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

Views and Opinions.

Education and Religion.

MR. GEORGE LANSBURY begs the people of England to bring their religion into politics. Lord Brentford begs them to keep it out. Both Mr. Lansbury and "Jix" are Christians; both, I am willing to grant, are good Christians. They both read the same Bible, they both claim to be inspired by it, but do not agree as to what it teaches. It leads Mr. Lansbury to Socialism; it leads Lord Brentford to think Socialism comes from the devil. Mr. Lansbury believes Christ taught Socialism; Lord Brentford says that Socialism spells robbery, murder, Atheism, and Russia, as seen through the pages of the *Morning Post*. So one Christian decides that the country will never be right till people bring their religion into politics, and the other decides that everything will go to the deuce if they do. It is a pretty picture and a demonstration of the value of Christianity as a guide in politics, morals, or anything else.

Mr. Lansbury's appeal was unnecessary; so was Lord Brentford's warning. Religion has always been in politics, and is in politics still. How could it be otherwise. How could any body of men seriously believe that the world was controlled by a God, and that man's welfare here and hereafter depended upon obeying him, without allowing that conception to influence, if not to dominate, their social and political actions. Can one imagine a number of voters who seriously believe in the Christian God, putting Atheists in positions of power or influence? So far as they do this they are giving the lie to their professed convictions. They are saying by their actions that religion does not matter. The truth is, as we have said, that religion has never been absent from politics whenever and wherever people have had a religion.

On the other hand Lord Brentford is right when he

says it is a bad thing to mix religion with politics. Here again all history, all experience is with him. There has never been an instance where a people have allotted their religion to determine their political action that has not spelled disaster. Religion in politics brought Spain to the verge of ruin. Religion in politics drove from France, in the seventeenth century, some of its sturdiest citizens and some of its most valuable craftsmen. It gave us in this country witch burnings, and torture for heresy, an unhealthy Puritanism, and an intolerance that created some of the worst laws we have. It gave us a State Church and consecrated all the evils of an hereditary aristocracy. I agree that religion in politics is disastrous—only, so long as people believe in a religion I do not see how it is going to be kept out.

* * *

The Fight for the Child.

The past week has supplied a striking instance of what religion in politics means. Education—we are bound to call it that—was once entirely in the hands of the Church. The particular Church does not matter, because in effect they were all one. And the Church understood by education bringing people up Christians and seeing that they remained such. But the only way that men and women could be kept Christian was by seeing they had no chance of being anything else. So all education had to be passed through the sieve of the Church. That meant throwing out everything with which the Church did not agree. What was not suitable depended upon what Church was in power. If the Roman Church, very much was thrown out; if a Protestant Church almost as much, but of a different kind. For a long time any school that was opened in this country could only be opened by the gracious permission of the clergy of the Established Church. When Nonconformity gained strength there was a wider choice, but not necessarily a better one. Then the French Revolution set other forces in motion, and schools with some other aim than making pupils candidates for heaven and regular customers at the religious general store, made their appearance. Finally, the State was compelled by the shocking state of education to take a hand and decided that the education of the children of the nation was its job. But religion was in politics and the mixture proved as bad as it always is. The clergy, all the clergy, said that if they did not give children religion before they were old enough to understand, there was no guarantee that they would grow up as religiously stupid as their parents. So State and parent entered into a conspiracy against the mental health of the child. What the State should have said was, "Education is our job, and we intend to do it. We will place schools in every village, in every town, in every city. We will see that every child has as good an education as we

can devise or can afford. If any parent wishes his child to have instruction in his own particular religion, then we will not prevent him, but we will have no hand in it. Amid the multiplicity of religions we decline to say which is true, although we have said by the constitution of our Education Acts that none of them is necessary. We will not mix religion with politics."

Subsidizing the Enemy.

This, we know, was not done. And nothing but trouble has followed, because the plain and proper course was not followed. The dual system was established. We had State schools in which all the education that was considered essential to the training of future citizens was given, plus a go-as-you-please religious instruction at the beginning and end of the school-day. Also there were a number of other—voluntary—schools in which youngsters could be so trained that when they grew up they would be inclined to place the interests of Church or Chapel before those of the general community. These schools were partly maintained from the public funds, and as is customary with all forms of clericalism, once it was permitted to dip its hands into the public purse, it clamoured for more and yet more, meanwhile struggling to get a larger dose of religion into the State schools. Many of the sectarian schools were badly built and insanitary, but sanitation was never a strong point with religious organizations that were permitted their own way, and anyhow, so long as the religion was sound, sanitation was of small consequence. Nothing more stupid was ever devised than the two sets of schools, in one of which the primary object was to turn out good citizens, in the other the primary object being to turn out good church or chapel-goers. None but politicians could have devised it, and no public but one suffering from centuries of religious tradition would have submitted to it.

There was yet one other evil. Every improvement in the educational character of the State schools meant a demand, usually of the smallest possible kind, for improvement in the sectarian schools. So improvement in the State schools was resisted in the hope of saving expense in the sectarian establishments. The State was actually subsidizing a competitor whose whole purpose was to keep State education down to the lowest possible level. Anything more incurably asinine was never born of the brain of man. At present, out of every pound spent in these Voluntary schools, nineteen shillings come from the public purse. It is quite common in business for one firm to buy out a competitor, but no business man was ever so silly as actually to give large sums of money to another and a competitive firm, and at the same time give the heads of the other firm a place on its own board of management. I agree with Lord Brentford, keep religion out of politics.

The Government and the Church.

The climax came a few days ago. The Government proposed raising the school-age. The vast majority of educationalists approved the suggestion and the Bill was drawn and passed the House of Commons. But here the sects got to work. The Church of England and the Roman Catholics complained that raising the school-age would mean more expense. Not content with the public paying nine-tenths of the money spent in these sectarian schools, the Roman Church, and the Established Church demanded that the extra expense should be supplied by the State. The extra money that was to be spent on the build-

ings was to be supplied by the State, the buildings remaining the property of the Church. The Nonconformists were agreeable, provided a larger measure of public control was given. They complained that in large numbers of schools no Nonconformists could get a headship, and in many could not even get appointed. That, owing to religion being in schools, it was next to impossible for an avowed Freethinker to get a headship never bothered them in the least—in fact, they helped to perpetuate this arrangement.

The Catholic Church proved the most stubborn. Their leaders said a school was no use to them if the whole education, including the multiplication tables, was not saturated with the Roman Catholic religion. The official organ of the Roman Church in England, *The Universe*, with charming logical idiocy, in its issue dated January 23, said:—

The purpose of education, is supernatural . . . It is the high privilege of Christian parents to offer their offspring to the Church in order that by this most fruitful mother of the children of God they may be regenerated through the laws of Baptism into supernatural justice, and finally be made living members of Christ.

The Church set to work with an open impudence that should lead some members of the public to think. The Roman Church commands the most docile, and therefore the least intelligent vote in England. As we have said more than once, its members think like sheep and vote like asses. It did not advise its members how to act, it ordered them what to do. Special sermons were given, and its followers were supplied with forms of letters and cards wherewith to bombard members of Parliament, and threaten them with the combined opposition of the Catholic vote unless an amendment was passed to the effect that the new Education Act should not become operative until the extra expense entailed on non-provided schools was made good from public funds, and with no increase of public control. We also had the ignominious spectacle of a Minister of Education holding meetings after meeting with the clerics to see in what way he could meet their demands. And the climax came when the amendment was actually carried. So, unless the Government can buy off the opposition of the Churches, or Members of Parliament resent being ordered what to do by Roman Catholic and Episcopalian clerics, the Act is dead, almost before it has begun to live.

The Only Way Out.

This, then, is what religion in politics means. It gives religious bigotry and religious tyranny, and religious ignorance greater power than ever. It makes democracy a sham, and public control a mere channel through which the priest operates. It is a far greater danger to the health of a State than the threat of foreign invasion can ever be. Mere invasion has never yet worked the harm to a country that religion worked in Spain, in Holland, in South America, and elsewhere. Over and over again a conquered nation has in course of time assimilated its conquerors; but a nation that assimilates the religion that rules it stands a good chance of perishing from intestinal poisoning. That is why I agree with "Jix" that religion should be kept out of politics. But I would also point out that it cannot be done, so long as people believe in it. A man who believes that religion is the most valuable thing about him cannot keep it from influencing his life and dictating how he shall act in public affairs. The only one who can keep religion out of politics is the man who does not believe in it, and who is strong enough to let the world see that he does not believe. And even he cannot ignore re-

ligion in politics so long as large numbers of those around him believe in it. That, again, is why I say for the thousandth time, that if we want to stop such degrading scenes as we have lately witnessed, go on making Freethinkers. You really cannot civilize religion; you can only help people to outgrow it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

George Borrow: Pagan.

"Nature, as we know her, is no saint.—Emerson.

"I claim no place in the world of letters: I am, and will be, alone, as long as I live and after."—Landor.

It was one of fate's little ironies which imposed on the Pagan, George Borrow, the function of colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The story of young Borrow's introduction to the suave officials of this society is very characteristic of this truly remarkable man. Hearing of the possibility of work, the young man tramped from Norwich to London, walking one hundred and twelve miles in twenty-seven hours, and spending sixpence on the journey. On arrival he told the surprised secretary that he could translate Manchu, and this was his first work for the Society.

Borrow went to Russia, and facing great difficulties, translated the New Testament into the Manchu-Tartar dialect. Ever a man of resource, there was nothing he was not ready to do, even to setting up type, teaching thick-headed compositors, buying paper, and hustling Russian officials. Later he went to Spain on behalf of the Society, and the adventurous career he led while hawking Bibles in this most bigoted of Roman Catholic countries forms the groundwork of "The Bible in Spain," one of the most vivacious travel-books ever written. "Gil Blas, with a touch of John Bunyan," the volume has been called, wittily. For the author pays small attention to the purely evangelical business of the organization that dispatched him, and he writes of thieves, murderers, gipsies, bandits, prisons, wars, and other worldly subjects with all the gusto of a Le Sage or a Burton. Addressed to the straight-laced and narrow-minded Victorian religious public, it was a stimulating drink to unaccustomed palates. It was the time when pious parents forbade secular books on Sundays, and Augustine Birrell has told us how, as an eager boy, he rejoiced in the old Pagan's writings, the innocent title of which had passed the unsuspecting critics on the hearth.

As may be imagined, readily, the correspondence between the Bible Society officials and Borrow is delicious reading. For their new colporteur worshipped at many shrines from the gentle Jesus to that of the pugilist, Tom Sayers. We see the old Adam peeping out in the evangelist, as Dr. Jekyll changed into Mr. Hyde, and the growing distrust of the pious officials who saw their employee boxing the compass, and forgetting the exceeding narrow channel they wished him to pursue. At times, indeed, Borrow quite forgot the theological jargon used by the society, and it all ended in his being recalled and being given no further employment.

This strange agent of a Bible Society commenced his literary career in London by writing *The Newgate Calendar*, a work which bears so marked a resemblance to that Holy Scripture sold by the society. Borrow was ever a fighter, even when his Flaming Tinman days were over, and his prejudices extended from popes to parsons. When a highly-respected canon of St. Paul's Cathedral ventured to criticize adversely *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow sent a note to the publishers calmly stating that the ecclesiastic was

a jackass, and that he would be doing better by minding his own petty business in his ugly church.

Borrow had a real passion for adventure, and a sincere love of language. Whilst still a clerk to a Norwich solicitor, he translated a volume of ballads from the Danish. Later, in Russia, he published his *Targum: Translated from Thirty Languages and Dialects*. Nor was this all, for during his travels in France, Germany, Russia, and Eastern Europe, he learned languages and dialects as he went. With the exceptions of Richard Burton and Lucien Bonaparte, he was, probably, the most enthusiastic of linguists. During a few years of travelling activity he made translations in a score of languages, and he produced a Turkish version of *Bluebeard*, and rendered a number of Danish, Russian, and Welsh tales into English.

For the last fifty years of his life he lived in tranquillity, passing his existence between Oulton Broad, Norfolk, and London. His famous books, *Lavengro*, *The Romany Rye*, and *Wild Wales*, were all written amid the peaceful surroundings of the Broads, and his tranquillity was only broken by fierce paper warfare with publishers, critics, and other unfortunate people who aroused the old lion's wrath. Borrow was always furious at the want of public appreciation; but his fame has grown since he died at Oulton, and the town of Norwich did well in purchasing Borrow's house as a memento of a remarkable man and notable citizen.

Nature mixed George Borrow in a moment of magnificence. Only those who have realized for themselves the inadequacy of a pen when confronted with life itself can appreciate to the full the wonder of his rare genius. Besides great gifts he had a sense of the significance of life apart from any personal liking or disliking, of the beauty and continuity of human existence. A little aloof, a little inscrutable, he will ever remain, but magnificent because of his greatness as a literary artist.

Borrow's life was an example of the square peg in the round hole. A son of Nature, he was impatient of the narrow and petty standards of civilization and society, and loved the men and women of the wayside. He recognized in these vagrants the true sons and daughters of "the great mother who mixes all our bloods." Listen to his exquisitely phrased Pagan glorification of existence:—

Life is sweet, brother. There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the hearth. Life is very sweet, brother, who would wish to die?"

MIMNERMUS.

WORDS AND THOUGHT.

How often the words we use are anything but good and faithful words! Often they distort our thought about important things.

We talk, for instance, of *owning* colonial possessions, of France having *taken back* Alsace from Germany.

Such words lead us to believe that a nation is as certainly enriched by addition of territory as a man would be enriched by inheriting an estate. This notion forms part of the motive for war, or for the fear that makes war, by leading us to believe that if other nations become stronger than we are they will take our property.

But the idea that when a province is transferred from one government to another there is a transfer of property is, broadly speaking, nonsense. When a province is transferred the fields, factories, houses, carpets, walking-sticks, remain in the same hands. There is a change of political administration which may be good, bad, or indifferent, but there is practically no transfer of property.

It is probably true to say that if the world fully realized all that is meant by this simple fact the days of war would be over.—Norman Angell.

Professor Jeans and the Universe.

(Concluded from page 54.)

WHEN Dalton enunciated the principle of combination of elements in *definite* proportions to form a chemical compound, he was stating an observed *statistical* law: and the law was never absolutely true.

If we take oxygen and combine it with hydrogen to form water, the assumed proportions are as two of hydrogen to one of oxygen by volume, or eight times by weight of oxygen to one of hydrogen.

Taking volumes, a set of experiments might show 1.9998 hydrogen to 1 of oxygen or 2.000001 of Hydrogen to 1 of oxygen, or conversely 2 of hydrogen to .99998 of oxygen, or 2 of hydrogen to 1.00001 oxygen. But the average of countless experiments indicated 2 hydrogen to 1 oxygen, though possibly not a single case arose of exact theoretical proportion. But on the assumption (as a result of experiment) that the proportion was fixed, the science of chemistry grew from the magic of the alchemist through the descriptive stage of uncertain quantities to a definite science—and the theory was that the atoms were hard, round bits of matter which could not further be reduced. But when the new conception of the atom as a tiny solar system replaced the earlier conception, the science of observed chemistry remained unshaken, because the "laws" of combination in definite proportion were derived from observed facts and tested by coming back to the facts. And so, even if the nucleus (or the protons) of the atoms can be further resolved, the science of chemistry will still stand fast. It is really pitiable to see a man of the scientific standing of Sir James Jeans talking of nature like an untutored anthropomorphist, *e.g.*, "nature permits a certain margin of error." p. 26. "The laws of nature, not recognizing such divisions (of space and time) as a possibility, cannot recognize the existence of the ether as a possibility." But these ultimate concepts, while they may be very useful as working hypotheses are derived from consideration of the statistical laws which are again derived from classifying our experience; and their downfall or replacement by better concepts does not invalidate the *statistical laws* (which some call laws of Nature). So when Einstein comes along with a theory of relativity which destroys our conception of an ether or of illimitable space, and replaces it by a four-dimensional continuum, and a finite space which not only satisfies the known "laws," but also explains the anomalies which could not be explained under the existing theories, our withers are unwrung. We say, this new conception simplifies the classification of our experiences, and so we adopt it, just as we discarded the cycles and epicycles of Descartes' time for Kepler's laws, and later accepted Newton's gravitation theory to explain these laws by physical and mathematical considerations: and just so we surrendered the hard metallic atom for Maxwell's vortex or for kinks in the ether. And if now Jeans's "empty-space welded on to empty time," "a four-dimensional continuum with corrugations" (empty space, pock-marked or with knobs on), meets the situation, we cannot see how that touches the "statistical laws" of experience, or how it affects the determinism which means there is no uncaused effect, though we may not be able to assign or measure the cause. Nor does it matter to the determinist, if the scientist in order to picture the processes of nature, must when dealing with large-scale phenomena think of matter and radiation as *particles*, and on the other hand, as *waves*

when he deals with small-scale phenomena. Large or small-scale phenomena are equally of nature, *i.e.*, of our experiences, and the instrument best fitted to express each is that law, statistical or otherwise, which covers or explains them. But the determinist never personifies his laws of nature, as does Prof. Jeans, and by writing them with capitals, change them into producing or compelling agencies. (pp. 38-40.) The determinist remembers they are merely a short formula *symbolical* of processes already observed and predictable under the recurrence of conditions similar to those originally producing the phenomena. And Prof. Jeans is a thorough-going determinist when he forgets himself.

"Astronomical physics is a far more exact science than terrestrial hydraulics." (p. 57), so that the *weight* of sunlight per minute falling on a square mile of land is better known than the amount of water running under London Bridge in a given time. This can only be on the assumption that the forces at work on the atom and in the form of radiation are constant for the sun's surface and on the earth.

When the Professor attempts to define his conception of atoms, electrons and radiation, there is a delightful example of a circle in the definition, thus: "Every atom is built up of negatively-charged electrons and of positively charged particles called protons: matter proves to be nothing but a collection of *particles* charged with electricity." (p. 52.) Of what are these particles composed, matter or electricity? It is delightful to see these mathematical physicists push their theories to their logical conclusions even though this lands them in what may appear to the common mind to be absurdity. "An electron must, in a certain sense, occupy the whole of space." (p. 54.) Of course if this is admitted it is easy to see how an electron can change from one orbit in the atom to another orbit in no time, because in a sense it is there (*i.e.*, everywhere) all the time. The indeterminacy of the electron is born of the same assumptions that carry these absurdities. And Prof. Jeans is conscious of some of these absurdities in trying to picture the flow of energy through space. (p. 108.) He admits that these absurdities and contradictions come of thinking of energy as a concrete stream, *i.e.*, representing reality: but he reinstates all the difficulties by saying that "the mathematician brings the whole problem back to reality by treating this flow of energy as a mere mathematical abstraction." (p. 109.) How can the treatment of anything as a mere mathematical abstraction bring it back to reality? But we are not done with this Jeansian misuse of language, for he goes on to say, "Indeed he (the mathematician) is almost compelled to go further and treat energy itself as a mere mathematical abstraction."

And this is the exposition which journalists (with the exception of Arnold Bennett) cry up as making the difficult easy—"as exhibiting a genius for making the most difficult facts and theories of physics and astronomy apparently intelligible to the man without scientific or mathematical training." We wonder if that word *apparently* in the eulogium just quoted was an intentional leg-pull.

But the book abounds in evidences that Sir James has a crude notion of a law of nature as a sort of compelling entity by which things are driven to an end, and even in the very act of exercising the notion of "force" he introduces a "curvature of the continuum" to do the job. The effect of a mass of gravitating matter was not, as Newton had imagined, to exude a 'force,' but to distort the four-dimensional continuum in its neighbourhood. The moving planet or cricket-ball was no longer drawn off from its rectilinear motion by the pull of a force, but

by the curvature of the continuum." That is, "empty space welded on to empty time" mysteriously shoves the planet round—probably because of the corrugations in the continuum. Now just what does this mathematician mean? It seems to me to be as far removed from sense or reality as language can get. And if the reader would like to see this absurdity, in its full beauty, let him read page 113. "If so (*i.e.*, if the electro-magnetic forces are resolved into crumplings of the continuum), the universe will have resolved itself into an empty four-dimensional space, *totally devoid of substance*, and totally featureless except for the crumplings, some large, some small, *some intense*, some feeble, in the configuration of space itself." (Italics mine). And having reduced the universe to an imbecile soap-bubble we are taken "into the deep-waters" of the final chapter, a medley of physics, metaphysics and further absurdities. There is momentarily a glimpse of truth, "we may think of the electrons as objects of thought, and time as the process of thinking" (p. 121), and plop once more into deep waters. "Some physicists meet this situation by regarding the electron-waves as waves of *probability*." (p. 122.) But this is clarified to some extent by the later statement, "Heisenberg and Bohr have suggested that electron-waves must be regarded merely as a sort of symbolic representation of our knowledge as to the probable state and position of an electron." (p. 124.) "A still more drastic possibility, again arising out of a suggestion made by Bohr, is that the minutest phenomena of nature do not admit of representation in the space-time framework at all." (p. 124.) So at last we get down to it. The electron-wave theory is *symbolic*, and *not perhaps representable* in the four-dimensional continuum, and all this talk about indeterminacy is probably due to an improper mode of presenting the facts of consciousness.

Recondite mathematical theories and operations must be constantly tested by reference to experience or they will frequently lead us into all sorts of contradictions and absurdities. And to this conclusion Jean is forced himself. "The essential fact is simply that all the pictures which science now draws of nature and which alone seem capable of according with observational fact are *mathematical pictures*." That is, they are fictions helping us to classify phenomena and therefore to be modified or discarded as soon as an ugly fact conflicts with pretty theory. But it is necessary to enter a caveat against the notion that all the processes of nature can always or best be represented mathematically. This treatment may be very suitable for astronomy and physics, but biology and psychology may and do need other conceptual constructions, even though some parts of these sciences may admit of mathematical treatment.

Sir James cannot avoid anthropomorphism except momentarily: yet he says the anthropomorphic explanation of the universe has failed, as also the engineering (*i.e.*, physical) interpretation. "Nature has refused to accommodate herself to either of these man-made moulds. On the other hand, our efforts to interpret nature in terms of the concepts of pure mathematics have, so far, proved brilliantly successful." (p. 133.) But this interpretation has also its difficulties and may have in the light of further knowledge to be modified, recast or even abandoned. It is human and therefore capable of improvement, and does not justify the inference that "from the intrinsic evidence of his creation, the Great Architect of the universe now begins to appear as a pure Mathematician." (p. 134.) The biologist and engineer would, according to Sir James, wrongly infer the Deity to be biologist or engineer according to their concept of the universe, for now "he begins to

appear as a mathematician," because *that* is the fullest description of the universe to date. But how if the mathematical conception must in its turn give place to a wider synthesis or fuller concept. Has Sir James not created God in his own image?

It is only fair to Sir James to say that he gives the reply to this conception in that mathematical laws are ultimately men's concepts *taken from nature*, and so mathematical laws are but one of the dresses in which we clothe our conception of reality. (pp. 134-5): and after disturbing, as far as he could, our notion of causation, he gives us back all he took away: for to prove a universal mind, he argues, "we may think of the laws to which phenomena conform in our waking hours, the laws of nature, as the laws of thought of a universal mind. The uniformity of nature proclaims the self-consistency of this mind." (p. 140.) So we are once more back at the uniformity of nature, which is the basis of determinism—and we rise again from the depths and "breathe aloft the flood."

MEPHISTO.

The Paragraph Mind.

ALTHOUGH I rarely disagree with the views expressed by Mr. Chapman Cohen in the *Freethinker*, I am compelled to think that he has examined the existence of the "paragraph mind" ("Progress and the Paragraph Mind," *Freethinker*, January 11) from only one of several aspects. He apparently wants an ideal newspaper, and blames modern newspapers because they are not prepared to lose money in the style production of such a paper.

As far as I know, no newspaper was ever published with the object of educating anyone, except in so far as "educate" refers to the formation of political opinions. I refer, of course, to dailies and weeklies, not to periodicals or publications as the *Freethinker*.

A newspaper is purely a business concern. A man who makes soap puts on the market a product acceptable to the most number of people. A newspaper is compelled to adopt the same policy, unless it has a backing of unlimited wealth.

Mr. Cohen refers to the "sustained arguments" of the newspaper of a century ago. If saying in a column that which can easily be said in a "couple of sticks" is sustained argument, I agree. Because a story is concise it is not necessarily less worthy of attention than a story that is run to a column by totally unnecessary padding.

The disappearance of the newspaper style of a century ago was inevitable as the social conditions of existence moved faster. Just as we can trace the social changes of the past century, so can we trace the gradual adaptation of newspapers to these changes, until at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, the modern newspaper press sprang into being.

A glance at old statistics, they are available at most newspaper offices, shows that increased production costs and small circulations made a radical change essential. Newspapers were not catering for the tastes of people who read them, a policy just as suicidal in newspaper production as in any other business.

In short, the newspaper-reading public forced the newspaper proprietors to introduce our present style of journalism. The alternative was to go out of business, a worthy but hardly human sacrifice.

A newspaper written in the old style could not exist to-day because it could not be read. No one would have the time to struggle through its sustained arguments, unless the business of the day consisted solely of newspaper reading.

The modern newspaper has for its news sources the whole world. Imagine a newspaper covering the events in a day of the world's history in the verbose style of 1831. It would take a week to produce and a week to read.

Mr. Cohen will probably reply that half of the events are not worth covering. That is the fault of the news-

paper readers, for no news editor ever passed stuff that he knew would not be read.

I wish Mr. Cohen could spend a few days at a sub's desk in a daily newspaper office and see the vast amount of copy that has to be handled. I think he would realize the sheer impossibility of using the style of the old-fashioned newspaper.

In the magazine page, I agree, exists a great opportunity of introducing the educative ambitions of Mr. Cohen's ideal newspaper. But if this policy were adopted the paper simply would not sell. I admit that a paper adopting these principles could in time establish itself, but who is to supply the money to cover the huge production costs and the sustained losses, inseparable from small circulations, until that establishment? Does Mr. Cohen know anyone who would publish the *Freethinker* as a daily, excellent paper though it is.

Even the *Times*, most Conservative of newspapers, has changed in the same direction.

Newspaper readers are kept in a deplorable position because they insist upon being kept there. It is our work to give them what they want, not what we think they ought to want.

I do not know whether Mr. Cohen has met many working journalists. If he has he must have appreciated that they realize the "toshiness" of some of the stuff their papers publish quite as well as their critics.

Why does Mr. Cohen pick upon journalism as though it were the only industry which ever exploited public taste? Surely it would be more just to go to the root of the matter and blame the educational system that has forced newspapers to cater for the paragraph mind.

Finally, if Mr. Cohen is so disgusted with the degradation of British journalism, I would recommend him to examine the American press.

B. FORD RUTHER.

Beware the Pundits.

In pursuit of knowledge, we have reached a stage where (by some) Materialism, Cause and Effect, together with Determinism, are thought to be entirely disproved by Science and, as a result, great efforts are being made by the clergy and the Press to misconstrue statements made by Scientists who have of late been entertaining us by broadcasting *their* views. This on the part of the clerics and the Press to create a fog in the mind of the public regarding Science and Religion. I am not prepared to advance any opinion regarding the motive of those who face the microphone on these occasions, but I have little doubts as to the effect it will have upon a certain type of mind.

Unfortunately there are those mentally disposed to accept the statements of the pundits without further consideration, as statements of fact. This is easier than studying the matter for oneself, and so if Profs. Jeans, Eddington, O. Lodge, J. Huxley or the Dean of St Paul's say or write so-and-so, such individuals simply accept their views as proof positive, whereas the truth is, Science remains where it has been from the first—faced with the fact that all it knows concerning the Universe rests upon the fundamental that—*Apart from matter we know nothing*. Try how we may, we cannot escape this fact, and it is only those who have ulterior motives for so doing who seek to obscure it.

Of course, only by a lengthy study of a branch of Science can any one rightly claim to pose as an authority; but it must not be forgotten that a *knowledge of facts is not the same thing as the theories and speculative views held by individuals in respect of those facts*. Hence we have scientists (each fully acquainted with the facts) advancing different interpretations, and suggesting this and that as an explanation. For instance, Eddington thinks that the "spontaneity" observed in the electron warrants a belief in "free-will," and that causality no longer holds as a law of the universe. As though "spontaneity" could not be determined as much as anything else. But the fact is, ignorance of the laws governing the motion of electrons in their orbits causes certain minds to jump to the conclusion that the electron must be some sort of spiritual entity having a will of its own,

so that it hops from one orbit to another just to please a passing fancy as it were. And this apart from the question as to whether such a thing as an electron really exists. Prof. Jeans too is aware of an apparent motion of the stars which suggests that the Universe is expanding at a tremendous rate, and may finally burst; but he is also aware of phenomena which discountenance this. Naturally, being a sound thinker, he is not convinced. The idea does not harmonize with his own perhaps, and we are loth to accept the ideas of those who think differently from ourselves. And so we find him summing up his views thus: "*In some way the Universe appears to be passing away like a dream that is told.*"—And a very nice dream too. And Shakespeare wrote "*We are such stuff as dreams are made of*"—including even astronomers.

But if Jeans were to broadcast—"The world will burst like a soap-bubble in fifty thousand million years from this"—there are those who would hail it as a fact of Science.

Quite recently the Press came out with a heading—**GOD A MATHEMATICIAN**. No doubt some smiled, while others exclaimed "what blasphemy," forgetting that the Press cannot blaspheme. But how many Editors really know anything about modern mathematics in relation to Logic and Philosophy as expounded by Whitehead and B. Russell, or the mode of thought which allowed Jeans to make a vague statement, flippantly served up by the Press to create a sensation in the minds of ill-informed readers.

It is perfectly absurd for persons to imagine that this broadcasting by the B.B.C. is capable of giving more than a very crude outline of the Science of the Universe, and it is unfortunate that the public should be thus misled at their own expense. Scientific knowledge worth the name cannot be got from snippets in the Press, nor from the shrieks, howls and groans of a loud-speaker. If one really desires to be educated in Science one must get down to a lengthy study of as many authoritative writers as time will permit, and weigh up the arguments. Short of this one should be content to admit ignorance and say—"I really don't know—I only read what the Press prints and the wireless transmits to my ears." Much mischief is being done by this kind of dissemination of knowledge by the Press and the B.B.C. Of course the Press only exists to make capital by fogging the mind of the reader—never for freedom of thought. As the moulder of public opinion and character the Press fails entirely—but it is a paying concern for all that, and better able to stir up animosity and strife than any other appendage of modern society. Next to the armed forces of the crown it is the best supporter of chaos that we possess, though it would seem it will soon have a more powerful rival in the B.B.C. But seeing that the Nation pays the piper in both cases, we ought not to grumble at being denied the additional trouble of calling the tune.

It may be asked by some—"Why are not all able to think alike?" Well, the answer is, no two individuals are equipped alike with a thinking machine and—no two individuals have a knowledge of the same facts about which to think. For instance, Prof. Jeans thinks about stars, and so does Prof. Eddington; but—they cannot and do not think alike. The ordinary man in the street rarely thinks about the "*stars*" in the sky, and what he thinks about other stars doesn't matter, seeing what little he knows about them. Again, Prof. Lodge knows a lot about ether, the "electron" and the "periodicity of ether waves," but, unlike Whitehead and B. Russell, great mathematicians, he thinks a lot about Spirits and Phantom Wells.

This diversity and perversity of mind functioning is of great importance, and involves a study of Psychology for its understanding. But Psychology is only just beginning to be a Science, and the subject is still in its infancy. To follow the arguments of McDougall, Lloyd Morgan, William Brown, M.D., W. James, Jung, Adler, Hans Driesche and other leaders of thought in this subject, requires some years of careful study, and the reader who wishes to examine the matter for himself must be prepared to sacrifice time and energy in pursuit of such knowledge. I shall hope to give some further information on the subject in a later article. In the meantime I strongly recommend a thorough reading of G. Santay-

ana's *Realm of Matter and Realm of Essence* as an introduction to a thorough-going Materialism, followed by a study of the works of Spinoza. Spinoza does not receive the attention he merits. It is a mistake to ignore his logical treatment of "Mind and Matter" simply because he has been dubbed "the god-intoxicated man." In my article of January 11, I called attention to Haeckel's opinion of Spinoza's thought on Substance. With apologies to my readers I again submit it for close observation. In his *Riddle of the Universe*, Haeckel states, "All changes which have since come over the idea of Substance are reduced on logical analysis to the supreme thought of Spinoza. With Goethe I take it to be the loftiest, profoundest and truest thought of all ages." Spinoza was a thorough-going Materialist and Determinist, and for him the Universe is the manifestation of cause and effect in universal Substance. Every thought is determined by the nature of the individual in response to what Santayana would call the "Flux of Matter."

The diversity of thought amongst scientists is both distracting and disappointing. We want to know, and they either can't or won't tell us. Instead, they offer us a conglomeration of ideas which leaves us as much in the dark as though they told us nothing.

Lemaître the Belgian has discovered properties in the Universe similar to those of a soap-bubble. Ergo—"the Universe may some day 'burst.'" Some astronomers have measured the speed with which the nebulae are apparently rushing away from each other. This seems rather confusing, because one finds it difficult to conceive how some of them can avoid rushing towards each other in their stampede from others. However, the speed, as measured, is so enormous, that certain astronomers think it cannot be real, and this induces them to think that the Universe may not burst after all, or at any rate not as soon as others think. Say a million billion years hence instead of a trillion billion years. Now while Prof. Jeans thinks that the Universe will "pass away as a dream that is told and dissolve into complete nothingness," (whatever that may be) Prof. Eddington thinks it will some day become a "uniform chaos." I am not sure I understand what uniformity in a chaos means, but let that pass. The Universe is "like the brain of a man who is growing old, and in time will dry up"—he tells us. I think it is, and I think I see why, but I am not an astronomer, so my opinions are not of value to any but myself. It used to be called "a clock running down," which caused Dean Inge to ask pertinently—"Who wound it up?" Now Dr. R. A. Millikan, the American physicist, says it is being wound up, but this still allows the Dean to ask—"By whom." This however does not fit in with Eddington's mode of thinking, and he ventures to think that Millikan is wrong. Lord Kelvin argued that the Universe must obey the second law of thermodynamics and finally become dissipated. This causes Prof. Soddy to think that the future will see a neck to neck race between man and Entropy, in his efforts to conserve the escaping energy of the Universe? If the energy wins, humanity is doomed to complete destruction. This is where Prof. Carr steps in to our aid with the theory of "Vitalism." The "vital principle" acts as a dam and checks entropy, thus saving the Universe from dissolving into nothing. With all these possible disasters facing us, the only thing we can do is—wait and see. In the good old Spencerian age we knew where we were. The Universe then passed from relatively homogeneous matrix through successive differentiations and integrations to a definite coherent heterogeneity of structure and function. This was followed by a period of equilibrium after which, it reversed and finally reached an indefinite incoherent homogeneity again. No soap-bubble—no dream that is told—no brain drying up. Perhaps a bit of a nightmare for the simple minds of those who are not familiar with Spencer, but a good solid opinion from a sound mind.

It is worth noticing that all these dire calamities are not going to happen in our time. Not a single person living in the ensuing million years is going to give the lie direct to these Jeremiahs, for they will all be dead before it happens—or rather before it is found to be "such stuff as dreams are made of." But in the meantime what

are we going to do with the evils of Capitalism and Industrialism. While we are waiting for the Universe to dissolve into "nothingness," gazing at millions of stars rushing helter skelter through space, the number of unemployed is steadily increasing in all parts of the world and, so the pundits tell us, Western Civilization is approaching a crisis. The Universe is going to be turned upside down—"inspissated gloom" surrounds us (consult Dr. Johnson for this brand of gloom)—the Government is compounded of "levity, cynicism, and a recklessness engendered in the slime of pre-revolutionary periods"—according to a staunch supporter of Might, whose business it is to feed the war spirit amongst all classes—the Electoral Reform Bill—the Trade Unionists' Charter of Civil War and the Education Bill are threatening us with financial ruin unless the Lords save us. It is terrible—terrible nonsense. It is mere sensational effluvia vomited by propagandists to divert the attention of the masses and stampede them into a hypnotic incapacity for straight thinking and calm deliberation in clearing up the mess. We may rest assured humanity will win through all right in the end, and that the nebulae will jolly well do what it must do whether Jeans believes it or not. In the ages to come 1931 will be treated as a mere tick of the clock in the onward march of humanity towards a goal for ever urging it on to greater things.

If the masses will refuse to be set at each other's throats, turn a deaf ear to certain sections of the Press, and refuse to listen to the warmongers and the Churches who are doing all they can to bolster up Capitalism and precipitate a rupture with Russia and India, they will escape the trap that is being baited to catch them.

There is plenty of wealth to subsidize the unemployed until the capitalist class is forced to consider ways and means for a better and fairer distribution of the wealth created by the workers. If the workers will refuse to be hoodwinked and side-tracked, if they stand firmly together in defence of right against might, and are prepared to accept with Stoic and Spartan spirit the sacrifices which always precede a victory for the downtrodden, they will win a heritage for posterity worth the struggle, and pave the way for a better world.

Remember Freethinkers—in all parts of the world, your brothers and sisters are engaged in this struggle for Freedom of mind and body. See to it that you are not found wanting in pluck to fight on to the end.

CULLWICK PERRINS.

Acid Drops.

From the *Daily Mail* of January 21, we learn that there is a Hindoo couple in London, who although religious, appear to have a far stronger and better sense of duty towards their children than have most Christian parents. This couple recently had their little five-month-old daughter blessed by representatives of six different faiths so that she might be free to make a choice of religions when she grew up. That is quite good, so far as it goes, but there are more than six faiths in the world. What then? We suggest that a better plan would be to have it blessed by someone who has edited a dictionary of religions. She would then have the whole lot from which to choose. But even then she might grow up and join the National Secular Society. Still, we repeat, these two showed a greater sense of responsibility than do most Christian parents, whose chief aim appears to be to prevent their children having any choice whatever.

The Rev. Father MacRory will have nothing to say to Bertrand Russell because he had given up the belief in God before he was eighteen, and he thinks that at that age no one is capable of making up his mind on that subject. These men are very funny. Under eighteen is not too young to make up your mind that there is a God, but it is far too young for you to make up your mind that there isn't. We have no doubt that Fr. MacRory would prefer everybody to go right through professing no more than a mere doubt, or perhaps a "reverent Agnosticism," that would leave the fundamental basis of the god-idea practically untouched,

A writer in a Methodist journal asks: "I wonder if we religionists ever stop to ask ourselves: What is real religion? If we did a little more thinking about it there would be a better chance for religion to be more real to us." We should say it would be better if religionists left off asking: What is real religion? There are as many definitions as there are religionists. And the more definitions they discover the more they squabble. The truth is that Jesus ought not to have bolted off the earth so soon. He should have stayed long enough to ensure that all Christians would interpret "real religion" in exactly the same way.

Gipsy Smith firmly believes, he says, that God has given him his particular job. Now, his particular job, to be of use to him, necessitates that there shall be plenty of people running around with a half-baked mentality. God provides the half-baked to keep the Gipsy out of mischief. And so we have to dismiss the whole affair as "an act of God"—one of the incomprehensible things for which no one can be blamed!

Sir Richard Gregory, in discussing "The Worth of Science," has raised the question—"Has Science Made Man Happy?" It depends, says he, upon man—how he uses Science. Now, regarding Science in all its various aspects as the sum of human knowledge, one might well affirm that, on balance, it has brought happiness to man, although it makes no claim to do so. In comparison with Religion, which does claim to make man happy, Science comes out well. If we regard Religion—the Christian brand—as the sum of *divine* knowledge and wisdom, and note the claim it makes, how poor is the achievement! The Christian religion has an appalling record of war, murder, torture, imprisonment, persecution, and hatred. This divine knowledge has introduced man to more misery than any other kind of knowledge. The claim to bring happiness to man is, in the light of experience, ludicrous in the extreme. The inevitable conclusion is that the happiness of man must come, not from alleged supernatural knowledge, but through that systematized human knowledge which we call Science. And if guidance is required as to the right use of that knowledge to achieve happiness, then it is to Science man must look—to the science of ethics or to philosophy.

Dean Bennett of Chester Cathedral hopes that one of the new English dioceses will some day build a cathedral of steel, concrete, and glass as representative of our present epoch. For our part, we appreciate that a Cathedral of such material might well represent the engineering progress of the epoch. But it would certainly not be representative of religious "progress" during that time. As indicative of the way in which religion has been stretched or contracted or twisted to suit the thought of the age, nothing would be so eminently suitable as a cathedral of rubber. As an embellishment, a few stained-glass windows showing prominent theologians engaged in acrobatic tricks would be very illuminative, especially to future generations.

A new suggestion has been put forward for getting rid of the malaria-carrying mosquito which is responsible for a vast amount of suffering and death in the world. A headline in a newspaper hails the proposal as "Ridding the World of a Scourge." This sounds like rank blasphemy. Just fancy calling a thing specially created by God to convey malaria germs a "scourge"! The epithet not only condemns the mosquito but also its maker. Still, it may perhaps serve to remind Christians that the earth created—according to religious fancy—by God especially for man, has only been made tolerable by man eliminating the "scourges" God put there. Meanwhile, the pious can go on telling the young all about a loving, heavenly Father who sacrificed a bit of himself to "save" mankind. It never occurs to Christians to ask how much better God might have served mankind from pain and suffering by sacrificing his many "scourges."

We like that sentiment expressed at a recent pious meeting, where a speaker said: "Don't let us pour religion into boys and girls as from a jug into a mug. Let

us leave them alone for a bit." Nevertheless, no parsons will be found to support this sensible policy. They believe that only constant pouring produces the perfect "mug."

The Christian life, says the Rev. Donald Soper, should be presented to youth as an "adventure." This must be rather difficult. After all, there is nothing very venturesome or thrilling in young people agreeing to believe what the parson tells them to do. But perhaps the "adventure" comes from knowing that, if one accepts the Christian religion, one is taking what large numbers of educated people reject nowadays.

Talking about men and marriage, Miss Kathleen Norris suggests that it is unwise for a woman to wait until her ideal turns up. If she can't get 100 per cent, she should take 80. "A girl is much happier with a nice man than by waiting indefinitely for a perfect one." Of course, waiting for a perfect man is useless. God only made one like that—Jesus; and he was a confirmed bachelor. As God took the pattern off the earth, there are no more forthcoming and so girls must take what they can get.

Mr. George Lansbury on being asked by a representative of the *News-Chronicle* whether he thought prayer would alter the general situation, replied in the affirmative. He said that the solution would probably be found by God teaching those who prayed to use their brains. We have our doubts. In the first place people do not pray for an incentive to use their brains. And even though they did, we feel quite sure that God would not grant that prayer. He must know that nearly all the troubles that have overtaken his Church have been by people using their brains. And as a matter of fact people have more often prayed for help to overcome the doubts that were a product of cerebral activity than otherwise. Finally, if Christians do pray to God for him to get them to use their brains, one need only look at any bunch of regular Church-goers to see how completely that prayer is ignored.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham says that ten years ago he asked the Roman Catholics of the city to send him five shillings per year towards the Ecclesiastical Education Fund. Less than five per cent made any response. This after ten years trial. We think the Bishop is rather unwarranted in his complaint. It is not obvious that to fill the part of a priest education is vitally necessary. Generally, the poorer the education, ditto the intelligence, the better. Second, from the general run of the Roman Catholic priesthood, few would argue that the amount and kind of education manifested presents anything of value for money received. Third, all history, religious history, shows that God pays no attention to education in manifesting his powers. His most potent influence has always been with the uneducated and even the half-witted. Even Roman Catholics may be expected to note these things when it comes to parting with their money.

We see it reported that Great Britain is booking quite a number of orders for military aircraft for foreign countries. This, we presume, is one of our contributions towards the peace of the world. Not that in this respect we are worse than other countries. It is quite a common game to point to the war-like preparations of other countries as a reason for hurrying on with our own, and others point to ours as a reason why they should keep pace with us. It is an old game.

Noticing a life of Jesus by Mr. Basil Mathews, a reviewer complains that the actual words of Jesus have been changed into modern language. What we wonder, are the actual words of Jesus? This reviewer is evidently under the impression that the English of the New Testament was the common language of Judea a couple of thousand years ago. We hardly think there is any subject other than religion with which such gross ignorance would be possible in even the columns of modern newspaper. The actual words of Jesus are what the writers and translators care to make them. The actual meaning of Jesus is precisely what is found to be popular or profitable for the time being.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. PRATT.—Letter has been forwarded as requested.

PLAIN SPEAKING (Hull).—You are not warranted in leaving papers in a public library, if those in charge object to your doing so. But we know of nothing to prevent your reading a paper of your own in a public reading room, providing you are not doing it in a manner that does not annoy or interfere with the comfort of those using the room. The remark made to you seems to have been motivated by sheer bigotry.

H. MARTINS.—Pleased to hear you find *Opinions* so interesting.

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 6a Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's Office is at 6a 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.

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

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

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 1) Mr. Cohen delivers the first of a course of four lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His subject is "The Coming of the Gods." The chair will be taken at 6.30.

The Secretary of the N.S.S. informs us that the Annual Subscriptions to the N.S.S. have come along quite well, and that in spite of the bad times many have improved on last year's amount. But, as usual, some are lagging, and we therefore remind them once again that all membership subscriptions are due on January 1, and we should like to see the last one received before the first month of the year comes to an end.

In the course of about three months the *Freethinker* will have achieved its Jubilee. This is something that has never happened in the history of the Freethought movement in the whole of Europe. We have had many enquiries as to what we are going to do about it, and have not yet decided what answer to give. But meanwhile we suggest that all who are interested may do something to celebrate the occasion. Half a dozen extra copies of the paper, spread over a period of six weeks will run to one and sixpence. We suggest that everyone who thinks the *Freethinker* worthy of it, and who wish to celebrate in their own way, should take an extra copy for six weeks and see that it goes into the hands of one or more who is likely to become a regular reader. If only a thousand readers were to do this, the result would be a very substantial increase in the circulation of this paper. We ask readers to think seriously about this suggestion.

It appears that in writing on the Manchester prosecution for non-attendance at Church on Sundays, we overlooked the qualifying amendment to the 1677 Act passed in 1871. We asked "Why ask permission from the Chief Constable to institute a prosecution?" The answer is supplied by Mr. F. E. Monks, the solicitor for the defence, and we thank him for the correction. He writes:—

You say why ask permission of the Chief Constable—the impression being that it was entirely unnecessary to be subservient to an Official. With that attitude I quite agree. But the Sunday Observation Prosecution Act, 1871, limits prosecutions under the Lord's Day Observance Act of 1677, and provides that no prosecution can be taken under that Act except by or with the consent in writing of the Chief Constable, or a Stipendiary Magistrate, or two Justices. We applied in the first instance to the Chief Constable in order to get a reply. It was not expected he would give his consent. His reply was that he was not prepared to countenance such prosecutions. The Summons had to be issued within ten days, so the League immediately obtained the consent of two Justices.

The trouble with regard to prosecutions under the Act of 1677 is that it applies to "tradesmen, workmen, artificers, labourers, or other persons whatsoever," who perform work of their ordinary calling on the Lord's Day. The ejusdem generis rule applies to the phrase "or other persons whatsoever," so that they must be in a similar category to those enumerated. And the other words "tradesmen artificer, etc., are defined strictly. The tendency is to define the words so narrowly that the effect of the Act is taken away. For instance a tram conductor has been held not to come within the definition. A tram driver is not a tradespeople, workman, artificer, or labourer, and so on. The Act of 1871 only makes it more difficult to institute proceedings. One would have thought our Legislators would have swept away rather than limit it in the way they did.

We are asked to announce that a course of four lectures by Professor Elliot Smith will be given at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on February 2, 9, 16 and 23. The subject of the lectures will be "The Evolution of Man," and each lecture will commence at 8 o'clock. Prices of admission are 1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. 6d.

The Liverpool Branch is doing capital work by paying regular attention to the newspapers where the interests of Freethought are concerned. We notice, for example, a lengthy letter from the Secretary of the Branch, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, dealing with the claims set forth on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church for full State support for its schools. The letter is capitally worded, and sets forth the Freethought case fairly, and without any qualification. We congratulate the writer on so excellent a letter, and the editor on his liberality in inserting it. We fancy his Catholic readers will not like it.

Manchester Freethinkers will have an opportunity of hearing Mr. J. Clayton, who lectures to-day (Sunday) in the Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester. The subjects are announced in the Lecture List. Mr. Clayton does some very useful work during the summer months, often in out of the way places, and deserves all the support which we hope Manchester will give him.

Mr. F. P. Corrigan lectures for the Liverpool Branch to-day (Sunday) in the Transport Buildings, 41 Islington (Entrance in Christian Street), at 7 p.m., on "Why I Am an Atheist." We feel we can promise to Mr. Corrigan, a good audience, and to Liverpool a good lecture.

Will members of the Bradford Branch please note, a special meeting of the members will be held to-day (Sunday) at the Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street, at 7.30 p.m. There is important business to be discussed, and all members are asked to attend.

The Marranos or Crypto-Jews of Portugal.

THE word Marrano, according to the Jewish Encyclopædia, denotes in Spanish damned, accursed, banned also hog. In Portuguese it is interchangeable with the word *Christaos novos* (Neo-Christians).

When the Jewish Encyclopædia was published twenty-five years ago, the living Marranos scarcely figured in the work.

The existence in Portugal of thousands of secret Jews was not then known to the outer world. It may appear incredible that in the full tide of the twentieth century in a republican country of Europe should exist secret or Crypto-Jews.

Nevertheless, as a matter of fact, Crypto-Jews are still to be found in Portugal. The "discovery" of the Marranos by a mining engineer from Poland, Mr. Samuel Schwartz by name, dates back only thirteen years; yet the movement for the open return of the Marranos to official Judaism is a movement which has assumed important dimensions, and which bears every indication of a further rapid spread.

Though the process of beginning to emerge into the light of day and proclaim their Judaism publicly is slow, ever so slow and with infinite caution, yet the cause of this extreme circumspection is quite obvious. In common with better informed Jews they have long memories; they still fear and execrate the Inquisition, notwithstanding that it was formally abolished in 1821. And when one reflects on the ghastly tortures—the flail, the rack, the stake, to mention only a few of the implements of the Religion of Love—which the Holy Office inflicted upon the Jews of Portugal in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one need not wonder that to this day is should be feared and abhorred by the descendants of its victims. These Crypto-Jews are descendants of those ill-fated Jews whom the Decree of Expulsion of 1496, and the brutality which followed it, forced to abjure their faith. This remnant of ancient Portuguese Jewry, having miraculously survived persecution, preserves to this day its purity of race and consciousness of faith despite four hundred years of Christianization and three hundred of Inquisition. The Portuguese Marranos are in the main concentrated in Northern Portugal. The Province of *Tras Os Montes* appears to be literally crammed with them, in some of its villages they form the majority of the inhabitants. They are simple country folk so that ignorance, illiteracy and superstition flourish.

If there are Marranos in Spain it cannot be ascertained, but even if there should have survived some of the forcibly baptized Jews who preserved their identity, their numbers must be small in comparison with the Marranos of Portugal.

A few historical details may render this anomaly a little less strange. An essential difference it will be recalled, distinguishes the expulsory measures of the two Iberian countries, Spain and Portugal. In Spain, the decree of March 31, 1492, caused a veritable mass emigration of Jews, for the greater part of Spanish Jewry (some historians estimate the number at 800,000) refusing to surrender their faith, abandoned its native land within the four months fixed by the implacable law.

In Portugal, on the other hand, no important emigration followed upon the expulsory decree of December 5, 1496. In fact this decree of King Emanuel, ordering under pain of death, the departure of all Jews who refused to be converted to Christianity, and at the same time promising transportation facilities to those who chose to emigrate, was little more than a piece of clever deception.

The King did not desire the expulsion of the Jews from his country, what he wanted was their conversion at all costs to Catholicism. Economic considerations as well as religious fanaticism entered into the policy of expulsion. The King was not blind to the economic consequences that followed upon the heels of the Spanish expulsion, and preferred recourse to the most savage devices to constrain his Jewish subjects to remain in the country and embrace the faith of, and assimilate with, the general population. Indeed, it is averred that Emanuel was personally opposed to the expulsory measures, and that he signed the decree only because the Spanish rulers, at the instigation of Torquemada, had conditioned their consent to Emanuel's marriage with their daughter Isabella, on the promulgation in Portugal of an act patterned after the Spanish expulsory decree. The young Portuguese Monarch thus signed the required decree under pressure, and then sought to avoid its unfortunate economic consequences by enforcing a mass conversion to Catholicism rather than a mass emigration. He began by the brutal conversion of Jewish youth, which was calculated to lead equally to the Christianizing of the adults.

It was not long before the greater part of Portuguese Jewry, which had not faltered in the face of exile or misery, was reduced to accepting Baptism as the sole means of retaining possession of their children.

Those who refused to renounce their faith were by order of the King conducted to the capital under promise of being furnished with facilities of transportation to Africa.

When to the number of about 20,000 they had been gathered together in Lisbon, they were herded in a concentration camp, and in place of being transported were starved and maltreated until they embraced the Faith of Love.

Many allowed themselves to die of hunger or took recourse to suicide rather than submit, while others were dragged like wild beasts to the Baptismal fonts.

Altogether only seven or eight persons, whose names history has unfortunately forgotten, resisted violence to the end, and eventually embarked for Africa. These eight persons comprise the totality of Jews who emigrated from Portugal in consequence of the expulsory measures, while the overwhelming majority embraced ostensibly Christianity and remained in the country.

By this policy, ruthlessly enforced, the King naively imagined he had solved his religious problem while preserving his Jewish subjects, whose energy and intellectual capacities had contributed so much to the economic development and scientific achievements of his country. But events were not slow to open his eyes to actuality.

In 1506, April 15, scarcely nine years after the general forced conversion, Lisbon during the absence of the King, became the scene of a horrible massacre of Marranos, of whom about 4,000 perished, tortured and burnt alive at the hands of a mob infuriated by the Dominicans.

Upon his return to the capital Emanuel inflicted exemplary punishments upon the perpetrators of the outrage as well as upon the monks who instigated the Pogrom. But this and similar acts of justice only augmented the passion for revenge, and in the reign of his son Juan III, the monks entered into full power through the establishment of the Inquisition in 1536.

The tribunals of the Inquisition accomplished the task entrusted to them faithfully, and continued the massacres of the Marranos, systematically and without respite until the abolition of the Holy Office by the Constitution 1821. In the light of this history

it will be easily understood that the Marrano child imbibed with his mother's milk, contempt and hatred for a creed whose followers dealt so treacherously with his ancestry; and the inevitable consequence was perseverance in his unnatural doubleness, namely, confessing something that is inwardly despicable and detestable to his very being. This is not the occasion to indulge in the elaboration of the psychological aspect of this tragic comedy, but so much is certain, that apart from the external influences that worked for aloofness, as for example, the practice of ritual, the family ties, the repulsive behaviour of the Christian environment, etc., inherent desire, working subconsciously to retaliate for the atrocities perpetrated in centuries past, had a considerable share in preserving not only the racial purity of the Marranos by marrying exclusively within their own ranks, but even their Jewish consciousness too. And this desire was crowned with fulfilment. For to frustrate the scheme of the enemy is sound strategy, according to the rules of warfare; to defeat the morbid will of an almighty Church, in a battle which lasted for centuries, is a momentous achievement that may entitle to indemnity.

The appellation "Judeu" (Jew) is no more an opprobrious epithet in Portugal, and is bestowed very frequently upon persons in the public eye, as for example upon the great champion of the people Alfonso Costa, one of the founders of the Portuguese Republic, or the eminent poet Guerra-Junqueiro, who was the soul and inspiration of the democracy and liberalism of his country. A more efficient retaliation than this, to fight for liberty, no human brain could ever conceive. The stratagems used by the Marranos to avoid Inquisitional suspicion make curious reading to-day. The strangest of subterfuges had to be resorted to in order to escape denunciation. In Inquisition times spies abounded, and the instructions they received as to the detection of Judaism from the holy fathers who employed them were in congruity with the ethics of Catholicism.

Thus a traitorous member of some Marrano household would run on a Friday to the Holy Office to announce that a white table-cloth was being spread or candles lit, or even a clean shirt donned for the Sabbath. Confiscation, imprisonment, torture and death would be mercilessly visited on men, women and adolescents as the punishment for such simple acts of Jewish life. And so the Marranos had to introduce many precautionary measures in order to outwit possible informers. For instance, they placed their Sabbath lamps in deep stoneware pots to conceal it from the dangerous glance of servant, neighbour or spy, the festivals were celebrated one or two days later than the prescribed date, etc. Now secrecy is for the Marranos one of the tenets of their faith, and they regard a public profession of their faith as a virtual impiety. One wonders what kind of superstitious beliefs the methods of rice-Christianity, the modern way of torture, will produce.

How the existence of Marranos in Republican Portugal became known to the outer world is no less dramatic than the fact itself. The virtual "discoverer" of the present-day Marranos, is already mentioned, a mining engineer, Mr. Schwartz of Lisbon. In 1917, his profession took him to the little town Belmonte in Beira Province, to discuss mining supplies with various local contractors. At the outset a Christian merchant anxious to obtain the exclusive privilege of supplying provisions for the mining operations in question, warned him against buying anything from his competitor, Balthasar Pereira de Sousa, because as he said, "It is enough for

me to tell you he is a Jew." It was indeed enough, remarks Mr. Schwartz. This disloyal boycott against the Marranos reminded him of his native Catholic Poland, but he expressed his thankfulness for this warning. Mr. De Sousa stoutly refuted the "accusation" when amicably approached by the Polish engineer. It was at a chance subsequent meeting in Lisbon that Mr. Schwartz succeeded in inducing him, in order to inspire confidence to accompany him to the synagogue. There he confessed his Jewish descent and that of his family, and promised to introduce Mr. Schwartz to the other Marrano families of Belmonte.

When he presented him to the Marrano families of his town, he whispered mysteriously in their ear: "E'dos nossos (he is one of us). But the formula somehow failed of its effect, either because it came from a man who had married a Christian—or because of the characteristic inbred suspicion of the Marranos.

Yet, by persistent efforts he won their confidence and the sacro-sanct secret was revealed.

And so the continuance of the miracles performed by Jesus was corroborated once more. But there are none so blind as those who will not see.

HISTORICUS.

Say It With Celluloid!

Gangsters and The Gospel.

SAV, Buddies—and Buddhists, Film Fans and Freethinkers, let's make Whoopee!

"Yeah!" sez you. Attaboy, let's go——!

I beg your pardon, but it's really not my fault. I've just had an interview with the Rev. Boanerges Bangs, Bishop of the Four Square Gangster's Gospel of Gopher City, Ill., and his language is infectious.

The Rev. Boanerges, as he explained to me, is over in England in order to discover whether the Four Square Gospel of the Redeemer is Rotary or just plain Stationary in Yurup.

He is a most stimulating personality.

Within five minutes of our meeting he gave me his opinion of Mr. Snowden, Mahatma Ghandi, Carnera, Mr. Hannen Swaffer, the Bishop of London, and Miss Frivol Frayne, who, it will be recalled, achieved fame by being one of the few star actresses who has not slapped Mr. Swaffer's face at a West End Hotel.

The Rev. Boanerges is nothing if not succinct.

"If them guys have gotten the Four Square Gospel—they're O. Kay with me chief," he announced "If they ain't, wal, God's gotten on the Spot—and I don't mean may be!"

THE GUNMAN EVANGELIST.

The Rev. Boanerges is, I hasten to explain, the first Gunman Evangelist. I understand that even Billy Sunday in his heyday never drew such crowded congregation as the Rev. Bangs ("Bugs" Bangs as he is still affectionately called in Chicago) now holds in the "windy city."

He was kind enough to give me a few details of his whirlwind revival campaign in Chicago—and after hearing them, I'm beginning to see why it has been called the windy city.

He enters the pulpit with the upper part of his face covered by a black mask. At his hips are strapped two loaded automatics, which he has nicknamed affectionately Peter and Paul.

"And believe me bo," he explained heartily, "they surely speak with tongues of fire!"

He uses a machine gun as a lectern, which natur-

ally dominates the congregation during the sermon. One of his most inspiring addresses I believe is entitled "Guns, Gangs and the Gospel."

"Believe me bo," he explained in his cheery way, "Them old timers the Apostles aint got nothin' on me. Apostles an' epistles were O. Kay once—but now pistols spread the word of God in Chicago. When I had my first try out at Chi, I preached for an hour and a half on "Bullets, Bootleggers, and the Bible." It sure made a hell of a hit. I used as a pulpit, the hundred thousand dollar casket of my old side kick "Pieface" Pellini, who had been bumped off three days before I got the religious racket. My sermon went big, believe me!"

In the course of our interview I asked him what he thought of the "Talkies," and the recent decision to ban Sunday Cinemas in England. "Hells bells!" he replied in his cheery Christian way. "It sounds punk to me. Say, lissen. I don't hold with keeping the Talkies open on the Lord's Day in the movie theatres, but that ain't saying I don't hold with the Talkies. Nossir. The Talkies—after the Bible, are one of the greatest gifts that Gahd, thro' his own country, has given the world.

"You tell me that thousands of your young folk ain't nowhere to go on Sunday nights with the movie theatres shut. O. Kay. They're used to 'em—and'll miss 'em. My reply is take the Talkies to the Temple. We've gotta move with the times."

TRY IT WITH TALKIES.

I was naturally interested in this daring innovation.

Most Churches, especially at this time of the year, are busy providing additional attractions to the Blood of the Lamb for their congregations. Lantern lectures on the "Life and Habits of the Spotted Snifflegrub," or "Pond Life at Ponders End," draw most enthusiastic audiences, to say nothing of Bazaars and Nativity Plays as inducements. The idea of a Sacred Talkie however seemed distinctly novel, and I asked the Rev. Boanerges to expound.

He switched his cigar from one side of his capacious mouth to the other, and pulled an ominous looking bulge in his hip pocket. I edged towards the door, but was relieved when he produced a small leather bound book.

"Say. Take a slant at this!" he said, "I'm putting that over as soon as I get back to the States. Folk ain't got time nowadays for the effete English of the Bible. They want Gahd's word—and they want it snappy!"

"Why did the Passion Play lose dollars at Ober Ammergau? It had no Pep!"

I opened the volume with considerable interest.

The title page was striking if somewhat unorthodox.

Whoopee Jeez!

THE ALL SINGING, ALL SACRED, ALL REVERENT

PICTURE OF ALL TIME

DON'T MISS THE HEART THROBBING THEME SONG

"SHY SHEIKH OF GALILEE"

AND THE SMASHING CLIMAX

"THE GUNMEN OF GOLGOTHA!"

"Get me bo?" queried the Rev. Boanerges. "I've gotta preach the gospel and I'm gonna say it with celluloid!"

I looked at him rather blankly I'm afraid, but after all, revolutionary as his idea sounds, it is not without precedent.

The Rev. Dr. Moffat has recently given us the New Testament in Modern English. Bruce Barton, the

American author has written a slick life of the Saviour, under the title of "The Man Nobody Knows." According to philologists, we are likely, in the future, to have the English language dominated in part by Transatlantic Talkies and the refanned accents of the B.B.C. On the whole, therefore, as I told the Reverend Boanerges, I consider his novel version of the Gospel, in every sense of the word, sound.

"Yeah," he agreed. "We've gotta keep it snappy! I was thinking of getting Aimee McPherson to play the part of the Virgin when we start shootin'."

A reminiscent gleam crept into the ex-gangster's eyes for a moment. "But Aimee's having a tough time at the courts right now," he explained. "Any-way's here's the idea."

THE BETHLEHEM BLUES.

I haven't the space to give the whole of the Rev. Boanerges' elaborate remarks, but a few of his own breezy explanatory words will give you a glimpse of his ultra-modern gospel.

"We open up the fillum in the garage of a Roadhouse, see. Young folk will get the idea better that way. The stable of an inn's out a date. We cut the 'osses and come to the cackle straight away, see?"

I nodded dumbly.

"Now I believe in dancing," continued the Rev. Boanerges. "If David could shake a nifty two step before the Ark its O. Kay with me. I'm gonna get a snappy fox trot specially written and open up in Bethlehem with the "Shepherdess Shuffle," "We've gotta have S.A.," he added with a smile.

"S.A.," I repeated. "I suppose you mean the Salvation Army."

"Aw! Shucks! Sneeze, your brain's dusty big boy. Ain't you never heard of Sex Appeal?" answered the Reverend gentleman.

I nodded.

"Wal. I'm thinkin' of converting the Broadway Belles an' gettin' em to do a nifty dance instead of the old fashioned carols. I'm getting my buddy Al. Boobenstein of Tin Pan Alley to write the music for *The Bethlehem Blues*.

"It goes like this."

The Rev. Boanerges rose to his feet and executed a few dance steps, then delivered with considerable gusto:—

"Ah'm liable to commit Mayhem
Way down in Bethlehem,
'Cos ah'm blue-oo,
Don' know what to do-oo
Got no pa, got no ma,
The sheep go baa,
We're fulla blah,
And fulla the Bethlehem blues."

"Got the idea?" queried the Rev. Boanerges. "Its better than harking to a lotta "Herald" Angels. I never did like that paper anyways—and as a hundred per cent Amurrican, I ain't strong on Kings new or otherwise."

Again I nodded.

"Then we switch over to genuine mother stuff," he continued enthusiastically. "Here's Mary, see? Sitting in the garage of the road house in an old automobile. She's holding the Infant in her lap and crooning very softly, "Hands off Herod! He's ma Honey Boy"—a real Al Jolson sobber that'll knock 'em cold.

Then we'll work in a touch of nigger spirituals as Joseph comes into the garage. An orchestra plays off. "Poor Old Joe." See?

"I-I-see," I returned somewhat dazedly."

"But that ain't the half of it," continued the Rev. Boanerges.

"I ain't forgetting the drama nor the comedy. Nossir! Young folk like comedy, an' they're gonna get it. I've gotta great scene where the first miracle takes place. It'll go great, believe me.

"There's a guy named Nicodemus, whose been running a booze racket at Bethany. He's hi-jacked a load of liquor that's gotta go to a rival gang whose boss is giving a wedding whoopee at Cana see?

"Wal. This liquor don't get there—and the booze runs out. And, say, I've had Al Boobenstein to do me a swell comedy number called, "You cain't got canned at Cana 'cos the Bootleggers in the Jug!"

"B-b-ut," I protested, "Surely that's not in keeping with the sacred theme."

"We've gotten plenty of sacredness to go on with." continued the Rev. Boanerges. "Wait till I bring in Mary Magdalene. Believe me bo' its a wow!"

GWYN EVANS.

(To be continued.)

The Poetry of Edmund Blunden.

THERE is a subtle appeal in the poetic excellence of Mr. Blunden's work that provokes many questions, raises numerous issues, and at last forces the genuine lover of melody and good sense to attempt to place it. The mind runs over the poetry of John Clare, Crabbe, Hardy, Goldsmith and Donne, but there still remains a missing factor. Maeterlinck, in Tytyl, looked at the past, present, and future of man; he has what is called an apprehension of cosmic consciousness which may be defined as a deeper and wider sympathy with the human race that is not given to everyone. In all the writings of Maeterlinck there is a silver thread running through them; it is the spirit of seriousness, a recognition of the dignity of man, and a genuine effort, untrammelled by religious fears, to wholeheartedly say "yes" to the highest aspirations of mankind. That is the strength of Maeterlinck. What then in comparison, is the aim and strength of our modern English poet?

A simple poem, "The Waggoner," tells in clear words of nothing of more mundane importance than a driver of a wain in the late autumn on his journey over a country road, and the final arrival at the darkened farm. The secret is in the last line:—

"... the moment hangs wan
As though nature flagged and all desires,
But in the dim court the ghost is gone.

From the lug-secret yew to the penthouse wall,
And stooping there seems to listen to
The waggoner leading the gray to stall,
As centuries past itself would do."

Here, in a few words, the poet makes a contact with the past. It is done almost without effort. Nietzsche's aphorism—"all that is good is easy, everything divine runs on light feet," comes to the mind in a consideration of this verbal creation. It is, in the words of the German dramatist Kaiser, "the magic of familiar things," and, in a few well chosen words Mr. Blunden has etched an unfading picture of time on the wing.

In the poem "Almswomen," there is a sympathetic story told of two inmates of an almshouse; the pair had been life-long friends and:—

"Many a time they kiss and cry, and pray
That both be summoned in the self-same day."
so that they would leave the world together.

"Some bell-like evening when the may's in bloom."
It is a quiet and melodious rendering, without supernatural fears, of a friendship, fragrant and tender; it is, in its simplicity, a gentle remonstrance with the age-long inheritance of our fear of the king of terrors. Our poets undo the theological fetters with the insight that is not given to the Lord's anointed.

One of the characters of Dickens asks what posterity

has done for us. Reversing the question "Forefathers" gently touches on the life and history of those who went before us. Reverence is a word from a vocabulary that is suspect, but in spite of it, the reader will sense the depth of "Forefathers."—six rhymed verses that weave a picture of the past, and make human history take on an individual significance that cannot be apprehended through the orthodox accounts of Kings, battles, massacres and laws.

When Mr. Blunden dispenses with God in his poetry, he is at his best and surest. His many and varied lines on the war, on the different phases of military life in the detestable madness that seized nearly all of us, are, in some few places false, and they pay a debt to respectability that is not due. In "The Avenue," the two opening lines are provocative, but perhaps perfectly natural when we remember that theology has made its mark in public schools:—

"Up the long colonnade I press, and strive
By love to thank God that I go alive . . ."

This piece gives a true description of soldiers marching up to the line; it is grey and sombre, melancholy, and verifiable by all those who still hold a cranny in their brain for the return to the trenches when:—

"The rattling limbers hurrying past would jar
The jangled nerves, and candles' chancing gleam
From sweating cellars looked sweet peace as far
As any star, and wilder than a dream
To him who soon would be beyond the wire
Listening his wits to ague in the mire,
And waiting till the drumfire hours began,
In the fool's triumph of the soul of man . . ."

Again, in "Return of the Native," written at Ypres, 1929, there is the theological straining and tugging with an imposed problem; God must somehow or other be worked in—two and two must be added together in some mysterious way to make five:—

"Man in our time, and with our help, grew here
A pale Familiar; here he struck the Sun,
And for a season turned the Sun to blood;
Many such nights as this, his Witch and he
Unmasked their metal, and with poisonous work
Broke the fair sanctuary of the world's rest
And circumvented God."

God's truth, God's peace, God's ways, why cannot a poet, for Mr. Blunden can lay a true claim to the title, why cannot the poet, we repeat, leave such conundrums to amuse the shrivelled brains of those who, with a crook in their hands, urged young men to pick up rifles? It is within the poet's power to bring pleasure to human beings; he can play sweeter melodies on the strings of memory than those who live on man's fabled depravity; he can recall by subtle skill visions of the past that the heart and mind will not render up to oblivion; all this and more can he do—what need then, to mar these gifts, by bowing the knee to anthropomorphism? The human race will have shepherds. Foiled and thwarted by those who scarcely know how to hold a crook, man will yet suffer to be guided, but not again by the black-coated race with its history and origin now known and defined. The poet sings of the known; his words gently stir the fires of hope for the best that is to be; what reason then for an obolus from his hand to mystery-mongers? There is none, and if Mr. Blunden had wended his ways towards that life stream where Gods and priests are very small fish, he would win the whole-hearted praise of brother-men.

To book lovers and scholars, and to those who do not ask overmuch of life, but are able to find compensation, *Poems 1914-1930*, Cobden-Sanderson, 10s. 6d. net, will provide material for many pleasant hours. Where Mr. Blunden discards his occasional theology, the reader knows exactly what the poet means, and can find time for admiration for the felicity of phrase, and the general rich texture of his work. Ernest Benn, Ltd., in the Augustan Books of Modern Poetry, publish a selection at sixpence a copy. *English Poems*, 1925, published by Cobden-Sanderson, 6s. net, carry on the tradition of Herrick and Drayton, but they are more homely. *The Shepherd* can be obtained for 3s. 6d. in the New Readers Library, Duckworth. *Retreat*, a collection of sonnets and poems are pleasing and memorable, within the easy

purview of English nature-lovers. *Near and Far* is a volume of poems, containing some memories of Japan.

With just one extract from *The May-Day Garland*, we will present Mr. Blunden in the garb we like him best, although *The Shepherd*, from which we take it, is full of beautiful lines:—

“And for these little children,
And my love like a child,
The May should never fade to-night
Could Time but be beguiled,
Could Time but see the beauty of
These singing honied hours,
And lie in the sun adream while we
Hid up his scythe in flowers.”

The rhythm is that of Byron's "So, We'll go no more a Roving," and that recalls Thomas Moore's lines on "The Bells of Ashburton in Derby"—a poem that was recited to the writer in an English Tavern. Immortality has as much chance in a place where men meet for a friendly drink together as it has in the twaddlesome literary salons of London that stink of jealousy and patchouli. And perhaps Dryden knew what he was talking about when he wrote that "Life is an Inn." In the spacious freedom of it, no one would be more pleased to see at his ease, the poet, whose works we admire—with just one small proviso—than

C-DE-B.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

B.B.C. SUNDAYS.

SIR,—Now is the time for all Saints, who have B.B.C. licences, to write to the Director-General at Savoy Hill demanding an alternative programme on Sundays.

Surely we have been silent too long, and my opinion is that if Sir John Reith gets a sufficient number of letters on this question even he will bend.

And let us remember that the Twin Transmitter at Moorside Edge will be radiating shortly, and this is a glorious opportunity of getting an alternative to the present dismal Sundays.

GEO. BURGESS.

MR. DARK AND ROBERT OWEN.

SIR,—May I encroach on a little of your valuable time and give you my impression of Mr. Dark's broadcast talk on New Year's night. I happened to be listening in at the time, and Mr. Dark put deliberate emphasis on the word "Christian," when he said that Robert Owen was a *Christian Socialist*. Then came a slight pause, only slight certainly, like one does when he makes a statement that he knows his listeners either don't know or think otherwise. My impression was at the time that it was a deliberately false statement.

Hoping this may be useful to you, as others may have heard it in the same way.

W. L. DRIVER.

FREETHINKERS AND THE SABBATH.

SIR,—It causes pain to me to see such an intellectual giant as Mr. Boyd Freeman casting salt upon the Dissenters altar in the *Freethinker* for November 30, 1930. Too true, I know the pleasures our illusions give us, and the pain experienced upon casting them off in our mental battle. As a Cornishman, I know from bitter memory the cant and the humbug indulged in without the chapel door after service is over. It was not "rest" to my father or me to attend chapel and Sunday school, nor is it "rest" to the Salvationist or the Catholic to attend mass or knee drill early Sunday mornings. Often very, very often, it is a day of labour. It was to my father, who as a local preacher walked to the outlying villages within a radius of seven miles, a tiresome day. Grant it was a labour of "love," the fact remains it was misplaced zeal, since he could have rested his wounded leg at ease—a leg with a wound upon the ankle, which did not heal for the good reason it never had a chance for forty years to my knowledge.

Mr. Boyd Freeman asks would the practice of church

and chapel going have been kept up had it been irksome? Who looks upon the practice as laborious? Rather is it a "duty" since all others go and to be thought eccentric, out of place, aloof, not in a clique, unsociable is, or was, to invite the term "infidel" upon one's self. After all it is cowardice unexpressed. The lyncher of the Southern States is swayed by the fear of public estimation. Yes, if their attendances, which is so regular, moulded the lives, thoughts and habits for the good of themselves and the community, I would say to all, be what you choose to be providing your beliefs were ennobling. Can it conduce to morality to a healthy moral character when a bribe is the lode star ever held up to their view? I was not taught at the Penzance Primitive Methodist Sunday school or chapel to be "good" for goodness sake, but rather because a saviour had a jew's harp and all treasures which this earth could not give were mine if I were a faithful believing groveller. The fact of good conduct carried its own reward did not enter into the question taught. It blighted my conception of duty. It mesmerized. It left me without mental balance when called to face realities.

It came as a shock to me after leaving the sea to find that where Christianity was firm in the saddle there virtue was at a low ebb. As a youth it was hard to do right, easy to swim with the tide. It is also a fact that the white workers of the Johannesburg Reef would and do prefer a native uncontaminated by the advocates of Christianity or, failing that an East Coast Moslem as a helper. Wherever Christ is upon the Dark Continent there sex is at the price of old boots. It was also painfully true that during my youth, my native land was pious, stupid and unmoral. Yet we were but the product of the church and the chapel. Religious excitement at the village chapel continued if only because the very environments on the homeward journey lent themselves to other promptings.

W. ROWE.

State Mines, Transvaal.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Friday at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinker* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrod Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 7.30. Speakers: Messrs. C. Frank, W. Aley, F. Day.

INDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Workers Circle, Great Alie Street, Aldgate, E.): 8.0, Mr. C. Burns—"Marxism and Darwinism."

CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, W.C.): Tuesday, February 3, at 7 p.m., Dr. Caroline Maule—"The Sterilization of the Unfit."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, February 4, at 7.15, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—"Politics and Religion."

RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, W.C.): Monday, February 2, at 8 p.m., Lantern Lecture by Professor Elliot Smith, on "The Evolution of Man." Admission, 2s. 6d., 1s. 6d., and 1s.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, A. Yusuf Ali, M.A.—"The Spoken and the Written Word."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Winter Garden, 37 High Street, Clapham, near Clapham North Underground Station): 7.15, Mr. J. H. Van Biene—"What Do We Know?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Harry Snell, C.B.E., M.P.—“The World Outlook for Peace and Progress in 1931.”

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, facing The Brecknock): 7.30, Mr. T. F. Palmer—“Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh.”

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 7.30, Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, Bart—“Health.”

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Members' Meeting.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—On Sunday, February 1st, at 6.30, in New Room (above Burdon's shop, bottom of Front Street), Mr. R. Robinson will lecture. Chair taken by T. Bentley. Members and friends please note.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. E. Atherton, Chairman of the R.L.R.A.—“The Case for Secular Education.” Questions and discussion. All welcome. February 22, and March 1, two lectures by Mr. Casey, of Bury—“The Workings of the Mind.”

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY—City (Albion Street) Hall, 11.30, Mr. Geo. Whitehead, London, “Religion, the Enemy of Woman”; 6.30, “The Truth About Women.”

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (London)—“God and Man.”

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): 7.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan (London): “Why I Am an Atheist.” Doors open 6.30. Admission free. Reserved seats 1s. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): Mr. J. Clayton (Burnley), 3.0, “The Queen of the Sciences and Humanity.” 6.30, “Spooks.”

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S.—Bigg Market at 7.30, Mr. J. C. Keast. Literature will be on sale after the lecture.

PERTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Secular Room, 122 Canal Street): 2.0, Mr. Tom Laing will lecture. Chairman, Mr. John S. Lumsden. Questions and discussion.

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