

The

# FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Vol. XLIX.—No. 51

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1920

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

*Russia and the Christian Conscience.*

It is, perhaps, not wise to take the *Morning Post*, with its attempt to work up a religious crusade against Russia, too seriously. From the purely editorial point of view it is an admirable paper, but it appears to cater for the more ignorant section of the “educated” classes, and every now and again it breaks out into a burst of sensationalism—Socialism, ante-Semitism, birth control, or something else—in a style that would do credit to the boy’s “bloods” of about fifty years ago. Russia, it appears is without ideals, and without morals—when all the time the trouble with Russia is that it is dominated, obsessed with ideals which it is trying to realize at all costs, and is so terribly obsessed with morals that it stops at nothing to enforce them. Of course, there is room for difference as to the value of these ideals, and of the new morality with which it is trying to displace the old, but it is only the backwoodsmen of Church and State who are inclined to take a difference in ideals and a different conception of what is moral as an absence of both. The trouble with the Fascists in Russia and the Bolshevists in Italy, as with the Church of the middle ages, is that they are so impressed with the absolute character of their own morality and their own ideals that it drives them almost insane to see any others existing. The government of Russia has very strong ideas as to what morality should be encouraged, and what ideals should be enforced, and however much we may differ with these it is only downright ignorance, or a propaganda deliberately designed for the exploitation of retired military men, timid elderly ladies, and religious backwoodsmen, that can talk about a country without ideals and without morals.

As a Freethinker I may protest against a government entering on a campaign either for religion or against it, and equally against persecution in aid of or

in opposition to the belief in God. As a Freethinker I object even more strongly against persecution mistakenly designed to help Freethought than I do against persecution designed to help religion. But I do not see that the *Morning Post* with its uneducated following has any right of protest against either. For these believe in a government interfering on behalf of religion, and are silent when it is opinions to which they are opposed that are being forcibly suppressed, when they are not actually clamouring for their suppression. I am quite sure that in any campaign for the forcible suppression of Atheism and Communism, even of Socialism, in this country the *Morning Post* would be found taking an active part.

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Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

But I really have to thank the *Morning Post* for one very suggestive expression. In its issue for December 10, it headed its leading article on Russia, “The Conscience of a Christian.” That is quite a pretty phrase, and, to one who knows the natural history of the Christian conscience, apt and expressive. Conscience was defined by Kingdon Clifford as the voice of the tribe, and that is quite a good working definition. It is certain that, collectively, and in broad outline, what the conscience of a people approves or disapproves is determined by the general conditions which govern the existence of associated life, and, particularly, by the history of special groups. This explains why we have in the natural history of conscience an agreement on broad lines as to right and wrong, with variations as to particular things which not merely differ from generation to generation, but also in individuals belonging to different groups.

It is these variations that give aptness to the expression “The Conscience of a Christian.” Take the case of the *Morning Post*. Its Christian conscience is outraged at the Russian Government waging a war *against* religion; but if it were to wage a war *in behalf* of religion, it, with its gallant company of aged fighting men and emasculated parsons would find in that something to applaud and support. That government agencies should circulate literature and broadcast speeches against religion is altogether wrong, but when our B.B.C.—a Government-given monopoly—uses its machinery for the Broadcasting of sermons and religious services, while rigorously excluding anything that looks like an attack on religion, the Christian conscience warmly endorses the policy. Suppression of opinions against the Government in Russia is wrong, so horribly wrong that it is a crime for this country to have diplomatic relations with a country that acts in such a way. But the same conscience can see nothing wrong in Italy carrying out precisely the same policy because Mussolini is shrewd enough to enlist the services of



the Church and to even grant it privileges. Never, in the days of the holy and anointed Czar, when men were being sent to the Siberian mines for reading the works of English reformers, when Jewish girls were forced to register as prostitutes in order to study in Russian Universities, and driven to bribe the police to avoid punishment for not practicing their alleged profession, or the most rigorous censorship was established over books and newspapers, with the policy of keeping the people in the densest possible ignorance, never when these things and worse were in force did the *Morning Post* protest against our maintaining diplomatic relations with the Holy Russian Empire. But now! well things are different. Enormities in the name of Christ are tolerable to the Christian conscience; but enormities without the sanction of Christ are not to be borne for a moment.

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#### Conscience as Convenience.

"The Christian Conscience." "I thank thee, Christian, for that word." It so aptly describes the behaviour of Christians as a whole. There is no need to dwell upon the barbaric punishments of a century ago, the gross immorality then displayed by one class of society towards another, or the fact that men were being imprisoned or transported for daring to band together to ask for as much as seven shillings a week wages, and this in Christian England, which had then behind it a more liberal history than Russia has ever had. One may find numerous illustrations of the curious quality of the Christian conscience. Only the other day the *Church Times* regretted the fact that the French were not ready to abandon submarines as an instrument of war because these were offensive to Christian and humanitarian sentiment. Battleships that can blow another ship out of the water, aeroplanes that may drop bombs on a ship and send it to the bottom, high explosives that will wipe out scores of men at a blow, gases that may half-blind or half-poison, a state of siege that will starve a whole city and spread disease throughout its people, none of these things are offensive to the Christian conscience, but submarines—well the Christian conscience must stop somewhere. I should not be surprised to find that the decisive point here is that while we do read of "Our Lord" walking on the water, or riding in a boat, we have no scriptural warranty for believing that he ever went below the surface. Even here one is not quite sure, for there is still the chance for the Christian conscience to find in Jonah and the Whale a divine foreshadowing of the submarine, provided, of course, that it is in truly Christian hands.

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#### The Nonconformist Conscience.

Take another example of the adaptability of the Christian conscience. The so-called Free Churches in this country are professedly based upon the principle of the freedom of religion from State control. They avow that religion is a matter for the individual, and the State should remain perfectly neutral. There is no principle of religious liberty on which the Nonconformist variety of the Christian conscience is more vocal than on this one. But in practice? Well, that is an entirely different matter. Wherever and whenever it is possible to obtain State help and State patronage none are more avid than Nonconformists. They are the first to demand that the State shall enforce its narrow and demoralizing Sabbatarianism, and is as energetic in wielding the weapon of social and business boycott as either Anglican or Roman Catholic. While its conscience revolts against the State enforcing any kind of re-

ligion upon it, it never ceases to demand representation at all State functions, and has even agitated for Nonconformist Bishops in the House of Lords, thus endorsing the most barbaric feature of our Constitution. Again, the one thing that rouses the ire of Nonconformists is the State endowment of religion, but if the endowment is indirect instead of being direct, the Nonconformist Conscience not merely takes, but greedily asks for more. Thus, quite irrespective of sect, every religious body in the country is freed from the payment of rates and taxes. No other kind of charitable or educational institution is so favoured, but I have yet to hear of any religious institution in the country that resents sharing in this enormous State subsidization of religion, which involves what is substantially the payment of a religious rate by every one in the country.

Or there is the case of education. Churchmen of the *Morning Post* type, who foam at the mouth at the idea of the Russian State bringing up children to believe that religion is false, can see nothing wrong in the State bringing up children to believe that religion is true. Nonconformists who will not admit for a moment that the State has any right to teach religion to the adult, willingly agree that it is the duty of the State to teach religion to the child, and, what is worse, a form of religion that is discountenanced by large numbers of adult believers. It really takes a Christian conscience to distinguish between the two cases.

An appeal to the social conscience of man is an appeal to something that is universal, vital, wholesome and wholesomely modifiable. An appeal to the "Christian Conscience" is an appeal to something that is essentially sectarian, which has shown itself compatible with the worst forms of self-deception, and consonant with some of the greatest crimes of which humanity is capable. It is an active conscience with all the activity of a virulent disease. It is a distortion, a sectarian perversion of the larger social conscience, and that fact explains its evils influence in European history.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Bible Society Bombast.

"The carpenter said nothing but  
The butter's spread too thick."

*Alice in Wonderland.*

"The task of the twentieth century is to discipline  
the chaotic activity of the nineteenth century."

*Frederick Harrison.*

MR. J. H. RITSON is the most ambitious man alive. Compared with him, Napoleon was a bashful amateur. Rather is he like Alexander the Great, who is said to have sighed for more worlds to conquer. Who is this Mr. Ritson? He is the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and he has held this position for thirty years. So satisfied are the members of this society that they have just presented Mr. Ritson with a beautiful silver salver, and, to show how generous they can be on occasion, Mrs. Ritson has also received a gift, details of the latter not specified.

Without question Mr. Ritson deserves recognition, for during his tenure of office the Christian Bible is said to have penetrated into every country in the world, and the statistics that he gives add a joy to existence, saddened only by the envious glances of rival publishers. For instance, in the last thirty years 237,000,000 bibles have been circulated, chiefly, if not entirely, by the aid of the Society's colporteurs. And, be it noted, these bibles are printed in



no less than 618 languages. Whether the brave colporteurs have to master so many dialects in order to sell their sacred stock-in-trade it is difficult to determine, but as they do not receive the salaries of archbishops they may occasionally fall back upon the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. The latter alternative is more than likely, for few men knowing over six hundred languages would be content to peddle bibles at a salary bordering upon the poverty line.

Do not imagine for a moment that I am disparaging the colporteurs. When I was a small boy, with the ambition to become a pirate and sail under the Jolly Roger, the thrilling and hair-breath adventures of the brave bible-peddlers filled me with envy and despair. It was to me, in those far-off Victorian days, what the whiskered desperadoes of the Pacific Coast are to the young frequenters of cinema theatres to-day. Now I am a grandfather and have parted with much of my hair and most of my illusions, my dear old colporteurs are still hard at it, telling the tale, pocketing the pesetas and other coins, at the peril of the lives and their sacred stock-in-trade.

The colporteurs are more intrepid than the film-hero, Douglas Fairbanks. They win their way among hairy immigrants in Canada, among throngs of scantily-dressed devotees at idol festivals in India, among brigands and murderers in Japan. One man rides with camels across the deserts of Central Asia. Another drives a Ford car in the same street as Chicago gunmen. Yet another ventures in a frail canoe down tropical rivers infested with alligators. And the bravest of the lot risks his life among the fleas in a Melbourne boarding-house in order to carry the good work to the unconverted larrikins of Australia.

Is it not romantic? Of course, the brave colporteurs do not work for nothing, and about £50,000 is their annual golden reward in this world, to say nothing of the golden harps waiting for them in the golden streets of heaven. But what a record of courage united to commercialism.

For Mr. Ritson assures the public that "God's book" is seldom given away. So that the colporteurs actually sold the greater part of 237,000,000 Bibles disposed of. Even at a bob a copy this would amount to quite a respectable sum of money. No wonder the Bible Society's report states defiantly that the Society has never been in debt. Remembering those cash-sales I can well believe it.

But Brother Ritson is not satisfied. Like one of Shakespeare's characters he is "perked up in a glistening grief and wears a golden sorrow." One country not only refuses to buy these bibles, but actually refuses to take them as gifts. The inhabitants may not even use the sacred work as a support to a flower-pot in the parlour window, as used to be the custom in the industrial parts of England. Nor may it be used to prop up a short-legged table. The fetish-book is taboo. Even the lure of "sold under cost" falls on deaf ears. "God's word" is treated with the same indignity as Paine's *Age of Reason* was treated in England in George the Third's reign. This country is Soviet Russia, which is the *bête noir* of so many pot-bellied, silk-hatted, cigar-smoking financiers and newspaper-magnates.

The trouble is that, under the Czars, Russia used 600,000 bibles annually, presumably, at a shilling each. This nest-egg has disappeared from the Society's accounts. And the cultured colporteurs who knew all the dialects of Asiatic and European Russia must be out of work, unless they are attempting to teach British Members of Parliament not to drop their itches in public. It is "too deep for tears," but the saints still have to endure much at the hands of the followers of Satan.

It is evident that the annual supply of bibles did not benefit Czarist Russia to any appreciable extent. It never prevented it from being the worst country in the world, and it never prevented its male inhabitants from cultivating bird's nests in their whiskers, or from murdering persons with philosophical opinions. As a fact this Bible is a much-overrated volume. There are enough copies of it in England alone to build a garden-city, but their presence does not prevent grocers sanding the sugar; tradesmen "selling their thumbs" on the scales; make policemen honest or truthful; or politicians other than tricky.

It is fascinating news that this particular Bible is now available in no less than 618 languages. Just think of the Eskimo being able to read of Jonah and the Whale; or of the Cannibals of the South Sea Islands perusing the story of the feeding of 5,000 people with three sardines and a bath-bun. Imagine a Chicago gangster reading the account of the massacre of the innocents, all duly set out in the great American language. Visualize a pigmy of African, laying aside his blowpipe, and trying to work out on his fingers the tangle of the Trinity in Unity. Such subjects almost compels the artist to dip his brush in crimson lake.

The British and Foreign Bible Society is now in its 125th year, and is stated to have issued during that time about 400,000,000 copies of the Christian Scriptures. With the sole exception of Soviet Russia, its books have crossed all frontiers, and the Society's work should be regarded as finished. Doubtless, the Society's balance sheets get more and more grandiose and imposing, but, nevertheless, the spectacle offered by European civilization remains unedifying and even nauseating.

The British and Foreign Bible Society is but one of many similar organizations which have enormous resources. Hardly a week passes but one or the other of these societies receive legacies, and collections are made constantly in the various branches associated with them. In fighting Orthodoxy Freethinkers are opposing an enemy entrenched behind mountains of money-bags. In money lies the power of the clergy and their fetish-book, and it is well to remember, with Shakespeare, that gold can "knit and break religions." Every copy of the *Freethinker*, and every Freethought pamphlet are silent messengers in the fight against Superstition. See that their distribution is "as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa."

MIMNERMUS.

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### Boreas and Zephyr.

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EVER so softly kiss;  
Let passion be a wistful, suppliant thing,  
As in the twilight dawn a bird will sing  
Yet some few notes will miss.

Great passion for the great;  
But we more elfin than such giant folk  
Know that great passion fast becomes a yoke  
That crushes, soon or late.

They that give all to love  
May smile on us who speak of love's restraint;  
Yet Venus may a gentle lover's plaint  
More willingly approve.

The passionate and strong,  
Who sweeping all before them reach their goal,  
May wield Jove's lightning: our's Apollo's rôle,  
To woo love with a song.

BAYARD SIMMONS.



## God and The Gallows--Our New Religion.

THE forces of intellectual reaction have at their disposal in Australia probably the world's champion servile Press. So far as I know, there is no other large city of over 1,000,000 white inhabitants, inside the British Empire, for instance, where it would be possible to publish, continuously, over a long term of years, such a paper as the Sydney *Evening News*.

Whenever Bishop Crotty of Bathurst runs amok, shouting his Mad Mullah's gospel of "Christ or Marx!" this pseudo-pious sheet invariably plays the part of a convenient sewer, draining away the nauseous result into ten thousand bankrupt drapers' porous apologies for minds. Bathurst, I might explain, is an old and decrepit convict-settlement, some 145 miles away in the interior of New South Wales, where Charles Darwin paid a short but famous visit in 1836. Since that date, scarcely anyone with a solitary grain of intelligence has set foot in the miserable, old, slave-minded town. But this precious village, mark you, with its utterly derelict, hopeless population of less than 20,000, serves as an economic pedestal for no less than two Bishops—the one Anglican and the other Roman Catholic: both baying, alternately, like mad dogs at the moon.

Bathurst is well over one hundred years old. In Machattie Square, at the centre of the town, formerly stood the original Prison Stockade, where the convicts—almost every day—were flogged and hanged. The evil spirit of that bygone epoch still hangs over the place. One could fire a cannon down the principal thoroughfare, called William Street, fifty times a day, and never hit a soul. Shut in, upon all sides, by huge estates—sterile lands which carry sheep instead of men—Bathurst has nothing but a past, most certainly has no vital present, and never even dreams of having a future.

And then again, one hundred miles to the north, we have that other favourite blatant Boanerges of the Sydney *Evening News*—Dr. George Merrick Long, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of Newcastle. This gentleman has behind him, geographically speaking, one of the largest coal-producing areas in the world. It is estimated, roughly, that the coal still unmined, in the Maitland-Newcastle field, amounts to about 18,000,000,000 tons. Thus, at a further conservative estimate of £1 per ton, the diocese of the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle contains tangible mineral wealth to the value of £18,000,000,000. But most of it is tyrannized over, with incredible meanness and tenacity, by a worn out old man—a sort of feudal Grand Duke of New South Wales, named John Brown. The income of this person works out at £4,000 per day. All torn out of the soil. But the coal-mines upon that field, almost from the very day that the dough Messiah arrived last year, under holy Roman auspices, in Sydney, have been closed down. The miners have all been locked out, by John Brown and his satellites, for refusing to accept a thoroughly "Christian," flesh-reducing cut in their wages; and there has been want unparalleled, over that normally rich area, upon a gigantic scale.

Do you think that Dr. George Merrick Long, D.D., LL.D., has ever found it in his heart, this year, to whisper one word against the infamous Dukedom of John Brown? Not much. Proverbially, the eyes of a fool are upon the ends of the earth. And so Bishop Long beefs it out to the Russian Soviet in fine dramatic style. He calls them thieves, murderers, assassins of Christ, crucifiers of religion, and I know

not what. Invariably, too, as in the case of his episcopal fellow-dancing dervish at Bathurst, every word of each horrible discharge is deftly caught up, and smeared over the insolvent mind of Sydney draperdom, by the *Evening News*. It is marvellous—positively marvellous—how the Anglican Bishops and the Sydney newspaper-editors, in the management of our splendid Society for the Spread of Useful Ignorance, pull together. For sheer co-ordinance of all the stupid elements in a given social fabric, working together to produce a mass-stupidity for religio-economic ends, I have never seen anything like it. And I most sincerely hope that I never will.

Every once in a way, however, the discretion of the God-fearing Sydney *Evening News* is savagely trampled upon by its zeal. It says things, straight out, in its bestial drapers' fury, when sufficiently intoxicated with its own dope, which make it hard for devout, most miraculously-perfect Bishops like Drs. Long and Crotty to explain, as part of the "absolutely necessary" mechanism of a Christian State. For instance, in its issue of October 9, the *News* went stark, staring mad upon the pleasant subject of the Gallows. Having had a real good debauch upon God and Marx for the previous fortnight, it went off at a paranoiac tangent and gave us this, under the entirely nice, agreeable, alliterative heading of "Hardwood and Hemp":—

What is the cause of this wave of crime? Criminals. Who aids the criminals? All of us.

We aid him by not hanging him promptly. We aid him by blithering about the "sacredness of human life," in spite of the fact that the criminal does not regard anybody's life as sacred. We are so soft-hearted and lily-livered that, as a community, we cannot stand the sight of blood—unless it is the blood of an innocent victim.

Let us bring this wave of crime to an end, by the one and only means which has been found effective in the past—a sturdy gallows and a strong rope.

The fact is that the criminal is essentially a moron, and has a poor resistance against his emotions. You can strengthen that resistance by making him realize, by the experience of other morons, that it is dangerous to himself to kill other people. That is the only argument that can penetrate his low cranium.

The plain, blunt fact is this: You must terrorize the criminal morons in our midst, or they will terrorize you.

The Irish have a proverb, "Make yourself a mouse and the cat will ate you." That's a true saying. Well, make yourself a mild, timorous, shrinking person, afraid of even the thought of a criminal's blood, and some day a criminal will demand your blood—and get it.

That article, published three days before the holding of a Federal general election, is rather a bad give-away for the God-fearing, more-holy-than-thou element in our midst. The fact of the matter really is, that the Sydney *Evening News* is not a newspaper at all. It is simply a Botany Bay vent-pipe—an honestly vertical and direct, historic sewer-ventilator; out of which the mephitic effluvium of old New South Wales—the slave-haunted, whip-driven New South Wales that Charles Darwin shuddered over, in 1836—periodically escapes. For we have a rich and an influential moron-element in Australia still, you see—an element, all-powerful in finance, owning all the rich but artificially-sterile lands around such country centres of decrepitude as Bathurst; and an element, too, notoriously weak in its resistance against its own emotions; which longs for the return of the cringing, God-and-the-Gallows days of 1836. Hence the fine Botany-Bay flavour of this new development in Australian Episcopal religion. Hence the dead silence of Bishops Long and



Crotty about the infamous feudal coal-regime of multi-millionaire John Brown; and hence, equally their roaring, passionately-rhetorical vehemence against Russia and that German unpleasantness-in-excess, Herr Karl Marx.

It is a fine thing for the British Empire, is it not, to have such a fine and hearty, hemp-flavoured "Christian" revival booming in New South Wales, in 1929? It helps British export trade enormously, does it not, to have our journalistic sewer-pipes belching out the social hate and accumulated horror-gas of 1836, when the Lash and the Hangman were lord of all; instead of clamouring for the settlement of Australia's empty lands at the present day? For Bathurst, mark you, as I have herein described it, is only a sample of a thousand similar centres of economic death and desolation, scattered over the whole vast 3,000,000 square miles of landlords' muddle, sloth and waste, that we call Australia. I was born, myself, within a few miles of such another squatters' Paradise as Bathurst, and I write whereof I personally know. I am the voice of the real Australia—of that implacably upright, free-thinking and free-speaking Australia, born of the Bush and its hard tasks—which dares to stand up before the world, and tell the truth.

To be, or not to be—that is our question. To be, as a coherent, intelligent, self-respecting nation, I say that we Australians must unitedly face these accursed Anglican Bishops, and must put them in their proper place. That place is in Russia. Since they are so fond of it; since they spend such an enormous proportion of their time in mouthing about alleged conditions in the land of the Soviet, and since they have nothing whatever to say about real conditions, which notoriously exist here, and which help, industrially, to poison life at its very source in Australia, in heaven's name let all these maudlin maffickers of Bishops get off to Russia, and be real Mad Mullahs against Communism there.

I, for one, am prepared to subscribe liberally to a fund for the transportation of all Anglican Bishops whatsoever from Australia. They are a curse. I am also prepared to throw-in all of the Roman Catholic, Theosophical, and other cross-clutching holy bishops as a make-weight. For they are a super-curse. And yet, curiously enough, in that very same issue of the Sydney Evening News, which expounded the Gallows-gospel of "Hardwood and Hemp," we read that a certain English President of the Congregational Union—to wit, the Rev. Rhondda Williams—in delivering an address to the Assembly at Norwich, had pointed out the utter futility of the present "Christian" conception of God.

"If God really blesses the use of such things as poison gas, boiling oil, incendiary bombs, treachery, lying, and bayonets," we are told he said, "then the world would do better by cursing God than by worshipping Him."

Amen to that! Why cannot such a man as the Rev. Rhondda Williams, I ask, be sent out here, in exchange for the tons of holy episcopal slush that we are prepared to export from Australia? As Galilee said, squinting impenitently, sideways, at his hog-faced friend the Pope: "The world does move, in spite of all."

It is good to have men still alive like this far-off Mr. Rhondda Williams, courageous for the truth. Even here in Australia, within the solemn and stupid ranks of the Anglican Church itself, we have one or two such—brave fellows like the Rev. Charles Walker Chandler, now of Auckland, New Zealand—who stand up to our coal-baronism like heroes. "A British Empire that rests upon a soup-kitchen basis is a bastard of a concern," says the true local Briton,

Chandler. Amen again to that. Given a few more social leaders of the Rhondda Williams, Charles Walker type, and the British Empire itself might begin to look a bit less like a fully-developed photograph of Hell, and a bit more worthy of the presence of a possibly-returning Jesus Christ?

JOHN MCCRASHAN.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

## A New Volume of Essays.

IN spite of the hurry and skurry of modern life, a tremendous amount of reading nowadays must take place. There seem to be many more magazines and journals published than ever before, and I read recently that something like 2,000 novels have been published this year in this country alone. There are always big waiting lists for a large number of these novels in the libraries, and I, for one, blame nobody for being a fiction lover. It cannot be said that there is an equally large public for the essay, however, and if a man loves both fiction and *belles-lettres*, then he ought to be encouraged for the essay holds a high and distinguished place in literature. To know the thoughts and opinions of a distinguished man, to learn his loves and foibles and faults, to enter his inner self, so to speak, and become his confidant—that, very often is the privilege of the essay reader; and in addition, he can see how his author *writes*, can judge the music of his language as well as the logic of his ideas. For the great essay must combine both, must at once show learning and wide reading, must be great-hearted and generous, tolerant and lovable.

A man like Montaigne looks out on the world and his brothers and asks, "What do I know?" Well, judged by modern standards, he may not know much; judged by his peers he is one of the greatest, if not the greatest of all essayists, a great humanist and a great sceptic, and no man can consider his education complete if he has not read what the wise old Frenchman—almost a contemporary of Shakespeare—can tell him of life and its duties, its hopes and fears. But since Montaigne, there has been a wealth of essays of an extraordinarily high standard on almost every subject under the sun and it is not too much to contend that, to the essay we owe the tremendous impetus given to social duties and humanitarianism generally as well as the wonderful advance in scholarship and culture which make the nineteenth century one of the most important in the history of the world. Whether it is the gentle, lovable Lamb, the controversial Macaulay, the ethical Emerson, the logical Mill or many others whose names are household words, the lover of literature—and humanity—owes them a debt of gratitude not only because of the pleasant hours he has spent in their company, but also because they have, sternly or whimsically, pointed out to him the path of duty or fortified him in the fight against the hellish powers of reaction.

And with the noble band of essay-writers, high up in the list, must be placed George William Foote. Some of us only know him, as Mr. Chapman Cohen says in his fine and appreciative preface to the volume just published by the Pioneer Press\* "as the uncompromising and fearless leader of British Free-thought." For Foote hated bigotry and intolerance and injustice with a fierce and deadly hatred, all the more deadly because, when he liked, he had the pen of Voltaire with its biting satire and contempt. For

\* *Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays*, by G. W. Foote, 1929. The Pioneer Press. Price 3s. 6d. net.



this side of his work *Bible Romances* remains a magnificent example—though behind all his deadly criticism of the supernatural claims of the Bible, lies an almost encyclopedic knowledge of biblical criticism and apologetics.

But Foote was a lover of literature at its highest and best. He would attack Christianity with all the weapons at his command, but he was a man and a brother with the lover of good writing. No matter what a man's religion was, if only he could write, then Foote was his champion—of literature, of course. It is a pity that Foote, the literary man, the artist in words, the finely sensed critic, the Shakespearean enthusiast, is not better known. What a right royal literary editor he would have made for one of the big London dailies! How precious, because of his unerring instinct for the great things in literature, would have been his reviews and comments "from the literary table"!

It was a happy thought of Mr. Cohen to gather together fifteen of Foote's essays dealing with books and writers—and one artist as well. Here are some of the famous appreciations and studies of Shakespeare, the man and the humanist. Here is reprinted the well-known article on George Meredith—whose critical acumen had singled out Foote as a master when he was boycotted by almost every other English writer—which first appeared in the *English Review*. Here are other famous essays dealing with Burns and Shelley and Emerson. Foote wrote about them because he loved their writings and because he felt he could say something that was new and was worth saying, and the reader was never disappointed. Moreover, you cannot open a page without finding in it the evidence of very wide reading not merely of acknowledged classics, but of many other writers whose fame has not yet reached the heights. Foote had a perfect genius for apt quotation, and his essays are sprinkled all over with them in prose and poetry—and they are quotations which make one thirst for more.

The one artist to whom Foote devotes an essay is Kate Greenaway. Her work—gems of drawings of little girls and boys dressed in those delightful "kiddy" costumes so dear to the hearts of our parents, or rather grandparents—was famous all over Victorian households, and no one would have ever associated scepticism in religion with it. Yet, as Mr. Spielman's book on Kate Greenaway proves, she had very little belief and living in such a period, and producing such artistic work, it is all the more surprising. Foote says that Freethinkers "will be glad to know that such a delightful artist was not one of the branded sheep in the penfolds of faith." It is a typical phrase from the pen of Foote, and I am tempted to quote a thousand. His writing looks easy because it is easy to read, but try it yourself . . . It seems hopeless to compete with a master of language like Foote.

Like many other of his admirers, I have always regretted he did not write a complete book on Shakespeare—"his beloved Shakespeare," as Mr. Cohen says. Failing that, the essays in this volume will give the reader an idea of how well Foote knew and understood the greatest of all writers, the master of drama, of poesy, of language, as well as of the human heart. And his point of view was not merely the point of view of a literary man, but also that of a Freethinker, and that means a great deal.

*Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays* should make an ideal Xmas present. The younger generation of Freethinkers may not know much of the work of George William Foote. We want his memory to be kept green. He devoted his life to the cause of Freethought and his work is our legacy.

If you want to read Foote, the fighting Freethinker, *Bible Romances* is your book, and if you want him as a master of prose and of criticism, of logic and of wit, get *Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays*. Foote never did better work than in this finely printed and compact volume.

H. CUTNER.

## The Future of Nakedness.

"The nakedness of Woman is the work of God."  
William Blake.

"Some day perhaps a new moral reformer, a great apostle of purity will appear among us, having his scourge in his hand, and enter our theatres and music-halls to purge them.

"It is not nakedness he will chase out, it will more likely be clothes."—Havelock Ellis.

ONE of the worst features of Christianity is that it teaches man and woman to be ashamed of their bodies.

My wife has not been allowed to walk into old historic churches with me when she was bareheaded, although the device of placing a handkerchief on her head has satisfied the custodians.

During recent years there have been weak-minded priests who have forbade women to appear in church with bare arms or with skirts reaching only to the knees.

In this Christian country, theatres and newspapers and films and novels are successful according to the degree of nakedness in which they can depict women.

All this is wrong, for apart altogether from religion, a nation which blushes at the thought of a naked body, and which at the same time has a sly delight in attempting to raise the veil is decadent.

The religious fanatics would cure such a state of affairs by covering more and more of the body, but wise reformers would cure the evil by revealing more and more of the body, and so removing the mystery.

One of the best arguments for the reform of our ideas on bodies is that contained in John Langdon Davies' *Future of Nakedness*, published by Noel Douglas at 2s. 6d. paper and 3s. 6d. cloth.

The book begins with the story of Lady Godiva, and a stressing of the point that the total number of inhabitants of the city was about 100 when Godiva rode through the city. The author considers that Godiva did not feel shame, the person who felt shame was her husband who had his clothes on.

Peeping Tom is described as the only man in Coventry who did not refuse to look upon the most beautiful sight of his lifetime. To-day nakedness is a crime in all civilized countries and a sin in all Christian congregations.

The author tells some amazing stories of religious and worldly prudery. There was a little girl who, on her first night at a convent school went to take her bath and lay in the water splashing. A nun entered the room and blushed with shame on seeing the naked body, for in that school it was the custom for a girl to bathe while she wore her chemise, partly because it was indecent for a girl to see her own body and partly because the delicate susceptibilities of her Guardian Angel might be upset.

Then there was the school where all the boys at the school baths had to wear "scarlet fig leaves." And a story of a weakly boy whose parents encouraged him to take sun baths in the garden, and who were summoned by the next door neighbours because a woman's health had been undermined by the sight. The author has seen a girl removed from a seaside beach in America because she bathed without wearing stockings!



That we should all be healthier without clothes is obvious. Here is a description of a boy: "the knees are larger than the hips, the elbow larger than the shoulder, the feet have become transformed into shapeless sores, the stomach is a swollen bag of poison, the hands are a suppurating mass of filth, the head is almost hairless."

This same child after some months treatment of the sun cure is shown as strong and as healthy as any child could be. There are other cases quoted.

The usual objection to no clothes is that it would be too wet and cold. As the human skin is a fine waterproof the too wet argument is foolish. Regarding the too cold argument, all that one needs to say is that savages living in much colder climes than ours are naked, and savages living where the sun beats down pitilessly in the day, and where frosts seize the earth at night are also naked. It is all a matter of custom.

Another objection is that not all of us have bodies which we would care to show to the public gaze. Admittedly this is true so long as we hold our present views, but in the name of honesty and sincerity it is better that we should appear as we are, than that we should pose as graceful or beautiful when we are not.

After all an ugly man or woman does not hide his or her face when walking in the streets; we judge people by other things than their personal appearance, and the opinion of anyone who condemns an ugly person merely for ugliness is not worth having.

The same applies to our bodies. My legs may be like drumsticks and my neighbour's paunch like a sack, and my friend's backbone may be as distinct as a row of buttons, but what would it matter?

I do not stay indoors because I am cross-eyed, neither does my neighbour, because he has three chins, nor does my friend, because his ears are large and his nose bulbous.

Finally, the sight of bare human bodies would not lead to fearful orgies. I can walk along a street crowded with women, and yet never feel desirous of kissing one. If we were all naked, I could walk down the same street and yet never feel my desires mounting.

The author deals drastically with the prudery of the early Fathers of the Church, and with that of Gladstone, who was distressed to report that the heroes of the Trojan War were often washed by damsels.

In one place Mr. Davies tells a delicious tale showing how standards of morals vary throughout the world. When some Jesuit missionaries went to China they displayed some pictures of female saints. The Chinese were horrified at these, which they took to be pornographic exhibitions, because in China it was considered obscene for a woman's neck or foot to be exposed to view.

Missionaries indeed appear throughout this book as prudish old women, but rarely has a missionary been shown in such a light as is Stanley, the rescuer of Livingstone. He once made a speech at Manchester, in which he told how the negroes on the Congo were naked. He told his audience that if the negroes could be persuaded to adopt European dress and cover their nakedness it would mean a demand yearly for three hundred and twenty million yards of Manchester cloth. "The ministers of Christ," he concluded, "are zealous to bring them, the poor benighted heathen into the Christian fold." The business men of Manchester rose to their feet and cheered him to the echo.

In this year, 1884, the Chamber of Commerce issued the speech as a pamphlet!

I have by no means mentioned all the delicious bits in the book. Space forbids, but I must refer Free-

thinkers to that section of the book which discusses whether nakedness would destroy Christianity.

"There was a time when Christianity condemned even war . . . But in spite of such strong confessions of faith as the Sermon on the Mount, history is everywhere stained purple with the blood shed by the armies of the Prince of Peace . . ."

In the same way Mr. Davies considered that when the church sees that the nudity movement is spreading it will open its arms and receive it, and every nudity club will have its own chaplain.

"NECHELLS."

## Acid Drops.

We have every sympathy with a Christian who tells a lie for God's sake, because we have always in mind the strong traditional pull in the direction of lying inherited by every Christian. One must bear this in mind when considering a statement from the *Liverpool Post's* "Special Commissioner" in the course of a couple of columns in defence of religion.

Heine is one of my intellectual gods. His wit, his humour, his grip of language, and of thought, were guides on my intellectual highway. Yet, even he led me astray in my youth, and, through him my feet were first led into the dark valley of doubt. He is a man of terrible images. Describing a phase of mind in France, he said, "God was conducted to the frontier."

On another occasion he wrote a phrase whose blasphemy is almost unrivalled: "Hear ye the bell ring!—Kneel! for they carry the sacrament to a dying God!" Yet this same man, a Jew by blood, christened a Lutheran who became an Atheist, then a Christian, and who said with his dying breath: "God will forgive me; it is His trade," also wrote a peerless description of the introduction of Christianity:—

"The Gods of Greece sat on high, Olympus at their feet; they listened to the music of Apollo, and drank the nectar served by Ganymede and Hebe, with Minerva the Goddess of Wisdom, the sole one present armed with helmet, spear, and shield, looked on calmly. Suddenly a pale Jew crowned with thorns, bearing a Cross on His shoulder, entered the banquet-room and threw His Cross on the festal table, and then the high gods melted away until they became only a memory."

I am quoting from memory.

Not so bad! But how unfortunate it is that this good Christian's memory did not carry well to recall the fact Heine was no Christian when he died, that the profession of Christianity was made only to escape the disabilities imposed upon him by his Jewish birth, and that the celebrated "God will forgive me, it is his trade," was not uttered when he was dying, but as a profound satire upon the whole Christian conception of God. It is also unfortunate this special commissioner did not remember that the quotation about the gods of Greece falling before the advance of Christ is completed by the remark that the world grew grey at the advance of Christ, and his remark "Our time—and it begins with the crucifixion of Christ—will be regarded as the great period of illness of humanity." What strange—or convenient memories Christian writers have!

Only a Christian writer catering for an ignorant public, and sheltered behind a friendly editor who takes care that no exposure shall be made in his columns would dare to present Heine as a Christian dying in the faith and trusting God to forgive him. Let any one consult Heine's *Germany till the Time of Luther*, and it will be enough. We open the volume almost at random and drop on the following passage:—

The real idea of Christianity spread with great rapidity over the whole Roman realm like an infectious disease, and the whole Middle Ages endured its agonies, sometimes in one delirium of fever, and anon in death-like exhaustion, and we moderns still feel its cramps



The Bishop of London has written a book *Why am I a Christian?* It is rather kind-hearted of him to ask other people about his own affairs, but we cannot do better than give an extract from a review of the book appearing in the *Times Literary Supplement* :—

Mission preaching of the emotional type common a generation ago, is now under a cloud. The spread of education, and a general if ill-defined reluctance to accept the Christian Faith without question have made it more necessary, and more profitable, to expound than to exhort.

This almost looks like a black eye for the Bishop, and the reviewer, without knowing it, asserts that education is fatal to an easy acceptance of the gospel.

Religion has now another foe with which to contend. Loss of faith is put down by Sir Thomas Oliver to the mechanization of mankind. It would therefore follow that we must scrap all modern growth of machinery in order to allow religion to live. This is really a delightful criticism, and it is what we have been saying for years. In an age when few could read, and those few chiefly priests, religion could sit in the saddle with comfort. I, I argue, in an illuminating passage, neatly summarizes the effect of machinery on the operator. He writes "The practice of the modern work-shop teaches the wage-worker scientific determinism, without his needing to pass through the theoretical study of the sciences." That was written some years ago; Sir Thomas Oliver is nearly up to date.

The Bishop of Coventry thinks that church-yards should be pleasant places with lawns and flower-beds, and no mounds. They ought not to be made too pleasant; else the dead will be reluctant to "rise again" in the manner affirmed by Holy Writ.

"The way in which all kinds of people have given money for the parks has taken my breath away," says a delighted Mr. George Lansbury. Obviously, then, the irreligion of the people has not adversely affected their feelings of generosity. This fact, puzzling though it may be to the pious, is not unaccountable to the non-pious student of human psychology. Charitable giving has nothing whatever to do with religion. It is not created or engendered by religion, but is simply an ordinary instinct of social human nature. What religion and the parsons do is to give people false notions concerning the origin and nature of the instinct, and to exploit it. Other persons know this as well as Free-thinkers. But has anyone ever heard of experts in psychology publicly declaring it? That is simply "not done," y'know, in the best intellectually timid circles.

*John Bull* thinks that national museums and art galleries, being educational institutions, should be open when working people are best able to use them. As regards Sunday, our contemporary says :—

Sunday is the one day of freedom for the mass of the people. What is the attitude of the museum and gallery authorities? A generation ago there was a prolonged agitation for Sunday opening, and in a grudging manner the principle was recognized. Even to-day it is looked upon by the authorities as a privilege and not as a right. Not one of the national institutions in London is open on Sunday mornings or on Sunday evenings.

Our friend has forgotten to add that the chief opposition to Sunday opening of such places comes from the churches and their clients—with the Christian Bible to back them up. Their point of view is that a truly godly people ought not to have a craving for anything educational or cultural on a Sunday. If they do happen to have that craving, it must be suppressed and not indulged. To sum up—the museums and galleries are closed because of the Christian Bible. But *John Bull* doesn't offend its customers by saying so. Still, we appreciate the boldness of our contemporary in agitating now for something Freethinkers advocated forty years ago.

Mr G. K. Chesterton says :—

There is a great man who makes every man feel small. But the real great man is the man who makes every man feel great.

Meanwhile, we have never heard of a man being made to feel great by contact with paradox coiners, mental equilibrists, or persons who twist facts and truth to conform to the claims of a Church. Still, quite possibly they may have that effect on persons who are submerged in Romish truth.

Professor Macbride declares that, "our system of social services undermines the moral fibre of the people and unfits them for a hard life." Scarcely, the quaint Christian notion that certain persons or classes within the State are divinely ordained to live a "hard life" is still deflecting the thinking of some university gentlemen interested in economics or sociology. The Christian religion has a lot to answer for.

Says General Smuts : "The African is the only happy human I have come across. No other race is so good tempered, so care-free." This is, of course, quite probable. The poor benighted heathen is not troubled concerning whether he is "saved" or not, nor as to the ultimate destination of his immortal soul. Also, he is denied the Christian blessing of trying to disentangle the true and exact meaning of God's Holy Writ. So he may well be happy and care-free! Still, the Christian missionaries are doing their best to alter this regrettable state of affairs.

But for education, says the headmaster of Harrow, anything might have happened after the war. On the other hand, if pre-war education had been on right lines instead of being dominated by Christian influences, the war might never have happened.

Th Rev. Herbert Moore, a Nantwich Guardian, has proposed that the inmates of Nantwich workhouse shall be permitted beer at Christmas. He backed up his proposal with the remark—"it is an ancient heresy that the pleasures of the body are evil." The rev. gent is not quite correct. It is not "an ancient heresy"; it is an ancient Christian stupidity which would still be believed in, but for the fact of Freethought, criticism and ridicule.

According to the Archbishop of York, "the essence of education is the working of your mind into the subject and the subject into your mind." The impression we have of this dictum is that it is little more than advice to thoroughly memorize facts. True education is more than fact collection. This is a notion which seems to have escaped the notice of our pedagogic pundits—and bishops. The fact—collection type of education produces men of science—not scientific thinkers; it breeds "followers of print," and clients for the churches—not thinking men and women. To-day, more money is being spent on "education" than ever before; but the mental quality of the products of the schools is not noticeably improved. This suggests that our educationalists might profitably direct their attention to improving the quality of education rather than its quantity. And while doing this they might ignore the advice of bishops; for these are not, and never have been, interested in producing men and women whose thinking is vigorous and independent.

A pious writer says it is no crime to be poor. No, indeed. The poor are special favourites of God, according to Christ, and will receive compensation in heaven. The poor are wisely ordained by God in order to excite the feeling of pity among more fortunate citizens, and to enable his Churches to dole out charity, and thus justify the Churches' existence. The poor so very neatly fit into God's scheme of things, as revealed in Holy Writ, that by no possibility can it be a crime to be poor! Still, in these ungodly times, some people there are whose view is that it is a crime for a State to be so organized as to have any poor. But these people must be wrong, for nowhere in the Bible is poverty or the poor condemned.



## Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

### TENTH LIST OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £1,350 13s. 8d.; V. Jeans (China), £1; C.E.T., £2 2s.; Failsworth Secular Sunday School, £1 1s.; John Cheshire, per S.R.A.R., £1; G. O. Diver, 5s.; J. Widdowson (N.S.W.), 5s.; Margaret Taylor, 2s. 6d.; H. W., 10s.; J. Drayton, 5s.; Wm. Lawrence, 10s.; Diff. in Ex. on Canadian P.O., 8d.; W. K. Huth, 10s.; P. Goodwin, 2s. 6d.; Frank Hill, 5s.; Dr. Henry Farmer, £1 1s.; E. Bott, 2s. 6d.; Ernest Whitehorn, £2 2s.; Trust of Sir H.S.M., £50; F. R. and W. Winters, 10s.; Total to December 16, 1929, £1,412 7s. 10d.

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK,  
Hon. Secretary,  
"Hillfield," Burraton,  
Saltash, Cornwall.

This Fund will close on December 31.

Extracts from letters on page 813.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. RADCLIFF.—We quite agree with what you say as to the need for correcting the rubbish that gets about the "morality of Jesus." It is the Christian's last ditch, and its quality needs exposing.
- MR. N. PILLAI, a new subscriber, writes from Batavia, "I have found the issues of your journal illuminating and thought-provoking, and am glad that I have become a subscriber." We receive many similar letters from new readers. It should encourage friends to introduce the paper to quarters where it is not at present known.
- N. HERBERT.—You have us on the hip. Like yourself we have come across Freethinkers who, as you say, "know so much about religion, but are yet unable to answer all the questions Christians put to them. On the other hand we have come across very many Christians, who know so little about religion, quite ready to tell us all about it.
- S. HARRINGTON.—Thanks for cuttings. Perhaps the answer to your question is that Christianity has got hold of many good men, and their natures have been proof against the influence of their creed.
- W.H.S.—We do not radically disagree with your view of the state of the world, but feel rather more hopeful of the prospect ahead. It is not an easy task to eradicate the savage, and he breaks through the thin coating of civilization at the slightest opportunity. But the recognition that it is a break through must certainly be counted for righteousness.
- T. LONGWAX.—If you will send us the particulars Mr. Cohen will be pleased to advise you to the best of his ability. It is advisable to have two executors.
- I. THOMAS.—The retort of the Rev. Desmond Morse-Boycott that there are as many contradictions or failures in the medical profession as there are among the clergy is either very silly, or very artful. Doctors do not claim to work on the basis of a revelation from God, or under the guidance of an infallible church. What a contempt these parsons must have for their followers to fob them off with such shallow excuses for their own failures!
- A CORRESPONDENT who encloses a sample to enforce his query, asks us, "Why do fools write books?" The answer so far as we can see is, Because there are fools to read them. Earlier generations might have seen in this proofs of the marvellous manner in which Providence adapts one part of creation to another.
- H. G. WHITEHEAD.—Thanks for advice, but the conditions of the Trust prevents our taking advantage of it.

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

We again remind all whom it concerns of the Annual Dinner of the N.S.S., which is to take place at the Midland Grand Hotel on Saturday, January 18. The price of the tickets are 8s. each, which may be obtained from the General Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4. We advise early application for tickets, it will help in making the necessary arrangements.

With reference to the suggestion that a gathering of provincial friends who are attending the dinner should meet on either the Sunday or the Friday evening, we have heard from several who would be glad to take part, and should like to hear from others as early as possible. These things take some time to arrange, if they are to be done properly.

A very liberal supporter of the Freethought and other advanced movements has just placed with his trustees the sum of £5,000, the income of which is to be distributed as follows. During her lifetime, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner is to receive for her personal use the sum of £200, less income tax, leaving a net sum of £160. The balance of the income from the £5,000 is to be distributed among poor Freethinkers to be nominated by the Editor of the *Freethinker* and of the *Literary Guide*. On the death of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, the whole of the income will be distributed in the manner indicated above.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner wishes it to be understood that this money is not given her because she is a "necessitous person," but as the donor writes:—

From the respect and admiration in which I hold the memory of her great father, and as a slight acknowledgment in gratitude for what I owe to his influence upon my outlook and conduct of life.

Every Freethinker will appreciate this tribute to Charles Bradlaugh, and congratulate his daughter on so practical a testimony.

We really do not know whether Mr. Cohen can claim to have been the first to use the expression "clotted nonsense," but it has been attributed to him, and he has used it on several occasions as properly descriptive of much of the writing we have had to notice. However, a supplement is being issued to the great Oxford Dictionary, and the editors would like Mr. Cohen to tell them at what date he first used the expression, and the issue of the *Freethinker* in which it appeared, so that full reference may be given. Looking for it is like searching for a needle in a haystack, so perhaps some of our readers may be able to help in this matter. Some of them may be able to recall an article in which the expression occurs. If they can and will let us know we shall be obliged.

The report of the deputation which waited on the Home Secretary with reference to the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, has now been published by the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. The pamphlet include the Speeches by Mr. R. Sorrensen, M.P., Professor Graham Wallas, Canon Donaldson, and Mr. Chapman Cohen. The pamphlet may be obtained from this office, price one penny, by post three half-pence. Some useful work could be done by those interested taking a few copies for distribution among their friends.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti had a successful visit to Manchester, lecturing twice on Sunday in the Engineers' Hall. The audiences were good, but should be better still, considering the work put in by the local Branch. There were a number of questions at each lecture, varied by a harmless opponent at the evening session.

Our shop manager asks us to say that there has been a little delay in supplying orders for Mr. Cohen's *Theism or Atheism* through the copies being in the



hands of the binders. A delivery has just been made and the orders will, by the time this paragraph is in the hands of readers, be discharged. For some reason there has been quite a run on this book lately. It is this work of which a well known clerical dignitary wrote when he first appeared, that he would not relish the task of having to reply to it. If we may say so, it is a fairly complete covering of the old ground, both positive and negative.

Mr. Boyd Freeman has now issued a cheap edition of his book on *Priestcraft*, originally published at 6s. The price is now 1s. 6d., by post 1s. 8d. It may be obtained from the Pioneer Press.

Mr. Ona Melton, of the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. has issued a second edition of his *Prehistoric Man and His Ancestors*. There are eight plates, and, as we said on its first appearance the essay is written so simply and plainly that any average child of ten or twelve years of age may read it with interest, and it is not without attractions to those of a more advanced age. It is far more difficult to write for youth than for maturity, and we congratulate Mr. Melton on his successful effort. The pamphlet may be ordered through the Pioneer Press, 1s. post free.

*At Grips With War*, by Guy Aldred, consists of a series of reprinted articles, together with six appendices consisting of lengthy excerpts from Thomas More, Voltaire, Tolstoy and others. The whole is uncompromisingly anti-militaristic. The book is published by the Bakunin Press, Glasgow, Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d., Paper, 1s. post free.

In *Stray Leaves* (A. H. Stockwell, 2s. 6d.) Mr. Trevor Thornton-Berry has the material for a big book, but has satisfied himself with a little one. But in it he has managed to tread heavily on quite a number of popular idols, and so managed to interest those who agree with his point of view as well as those who dissent from it. We find ourselves alternately agreeing and disagreeing with Mr. Thornton-Berry's conclusions, and found ourselves interested in consequence. Thus, while we agree with him that one of the dangers of Democracy is the incitement it offers to politicians for the abandonment of principle, we find ourselves at issue with him on the "rationalizing" method he adopts in relation to religion in general and to Christianity in particular. In this direction the author appears to us to adopt the very dangerous method of reading into Christianity ideas which do not really belong to it. Once one lets go of the supernatural in Christianity there is nothing left on which to build a genuine religion. But whether dealing with religion or sociology Mr. Thornton-Berry is never dull, and has always his own point of view, and is not afraid to express it.

### The Christ.

Two thousand years, less now one hundred years,

Since that shrill cry which gave her Baby life :\*

His greeting to a scene of secret strife ;

And then, a brief span later, lo! her tears

At that great hear-sob, as the Moment nears

Of dissolution, with all anguish rife—

"My God! My God . . . !"—To her soft breast, the knife

That told of mocking gestures, heartless jeers!

End and Beginning! Mother sees them yet,

Man's short, short space of Time dividing them!—

The rosy Infant, nestling at her side,

In a quiet stable-room at Bethlehem;

And then the white Face of the Crucified,

Moon-washed, and all forlorn, on Olivet!

\* The birth-cry begins terrestrial life. Chemically speaking, the accumulation of carbon dioxide causes a reflex in the oblongata. Physiologically speaking, breathing begins in lungs as yet unused. Psychologically speaking, the child protests, and cries in the struggle. Death is the exhalation of the last breath from the lungs.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

## Cornwall and its Prehistoric Monuments.

THE picturesque and romantic county of Cornwall is interesting and instructive to the historian, the antiquary and the lover of scenery alike. The last retreat of the ancient Britons in the south to succumb to the Saxon invader, it remains one of the least visited of all the beautiful counties of our little isle set in the silver sea. On the map, the delectable Duchy immediately suggests a miniature Italy, and the Scilly Isles in the near distance mimic, on a tiny scale the island of Sicily lying to the south of the garden of Europe. A maritime region, Cornwall forms the south-western extremity of England, and the most southern section of the British Isles.

Between Treryn and Land's End a splendid mass of granite faces the ocean. This granite rock reappears in the lovely Scilly Isles, and tradition tells us that the intervening waves roll over a submerged land area named Lyonesse, which was once the scene of the Arthurian romances. Indeed, save where the streams wander to the sea, the coast is almost completely rock-bound, and the cliff scenery equals any in England.

The fisheries have long been famous. The surrounding seas abound in edible fish, and the mackerel and herring harvests supply London, and similar centres of population with huge quantities of fish. In bountiful seasons immense numbers of pilchards are "caught, cured, and exported" to Southern Europe, and furnish a favourite Lenten repast to Catholic communities.

The climate of the county with the crest of three feathers is genial, and frost and snow are rare visitors in its western regions. Consequently, its flora flourishes better than in any other part of Britain, and numerous exotic plants have been completely acclimatized in the Falmouth district. In the Scilly Isles themselves, the vegetation verges on the tropical and the gardens display both beauty and variety. The potato and the much derided broccoli yield abundant double crops each year.

The rich mineral mines of Cornwall have been worked from prehistoric times onwards. Probably the county was synonymous with the ancient Cassiterides of the Greeks and Phoenicians. Moreover, the widespread distribution of megalithic monuments seems to support the theory of Dr. Perry and Prof. Elliot Smith, that these stone structures were erected by seafaring peoples who visited, and perhaps occupied our island while exploiting the mineral and metal deposits of Cornwall and other counties.

Cornwall contains a far greater variety of valuable ores than any other part of Britain. Copper, tin, iron, lead, zinc, cobalt, silver, antimony, tungsten and arsenic have all been raised on a commercial scale. Some minerals of a unique character have been discovered, and even gold has been found, the largest nugget weighing, it is said, more than two ounces. Pitchblende is mined for the extraction of radium. There are important granite quarries near Penryn, and this hard rock forms the material of London and Waterloo Bridges, the docks of Chatham, and several other great works.

In recent times, however, mining has been greatly curtailed. The tin industry continues to provide practically all that is raised in Britain. Next in order of importance is Cornwall's celebrated china clay—kaolin—a species of decomposed granite. St. Austell is the centre of this industry, which furnishes the finest potter's clay in the world.

When motoring through the country one sees



little of the innumerable vestiges of ancient times so noticeable in secluded districts. Near the coast, especially in the country lying between Land's End and Penzance, these memorials are extremely abundant. As Mr. C. E. Vulliamy states in his brilliant if provocative volume, *Unknown Cornwall*, a splendidly illustrated production from the Bodley Head: "In the Land's End district, you are nearly always in sight of them: long stones, barrows, cairns, dolmens, circles, huts, ancient fortresses and fortified promontories. For many of us, the charm of Cornwall is most vividly manifested in these ancient stones . . . I am convinced that nothing is more distinctly and essentially a part of the impression which Cornwall makes on the minds of those who know her than the sense of venerable mystery which the prehistoric remains do certainly convey, even to the most heedless."

Many centuries ago some forgotten race erected stone avenues, circles, and other megalithic monuments in the Duchy. This race, perhaps later, blended with an invading people or may have deserted the country. The incoming stock, the earliest so-called Celts seem to have established a different form of sepulchral monument. A later invading people became the builders of stone dwellings protected by fortifications, while at a still later time in the shadowy age of the Christian saints, crosses, altars and holy wells were venerated or worshipped.

These large stone chambers—the dolmens—are formed by upright stones placed so as to fashion a square or oblong arrangement surmounted by a massive stone cover, or in a few instances, more than one cover or capstone. These structures represent prehistoric tombs in which the famous men of the tribe were buried with the ornaments, weapons and domestic utensils suitable to their rank. These sepulchres are termed "quoits" in Cornwall.

At Trevelth, one of the most imposing dolmens may be seen, while in West Penwith there are five fine specimens, although they have suffered severely from the defacement of time. And regarding the ancient memorials generally, it may be said that not only have they been worn by wind and weather, but unashamed Vandalism has materially hastened their ruin.

Archæologists differ in opinion concerning the use and meaning of the mysterious stone circles which characterize the Cornish landscape. Vulliamy conjectures that they commemorate the illustrious dead, although his attitude is frankly agnostic. "No man," he avers, "can read you the riddle of these stones. To some they are places of Druidic session; to others, sepulchral monuments, or temples, or observatories. In view of the fact that such circles belong to a period in which the supremest efforts were devoted to the burial and commemoration of the dead, the best founded assumption is that they were intended for some commemorative or funerary purpose." The writer himself has ever been impressed by a sense of the presence of some prehistoric mausoleum, when wandering amid the mysterious monuments at Avebury and Stonehenge, in the nearby county of Wiltshire.

Menhirs or standing-stones were long regarded as pillars representing the phallus. These long stones, placed perpendicularly in the earth, are extensively scattered in many lands. Whatever their single meaning, assuming they ever had one, they were undoubtedly at times associated with adoration and worship of the male organ of generation. Menhirs are strikingly common in Cornwall, and as Dr. Borlase noted long ago, their sacred character persisted after the conversion of Cornwall to the cult of Christ. "Many," he declares, "continued to worship these

stones, to pay their vows and devote their offerings at the places where these stones were erected, coming with their lighted torches, and praying for safety and success; and this custom we can trace through the fifth and sixth centuries, and even to the seventh, as will appear from the prohibitions of several Councils."

In the folk-lore of Wales, ancestor worship seems associated with the pillar cult. In some districts the legends suggest phallicism, but the spirits of the dead in the guise of departed heroes who haunt their vicinity point clearly to a cult of departed men. Again, it appears more than suggestive that: "Excavations made at or near the bases of these stones have revealed splinters of human bone, charcoal and burnt earth, pieces of flint, stone-covered pits in which were placed funerary urns, and other relics of a like kind."

In late summer, when the wilder parts of Cornwall are overgrown with the luxuriant bramble, briar, and bracken-fern, many of the minor monuments lie hidden or obscured amid their vegetable environment. These archaic memorials are therefore best observed in winter time, when the pageant of summer has passed away. Multitudinous as these prehistoric relics still are, they represent but a fraction of their former greatness. Monuments of priceless importance to the antiquary now form part of stone hedges, mural structures, and other modern utilities. Many silent and deserted resting-places of the nameless dead have been adapted to serve as shelters for swine, sheep and cattle. And a shrewd observer noted that "many a megalithic pig-sty is more than suggestive of a sepulchral origin."

The uplands of West Penwith are the sites of prehistoric hill-forts. One famous fortress, Chûn Castle is truly described as "one of the most wonderful though neglected antiquities in the kingdom." These ruins consist of two concentric walls of granite, and the general scheme of defence is eminently scientific. But it is uncertain whether these are not later improvements of an even earlier and more primitive rampart. Many other solitary and silent relics remain that have long awaited archæological investigation. Perhaps some of the more scientific successors of Aubrey, Borlase, and Sir Walter Scott's antiquary, Jonathon Oldbuck, may in the immediate future discover the keys that will unlock the guarded chambers in which lie hidden the secrets of a remote, mysterious, and ever fascinating past.

T. F. PALMER.

### A Question of Terminology.

BRADLAUGH, when taxed with the great amount of misunderstanding that surrounded the term "Atheist," pithily replied that this very fact provided an excellent reason for continuing to use it; in which view Bradlaugh was, to my thinking, right, because this term alone gave an unequivocal indication of the position for which he was fighting. He could not have diminished, but, on the other hand, could only have increased, the misunderstanding of which his advisers complained, by the adoption of some alternative word from the ample terminology then available; and this because, in the list from which he had to make a selection, all terms that did not fail entirely to define his position at best conveyed only an anemic or attenuated impression of it. In the present article I wish to contend that, in the case of the word "Materialism," as used by Mr. Cohen, the analogy with Bradlaugh's case breaks down; because, when we look around for some term that will obviate the misunderstanding at present surrounding "Materialism," we find, or are able to compile, an expression which not only indicates with precision the fundamental issue on which Mr. Cohen is fighting, but harbours, in addition,



a direct and striking challenge to his adversaries: And this expression is "Universal Determinism." I make so bold as to suggest that the new term might with profit be brought to the front in such controversies as that which we have recently enjoyed between Mr. Cohen and Professor Eddington, and that it would make a useful and substantial phrase round which to hang the structure of the Freethought case in its philosophic aspect.

It may occur to many readers, at this point, to ask the question, "Why universal?" feeling, as they may, that the word "Determinism" already carries with it, for those who rightly understand the matter, the force of universality. And to this I will answer, "Because this very force of universality, together with its philosophic consequences, is the one element about Determinism that people appear least able to appreciate, and the element, therefore, that is least likely to be included in the popular conception of the word." For this reason, then, and further, because this matter of universality is the crux of the whole Freethought argument against gentlemen such as Professor Eddington, it is claimed that the risk of redundancy is well merited in this instance; that the term "Universal Determinism" should stand; and that it will lose nothing by thus rendering explicit what is at once a crucial issue and a challenge. That "Materialism" is widely misunderstood is evinced, if by nothing else, by the fact that Mr. Cohen found himself under the necessity of writing *Materialism Re-stated*; and, all considered, the misunderstanding is not difficult to explain. Those who, in the historic conflict between Naturalism and Religion, ranged themselves on the side of the former, found a most acceptable and, in those days, apparently comprehensive doctrine in the theory of the atomic constitution of the universe. The more profoundly philosophic basis of pure experience was not adopted as the "material" out of which a scientific universe might be constructed, because, not only was this conception not adequately developed in current philosophy, but the almost exclusively physical character of earlier science tended to obscure, when it did not altogether inhibit, whatever thought was glimpsing or grouping outside the range of atomic conceptions. In parenthesis, I may say that I believe Mr. Cohen has been chiefly responsible for the emphasis now laid upon the conception of experience as the irreducible basis of thinkable existence; a conception which, like many great thoughts, may seem very obvious once our attention is directed to it, but which, nevertheless, I have always regarded as something in the nature of a philosophic inspiration.

That men who, fundamentally, were merely naturalistic thinkers should come to be coupled, and in the end to couple themselves, with a particular naturalistic theory of cosmology was only to be expected, and the materialists were thus dubbed the champions of the atomic universe; from which state of popular impression it was not a far cry to the identification of materialism as a doctrine with the theory of the material constitution of the universe. Mr. Cohen himself would be the last to deny that this interpretation has been shared by some of the foremost scientists of the last century. Both Tyndall and Clifford discussed Materialism in this view; and Carveth Read, Gröte Professor of Philosophy in the University of London, wrote in 1908 under the same impression. We cannot therefore call Professor Eddington to task for disclosing a similar outlook upon this philosophic question.

At the same time it must be admitted that Mr. Cohen's method of going to work in elucidating the meaning of Materialism is not open to question. It is the historical method, based upon the principle, so aptly stated by Auguste Comte, that "No conception can be understood except through its history." And what Mr. Cohen has done is simply to go back into the history of philosophy to a point immeasurably beyond the confusions of the last century. By doing this, he tells us, we will find that the fusion of Materialism as a doctrine with contemporary theories of matter is a historical accident, and therefore non-essential in tracing out the original and permanent import of the materialistic philosophy. To cite the authorities instanced above is not therefore to mass their opinions against the weight of Mr. Cohen's

conclusions, but rather to show that these conclusions, legitimate though they be in the strictest scholarship, do not in any sense represent a generally acknowledged point of view. To avoid the confusion that was bound, therefore, to follow whenever Mr. Cohen discussed philosophy with those of his contemporaries who had not read *Materialism Re-stated*, a writer in the *Freethinker* recently suggested the adoption of the term "Neo-Materialism" on Mr. Cohen's part; a course which appears well enough grounded until we remember that it would have quired as much time and editorial space to define what Neo-Materialism was, as it takes at present to explain what Materialism is not. And that is why I venture the suggestion that, without receding from his present interpretation of Materialism, should the question arise, Mr. Cohen would greatly clarify and facilitate controversy by fighting under the formal banner of "Universal Determinism"; for, though this is not in itself identical with the philosophy of Materialism, it is nevertheless the philosophic foundation from which spring all the logical consequences that embody that doctrine. The attitude I envisage is that of a man who says, "Set aside all ambiguous discussion of Materialism, and I will take my stand, if you please, on a question of Universal Determinism. Then you will see where it inevitably leads to, and in the end I shall be advocating my Materialism without having so much as used the word."

Finally, this is not the only recommendation for the new term. It is, in the first place, explicit and, as far as can be, self-explanatory. It is definite, unequivocal, superlative and uncompromising. It leaves no opening for prevarication, no road for retreat. To utter it is to utter a philosophic challenge that few can misunderstand; a challenge, moreover, that Freethought is willing to stand by. All the energy that has hitherto been diverted in clearing up confusions regarding Materialism, could be utilized in developing and sustaining the position of Universal Determinism. And this should not be a difficult task; for if Mr. Cohen's view be the right one, to take a stand upon this foundation is to base philosophy on the conditions of human thought itself. MEDICUS.

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### American Notes.

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#### A NEW YORK PARSON BOOSTS HIS CHURCH.

Dr. Lyman Abbott has been telling the readers of the *Review of Reviews* (U.S.A.), what a wonderful man he is, and what a marvel is St. Margaret's Church, New York, where he preaches. "At the altar rails one Sunday, ten races knelt together." Dr. Abbott is of the Bishop Barnes type, progressive—as Christians profess progress.

Dr. Abbott never "proselytes," Jews and Roman Catholics who come to him for help are "helped to re-attach themselves where they belong." (This does not sound very hospitable: it is like telling needy visitors to "get the hell out of here").

Boy Scouts, Y.M. & Y.W.C.A., City Missions and all sorts of agencies help to fill Dr. Abbott's church, and he is very optimistic about the future. The Federal Council boasts of having "federated" 22 million church members. The population of the United States being 122 millions, it would appear as if optimism might be deferred until the odd 100 million had been "touched."

The Census of Religious Bodies (official) reports that the Roman Catholics claim 18 million members. All the other religions, including Protestants, Greeks, Mormons, Mennonites, Spiritualists, Unitarians, Theosophists and Amarna (Communist) Societies, total 36 millions. Dr. Abbott has had to institute all sorts of secular aids, entertainments, educational classes, industrial organizations, peace movements and even movie, talkie and radio to conserve one church in New York. A few years ago most of the churches were filled by believers who objected to all these worldly adjuncts. Even to-day half the Christians enumerated in the census regard Dr. Abbott and this church as "procurers to the lords of hell."



## A PACIFIST BISHOP.

Bishop Paul Jones, of Ohio, speaks out bravely and frankly against the growing jingoism of America. He objects to the general worship of the Star and Stripes, but particularly in schools where considerable pressure is put on children to pay a reverence to the "Flag," hitherto given only to the Cross or the Bible. "This country," he says, "has two religions—Nationalism and Christianity. It is impossible to worship at both altars."

Freethinkers are not prone to idolatry of either kind, but these worthy religionists can always be trusted to confuse the issues where their faith is concerned. There never has been any kind of obstacle to the worship of the narrowest kind of Nationalism and Christianity simultaneously.

Political and international questions must be judged on their merits, and to do this requires a knowledge of science and history. Religion confuses judgment, it cannot possibly help. It adds prejudice and loads the dice against a sensible solution. This is indisputable in the case of disputes between Christian and non-Christian races. In the late World War the Christians on each side were indistinguishable from the fiercest fanatics of their cause.

## LO THE POOR ATHEIST.

The *Chicago Journal of Commerce* naturally is concerned that Russia should officially deny the existence of whatever God the *Journal of Commerce* happens to believe in. How terrible it seems to the *Chicago Journal*—published within a bomb's throw of a church where recently two worshippers were murdered, and a synagogue where the congregation was held up by armed bandits. The *Journal* is particularly sad to think that even Lenin, being dead, is really dead according to the Atheist belief. Presumably the *Journal* would be happier if Lenin had begun an eternity of hell-fire torture. Stepanoff Skvortsoff, too, who founded an Atheist University, in Leningrad, said:—

If there is no God or heaven or purgatory or hell, and Epicurus and Stepanoff Skvortsoff are both as extinct as General Custer's horse, how shall Stepanoff Skvortsoff plume himself on his posthumous glory? Little does it profit him that the anti-religious university in Leningrad is the Stepanoff Skvortsoff University. And do the "300 students, forty-seen of them women," who drink eagerly at the Skvortsoffian spring, derive a mighty advantage from contemplation of the honour paid to the inanimate matter that was once Stepanoff Skvortsoff? Do they reflect that if with such superlative zeal they diffuse the gospel of anti-religion, for them too there may some day be erected an anti-religious university, honouring their dead and meaningless bones along with those of Stepanoff Skvortsoff and Stepanoff Skvortsoff's dog?

How horrible, to think that when we die, we shall have no hell to go to.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## Forbidden Fruit.

On the tree top there hangs a ripe, sweet plum,  
Far up beyond my reach;  
And I, who have the gift of angel speech,  
Must remain dumb;  
I may not speak of that which hurts my heart;  
Such fruit and this my watering mouth are set apart.  
All the world's history bids me not to eat,  
Forbids me climb  
(The lemon and the lime  
In plenty lie about my feet);  
The synod of the gods would stir in wrathful action,  
Should I make this infraction.  
The jealous Juno and grave Pallas cold  
Would me condemn  
Should I partake of fruit that is not mine;  
Yet, maybe, were the foam-horn Venus told—  
If boldly I could pluck her garment's hem—  
She would instruct the little god of wine  
To drown in vinous torrents this my dumb desire,  
And quench, what she has roused, a hopeless fire.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

## Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

A few extracts from, and comments on letters received:—

E. Kirton wishes his donation had been "fifty times greater, for a more deserved Testimonial is unthinkable." He hopes superstition will be swept away, as it will be, if the leaders and the rank and file continue as they have done since he became a reader of the *Freethinker*—forty years ago.

W. Milroy sends "a little token of respect for Mr. Cohen. He and Mr. Foote have kept me interested for over thirty years."

Aug. Danielsson says he hopes his "donation will not be despised," although he is well aware it is a very poor compensation for all the enjoyment and mental satisfaction he has derived from Mr. Cohen's lectures and writings.

W. P. S. Murray says: "I hope you will be successful in raising a good sum of money for so good a purpose."

Wm. J. Lamb writes: "To subscribe to this is not only a pleasure, but an honour. I trust you are in no indecent haste to close."

C.E.T. says: "I wish I could multiply this many times over; it would not be enough."

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School send: "As an appreciation and in happy memories of his visits to Failsworth."

[Good Old Failsworth!]

I have to acknowledge fraternal and kindly wishes and greetings from Freigeistige Vereinigung der Schweiz (Zürich).

G. O. Diver hopes the Testimonial will reach a high amount, and says: "Although free from the horrors of my teaching in childhood directly—I shall carry indirectly the scars consequent on that teaching."

[Our friend even carries a "scar" in his initials!]

H. W. sends "as an appreciation and expression of admiration for a man who has used his wonderful ability to bring about a greater liberty and keener sense of justice between members of the human race."

Wm. Lawrence writes: "I can add my tribute to the many others you have received as to the great value of Mr. Cohen to the Freethought Cause. For myself, I can say that what measure of intellectual sanity I possess is due, in very great measure to Mr. Cohen's influence."

I again desire to thank all those who have written so kindly and appreciatively of our efforts. May we all meet one day!

I have just received a letter from a Christian, who writes: "Come, Come! You will have to get a move on to get £2,000 for Mr. Cohen by Christmas. I'm rather surprised the money is coming in so slowly. Infidels evidently don't seem very grateful for services rendered over many years by Mr. Cohen." He then goes on to refer to the Christian way and quotes Christ and St. Paul—"It is more blessed to give than to receive!" There is no answer to that challenge!"

Evidently we are being watched! Yet some are never tired of preaching "Blessed be ye poor," and of glorifying "the soul of man who had not where to lay his head."  
W.J.W.E.

The pickaxe is already laid to the foundation of the church tower.—*Richard Jefferies.*

Subjective immortality based on altruism is superior to an objective resurrection in which egoism is supreme.  
*Auguste Comte.*

He that speaks against his own reason, speaks against his own conscience.—*Jeremy Taylor.*



## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### MATERIALISM AND A CRITIC.

SIR,—So far, Mr. Boyd Freeman has proved one thing very clearly, that *Materialism Re-stated* is by no means clear to him. The trouble is that he cannot get beyond the necessarily vague terms that Mr. Cohen, in common with all of us, must use. Nobody can possibly have any idea of even such an exceptionally well-defined position as that advanced in *Materialism Re-stated*, if he will seize on the wrong possible meaning of terms whose context plainly indicates the right one.

For example, what could be clearer than Mr. Cohen's use of the word, "explain," to connote a logical connexion between cause and effect? And what could be more muddled than his critic's insistence that "analysis" is the same thing?

Unless Mr. Boyd Freeman can follow up his criticisms with a reasoned statement of his seemingly dualistic position, I am afraid he will stand convicted of mere quibbling.

P. VICTOR MORRIS.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON  
DECEMBER 13, 1929.

MR. CHAPMAN COHEN in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Moss, Silvester, Corrigan, Mrs. Quinton, Mrs. Venton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

Apologies for absence were read.

Mr. Clifton, one of the representatives of the N.W. Group was absent through an accident, and the Secretary was instructed to convey the Executive's sympathy.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted, and the financial statement presented.

New members were admitted for Bradford, Liverpool, West Ham Branches, and the Parent Society.

Correspondence from Paisley, Bradford, Birmingham, and Liverpool was dealt with, and the Secretary instructed accordingly.

Items in connexion with the Annual Dinner, and a Social, were left in the hands of the Secretary to deal with.

Various minor matters were discussed, and the meeting closed.

R. H. ROSETTI.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Miss Ada Console—"An Evening with a British Composer, Rutland Boughton."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Mr. Wm. Stephen Saunders, M.P.—"Organizing Peace: Ten Years' Retrospect."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station).—No meeting.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Debate—"What are We Coming to?" Mr. George Royle.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (36r Brixton Road, near Gresham Road, S.W.): 7.30, Lantern Lecture—"Jesus Christ," Mr. E. C. Saphin.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Messrs. Charles Tuson and James Hart; 3.15, Messrs. E. Betts and C. F. Wood; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and B. A. Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and J. Hart; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury; Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Friday, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Lecture—Mr. Frank Toone, "Modern Realistic Drama."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club Room, Middle Chase): 7.0, Mr. J. Porter will lecture on "The solar System," and will demonstrate with his model of same. Chairman, T. Brown.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bakers' Hall, Forbes Place.) Sunday, December 22, 7.0 p.m., Mr. E. Hale of Glasgow. Subject: "Christmas Before Christ."

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. Keast will speak in the Bigg Market on Friday evening at 7.0 (weather permitting).

### Miscellaneous Advertisements.

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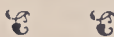
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THE *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was registered on the 25th of August, 1925, its object being to raise a sum of not less than £8,000, which, by investment, would yield sufficient to cover the estimated annual loss incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is controlled and administered by five Trustees, of which number the Editor of the *Freethinker* is one in virtue of his office. By the terms of the Trust Deed the Trustees are prohibited from deriving anything from the Trust in the shape of profit, emoluments, or payment, and in the event of the *Freethinker* at any time, in the opinion of the Trustees, rendering the Fund unnecessary, it may be brought to an end, and the capital sum handed over to the National Secular Society.

The Trustees set themselves the task of raising a minimum sum of £8,000. This was accomplished by the end of December, 1927. At the suggestion of some of the largest subscribers, it has since been resolved to increase the Trust to a round £10,000, and there is every hope of this being done within a reasonably short time.

The Trust may be benefited by donations of cash, or shares already held, or by bequests. All contributions will be acknowledged in the columns of this journal, and may be sent to either the Editor, or to the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. H. Jessop, Hollyshaw, Whitkirk, Nr. Leeds. Any further information concerning the Trust will be supplied on application.

There is no need to say more about the *Freethinker* itself, than that its invaluable service to the Freethought Cause is recognized and acknowledged by all. It is the mouthpiece of militant Freethought in this country, and places its columns, without charge, at the service of the Movement.

The address of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust is 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



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R. H. ROSETTI, Secretary.

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