end. This is rich and fruity, and almost too good for comment to spoil. In ushering the murderers into heaven, the victims are forgotten, who probably did not have the chance to be "reformed"—but the culprits' souls were saved. Heaven must be a very undesirable place through these last hour conversions. It is somewhat late in the day too, for the Bishop to talk about the sanctity of human life. The latest figures available in the ninth annual report of the Imperial War Graves Commission are as follows: 1,081,952 names registered; of this number 582,783 have been identified, while 499,169 are recorded as missing. 173,213 of this number have been found but not identified. When we remember the Church's part in the war, it is time to remind those who talk of the "sanctity of human life" not to mouth cant and humbug, following as they do a God who did nothing to stop war, and does nothing to prevent murders.

A very Christian gentleman of Harrogate, Mr. Mark E. Mitchell, writes to the *Daily Mail* as follows: "It is not necessary to broadcast at all on Sunday. But since we have Sunday wireless programmes, let them be Sabbath programmes. One is not obliged to listen." No! one is not obliged to listen, even to Sabbath programmes. But if one pays for a licence, one expects value for money, and does not expect to have to switch off for many hours on the day of leisure. The only way to satisfy our Mr. Mitchells and the hundreds of thousands of listeners who differ from him is to broadcast alternate programmes on Sunday. That would give all listeners a fair deal.

DIED, March 13, aged 28, Daisy Price, only daughter of Chapman and Cecelia 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.

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.

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen asks the indulgence this week of the numerous correspondents whose letters remain unanswered. For the moment he is dealing only with the most pressing business, but everything will be cleared up in due course.

Mr. Cohen was unable to go to Leicester as arranged. He is indebted to Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who at very short notice, acted as substitute. We are glad to learn that his visit was very much appreciated.

The last indoor meetings of the Manchester Branch this season will be held to-day (March 24), in the Chorlton Town Hall. Mr. Cohen was to have been the speaker, but domestic circumstances make this impossible. His many Manchester friends will excuse his absence. In his place a capable substitute from London will speak at 3 and 6.30. We feel sure there will be good audiences, and we know there will be two good lectures for them. It is hoped that all Manchester friends will see that the closing meetings are "bumper" ones.

We are pleased to learn that the sales of the first two issues of the *Controversialist* exceeded expectations, and that congratulatory letters have been received in large numbers from all over the country and from many places abroad. We are glad to see this, because at present it is the only journal in the country that allows each side to state its case as it will. In the March issue, one of our contributors, Mr. T. F. Palmer, writes an article in favour of vivisection, while the Hon. Stephen Coleridge puts the case against. Mr. Cohen's article deals with the argument from Existence and Causation, and with his reply to Dr. Calnan covers about twenty columns, and he will fill a similar space in future numbers. Certainly there is no other magazine that would have the courage to permit so notorious a Freethinker to occupy so much space, and to say precisely what he desires to say. We ought to say, no other magazine at present. For just so soon as newspaper folk wake up to the fact that there is a large public that would appreciate that kind of thing, other avenues will open. In that case, the *Controversialist* will have the credit of having led the way.

Writing of the censorship, the latest example has occurred in connexion with India. Mr. R. J. Minney, late co-editor of the *Englishman*, of Calcutta, wrote for Messrs. Routledge's excellent "To-day and To-morrow" series, an essay, *Shiva, or the Future of India*. The Government of India has prohibited the book entering the country. Answering a question asked in the House of Commons, Earl Winterton gave as the reason for the prohibition that:—

The book contains passages commenting on the Hindu religion of extreme grossness and coarseness . . . It

would be improper to quote some of the passages, but I should describe them as exceeding in grossness and coarseness, anything which has appeared in this country for a long time.

Either Earl Winterton has never read the book, or he is uttering a deliberate lie, but a lie it is in any case. There is not a single passage in this very small book which can be described by anyone as coarse or gross. No judge in England would so describe it. If Earl Winterton dared to make an identical statement on a public platform, we believe the author could secure damages in any court in this country, and if we were in the place of Messrs. Routledge & Co., we fancy we should see what could be done to bring the matter before a court. There are several ways in which this might be done. But if the book exceeds in "grossness and coarseness," anything which has been published for a long time, why does not "Jix" and his susceptible policemen see to it that it is suppressed in this country? As it is, anyone can buy it for half-a-crown.

Mr. Minney does not believe in the British withdrawing from India; he affirms that India cannot do without British aid; all he asks is that that rule shall be firm enough to crush admitted and obvious evils. He has no patience with those who say that India must be left to work out its own destiny, but believes it ought to be Westernized. But he does protest against the draining of wealth from India by British residents, which wealth is spent out of the country, and argues for a heavier taxation, to be applied to the betterment of the Indian people. He asserts, also, that the great canker at the root of India's welfare is religion, and desires the government should suppress certain religious practices—as suttee and human sacrifice was suppressed—solely in the interests of the mental and material well-being of the people. He believes that "every step in the education and uplift of these peoples will have to be taken entirely by the English," but says that the "present form of government in India is the greatest humbug known to history."

We are neither endorsing nor dissenting from the opinions expressed. We merely give an outline of the book—it is no more than a small pamphlet—in order to justify our statement that the book does not contain a single "gross or coarse passage"—it does emphasize the evil of religion—and also to justify the statement that Earl Winterton was either telling the House of Commons a deliberate lie, placed in his mouth by others, or slandering Mr. Minney on his own account. A deeper purpose still is to drive home the lesson that censorship is a dangerous thing. Here, if anywhere, appetite grows by what it feeds on, and the activities of "Jix" and his police may encourage action on an ever widening scale. We suggest that the publishers and the author should invite Earl Winterton to point out the passages that are gross and offensive, if only for expurgation in future editions. But we pity the poor devils who spend half-a-crown in the hopes of getting something "spicy." They will be as disappointed as those who go to hear a parson who advertises a sermon to "men only."

Mr. E. C. Saphin will lecture to the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. on Sunday, March 24. The meeting, which will be held at the Bristol Street Schools, will commence at 7 p.m. Mr. Saphin's subject is "Christian Art and Ritual," and the lecture will be illustrated by lantern slides. We hope to hear of a record attendance.

The Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. is expecting good audiences on Sunday, March 24, when Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture in the Hall at 18 Conduit Street, off Bold Street. Mr. Rosetti's subjects are: 3 p.m., "A Christian Humbug in Liverpool," 7.30 p.m., "Spiritualism and Science." These will probably be the last meetings in Liverpool this season to be addressed by a speaker from London, and we would suggest that all local Saints should make a special effort to be present, and take a Christian friend with them.

"Do the Dead Live?"

(Concluded from page 171.)

THE idea that consciousness must always have existed throughout the whole universe, or at back of it, in order to make human consciousness possible is ridiculous. This means that if nature as a whole were not rational, purposive, etc., man as a thinking being could not have evolved, the idea being that in order to have mind at all there must have been an eternal mind at the start ready to divide itself into millions of small minds as the universe evolves. It is a known fact that consciousness not only did not exist, but was impossible at one time owing to the state of the universe. Life only became possible when the earth, with which we are mainly concerned, cooled down to a temperature that completed the conditions of life, and consciousness appeared later on when organisms had developed the necessary responsiveness to external stimuli, and capacity to re-combine, store up, and reproduce the impressions made by those stimuli. The process was quite natural, and there should not be any surprise at the appearance of consciousness and intelligence as a result of the changed condition of the earth and the gradual development of new structures, of the physiological type, capable of new functionings, in the animal world. At anyrate, there would not be surprise, especially in view of our knowledge of the results of emergence in other directions, were it not for the dead weight of theological teaching which is still upon us.

One of the greatest fallacies propounded by those who believe in the survival of the "soul" after death is the idea that man must live on because he is unable to complete his being here, on earth. He dies an unfinished product of evolution.

Now there is no justification for the belief that this is so in the sense implied by the religionist. That is, that each individual born on the earth must during some period or other work out a given plan of life, and at last round off the whole by attaining a certain standard of completeness.

No one knows what should be the "complete" life of any individual; the idea that every person has a definite "life object" that *must* be attained is a mere assumption.

What is the life object and final character-form of any man, except that which he himself may have in view: or which may have been set for him by others? We have no idea; nor does it matter to the universe. Then why should anyone have another life in which to complete himself?

If complete character-form is to be attained, this life might just as well be prolonged. There is no reason why there should be a change over to some other place, unless it is that of making more room in this world for turn-out, on the idea of quantity rather than quality.

Not only so; the thought of another world, as a place in which to complete unfinished beings suggests the question—at what time will the complete being be attained in that place? Again, what exactly happens when the full character-form is developed in the other world? Must it remain at a standstill for the remainder of eternity? The question is no doubt one that is capable of bringing forth a vast amount of theological profundity.

If, in the other world, each individual dies out after attaining a state of perfect development, nothing of permanent value has been accomplished, and this life might just as well have been the end of all. Why, if we have to live to be a thousand years of age, should we bother about dying until the term is completed,

or why not die every few years, by way of excitement, until the final death arrives? Everything might be arranged just to suit our convenience, and that is really what the believer in another world thinks should be done. He refuses to face the facts of this life, because of his own desires.

On the other hand, if a man is to remain at a state of perfection for the rest of eternity, when once he has reached his fullest possible development, what will he have gained: will it be more than final stultification?

Life has no value except in terms of development. The idea of perfection in the sense implied or expressed by those who say that this life does not give a man a chance to fulfil himself should leave anyone cold who thinks about it. Fancy living for millions of years without making any further progress, in art, in literature, in science, or in mode of living. Yet we are treated to this kind of talk by men who claim to be thinkers: "once more, Man does not fulfil himself here. We can think of heights of knowledge, of wisdom, unattainable on earth. If man does not come to perfection here, he must come to it somewhere else. For is the soul of man to be the sole exception, in the whole of the creation as we know it, to the system of evolution and perpetuity? If this be accepted, it leads to the conclusion that the death of the body has no significance at all, so far as the fate of the soul is concerned."—(*Daily News*, June 30, 1928.)

At the back of this there is not only the idea that man must some day become perfect, but also the all too common notion that evolution is always in the direction of development. This is not correct, as evolution includes both retrogression and progress, failure and success, building up and breaking down, the best and the worst, and so on; while it is not itself concerned with any of these things. These distinctions are our business and not that of evolution, which is a non-conscious, non-moral process as far as the universe goes. The production of man's consciousness is but a side issue, and does not afford any justification for the theory that there is a conscious working out of evolution going on, and that there is an objective being aimed at, which must ultimately be attained.

Evolution has nothing to do with a final objective, it is nothing more than the process of producing all the possible natural forms, living and non-living, that can be produced owing to the numberless combinations and recombinations which the elements of the universe happen to be able to make.

Whether the universe as a whole will continue in perpetuity is of little interest to us, unless we can justly apply the term perpetuity to the myriads of individual forms which we see in the universe, and modern science does not support this latter idea.

Man, like other forms of being, has a beginning; he comes on the earth in a natural manner, goes through a period in which he reacts to, and more or less adapts himself to his environment, and when he is no longer able to do this he dies and disintegrates. To assume, as the religionist does, that after disintegration he still lives, is to assume that he is totally unlike what we have known him to be, and that is not an honest way of dealing with the immortality of a person whom we have known, and whom we could only know again as we have known him on this earth. If man becomes immortal by becoming something other than he was, then his immortality is of no value. If we must all live for ever, but be unrecognizably different to the eyes of our friends, wherein will lie the possibility of social companionship in the "eternal life"?

Not only so, on the score of environment there is no justification for the belief in a future life, as we have no knowledge of what that environment might

be. Consequently it is impossible for us to say whether we could react to and adapt ourselves to that environment; and life without such adaptation is unthinkable.

So the outcome of the religious argument seems to be, that immortal man is a being whom we do not know, living in an environment of which we also do not know anything.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

A Recently Extinct Race.

THE limited knowledge available concerning the natives of Tasmania is of priceless importance to the anthropologist. When their island habitation was invaded by European explorers, these savage people were still living in the Palæolithic or Old Stone Age.

Van Dieman's Land, or Tasmania, as it is usually called, is separated from Australia by Bass Straits. The modern Tasmanian State includes the Isles in the Straits which extend as far as Kent's Group.

In the seventeenth century, the Dutch governor of Batavia, in Java, commissioned Abel Tasman to sail on a voyage of discovery in the Southern Seas, to ascertain the existence of a rumoured Antarctic Continent. In the course of this expedition Tasman discovered a large island which he named Van Dieman's Land, in honour of the author of the voyage.

Low as they are in the scale of culture, the aboriginal tribes of the Australian Continent have developed into the Neolithic or New Stone Age. The Tasmanians, on the other hand, were less advanced than the long vanished drift and cave men of prehistoric Europe. Their stone implements were unground and unpolished, and their extremely primitive condition is demonstrated by the fact that they obtained fire by friction, the flame being produced by rubbing one stick in the hollow of another stick. The more developed fire-drill appears to have been unknown to them.

Save in winter when the skins of kangaroos were sometimes worn, the Tasmanians were naked from top to toe. For ornamental and protective purposes in inclement weather, they plastered their bodies with fat and ochre. That these lowly people possessed a rudimentary sense of art is suggested by the fondness of the females for flowers and bright berries and other adornments. Herbert Spencer's theory that ornament preceded dress seems supported by the circumstance that the Tasmanian beau when fully attired "wore a necklace of spiral shells and a number of kangaroos' teeth in his woolly hair."

These savages appear to have been intensely proud of their hair, which they carefully anointed with grease and colouring matter. Tattooing was not customary, but they disfigured their upper extremities with gashes of an unsightly character.

A nomadic race, they possessed no permanent dwelling-places. During their wanderings, when searching for food, and even in bleak winter time, their sole protection against wind and weather was a coarse screen consisting of sheets of rough bark placed against wooden stakes. H. Ling Roth, our leading authority on the early Tasmanians, thinks that they sometimes sought shelter in caves. James Backhouse, in his *Narrative*, tells us that they erected rude huts for the winter season at least on the western coast. This was an ingenious, if simple, method of construction, as "a circular space was cleared in a thicket of young and slender Ti trees, and the tops of the encircling trees were drawn together and thatched with leaves and grass."

They were acquainted with a few rude tools prepared from stone or wood. Their hunting implements and even their weapons of war were of wood.

The spear was their most important weapon, and this was fashioned into a state of efficiency with the aid of fire, and the muscles of the human jaw. Their crude stone knives and scrapers were made to serve many purposes. In the absence of flint, these were perforce prepared from a fine grained sand-stone, which is less easily chipped than flint. Professor Sollas surmises that "this may partly account for the inferior finish of much of the Tasmanian workmanship."

The fauna of Tasmania afforded the aborigines a fair supply of food. They hunted the opossum, wallaby, bandicoot, kangaroo and various other animals. The unskinned carcasses were roasted whole, and then carved with stone knives, while the ashes of their wood fires might supply the seasoning to their succulent meal.

Snakes, lizards, and even palatable grubs formed part of the native dietary. Feathered bipeds were abundant, and the natives were expert fowlers. The emu, now extinct in Tasmania, the celebrated mutton-duck, penguins, swans, and other birds, were killed for the larder, while the women and children raided the eggs.

The natives were ignorant of the angler's art. Fishing tackle was entirely unknown, but they caught crayfish in large numbers. Molluscs were greatly appreciated, and these the women obtained by diving. They utilized a wooden chisel when detaching gasteropods such as limpets, which cling so tenaciously to the cliffs. Cockles, oysters and periwinkles were roasted, and the accumulated shells formed huge kitchen-middens or refuse heaps.

Various forms of vegetation, when broiled, were eaten. These included fern-roots, bullrush-root, sea wrack, fungi, and the mellow fruit of the kangaroo apple.

The customary beverage was Adam's ale drawn from the running brooks, but they drank and enjoyed fermented liquor. A native gum-tree secretes a sweet juice resembling mollasses. This, they ran into a depression at the foot of the tree, where it fermented and furnished an exhilarating drink.

Primitive indeed, was the artistic sense among these children of Nature. They executed crude drawings of animals, but as these represent dogs and cattle in addition to the indigenous fauna, it is uncertain whether these are traceable to European influence.

The Tasmanian watercraft was exceedingly primitive. As substitutes for boats or canoes—to them unknown—they used rafts. These consisted in a kind of half-float, half-boat contrivance, which they fabricated from the bark which they peeled from the Eucalyptus, and other trees. Three rolls of bark were lashed together, a strong coarse grass being used as cord. These rude vessels sometimes attained a length of ten feet, and could easily accommodate a crew of three or four. The rafts were utilized both on the rivers and the open sea. So skilful were the native raftmen, that they were able to reach the nearby islands even in rough seas.

In his splendid work, *Ancient Hunters and their Modern Representatives*, Prof. W. J. Sollas suggests that: "The primitive ancestors of the race may have been widely distributed over the Old World: displaced almost everywhere by superior races, they at length became confined to Australia and Tasmania, and from Australia they were finally driven, and partly perhaps absorbed or exterminated by the existing aborigines of that continent, who were prevented from following them into Tasmania, because at that time Bass Strait was wide enough to offer an insuperable barrier to their advance."

The Tasmanians were of comparatively low stature.

Their skin colour was nearly black. Their eyes were small and deep set under protruding brows. The nasal organ was broad with widely distended nostrils, while their immense teeth within a repulsive mouth gave them a distinctly ape-like appearance.

At present there is no unanimity of opinion concerning the racial affinities of this rude stock, whose mental capacity is the lowest so far known among recent uncivilized races. The opinion propounded by the eminent French anthropologists Quatrefages and Hamy that "from whatever point of view we look at it, the Tasmanian presents special characters, so that it is impossible to discover any well defined affinities with any other existing race." Prof. Sollas considers that this conclusion probably "represents the prevailing opinion at the present day."

When the prehistoric artefacts of ancient man were first attributed to human agency, there was a terrible outcry. That profane scientists should dare to state that man existed many thousands of years before the orthodox date of Adam's creation was denounced as the end of all things divine. To-day, the remote origin of man is a scientific platitude.

That famous pioneer and prophet, the late Edward Tylor, first directed the attention of archaeologists to the striking resemblance between the stone artefacts of the Tasmanians and those ascribed to early man in Europe. It is now universally conceded that the parallel is practically complete.

Pity it is that so very little is known concerning the religious ideas of the Tasmanians. But when their isolated island was invaded by adventurous Europeans their doom was sealed. Then, and long afterwards, no attention was paid to the claims of humanity, and the inestimable value of these unsophisticated savages as material for scientific study was completely ignored.

The European conquest led to the development of Tasmania as an agricultural colony. This encroachment on the soil drove the natives, who had never risen above the hunting stage, to a fierce competition among themselves for food. Also, the struggle was intensified by the establishment of a penal settlement on the island.

The native population never numbered more than 7,000. After the miserable conflict, which raged from 1825 to 1831, was over, scarcely 200 survived. These poor creatures were subsequently confined in a compound, and after 1834, every precaution was taken for their well being. But the tragedy was all but ended. The natives drooped and died, until in 1877, the last of the pure blooded Tasmanians, Truganina, departed, and the race became extinct.

It is a sad and shameful story. Well may Prof. Sollas assert that: "If any other nation than our own had shown the same disregard for a human document of such priceless value, we should be very outspoken in our censure. Even now, in this twentieth century, it cannot be said that the British Government takes such an intelligent interest in the numerous primitive peoples which it has taken into its charge as we have a right to expect, at least from a State having any regard for the advancement of learning."

Hope springs eternal in the human breast. Therefore, let us trust that even bureaucrats will sometimes learn from the sinister happenings of the past.

T. F. PALMER.

The man who will stand by another in affliction as well as at a feast: in calamity, in a famine, in a tumult: who will follow him even to the King's Court or the Cemetery—he is indeed a friend.

The Hitopadesa.

Address delivered at the cremation of Daisy Price, only daughter of Chapman and Cecelia Cohen.

FRIENDS,

Behind every death there lies the material of a tragedy. It may be that of the aged, carrying with it the memories of mistakes made or of undeveloped potentialities. It may be that of extreme youth with all the vast possibilities of life undeveloped. Or it may, as in the present case, be where death is met at the opening of the most important period of a woman's life. In every case we are faced with a deep problem and a heavy sorrow.

Daisy Price, only daughter of one whom we all know and respect, had reached but the age of twenty-eight. It was an age at which, with her short married life, and surrounded by the love of husband and family, she might reasonably have looked forward to many years of happiness. Quick and bright in intellect, artistic in her tastes, warm in her sympathies for weakness and strong in her hatred of wrong and injustice, she might have become the centre of a useful, healthy social circle. That was not to be. After an illness of six months' duration she has been taken from our midst. All that medical skill could accomplish, all that the most affectionate care could do, failed, and a bright young life has ceased to be. That is the tragic aspect of it.

I do not wish to enlarge on the personal aspect of to-day's ceremony. Many of you knew her intimately, and, I am sure, loved her deeply. She roused strong affection in all who knew her, and poor characters do not achieve that. I do not attempt, either, to check the grief of those who so deeply mourn her loss. They have philosophy enough to see death in its true proportion as part of the pageantry of existence, and to know that while death is the cause of our keenest sorrows, it is also the matrix of our deepest affections. She belonged to a family who have nothing to do with the conventional formulas and ceremonies that have gathered round death. To them and to her death was no King of Terrors, but a deep, unbroken, dreamless sleep. Strong as the attractions of life were to her, death held no terror; and when the end came she sank to sleep with a smile to her mother, who was holding her hand, and "Mother" was the last word that passed her lips.

No death could have been sweeter, and on such a death it would be almost sacrilege to say more. It would be useless also, in the present case, to offer to those to whom she belonged those formal words of sympathy that so readily spring to the lips. Sorrow in the presence of death is healthy, and cleansing. It is well that we should feel grief for the loss of those whom we have loved; it is the root of much that is good in human nature; it is the price we pay for affection we have given and received. But we cannot separate without at least voicing our deep sympathy with her family, and with those friends who knew her intimately. Idle as words are, we must use them—for naught but formal words are available. At present the grief is keen; the sense of loss cuts like a knife; the gap in the family life seems forever unbridgable. But nature has its own way of healing such wounds, and time and work lay their soothing hands upon most heartrending sorrow. For awhile, death is in full control, and life seems only the occasion for pain. But insensibly, the world of life, of fellowship, of work, of duty asserts its sway, and we are brought back to a feeling of serenity and to a healthy sense of community with our fellows. It is this way that life conquers death while life and memory remain.

What the life that is over might have been, is the feeling that is now uppermost in the minds of those who mourn the death of Daisy Price. But as the days pass, there will come to the front the sweet memory of what she was. They will recall the many happy years they were together, of the mutual love that reigned, the love against which even the sword of death will fight in vain. It is by plunging into the waters of life that sorrow purges itself and love rises triumphant over disaster. We know death has no pain for the dead; that remains the lot of the living. The dead sleep the sleep of eternal peace; the living are left with the sense and pain of loss. The sorrow is ours, the peace is theirs. But as day fades into day, and the call of life becomes more imperative, the pain falls into the background, the sweeter memories gain in vividness, and become to us priceless possessions. It is a form of solace of which nothing can rob the living; a form of immortality of which nothing can deprive the dead.

We offer our loving memory to those who mourn the breaking of a young and promising life:

I hold it true, whate'er befall,
I feel it when I sorrow most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

Books and Life.

THE late war has eaten into the memories of some men to such an extent, that even now questions are asked and remain unanswered; what was all the pain for, what has it settled, and what profit comes from it? In facile language it was a struggle to save civilization. There may have been a little truth in the assertion, but where is the civilization that is saved? The professions, the fine arts are languishing; good books are very expensive, personal liberty is curtailed, and on the slippery slope downwards, cranks, quacks, spiritualism, daubs of paint on canvas termed pictures, saxophone players, all these and other phenomena compel us to ask, where is the civilization that is saved? These thoughts were prompted by a reading of Henri Barbusse's latest book, *Thus and Thus*, published by Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 10/13 Bedford Street, W.C.2, at 7s. 6d. It is a collection of short stories, the truth of which is vouched for by the author, and they are taken from witnesses of the various nationalities engaged in the madness and aftermath of four years. They are cruel, revolting, and painful, and the will of Barbusse to never forget, vibrates on every page. We lent our copy of *Under Fire* to a friend, who returned it as he could not read it; *Thus and Thus* would suffer a similar fate, for it is almost like the passages of gloom in "Schubert's Unfinished Symphony." Almost, we write; Barbusse has faith firm and fixed in human goodness, and if we believe with Emerson that the veracity of good men holds the world together, Barbusse is not on the side of disruption.

In his "Dedication," the author has written brave words; brave words are written advisedly, for there is no doubt that Barbusse was a man before he was a writer, and the myth of Prometheus is in the present day a reality for anyone who dares to stand alone and with affirmism smash pessimism and optimism—those sweet chiming bells of word-jugglers. He is on the earth when he writes: "For whether they are few and far between or whether they are representative, these woes and crimes are imposed, not by Destiny, but by Man. They are episodes in the world-wide struggle between the tortured and the torturers." Barbusse has no faith in the dealers in supernaturalism to make a human adjustment, and, in a few pages in the book *Jesus Exploited*, he writes: "All strength is in ourselves and in heaven there is no strength." Disraeli could not understand why Zola wrote such realistic novels; this elegant statesman had never slept in a bed that was not allowed to go cold through the constant use of day and night shift miners in the French

coal district, and in our present day, houses must be frozen out to prove the value of water. Henri Barbusse, in this book, has shown us the horrible cruelty of war and its consequences; from the Italian front, from Salonica, from Africa, Russia, Mexico, and Hungary, he has collected bitter and corrosive stories that were better unwritten if the new age was discernible. His motive cannot be questioned nor his sincerity doubted, for those who sit in the seats of the mighty invoke the tiger and the ape in man at their peril. History to them is Greek, and so also is a secular shepherd like Barbusse, who thinks more of a grain of wheat on earth than a sackful of promises in the life to come. These twenty-five stories should be read and remembered by all who do not believe that spots on the sun explain war; if some few thousands can now see clearly that modern wars are purely economic in origin, they will have no use for those who counsel prayer, or command hatred to order by the press. That Henri Barbusse had to write these stories in a bitter commentary on two thousand years' teaching of that which we are told has never been tried. We presume that another two thousand years must elapse before our divine sprinters get off the mark.

In connexion with the above note we find that our contemporary the *New Age*, reviews a book entitled *Unemployment or War*. By Maurice Colbourne. (Coward McCann, 425 Fourth Avenue, New York. \$3.00) The *New Age* is very definitely pursuing an economic theory with the same tenacity that actuates intellectual inquiry in this journal, and it will be found that the *New Age* and the *Freethinker* are both ranged against superstition. Therefore, when the *Freethinker*, sighing for more worlds to conquer, and tired of twiddling his thumbs, requires another task, let him make a few inquiries into the origin and control of money. The arguments against his inquiries are almost similar to those in favour of established religion. There is the jargon of the bankers which fits up nicely with those Aunt Sallys of theology, and if the inquirer is not of the persistent type, he will be told to run away and have faith. Yes, have faith in a system that blocks up Manchester with cotton, blocks up Northampton or Leicester with boots, and cotton and boots cannot be exchanged unless someone digs gold in Klondyke or South Africa. This is rather amusing and it seriously reflects on the common-sense of the Englishman who is told that Dr. Johnson was a typical Englishman. To return to the book mentioned above, the reviewer gives a sample of its quality in relation to the functioning of the press in war-time:—

Without some such artificial manure it is ridiculous to suppose that the murder of a single archduke could burgeon into so red a blossom as the licensed murder and maiming of millions of men who had never so much as had the pleasure or otherwise of his acquaintance.

Our only comment on this is that we remember men falling like ripe corn on what was picturesquely described as the battle-field, and a point of arrest was reached in the mind when we wondered what a million mothers thought of it all.

A phrase from Michelet qualified for entrance to our note-book. It reads: "Metaphysics—the art of bewildering oneself methodically." Another definition of the word may be found in a volume of Anatole France's *Under the Rose*. The witty author wrote, "There is the purée that has been strained through a sieve—thin, slushy stuff and as clear as water. That is Metaphysics." The picking up of a gem from Michelet led us to acquire his book from the book-lover's paradise—a second-hand bookshop. The title of it is *The People*, and it was written in 1845. The translation is a model of clarity and simplicity, and it reads in places like Ruskin. On a morning, when invisible forces had apparently agreed to defy the sun and freeze everything stiff, human beings included, there was a party of men digging up the road. Two of this party were told off to see to the breakfast, and we noticed a tramp roll up to the fire with its primitive firegrate of a bucket with holes in the side. This tramp was given a can of hot tea, on the country assumption that a slice off a cut loaf is never missed, and he was free to resume his wanderings as he preferred his freedom to the workhouse. "I

have found among our workmen," Michelet writes, "but one virtue that they possess in a higher degree than the more happy classes—this is a *natural disposition* to aid, to succour, others in every kind of necessity." The historian's eyes could see as far as Battersea. We draw no moral neither do we quote Sir Philip Sydney.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

TELLING TALES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Since childhood I have wished to make public an exposure of one of the most despicable crimes against little children, and at the same time the most cowardly and universal, in the country; perpetrated, too, by just those who ought to take the greatest interest in their welfare. This is the prohibition, in every school I ever heard of, of "telling tales," which is held to mean, making complaint, *however true* (though strictly speaking the phrase signifies telling lies) about any tyranny or cruelty to which they may be subjected, either by boys or teachers, while in school, and, which is immeasurably worse in the present-day, fashionable "mixed" schools than in the separate ones in which most children of my generation were brought up. In all schools there is a larger or smaller proportion of boys who delight in bullying and ill-treating pupils who are smaller and weaker than themselves, and naturally, in a mixed school, the girls being less able to protect themselves, as well as being less selfish and more yielding, than boys, are largely at the mercy of their stronger and less scrupulous playmates.

One would suppose that any teachers who had the welfare of their weaker pupils at heart, would therefore be glad, if only in order to save themselves the trouble, personally, of investigating every case of such cruelty or outrage that they may notice or suspect, if the more well-behaved children would make a point of informing them of every case of assault (of any kind) that they may know of or suffer from. So far from this being the case, the law against "sneaking" is the most strictly maintained of all in the curriculum, and its rupture is not merely ignored but severely punished by all teachers, as well as denounced by the children themselves, if any violation of it comes to light. This is not only most unfair to the weaker and more delicate boys, but of the most terrible danger to the girls, who are subjected, during the whole of their school life, to improper assaults and insults from the more daring boys, who soon find opportunities in the playgrounds, outhouses, and even in the classrooms, to whisper suggestions, of the vilest kind, and practise aggressions, which no parent would tolerate, but of which the teachers, whose boast is their being "in loco parentis" take no notice, however flagrant, and who, if any little girl ventures to ask protection from them, only scold, and even beat, not the aggressor, but her, the victim! They even make excuses for the former, no matter how vile the offence, such as "it was only childish play," or "curiosity," or that "the child was too young to know better," although they learn this conduct earlier and quicker than anything superior!

As for the higher authorities, they apparently know nothing about this shocking result of indiscriminate mass education! But their own experience ought to render them specially careful.

HEURECA.

LIVERPOOL, BRANCH N.S.S.

Sir,—I am anxious to get in touch with some of the older members of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S., especially those who were members in the "eighties" and "nineties" of last century.

I am interested in the history of the Movement, and I know that there must be members who could help me with information.

If any lady or gentleman will write me, I will refund all postages.

HENRY FARMER.

2 Blythswood Drive,
Glasgow, C.4.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON. INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8) : 11.15, Mr. William Platt—"What is 'Truth'?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.1) : 7.30, Mr. Gore Graham—"The State."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station) : 7.15, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A.—"The Youngest of the World Religions."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.) : Free Sunday Lectures at 7 p.m., Miss Carrie Hedges—"The Modernity of Greek Drama."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2) : 11.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander—"The Preservation of Bodily Health by Mental Training."

THE NON-POLITICAL, METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree Hotel, Euston Road, N.W.1) : 7.30, Rose Witcop—"Morality and Birth Control."

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrols Road, North End Road, Walham Green) : Every Saturday at 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Bryant, Mathie and others.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common) : 11.30, A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12 noon, Mr. James Hart. 3.30, Mr. A. H. Hyatt—"Our Hope at Calvary." 7.0, Messrs. Hart and Le Maine. Every Wednesday at 7.30, Mr. James Hart. Every Friday at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* is on sale outside the Park at all our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith) : 3.0, Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BELFAST SECULAR SOCIETY (I.L.P. Hall, 48 York Street) : 3.30, Mr. R. L. Smith—"Putting the Wind Up."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council School) : 7.0, Mr. F. C. Saphin—"Christian Art and Ritual." Lantern views. Questions and Discussion.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Borough Small Hall, Corporation Street) : 6.30, Adjourned Annual Meeting and Statement of Accounts.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—7.15, A Friend will lecture on "Astronomy." Chairman: Mr. T. Birtley.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street) : 6.30, Musical Evening.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Dramatic Performance—"Nathan the Wise," by Lessing, performed by the Secular Players. Silver Collection.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street) : 3.0 and 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti (London). Subjects: "A Christian Humbug in Liverpool"; "Science and Spiritualism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Chorlton Town Hall) : 3 and 6.30, Lectures by London Speaker.

SHORTS BRANCH N.S.S. (Public Hall) : 7.0, Mr. Hale—"Why I am a Secularist."

OUTDOOR.

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

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For an Illustrated Descriptive List (68 pages) of Birth Control Requisites and Books, send a 1½d. stamp to—

J. R. HOLMES, East Hanney, Wantage, Berks.
(Established nearly Forty Years.)

Fittest for Freethinkers?

When a new suit becomes needful that you consider there any one firm more than Remembering that you "Freethinker," possibly your following, which will be sent might provide a fitting



necessary, it should also be well who shall provide it. Is another having any special a chance of your custom? read these words in the examining any of the to you by return of post, answer.

SUITS

- No. 1 Card - prices from 64/-
- No. 2 Card - prices from 97/-
- No. 1 B Serges prices from 76/-
- No. 2 B Serges prices from 99/-

OVERCOATS

- D & E - - - prices from 48/-
- F & G - - - prices from 60/-
- H & I - - - prices from 68/-
- J to L - - - prices from 77/-

Whatever be the style or whether it is only a the purpose the clothes shade or the kind of the for in these samples, Freethinkers.

of the suit you require, single garment, whatever are for, whatever be the material, it is provided and offered to you by

MACCONNELL & MABE, Ltd.
High Class Tailors

New Street, Bakewell
Derbyshire

Ready this Month—

RICHARD CARLILE'S Freethinking Essays and Dicta

Brought together in a special Richard Carlile number of *The Commune*, containing Richard Carlile's essays only. This number is completely set up, and is now passing through the press.

Contents:

CARLILE'S COMMUNION PARODY—SIMPLICITY—FREE THOUGHTS: A TOUR JOURNAL.—IRELAND, COBBETT, AND PAINE—MANCHESTER'S COTTON MILLS—STUDIES IN GOVERNMENT, TYRANNY, AND FAMINE (3 essays)—CARLILE'S JAIL JOURNAL (1820-25), consisting of nine essays: Blasphemy; Religion; Materialism and God; Science and Superstition; Astronomy and Atheism; Priests and Judges; Social Truths; The Instruction of Youth.

These essays of Carlile are illustrated by a picture of Carlile and a short essay by Guy Aldred, entitled, "The Importance of Richard Carlile."

This Marvellous Freethought Budget

Price 3d. Post free, 4d.

Special Terms for Quantities.

Also Guy Aldred's RICHARD CARLILE, AGITATOR. Cloth bound, post free 1s. 3d. Paper Covers 6d.

From the Publishers:

BAKUNIN PRESS, BAKUNIN HOUSE, 18 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, N.W.

On Sale, with all other Freethought literature, including the *Freethinker*, at B.P. LIBRARY, 263a BUCHANAN STREET, GLASGOW, and A.B.P. BOOKSHOP, 818 SHETTLESTON ROAD, GLASGOW, E.

CHEST DISEASES

"Umckaloabo acts as regards Tuberculosis as a real specific."

(Dr. Secheyay in the "Swiss Medical Review.")

"It appears to me to have a specific destructive influence on the Tubercle Bacilli in the same way that Quinine has upon Malaria."

(Dr. Grun in the King's Bench Division.)

If you are suffering from any disease of the chest or lungs—spasmodic or cardiac asthma excluded—ask your doctor about Umckaloabo, or send a post card for particulars of it to Chas. H. Stevens, 204-206, Worple Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W.20, who post same to you **Free of Charge.**

Readers, especially T.Bs., will see in the above few lines more wonderful news than is to be found in many volumes on the same subject.

BIRTH CONTROL

Successful "ANTIBION" System

A practical treatise with clear anatomical descriptions and diagrams. Latest medical information on absolutely safe and hygienic lines. Send stamped addressed envelope for pamphlet issued by ALKHANA, 14 FULWOOD PLACE, LONDON, W.C.1.

MAZEEN

- SUPER HAIR CREAM - - - 1/6 per bottle
- SOLIDIFIED BRILLIANTINE - 1/- per tin
- TOOTH BRUSHES - - - 1/- each
- RAZOR BLADES (Gillette Pattern) 1/6 per doz.

POST FREE FROM:

THE MAZEEN TOILET Co., 82 Hart Street, Manchester.

Materialism :

Has it been Exploded?

VERBATIM REPORT OF DEBATE HELD AT
THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1,
ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1928

BETWEEN

CHAPMAN COHEN

AND

C. E. M. JOAD

THE RT. HON. J. M. ROBERTSON
IN THE CHAIR

ONE SHILLING NET
Postage 1½d.

(REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS)

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

A book every Freethinker should have—

BUDDHA

THE ATHEIST

BY

“UPASAKA”

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

IN this book Buddhism is expounded plainly, freely, accurately, and without circumlocution or apology. It is written by a Buddhist who has studied the subject at first hand for thirty years, not merely from the writings of others, but from Buddhists in Buddhist countries. It will be accepted by English-reading Buddhists as a necessary corrective of the misrepresentations of their religion so widely current.

Price One Shilling

Postage 1d.

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.

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 2/6. Postage 2½d.

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

GODS, DEVILS, AND MEN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

By George Whitehead

Contains Chapters on: The Primitive Theory of Lunacy and Disease—Religion and Madness—Religion and Crime—The Suggestibility of the Mind—Religious Epidemics—The Pathology of Religious Leaders—Jesus.

Price Ninepence. Postage 1d.

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

PRIESTCRAFT :

A Study of the Exploitation of the Religious Sentiment

BY

C. R. Boyd Freeman

MR. FREEMAN writes with the gloves off, and does not mince matters when handling what is really one of the greatest curses from which modern civilization suffers.

PRICE 6/-, postage 3d.

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

Essays in Freethinking

(Third Series)

BY CHAPMAN COHEN.

Contains Essays on:

ATHEISM: ENGLISH AND FRENCH—RELIGION AND THE FEAR OF DEATH—GOD AND MAN—RELIGION AND THE STATE—DESIGN IN NATURE—GOD AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS—GOD AND MORALS—FASTING AND FAITH—WITCH DOCTORS IN LONDON, Etc., Etc.

CLOTH BOUND 2/6 POSTAGE 3d.

The three Vols. of Essays in Freethinking will be sent post free for 7/6.

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