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

Views and Opinions.

The Press and the Public.

SOME time ago, January 11, I wrote some notes on "Progress and the Paragraph Mind," dealing with the influence of the ordinary London morning newspaper on the public mind. In our issue for February there appeared a defence of the working journalist by Mr. Ford Ruther, a regular reader of this paper. In his reply he said almost all that could be said in defence of the newspaper and of his fellow journalists, and I would have replied to that article at once, but my space was occupied with other things, and there was no immediate hurry. And now that I come to reply I find that all I have to do is to reaffirm what I before said and to amplify the charge. For I am in the peculiar position of agreeing with nearly everything that my critic said, as he appears to have agreed with what I said. The only curious thing is that he seems to be under the impression that by stating the existence of the conditions of the evil about which I complained, he has removed the ground of complaint. That is not the case. The case against drunkenness is not destroyed because one reduces its existence to definite physiological and sociological conditions.

It must be understood that in my "Views" I was referring specifically to papers of the *Mail*, *Express*, *News-Chronicle*, and, of late, the *Herald* type. In defending these Mr. Ford Ruther reminds me, (1) that newspapers are business propositions, they are put on the market as is soap; (2) that the newspaper reading public force the hands of the owners; (3) that journalists fully recognize the "toshiness" of the stuff they produce; and (4) that a newspaper produced in the old style could not now exist. I have no serious difference with any of these statements—with the exception of number two, which can only be accepted with certain qualifications. For the rest, Mr.

Ruther seems to be only repeating the substance of my own charges by way of justification.

* * *

Moronic Culture.

My notes were written to remove the assumption that there were fewer readers of good matter than existed once upon a time. Against that assumption I pointed out that there were as many readers of good matter now as ever, but that universal education had given us an enormous number of people who, being fed with bad stuff from the outset, had never developed the taste for good reading, or for forming independent opinions. And I went on to point out that when a man like Lord Northcliffe, with a lust for power and a genius for making money, saw that a huge advertising revenue might be achieved by writing to please the lowest intelligence instead of the higher, he set on foot that movement which brought into being the stunt press, forced all newspapers to follow his evil lead, and so brought the mass of the press down to the low level he had established.

I know as well as my friendly critic that no paper that steered clear of the style set could compete with those named. They would not get the circulation, and therefore, they would not get the advertising revenue upon which they depend for existence. Lacking this revenue they could not afford to spend the huge sums required for their news-service and their special writers. I admire the marvels in the direction of the news-service as much as anyone. I also know that very many of the well-known writers on the press are quite aware of the nature of the rubbish they write. Have I not pointed out that certain well-known men and women simply could not be as silly as they pretend to be? Parsons, even Bishops may be silly enough to believe what they preach. But I could name half a dozen well known newspaper men who cannot believe the nonsense they pen. They write that way for a living, and some of this class write an occasional article for the *Freethinker* to, as they say, take the taste out of their mouths. But still, I do not think it wholly true that the newspapers are what they are because newspaper readers insist on their being what they are. The newspapers created the demand for their particularly degenerate *menu*, far more than the public initiated it. Drug taking may result on the one hand from a desire for so unwholesome a stimulant, but it can hardly be denied that the habit may become wide-spread and incurable in consequence of the activities of dope-peddlers.

* * *

The Newspaper "Fan."

Let us bear in mind three things. First, everybody to-day can read. Second, practically every adult has a vote. Thirdly, the chief reading of the overwhelming majority of the people is the newspaper. Perhaps

a fourth thing that one ought to bear in mind is that the press is becoming more thoroughly syndicalized every year, so that one may visualize in the not very distant future, perhaps two syndicates controlling the press of the country, and so bringing up their millions of followers to think certain things and certain things only. When this day arrives the press will have accomplished the ideal at which the Roman Catholic Church has always aimed—a huge following repeating ready-made views in almost complete ignorance of the truth of the situation.

Everybody reads a newspaper, and with probably more than half the population the newspaper is their only channel of communication with the outside world. In the case of so important a world issue as Russia or India or China, it is through the newspapers that more than half the population look at these countries. They have no other source of information, and, apparently, desire no other source. And what is that information worth? Well, if there is anything of a very sensational character, the news will be there. Or if it is anything that favours the particular game the proprietor—the editor counts for little—has on hand, it will be there. If there is an earthquake, or a riot, or a few startling murders, or some little princelet has run off to Paris and married an actress, the news will be lavish, and no expense will be spared in the collecting. But if there is important work going on in the shape of political or sociological or industrial developments one will be lucky to discover a short paragraph. There was plenty of Turkey while there were massacres to report. There is none at all now that Turkey is trying to develop itself. Portugal occupied space while the papers were writing of terrible scenes after the expulsion of the King. Where does one find mention of Portugal now? Ireland was well in the newspaper front while we had the reign of the black and tans, and riot and revolution. To-day Ireland might be at the North Pole so far as the newspapers are concerned. So one might take country after country. The search is for sensation, for trivialities, for the things that matter least, instead of for the things that matter most. And if one wishes to see the results of this, one need only take the average man or woman and find out how much they know or what is their idea of India, of China, of Japan, of Ireland, or Russia, or of anything that is removed from their own personal contact.

* * *

Dope!

There is something further to be said. In the latter days of the Roman Empire it is said to have been part of the governmental plan to keep the people quiet by means of shows, the circus, and doles. To-day we have not exactly that kind of dope, but we have the much more effective dope of the press. That, we must admit, is very skilfully administered, but the dope is there nevertheless. Let anyone follow closely any one of the papers mentioned and mark what they will find. There will be seven or eight, or more columns of sport. Lengthy accounts of the Prince of Wales going lion-hunting, special articles by well known writers on whether wives should be petted or husbands pampered, full length articles on motor or aeroplane racing, elaborate reports of murder trials, sensational developments in the film world, with columns of gossip by society correspondents, who are always hob-nobbing with the Duchess of This or Lord That. On the political side nothing in the shape of a parliamentary report is even attempted. One may get a summary, but not always that. Usually it is an account of what you ought to believe, so that from one paper you may learn that Mr. Macdonald com-

pletely exposed Mr. Baldwin to the unconcealed disgust of the whole House, and from the other that when Mr. Baldwin sat down Mr. Macdonald sat like a deflated bladder, with "none so poor as to do him reverence." As to the meetings of such bodies as the British Association, they are obviously very bad copy, unless something has been said which in the mind of the reporter seems sufficiently startling to be capable of misrepresentation in a popular paragraph.

Much of this kind of thing may be said to be of interest to large numbers of people. It must be or it would not be published. But it is obvious that it is of no great consequence to anyone. And the danger of it is that since the reading of the majority is practically confined to newspapers, there is ultimately developed an altogether false sense of values. The world's gossip fills a large class of people with the sense that they are being kept in touch with the affairs of the world. They do not seek better information because they feel they have already got the best available. But their knowledge of things that really matter is about as real as are the visions of an opium smoker. They are being "doped" as surely as though some drug which dulled their minds and distorted their vision was being administered. There are, of course, some few papers in the country that have not yet succumbed to the Northcliffe influence, but how long they will survive in their present form is a matter of conjecture. It is needless to say that these papers are not those with huge circulations. So soon as they pass under the influence of a Beaverbrook, a Riddell, or a Rothermere, they will fall into line with the true yellow press.

* * *

Training the Young.

Mr. Ford Ruther would probably reply to all this that the newspaper which gave space to what I regard as of consequence would not be read. I am not so sure. Many years ago a shrewd old man—not by any means a "highbrow," said to me that his principal objection to much novel-reading was that it bred an unhealthy desire to discover what happened in the last few pages. So soon as the nature of the plot was realized, all interest in the working out of the story, or of the development of character, was drowned. The sole desire was to see what happened, and to satisfy that the reader was content to take the author's word about it. Now every generation we have a fresh army of newspaper readers released from our elementary schools. So soon as they are of age they will—male and female—have the vote. Theoretically the control of the country will be in their hands and with the majority the source to which they will look for information will be—the stunt press. They will read only that kind of writing because they are brought up on that kind of writing. They will demand the dope for the same reason that the drug addict demands his particular drug. They will be receiving the kind of education the Roman Church gives its members. The newspaper policy of *telling* its readers what it must believe in short paragraphs and staring headlines, and suppressing all that would enable its readers to have a really informed opinion on any subject—except, say, sport or murder trials—will secure their being ready dupes to the policy of the largest circulation and the smallest thinking. They will never have acquired either the taste for serious reading, or the capacity for digesting it. In education the policy of the Churches is so to train children that when they become adults they will be passive followers of a particular religious organization. They too might plead that they give their followers what they want. If the Churches could only completely control the press they would have in their grasp one of the finest instruments

known to the world for "doping" the public. The stunt press caters for a doped public. That it forces writers who do not believe in what they write to turn out so much "tosh" is only a further example of the thoroughness of its rule. It is true that we cannot do without the press, but it is an important sociological problem as to what we are going to do with it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Legacy of Lucretius.

"Bird of the lithe, bright, grey, golden morn,
First of all and sweetest singer born."

Swinburne.

"Reason is a rebel unto faith."—*Thomas Browne.*

"The crime of inquiry is one which religion never has forgiven."—*Shelley.*

WHEN Gladstone delivered his finest speech before a hushed and expectant House of Commons, he quoted some daring lines from that old-world poet, Lucretius. The quotation was its own justification, but it is safe to say that few of the Members of Parliament present knew much concerning the most powerful of the Latin poets, whose sonorous verse and profound scepticism induced Elizabeth Browning to say that he "denied divinely the divine."

The personality of Lucretius is one of the most extraordinary and one of the vaguest in the whole world of literature. He comes before us in his great poem, "De Rerum Naturæ" (On the Nature of Things), very distinctly. He is, as it were, always present, but the details of his life are so shadowy and so misunderstood. This is not to be wondered at, for Lucretius wrote half a century before the alleged birth of the mythical Christ. Yet, in some ways, this old-world Freethinker comes closer to our modern sympathies than many others who sang of fair ladies and Falernian wine in that far-off time in which they lived. Across the gulf of twenty centuries, across the far deeper abyss of an older civilization and an alien language, we recognize in him a brave soldier in the Army of Human Liberation.

The name of Lucretius is immortalized by his Atheistic work, "De Rerum Nature," which remains the finest didactic poem in any language. In this truly wonderful poem, for whole pages together, he reads like a modern author rather than a Roman poet of the Classic period. We may gain some notion of the general effect of this masterpiece if we conceive Tennyson to have devoted his rare genius to versifying Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy," or Swinburne to have subordinated his splendid gifts to the poetic presentation of the Darwinian Theory. The central idea which lay at the heart of this magnificent poem was that the universe is ruled by natural law, and that mankind is free to work out its own destiny, undisturbed by any supernatural guidance.

Lucretius denied the doctrine of a future life and its ethical usefulness. He declared this promised hereafter to be a fable and a dream. Moreover, and this is truly astonishing, he anticipated so many of the scientific ideas of the nineteenth century. Writing two thousand years ago Lucretius perceived the truth of evolution, the indestructibility of matter, the survival of the fittest, the origin of language, and the progress of society. To us these things are but comparatively recent tidings, but, so potent a thing in genius, that they dawned twenty centuries ago on the prophetic mind of this great Latin poet "dreaming on things to come."

It will be seen that Lucretius is so much more than a singer writing odes to his mistress' eyebrows. He disclaimed to carve cherrystones; he elected to

hew granite. He is man's champion against priestcraft. According to him, the greatest curse of human nature is religion, which priests use to fool and to degrade mankind. Now and again his cheek flushes with anger, as when he records, in lines of great beauty, the terrible guilt prompted by religion against the most sacred ties of humanity. No poet has presented us with a picture more finished than that of the sacrifice of Iphigenia to the "gods." It is a story "too deep for tears." We see the hapless maiden trembling by the altar without power of speech, the murderous priest, the sorrowing father, the strong men powerless, and the awful end. Lucretius concludes his account with lines that make us feel his heart throb with indignation as we read:—

"Learn thou then
To what damned deeds religion urges men."

A most marked characteristic of Lucretius was his passionate love of humanity. Listen to his beautiful words on death, and note how he insists that it is but dreamless rest:—

"Thou not again shalt see thy dear home's door,
Nor thy sweet wife and children come to throw
Their arms round thee, and ask for kisses more,
And through thy heart make quiet comfort go,
Out of thy hands hath slipped the precious store.
Thou hoardest for thine own, men say, and lo!
All thou desired is gone. But never say
All the desire as well hath passed away."

His pathos and tenderness in contemplating the riddle of life have already been noted. His large, brave heart felt sympathy with the animals as well as humanity, and he voices the helpless grief of brutes sorrowing for their young. His allusions to children are always touching and beautiful. His ever-present ardour for knowledge, his austerity of character, the magnificence of his genius, rank him among the really great poets, who, like stars, shine for ever in the firmament of art.

When we reflect on the present condition of priest-ridden Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy; when we recall the struggle of reason and religion, written in blood and fire during the centuries, we feel it is but just to acknowledge that this old-world Freethinker fought the battle for Freedom. The passage of the centuries also helps us to understand the magnitude of the struggle between reason and unreason. In his days, each, as it were, armed with the simplest weapons, fought together. Now, Freethought, armed with all the powerful resources of science, marches to battle in the confident hope of certain victory.

MIMNERMUS.

KNOWLEDGE.

OPEN the doors of Knowledge wide;
Brush the dust of Ignorance aside.
Let Truth shine bright on all mankind
And release the shackles of the mind.

Trample tradition underfoot,
Tear out Theology by the root;
Plant sane, clean thinking in its stead—
No more on Christian tales be fed.

Listen not to the petty Preacher
Nor the vapid Bible Teacher,
But rather turn to the Scientist
And noble Anthropologist.

In your Philosophy be sane,
And do not overcome Life's pain
By seeking solace from the Priest—
Be bold and free—An Atheist.

"ALMA KAYE."

New Books.

The Problem of God (Brightman; New York Publishing Co.)—In a systematic treatment of his subject the author follows a line of inquiry indicated by the titles of his chapters: Contemporary Doubt; Substitutes for God; Expansion of God; Contraction of God; leading to his own Resultant Idea of God. Then follows a typical example of twisting and turning an old term as though it were a piece of clay which could be moulded to any shape to suit any whim of anybody. The author says "a known God must be contracted within the limits of our reason," and the problem is, how much can God include without becoming all-inclusive and therefore meaningless? Omnipotence and Omnibenevolence will not go together, nor will impersonality and worship; so let us say that "God is a person, supremely conscious, supremely valuable, and supremely creative, yet limited both by the free choices of other persons and by the restrictions within his own nature." There is evidence of Design, yet also of frustration of Design and its delay. This makes God "perfect in will, but not in achievement," and "evolution points to a finite God." "The advance of modern thought," he says, "has compelled us to modify our faith either in God's character or in his omnipotence. We believe it is far more reasonable to deny the omnipotence of the power than to deny its goodness."

The Philosophy of a Biologist (Sir L. Hill, F.R.S.). The author renounces the Bible God and looks to science, which shows us an eternal, infinite and unknowable power, stripped of all superstition and magic (after Spencer's.)

Immortality, he contends, is strictly impersonal (after Keith). Personality, character, consciousness—all these are submerged at death, *i.e.*, they die. Their effects are perpetuated, and something may conceivably be perpetuated in descendants. The living animal has two bodies, the somatic and the germinal, and the offspring will be the development of the germinal.

The Dawn of Modern Thought (Mellone).—A fairly reliable and, so far as we can see, entirely uncalled for, exposition of the philosophical systems of Descartes, Leibnitz and Spinoza.

The Evolution of Truth (Knox).—Capt. Knox was a Jamesian Pragmatist of long ago, and he has here reprinted some old essays. Of special interest to Freethinkers is his treatment of Determinism, which, we learn, is (1) indisputable; (2) meaningless; and (3) indisputable *because* meaningless. The author cannot understand how Determinism can possibly accommodate "volition." "If psychical Determinism maintains its pretence of treating will as real it contradicts itself. If it drops that pretence it relapses into Behaviourism," and in order to uphold necessity it becomes necessary to suppress purpose, and "psychical Determinism" is a contradiction in terms. The issue, he contends, is between Voluntarism and Behaviourism.

Beyond Agnosticism (Bell).—A cynical emotionalism runs through the book, which is almost devoid of argument; the tone is Chestertonian. Science is not enough. Religion must go beyond it, for an Agnostic "has no inward peace until he finds his God," which he is advised to do by an act of faith. God has translated himself into terms we can understand, *i.e.*, Jesus. We must go on our knees to the Unutterable Mystery who will reveal himself.

Science in Soviet Russia (Crowther).—It is a pleasure to pick up a book on Russia containing both sane information and dispassionate comment. A. W. Benn has just written and published a book, *About Russia*,

in which he states on the first page, that he has never been, doesn't want to go, and never will go so long as the Soviet Régime is there. To visit Russia, he says, is exactly the way to get a wrong impression of it. On the next page he tells us he has taken his information from people who have actually been there.

We therefore prefer this book by Mr. Crowther, which contains great wealth of detail, culled from visits to the various scientific academies and public institutions, information varying from the production of a fertile cross between a raddish and a cabbage to the popularity of the *Daily Herald* and *Manchester Guardian* in the Moscow Library. The great question, he considers, is not what is Russia like now? but how is she developing? His answer, into the most powerful country on earth.

Christian Unity (Bishop of Gloucester).—Intermingled with the usual ecclesiastical exuberance is a plea for union among the various Christian sects. The problem occurs, what is the definition of the Church? Current theories are:—

Only the Orthodox is the one true Church.

The true Church consists of all those bodies that have bishops and the Apostolic Succession.

The Church consists of all baptized Christians who believe in the Lord Jesus.

Good News from God (Bishop of London).—This book is well up to the usual standard of the Bishop of London. He says it is "an appeal to the heart and conscience rather than to the intellect." Never mind about "defending" the faith, shout it for the Gospel is Good News! God is a "lovable" person (the proof is that atoms could not have thrown themselves together), and he is always giving us things to enjoy, like life, and he wants us to be thankful. Freethinkers please note that "the Church gives us nothing *against* our reason, but only some things *above* it." The Cross is "the one thing that keeps steady our faith in God," and the best bit of Good News is the ultimate triumph of the cause of Christ, etc., etc.

The Conquest of Happiness (Bertrand Russell; Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.).—One mark of a true philosopher may be that he can draw from his system some canons of judgment for our everyday behaviour, and set them down in simple form rather than in a voluminous "treatise" on Ethics. Those of us, therefore, who have no appetite for the latter, will welcome this latest effort of probably the most tough-minded thinker from our universities.

The title is significant, though slightly misleading. Happiness is not exactly a plum which falls to the mouth; it implies a certain amount of effort; the tree must be climbed. Yet Russell is all for the golden mean between effort and resignation. Two primary assumptions are made, sufficiently of wealth and of health. These, plus a little exertion, or pull, in the right direction are the means which produce the end. Further than that, we can renounce the sin by which the angels fell. The author's advice, of course, is of a general nature, to be utilized by individuals in their own ways.

The book has two parts, I. Causes of Unhappiness; II. Causes of Happiness, making in all nearly 300 pages, to be read, of course, with the greatest possible amount of interest, intelligence, suspicion and salt. Not every book is worth that. We should deplore the day when Freethinkers succumbed to that demoralizing drug called hero-worship. Let us have no "Hark The Oracle speaks," and with this we heartily recommend *The Conquest of Happiness*, which, sparkling with aphorism, would make a good brother to *Opinions*.

Here are his causes of unhappiness: fear of public opinion, sense of sin, envy, Byronic unhappiness,

competition, boredom, fatigue, and "persecution mania" (going about with a "grouch," and groaning under the weight of an injustice). The main causes of happiness are zest and affection. Life is like a meal. Some approach it with a sense of duty, like the invalid, who obeys his doctor; some gluttonously, eat too much and get plethoric; some in the bored way of routine; and some with hunger and a sound appetite, who knows when to stop. Hunger: Food=Zest: Life. Zest, then, is "the distinctive mark of happiness."

In order to provide channel and opportunity for zest we require a variety of interests. "The secret of happiness is this: let your interests be as wide as possible, and your reactions to the things and persons that interest you as far as possible friendly rather than hostile." Life is doubtless too short to be interested in everything, but long enough for quite a lot. Some, like Sherlock Holmes, may relish an old hat picked up in the street; others may have a partiality for a football match or a film, and are thus far superior to those who haven't. Yet if the football match or film has completely exhausted the zest for life, its devotee falls far behind him whose zest takes him further, into music, say, or literature. So says Russell.

Others may conceivably get a "kick" from an earthquake, or a shipwreck; others from an intellectual pursuit. In the recent criticisms which have appeared on Prof. Jeans' *Mysterious Universe*, we have noticed some writers who, excusing themselves from intelligent comment on grounds of brain-fag, have attempted to hide their incompetence by affecting the rôle of jester, which becomes quite unfair when the opportunity is taken to misrepresent and challenge points raised in the book. A contributor to the *Clarion* pictures the scientist boring over his problem with a ruffled brow while the "plain man" is enjoying "Variety," thus demonstrating the superiority of the "lowbrow." The truth is, probably, that the scientist gets a far greater "kick" out of an hour's investigation on a new line than did any plain man in a lifetime of "Variety." Russell himself has spoken elsewhere of the thrills which even now he gains from a new problem in Mathematics.

He believes scientists are, in the mass, far happier than artists. "Very few men can be genuinely happy in a life involving continual self-assertion against the scepticism of the mass," unless he has taken unto himself a coterie. The man of science, says Russell, has no need of a coterie. (That is quite true for to-day, but would not serve for so recent a time as that of the Baron von Holbach). The scientist "is thought well of by everybody except his colleagues. The artist, on the contrary, is in the painful situation of having to choose between being despised and being despicable." Whereas scientists "obtain from their work a satisfaction so profound that they can derive pleasure from eating and even marrying," "artists and literary men consider it *de rigueur* to be unhappy in their marriages." Meanwhile "men of science frequently remain capable of the old-fashioned domestic bliss. The reason for this is that the higher parts of their intellect are wholly absorbed in their work, and are not allowed to intrude into regions where they have no functions to perform."

Russell has found that affection plays a big part in happiness. "To like many people spontaneously and without effort is perhaps the greatest of all sources of personal happiness." "A too powerful ego is a prison from which a man must escape if he is to enjoy the world to the full," and "a capacity for genuine affection is the mark of the man who has escaped from the prison of self." Besides, "the feeling of being loved promotes zest more than anything else." But enough; more would be cloy some.

Many more interesting themes are discussed in the book; work, for instance, which fills in the time nicely and so prevents boredom; sex, which is a form of affection, and which calls for a considerable display of zest, for "caution in love is fatal." Impersonal interests are strongly advocated. "All our affections are at the mercy of death. It is therefore necessary that our lives should not have that narrow intensity which puts the whole meaning and purpose of life at the mercy of accident." Readers of Borrow will remember the tea-merchant in *Lavengro*, who was so overcome by the death of his wife that he taught himself to read the Chinese inscription on the tea-chests that passed through his hands. Impersonal interests cannot die.

Gestalt Psychology (Dr. Köhler).—Possibly the most important work on psychology since *The Ways of Behaviourism*. The system is at present mostly a local affair (Germany) "gestalt" being "form" or "configuration." There is a modified introspectionism, the method being of "direct experience," the raw material for psychology as well as for physics. We are affected, not only by the external world but by internal physiological states. Experienced external order represents a corresponding order in "the underlying dynamic context of physiological processes," the latter being a dynamic unit or whole. The correspondence is between two orders—experiential and functional. The consideration of gestaltqualitäten has become a special side of the gestalt problem—a study of the properties of organized wholes, segregated from their context (e.g., an event with acquired meaning).

We should like to mention two recent materialistic works, not perhaps so exciting as Jeans', but of tremendous value, *Mechanism of Nature* (Prof. Andrade) and *Philosophy by Way of the Sciences* (Prof. Dotterer, U.S.A.), which would require an article to themselves.

G. H. TAYLOR.

A Beggar's Gospel.

Beati pauperes, quia vestrum est regnum Dei.

INGERSOLL said that the churches preached charity because it was the constant doctrine of all beggars that other people should give. If the churches were not notorious beggars they would soon cease to exist; for everything they possess has been gained by persistent begging, and their ordinary income is derived from the same source. Yet, though we everywhere see the clergy in enjoyment of the fruits of mendicacy, it is not for themselves they ask. That would be too clumsy for an organization that is always advocating "living for others." It is their concern for the "poor" that is the constant text of their appeal; and as the churches cannot exist without begging, and as the poor are the objects for which they profess to beg, it is clearly necessary that there should ever be in evidence a mass of poverty, misery, and crime, to act as an excuse for extorting fresh sums from the pockets of the faithful. Christianity was not the first to discover how profitable it was to exploit poverty and crime, nor was it the last, for history shows us that every system of fraud, humbug, and oppression, has made great professions of concern for the indigent classes; and the more outrageous, and the more extortionate, the system, the greater its outcry about the miseries of the poor.

Apart from this it is difficult to understand why the welfare of the poor should be considered before that of the other sections of society. Poverty is the natural condition of man—and of all other animals. The rich are those who have raised themselves above

that natural condition. And it is not sufficient for man to be raised above poverty: it requires the exercise of certain qualities to enable him to stay there; for we constantly see the well-to-do sinking back into pauperism through idleness, improvidence, incompetence, and vice. Therefore the difference between rich and poor is not an economic, but a moral one. Nevertheless we are continually hearing the rich denounced, as though to be wealthy were a misdemeanour. This condemnation of riches is the one thing on earth that never changes. It is repeated in the same set terms from clime to clime, and from age to age, until it almost seems to be the one sentiment upon which the whole human race is entirely in agreement. In fact, there is only one passion stronger than the denunciation of riches; and that is the desire to possess them. Whenever an individual inveighs against wealth, it invariably means that he has not enough of it; and that he wants to get hold of the wealth belonging to other people without the trouble of himself labouring for it. Such sentiments can always command an audience, for there is an unlimited amount of greed and envy in the world to which to appeal. Therefore the shortest and easiest way to advertise one's self is to declaim against riches. It is also a profitable amusement, as we may see by the example of the churches. And thus we have a continuous stream of denouncers of wealth; and a perpetual succession of champions of the poor.

The writers of the gospels were quite aware of the true meaning of all this clamour about poverty, for it is stated with refreshing candour "this he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." The evangelists understood mendicacy far too well to cherish any false ideas about it. In fact mendicacy was the one thing they did understand; and the gospels are everywhere animated by a genuine Beggars' Philosophy. Even the scheme of Christian theology owes its form to the mendicant idea; for the relationship of the worshipper to the deity is conceived entirely as that of a beggar to an almsgiver. There is no hint of any personal service on the part of the worshipper that would merit an adequate reward. On the contrary, the deity is represented as giving everything out of his own spontaneous bounty: or, to speak in theological language, Salvation is obtained by Grace, and not through works; for the true believer is to get everything he requires by merely asking for it. The Heavenly Father is lord of all, and possesses all: therefore he can give all to the favoured and persistent beggar. There are the birds of the air, and the flowers of the field. They do no work, they have no trouble; and yet they are always nourished and always clad. Consequently if the Heavenly Father takes such care of these worthless things, it is obvious that he can take equal care of the equally worthless mendicant. So the mendicant looks with scornful amusement at those misguided beings, who toil and moil and gather into barns. He smiles at the foolish persons who bear the burden and heat of the day, while his is the easy task of sleeping in the shade until he feels inclined to come and beg for a share in the result of other people's industry. That is the standpoint throughout the gospels. The apostles are represented as leading an ideal life, roaming about the country, sponging on all who would endure them; and even helping themselves to anything, such as standing corn, which came in their way. On one occasion, even, when a donkey was wanted for riding, the disciples were sent to take it, and were instructed that if anyone interfered, they were to say that the "lord" had need of it; the ambiguous word leading the bystanders to suppose that the owner wanted the animal. When the apostles were despatched on a mission, they

were told not to make any provision for their journey; but to adopt the easy plan of walking into any house they fancied, and staying there. If the householder objected, he was to be solemnly cursed, and threatened with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah; and, as a proof of the efficacy of these beggar's imprecations, we have the example of the wicked fig-tree, which, having no figs to give, was promptly cursed, and in consequence it withered away. From all which we may discern that the "abusive beggar" of our police-courts was equally well-known in the villages of Palestine.

The baseness of this Beggars' Philosophy is sufficiently manifest, and we need not enlarge upon the mischief it has worked for humanity; because that also is fully obvious. It is quite clear that industry and virtue will never flourish under a doctrine that extols plunderers and parasites. The beggar consumes as much as would keep an honest man alive; therefore he is preventing some better person from living in the world. Furthermore, as the beggar possesses nothing and produces nothing, everything he gets has been taken away from some useful member of society, who is so much the poorer; so that the mere existence of the beggar is a double damage to humanity; not to mention the danger to health and morals by the frightful filth, disease, and vice, which are the four characteristics of the mendicant fraternity.

The clergy are perpetually descanting upon the miseries and hardships of loafers and wastrels; but never a syllable is said about the miseries and hardships of the virtuous and industrious. One would get the impression from a series of charity sermons that the useful and worthy portion of mankind lived in a perennial paradise; where everything reached them without effort; and where they had no other occupation than to hand out their superfluity to whoever demanded it. Such a description might apply to the average clergyman; but not to the useful and worthy part of humanity. On the contrary, the life of the industrious person is filled with constant anxiety and care; not only from his own actions, but from those of others; for all the burdens and sorrows of existence find their way—with added interest—to the shoulder of virtue; so that it ought to be one's endeavour to sustain and alleviate virtue, and not to encourage vice. Yet the age-long policy of the churches has been the reverse of this. If any set of people are particularly harmful and despicable, the churches have affected a special interest in them, and have demanded contributions for their benefit; thereby inflicting fresh injuries upon the virtuous. In such a spirit is conceived the famous exhortation, "I was in prison, and ye visited me." In the first place the offender has no one but himself to thank for being there. He has been imprisoned for wronging the honest man. Then, again, all the expense of apprehending the offender, trying him, and maintaining him in prison, has fallen upon the honest man, who is thus wronged a second time. Finally, the honest man is exhorted to waste his time and means by "visiting" the prisoner; thereby sustaining a third wrong. The whole precept would be grotesque if it were not criminal.

In all this class of exhortations there is one constant demand; and that is that the good shall benefit the bad. We never hear the slothful and vicious exhorted to assist and support the industrious and virtuous; for the simple reason that it would not pay. The slothful and vicious have no possessions; because not only do they produce nothing themselves, but they scatter and squander all that comes into their hands; and therefore nothing is to be gained from them. Ability and industry, on the other hand, produce and preserve all that is valuable to mankind: therefore the able and industrious *can* be blackmailed

and plundered. Thus from age to age a toll has been levied upon the diligent and moral; and out of the pillage vast religious organizations have been built up, which have become powerful and wealthy by pretending to be concerned for the weak and the poor.

E.J.P.

Acid Drops.

Superintendent Foster told the Durham Licensing Justices that there had been a decrease of drunkenness, and better behaviour among the youth of both sexes in the streets owing to the counter attractions of cinemas and dancing places. This is all very well, but we would point out to the Superintendent that this sobriety and better behaviour on Sundays is very dearly purchased if it leads to the damnation of immortal souls. There is plenty of authority for saying that drunkards and badly behaved people, even on the point of actual criminality, may be saved, but whoever heard of a man being saved who had desecrated the Sabbath? Had Superintendent Foster been a good Christian he would never have made such a statement even though he had known it to be true. A man who cannot lie over such an important thing as the right keeping of the Sabbath can never be counted among the saints.

There seems no end to the absurdities of those who are entrusted with the administration of the Sunday laws. The L.C.C., for instance, after solemnly giving permission to break the law if something is given to charities—which is equal to licensing a burglar, provided he gives ten per cent of his swag to the local hospital, solemnly decides that it will not, for the present issue any more permits for Sunday entertainments. Another Licensing Authority issues a seven-day entertainment licence, although such a thing is unknown to the law, on condition that those receiving it do not exercise it until there is some alteration in the existing law. Really, this type of magistrate make the law "as a whole" a trifle ridiculous.

But for sheer pig-headed absurdity and Sabbatarian bigotry commend us to the South Bank Brewster Session. The North Eastern Breweries applied for permission to instal a wireless receiving apparatus in five of its licensed premises. We should be surprised if any such permission is necessary before a publican may have a wireless set, any more than it would be necessary for him to get permission to have a musical box. But this body of wise-acres granted permission on condition that only B.B.C. programmes were received on Sunday. It is this kind of thing that makes one wonder what the country is coming to. We should dearly like to know what law there is to prevent a man holding a wireless licence, receiving from any station in any part of the world. We have before suggested that those who appoint these men should see they have at least an elementary acquaintance with the laws they are likely to administer. We again repeat the suggestion.

There seems to be hope for England's intellectual emancipation after all! Fifty teachers were asked to give the name of the book they would take to read on a desert island, assuming they could take only one volume. The answers given varied from Hugo's *Les Misérables* to a cookery book, but not one mentioned the Bible. It seems that when all is said and done the world's "greatest piece of literature" cannot compete with secular works, when one's choice is narrowed down to an extent that calls for great discrimination before a decision is made.

Here is a pretty little problem to solve for the British and Foreign Bible Society, with all its prattering about the world's best seller. Still, there may be an explanation, which we offer to the society—to the majority of the Society's customers, who appear to be uneducated Chinese, or natives in other parts of the world. Where literature as such has no value owing to the low degree of

civilization, it does not really matter what is the name of the book they get. What they do probably appreciate is the novelty of a book as a new article, or toy—and Bibles are very cheap!

The Cyclists' Touring Club has increased its membership from 10,000 in 1919 to 28,000. The Lord's Day Society will no doubt be deeply pained to learn that the large majority of C.T.C. members, in order to derive full benefit from their healthy pastime, habitually "desecrate the Sabbath." One good feature in connexion with Sunday cycling is that it cannot be hindered or interfered with by pious local councillors who delight to prohibit games in public recreation grounds. Nevertheless, the C.T.C. will no doubt appreciate that a watchful eye need be kept on the Sabbatarian bigots whose anti-Sunday-trading legislation attempts may, if successful, seriously hinder cyclists from obtaining food and other refreshment when they please.

Christian unity of some form or another, declares a pious journal, is becoming an increasingly more urgent question; religious work at home and abroad is being hindered by "our unhappy divisions." Any excuse is better than none! And no doubt this can be made to serve, since brotherhood in Christ Jesus has for centuries failed to bring the sects together. The true reason, however, for this cry of unity is that the self-preservation instinct is warning the leaders of the sects. Let us hang together, lest we hang separately! That fear will bring the sects together far quicker than yards of talk about brotherhood and love, and a common faith in the same Saviour.

The Rev. Dr. Rhondda Williams says that a great change has come over prison administration during the last ten years. The main idea is how to reform, not how to punish. The old idea was how to so treat a man so that he was deterred from wrong-doing. But, he says, the reforming idea was not absent in the old days, but there was so much "bad psychology" that even the people who wanted to reform thought the best way of doing it was to inflict heavy punishment. As a supplement to Dr. Williams' remarks we will add that the "bad psychology," the heavy punishment, and the idea of retribution rather than reformation are all quite understandable, when one knows that the Bible and the Christian religion were the sources from which legislators and prison authorities derived their inspiration. The modern, and more intelligent, view of the wrong-doer has come from the medical and psychological experts, and not from the experts in religion.

This is a restless, changeful age, when everything has been thrown into the melting-pot, even mass evangelism, says a Methodist reporter. He also adds that, in many quarters, the methods associated with Gipsy Smith have been called in question as being out of key with the mental and spiritual needs of the time. After musing thus, he hastens off to Gipsy Smith with the enquiry: "Are your kind of missions obsolete?" That was a rather fatuous question to put to a professional evangelist. Back came the inevitable answer: "No, emphatically no!" Gipsy Smith is right, anyway. There are still thousands of people, emotionally unstable and mentally uncultured, who have had an early Christian training, and who can be trusted to respond when a skilled manipulator of mob psychology sounds the old familiar notes.

A correspondent of a pious weekly offers a plan by which one may read through the Bible in twelve months. All he asks is a stamped and addressed envelope. We should imagine that anyone who is filled with the ambition of getting through the Bible in twelve months by easy weekly doses would be quite silly enough to waste the stamp on getting the recipe. It is the existence of this kind of individual that sometimes makes one fear there may be a revival of religion after all.

We see it stated that for the last ten years of the last century 153 babies out of every 1,000 born died. To-day the figures are seventy-four out of every thousand. It

looks as though the decline of religious belief has at least made it healthier for babies.

Freethinking France has now upset Christian America. In the Government of M. Laval, the post of Under-Secretary for the Colonies has been given to M. Diagne, who is of pure negro stock. The Americans in Paris are greatly upset over this outrage on their Christian feelings, and say it is an "outrage" to expect them to rub shoulders with a "nigger." There is talk of boycotting the Colonial Exhibition in Paris on this account. The Christian doctrine of human brotherhood is a splendid thing. In the whole of its history it has never yet managed but to inflame and keep alive national and racial animosities that might otherwise have either died down or become negligible.

The Rev. Dr. Waterhouse, writing in the *Methodist Times*, says that in the Broadcast talks on Religion and Science, the one thing that stands out clearly is "the complete passing away of the materialistic monopoly of science. In the correct use of the word, all the word, all the writers—even Professors Huxley and Malinowski—are Spiritualists." We hope these gentlemen are quite satisfied at being bracketed with Spiritualists. We do not suppose they will protest, although we are sure that the label is a misrepresentation. Of course, if the statement had been made that they were all Materialists, they would soon have protested they were nothing of the kind.

But there are several things that ought to be borne in mind when reading comments such as those of Dr. Waterhouse's. The first is the traditional impossibility of getting a completely honest representation from a Christian clergyman when he is dealing with Christianity. Otherwise it might have been pointed out that the B.B.C. boasts that no anti-Christian has been invited to speak on the relations between science and religion. The judges were selected because their opinions were known beforehand. Next, the papers read are first of all submitted to the Committee for approval, and care is taken that nothing that is directly against religion shall be uttered. One day we hope that public men will muster up enough self-respect to refuse to lecture under such insulting conditions. If a man is asked to speak because he represents a certain type of thought, he should at least refuse to have what he is to say submitted to a censorship of the kind established by the B.B.C.

Finally, the sole ground on which the statement concerning the passing away of the "materialistic monopoly of science" is made, is that of the want of knowledge of some so-called "Materialists" as to what constitutes Materialism, and of even greater ignorance on the part of anti-materialists. A genuine knowledge of science on both sides would have prevented such confusion. What has happened in recent years is a change in the scientific conception of the atom and of "Matter." No one with an adequate conception of the present state of physical science can now think of the atom as a single hard indestructible point, and no one who understands the philosophy of science thinks of "matter" as anything other than a concept framed to express a special aspect of experience. It is equally true that no Materialist who understood the philosophy of science ever took Materialism to stand for anything other than an affirmation that the whole phenomena of the universe was ultimately explainable as so many products of determinate and calculable conditions. If Dr. Waterhouse cares to set himself the task of trying to understand Materialism we do not think he will be quite so ready to talk about there being an end to the "Materialistic monopoly of science." Science cannot be anything other than materialistic.

An American paper, just to hand, advertises a supply of sermons for a whole year—fifty-two in number—at an inclusive cost of fifty dollars. We do not see how it can be done for less, and we are certain that the quality of the sermons, even at four shillings each, cannot be much

worse than they are at present. We believe the same kind of industry is carried on in this country, but it is done by circularizing the clergy only. We have not yet reached, in relation to religion, the degree of straightforwardness implied by such a public advertisement.

On the other hand, there does not appear very great need for this canned sermon industry. For there already is in existence numerous guides for the preparation of sermons, all supplied with suitable illustrations, and above all with the proper "experiences." That is one of the ways in which these faked experiences of a great many clergymen, from the Bishop of London downward, come into existence. These books supply them with the experiences of the repentant infidel, the young woman who is brought back to Jesus by seeing an illuminated text, or the parson who is hurriedly sent for to some death-bed, to discover that it is a man, who in his earlier years was a well-known Atheist. Christianity has never, from its earliest years, been wanting in that form of lying "for the greater glory of God."

We wonder whether Lord Hugh Cecil reads the *Freethinker*? At any rate, on January 6 he told the House of Assembly that the clergy:—

When war is popular we hear eloquent speeches about the uplift of opportunities for self-sacrifice given by the war and the heroism of our soldiers. When ten years afterwards, war has become unpopular, we have resolutions in favour of peace.

Yes, and if war broke out next week we should have the clergy playing the same old game. The surprising thing is that Lord Hugh Cecil should be surprised at this state of affairs. The Christian clergy are running true to form.

At the same meeting of the same Assembly there were roars of laughter when Bishop Barnes told the assembled clerics that the earth was four thousand million years old. Such a statement invites laughter. Six thousand years, with perhaps a few centuries thrown in as a concession to mere theorists is a quite reasonable statement. But millions of years! No wonder the bishops laughed!

Bishop Barnes' statement was made in reply to the Rev. Mr. Douglas who favoured the 6,000 years. Bishop Barnes also affirmed his belief that the world was not made in six days. And yet there are some people who doubt that our clergy are up to date.

One need only to consider the fearlessness, the tremendous philosophic power, the enormous knowledge implied by a rejection of the story of the Garden of Eden story—a story backed by the united wisdom of the Christian Church for so many centuries, to see how proud we ought to be of such fearless thinkers as Bishop Barnes.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham says that he sees ahead a very bright future for Catholic schools. We have no doubt that if he can get the State to pay all the expenses of Roman Catholic schools, while giving the Roman Church absolute control and ownership, the expectation will be justified. By this plan the State is not merely expected to see the minds of children warped and their characters distorted, but is also expected to pay for it being done. There is no impudence like Christian impudence, of all Christian impudence the most thorough is the Roman Catholic variety.

Apropos of Sunday laws, a *Daily Mirror* reader says she fails to see why "true religion" should be associated in this country with gloom. Surely, she asks, an all-loving Deity does not want us to be miserable? Well, the most fervent believers in "true religion" in England say that God does want people to be miserable, if they refuse to be happy in the same dolorous way as the true believers. So there is little more to be said on that score. A more important question is this: Can a Deity who wants human beings to be happy with the English Sunday be rightly described as "all-loving"?

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. BELL.—You are quite mistaken in thinking that we have any desire to sneer or jeer at the Temperance Movement. But we may occasionally tilt at an intemperate temperance, as we do at intolerance in other forms. Thanks for cutting. The letter is quite a good one.

B. MANN enquires, *apropos* of our note on the Bishop of Ely's statement that the Broadcast Church Service, on Sunday, was listened to "reverently" by wireless users, "Why does the Bishop of Ely lie?"

Does Ely not know he is lying?

If Ely's while he lives, when dead will Ely?

Or will Ely's lies keep him from flying?

H. HENRY.—Very pleased to hear from you, and to know how much our writings have helped in your emancipation.

W. GORDON.—Your letter is rather belated. The correspondence concluded some weeks ago.

G. H. NORRIS (N.S.W.).—We cannot tell you whether the manuscript, which is alleged to be a true copy of the Oath of the Knights of Columbus is authentic or not. We have not seen either the MSS. or the printed form.

A. D. C. FORBES.—Received, shall appear as soon as possible.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE AND BRADFORD BRANCHES N.S.S.—Notices of reports will appear next week.

T. YOUNG.—We have read your letter with much appreciation, and can understand your feelings towards the "Mother Church." Sorry that your verse—while good in idea and sentiment is hardly up to the standard as verse. The scansion is very faulty.

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

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

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

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

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.

We desire to call the attention of the London readers to an advertisement on the back page of this issue of the *Freethinker*. This concerns the public meeting to be held in the Conway Hall, on Tuesday next, February 17. The present deadlock over the question of the further subsidising of religious teaching in the schools gives all concerned a splendid opportunity of urging the logic and the justice of the policy of Secular Education. It is an open secret that the government has gone as far as it has in response to the organized pressure of the Roman Catholics. It should be the aim of all who believe in Secular Education to make their voices heard and their numbers felt. If this is not done we may find the government making still further concessions to sectarian claims. In this respect London may well set the example for a series of similar meetings all over the country. Conway Hall should be far too small, if but a small percentage of those who believe in Secular Education make it a point of being present. There will be a good list of speakers, and there should be a fine audience. There is a good chance at the moment of making headway with the cause of Secular Education, and we advise

all Freethinkers to make the most of it. It is necessary to prove to politicians that there is a real public opinion behind the demand for Secular Education.

We hope that our readers are taking quite seriously the suggestion thrown out recently in this column as to the possibility of substantially increasing the circulation of this journal during its Jubilee Year. The suggestion was that each reader who is sufficiently interested should for a period of three months, or more, subscribe for an additional copy of the *Freethinker*, for the purpose of giving it to one who would be likely to become a regular subscriber. The fact of a paper like this having survived for fifty years, and that fifty years embracing the period of the European War, is something that deserves signalling. And we do not know a better way than that of working for a circulation worthy of its quality.

In this connexion we have to acknowledge the receipt of a cheque for £5 from Mr. J. Jacobs, who sends it in recognition of the *Freethinker* being on the eve of celebrating its jubilee, and who wishes it to be devoted towards advertising the paper. That is quite a good purpose, and advertising is what the paper needs. We do what we can in this direction, but unfortunately what we can do is neither large enough nor persistent enough to produce striking results. But what we have done, and the results therefrom, has shown us the possibilities that lie in a steady advertising campaign.

To-day (February 15) Mr. Cohen will deliver the third of his course of four lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The lecture will commence at 6.30, subject, "The Passing of the Gods."

A movement is on foot in the United States to erect an appropriate monument to Colonel Ingersoll in Washington on the 100th anniversary of his birth, which will be on August 11, 1933. A United States Senator, and a Member of the House of Representatives have promised to introduce a resolution into Congress providing for a suitable and desirable plot being given. A Committee is being formed for the purpose of providing the monument, and Mr. Cohen has been asked to join. He has, of course, consented to do so, although his joining can be little more than a gesture of agreement in and good wishes to the enterprise. The moving spirit is Mr. Joseph Lewis, so that the attempt will not lack enterprise. Colonel Ingersoll's daughter, Mrs. Maud Ingersoll Probasco, is acting as temporary chairman of the Committee.

Mr. Cohen's new book, the full title of which is "*God and the Universe*, Eddington, Jeans, Huxley, and Einstein, with a reply by Professor Eddington," will be published either at the end of this month or early in March. We had hoped to have got it out earlier, but it is larger than was originally planned, and Mr. Cohen has been busy in other directions. The work will be issued by the Secular Society, Limited, and will be published at 3s. in cloth and 2s. in paper. It should prove of value to both Christians and Freethinkers.

Plymouth saints are asked to note that Mr. F. P. Corrigan lectures twice to-day (Sunday) in the Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street entrance. In the afternoon, at 3.0, the subject will be, "Can We Live Without Religion?" And at 7.0 p.m., "Rome or Reason?" There are sufficient Freethinkers in Plymouth to fill the hall on every occasion, and a service to the Cause will be done by their attending and bringing a Christian friend.

Manchester weather was apparently, as usual, on Sunday last, nevertheless we hear Mr. G. Whitehead had two good meetings. After Friday the 13th inst, the address of Miss Black, the local secretary, will be at 422 Bury Old Road, Heaton Park, Prestwich, Manchester.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti lectured at Chester-le-Street on Sunday last. Mr. Brown occupied the chair, and the address was followed with evident appreciation. There were no questions or discussion, but some new members were enrolled. Arrangements are being made for open-air propaganda in the district during the summer months.

Witchcraft and the Erotic Life.

(Continued from page 91.)

THE two priests now retracted their former retraction. "The evidence of the nuns was also heard, and that of lay persons of both sexes, among others two women, the one of whom confessed having had criminal relations with Fr. Grandier [his ghostly double], and that he had offered to make her Princess of Magicians, while the second confirmed the evidence of the first. As regards the nuns, they deposed that Grandier had introduced himself [spiritually] into the convent by day and night for four months, without anyone knowing how he got in; that he presented himself to them ['spiritually'] whilst standing at divine service and tempted them to indecent actions both by word and deed; that they were often attacked by *invisible* persons; and that the marks of the blows were so visible that the doctors and surgeons had easily found them, and that the beginning of all these troubles was signalized by the *apparition* of Prior Moussant, their first confessor. The Mother Superior and seven or eight other nuns, when confronted with Grandier, identified him, although it was ascertained that *they had never seen him save by magic*, and that he had never had anything to do with their affairs. The two women formerly mentioned, and the two priests maintained the truth of their evidence. In a word, besides the nuns and six lay women, "sixty witnesses deposed to ['spiritual—hallucinatory'] adulteries, incests, sacrileges, and other crimes, committed by the accused, even in the most secret places of his church, as in the vestry, where the Holy Ghost was kept, on all days, and all hours."

"It may well be imagined that the mother, brother and friends of the accused did not abandon him. They appealed to every possible authority. The details of these proceedings would be as wearisome, as useless, as the Commissioner, by the very terms of his Commission [which prohibited an appeal], was placed above all such applications in that direction. He then questioned the accused as to the facts and articles of accusation, and after having made him sign his confessions and denials, proceeded to Paris to inform the Court of what he had done."

"This precaution was necessary, for letters from the Bailly of Loudun, Grandier's chief supporter, to the Procurator-General of the Parliament, were intercepted, in which it was asserted that the possession was an imposture." The latter's reply was also seized. Monsieur de Laubardemont returned therefore to Loudun with a Decree of the Council dated May 31, 1634, confirming all his powers and *prohibiting Parliament and all other judges from interfering in this business, and forbidding all parties concerned from appealing, under penalty of a fine of five hundred livres*. He caused Grandier to be transferred from the prison of Angers to that of Loudun, so as to have him at hand to confront with witnesses, if need be."

"But, first of all, he considered it necessary to examine the nuns carefully; for this purpose, with the consent of the Bishop, he sequestered them in different convents, and interrogated them so severely that one might have thought that they themselves were the magicians. 'He saw them all, one after the other, for several days; and listened to their conversations, to observe their mode of thought. He enquired minutely into their lives, their morals, their behaviour, not only secular but religious. His depositions, or notes, which represented the evidence of twenty girls, including a few not nuns, filled fifty rolls of official paper, and were the admiration of all

judges, so great was the prudence and care they demonstrated."

"On the other hand the Bishop of Poitiers, after having sent several Doctors of Theology to examine the victims, came to Loudun in person, and exorcised them himself, or had them exorcised by others in his presence for two months and a half. Never was such work done with such care and attention."

"All precognitions over, the Commissioner began to confront the accused with the witnesses, and the latter maintained, face to face with Grandier, the evidence they had given against him." Obviously they were honest enough in reporting their erotic hallucinations as being objectively true. They were equally sincere in rationalizing their sexual phobia; so as to convert their hallucinatory copulations into satanic rapes, adulteries, etc., etc.

"As regards the nuns, it was observed that they never contradicted themselves, whether questioned together or separately, though they were examined often by different persons, and as skilfully as possible. Now, criminals do not manage this, for the cleverest have the greatest difficulty in avoiding contradictory statements. Those writers, who have supported Grandier, have never discovered the least discrepancy in the evidence of the nuns. *Nor did Grandier ever plead malice on their part as a defence, for they had never seen him, nor had he had anything to do with their affairs, as we have said.*" But how could he possibly persuade "spiritual maniacs that the "satanic possession" of nuns were mere hallucinations?"

"If, as calumny asserts, the only thing sought was the death of Grandier, here were sufficient proofs to burn him, if only for abusing the privileges of his ministry and of his Church, or for the sacrileges he had committed therein. But justice is not satisfied with punishing one kind of crime, when she finds traces of another still more serious. It was moreover a Christian duty to assist the views of God, who permitted so strange an event, to confound the calumnies of the Protestants, and to prove the demonstration the 'possession' of the nuns, and the magic exercised by the accused. To this the Commissioner and the other judges applied themselves." If Grandier's seductions had been real seductions, that would have been a lesser crime. However that they were not physical, enhanced the crime to that of satanic magic. That alone would justify the death penalty upon Fr. Grandier, without mentioning his real offences to Cardinal Richelieu and to the celibate clergy.

"Thus, as it was a matter rather of religion than of jurisprudence [of magic rather than of physical sensualism] they resolved to begin by a prayer to God, who is the father of all light, rightly considering that all France was watching the trial with eager eyes, that it was shrouded in a thick veil of obscurity, and that their verdict would entail important consequences. They therefore prepared to receive divine assistance and grace by frequent confessions, and by often receiving the Holy Sacrament. Then they decreed a general procession to implore celestial aid in so difficult a matter; and, to excite the devotion of the masses by their example, they went in a body, during the whole trial, to visit the Churches of the city, set aside by the Bishop for forty hour services, and reached each, in time for the elevation of the Host. Thence the Exorcists went to the Church fixed upon for the Exorcisms, and the judges proceeded to the tribunal to continue the case; in the evening all returned to the Church for evensong." By such strange mummery the prejudices against Fr. Grandier were intensified and sanctified. Even now in these United States there are certain cases in which very similar tactics are used and go unrebuked by our "most worthy" judges.

"The examination lasted forty days, during which Demons gave them the clearest proofs of their presence in the bodies of the persons exorcised, and every day added new evidence against Grandier, and yet never said anything against him, which did not turn out strictly true. These assertions merit distinct proof, which will be found interesting."

As regards the presence of Devils in the possessed, the Church teaches us in its ritual, that there are four principal signs, by which it can be undoubtedly recognized. These signs are "the speaking or understanding of a language unknown to the person possessed, the revelation of the future, or of events happening far away; the exhibition of strength beyond the years and nature of the actor; and floating in the air for a few moments."

Speaking in some language previously unknown to the speaker, or non-existent, has always been a pious occupation for psychotic religious zealots. There is abundant reference to it in the Bible (tower of Babel), and every sect since then, down to our Mormon friends, have exhibited these symptoms.² Of course, all of us are bedevilled if the making of lucky successful prophesies can prove it. Hallucinatory levitations appear to be a dramatic fantasmal portrayal of a feeling of "lightheadedness," such as may come as the psychologic consequences flowing from a erotically over-charged organism. It is a mere visualization of the feeling, as if of flying, floating, swimming, etc.³ This too, has received some psychoanalytic attention.³

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

(To be concluded.)

Say It With Celluloid!

A Talkie Testament.

(Concluded from page 77.)

"YEAH bo," said the Rev. Boanerges Bangs, the eminent gunman evangelist, as he selected a cigar. "Believe me," Whoopeez Jeez! "will go big. It'll knock 'em cold—and how!"

It will be recalled that the Rev. Bangs, pastor of the Four Square Gangster's Gospel Church of Gopher City, Ill., has written the New Testament as a Talkie and has kindly consented to the publication of a few extracts from his epoch-making book in *The Freethinker*.

The Rev. Boanerges has a way with him. His enthusiasm is infectious. "Take Mary Magdalene for instance," he explained, "There's some class to that jane—and I don't mean may be. Them old timers Matt., Luke and the Marx Brothers don't give her a square deal, an' I'm gonna alter all that in my version. Mary Magdalene was plumb full of it. I did think of getting Clara Bow to play the part, but Clara, like Aimee McPherson's, kinda busy in the courts right now."

² For a unique case see: *Devotional Somnium or Rachel Baker* . . . 1815. For a psychologic study of "talking in tongues," see: Pfister, O., "Psychological Solution of Religious Glossolaly and Automatic Cryptography," *Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 7, pp. 103-105; also: *Jahrbuch für Psychoanalytische Forschung*, Vol. 3, pp. 427-466, 730-794. Early mormonism if full of accounts of talking in unknown tongues.

³ Horton, Lydiard H. How "stimulons and reaction" explains levitation dreams, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Vol. 15, p. 11. Sadgar J., "Sleeping-walking and Moon Walking," A Medico-literary study; *Psychoanalytic Review*, also in Monography form. Translated by L. Brink, Ph. D., *Nervous and Mental Diseases Monograph Series*.

"It?" I echoed vaguely.

"Sure. Ain't you heard of it? Elinor Glyn invented the word. Its the same as S.A., Sex Appeal. Get me?"

I nodded.

"Wal," continued the evangelist enthusiastically, "As I caint get Clara, I'm gonna give the part to a cute l'il Jane who sings in my gangsters church choir back home. Believe me bo, she's the centepede's spats. She's easy on the eyes and high toned at that."

THE THEME SONG.

The Reverend Gentleman's steely eyes gleamed reminiscently.

"Yessir. She's the cutest l'il girlie who ever shook her scanties at a shy sheikh—and believe me bo' she shakes 'em reverent. I've written a dandy scene for her first appearance. It's a "close up." I'm gonna take a shot of her sitting by the side of a well in Samaria. She's got a ukelele on her lap with all the strings broken see—except one. That's a symbol of hope, see.

I assented.

"Wal. There she sits kinda goofy like when she suddenly lamps Jesus coming along the road all foot-sore and lonesome. She picks up her uke, then sighs as she realizes its on the blink. Jesus sits down on the edge of the well and gently takes the uke from her and immediately all the strings are mended. A miracle, see. The instrument was made whole as them old timers put it."

"I see, but surely the woman of Samaria and Mary Magdalene were'nt the same person," I ventured.

"Say. Why bring that up?" replied the Rev. gent. with a touch of petulance. "That leads up to the theme song, the greatest number my buddy Al Boobenstein's ever written. Believe me bo, its a wow! Its the alligator's gaiters and the snake's hips. Listen. This is how it goes"—

Shy Sheikh of Galilee
My love belongs to thee,
Oh Gosh! Oh my! Oh Gee!
Let's go and make whoopee!
You're lonesome here, I guess,
At this Well of Loneliness,
So take a slant at me
Shy Sheik of Galilee."

"Ain't that a humdinger bo?" queried the Rev. Boanerges.

I nodded dazedly.

"But that aint all. Nossir," continued the Rev. Boanerges. "We've got some mighty big shots to come. I've already told you about the wedding whoopee at Cana. Wal. I'm gonna try and persuade my old pal Scarface Capone to play the part of Judas—the guy that double-crossed Jesus," he explained.

"It'd go big-believe me!" Wal. Old Scarface Judas gets sore at Jesus. He wants to boss the gang himself. Besides he aint forgotten how that guy Nicodemus hi-jacked the booze from the wedding feast. He's a real bad egg is Judas an' quick on the draw at that. He decides to squeal to the cops. There's a reward of thirty bucks for the arrest of Jesus, and the dirty double crosser squeaks to the bulls. The patrol wagon goes out and Jesus is pinched late at night, at a joint called Gethesemane Gardens, where Mary Magdalen's found a job as a cabaret singer.

"She raises hell, but it aint no use. It's curtains for her buddy!"

The Rev. Boanerges paused impressively.

"Then follows the smashing climax. No Talkie is complete without a trial scene, and believe me, the trial scene I've written for this fillum will raise the

roof. I've pepped up the gospel narrative as you'll see."

He opened the scenario and pointed to the following:—

Judge Pilate (sternly): "Say, guy, what's your monniker? What's all this high hat stuff about being King of the Jews anyways. Come across clean now and no wise cracks."

Jesus: "You aint got nothing on me judge."

Pilate: "The hell, you say!"

(Turns to the prosecution).

"Say what's the big idea? This poor boob aint done nothing. He's just plain dumb, the poor fish aint done no harm."

The District Attorney: "The accused is charged with sedition and treason against the State, your honour. He's just plain Bolshie and a breaker of the eighteenth amendment."

Caiphaz (interjecting): "Aint that the truth!"

Pilate: "What in the hell is truth anyways?"

Jesus (shrugging): "Search me boss."

Pilate: "Say. This guy's O Kay with me. He's just plain nutty that's all."

The D.A.: "He's a dangerous guy to have running round loose, your honour. A menace to the State.

[There is a violent commotion and Mary Magdalen forces her way into the front of the court flourishing her ukelele.]

Mary: "You can't send my buddy to the Hot Squat, judge. Because he's

My Sheik of Galilee."

She strikes up the theme song again.

Uproar in Court while the populace bellows.

"For the Lands sake give us Barrabas!"

"You get the idea buddy?" said the Rev. Boanerges. "There's punch and pep in that lot. Then the last scene I've bought plumb up to date. The poor guy's condemned to death and he's put in the Smoky Cell alongside two other gangsters, who are also for hot seat. They're both tough guys, and before the executioner turns on the juice they pull a few wisecracks on Jesus."

"Say big boy. Where dya get that stuff about being King of the Yids," says one.

"Lissen buddy," breaks in the other yegg, "That frail of yours is a swell looker. You aint so dumb as you look, I guess."

Jesus looks at 'em kinda forgiving and sorrowful.

"Believe me or not, to-night you'll be with me in Paradise."

"Oh yeah?" answers one of the gangsters sceptically. "Sez you!"

A-MEN!

GWYN EVANS.

Historians ought to be precise, faithful, and unprejudiced; and neither interest nor fear, hatred nor affection, should make them swerve from the way of truth.

Cervantes.

What proposition is there respecting human nature which is absolutely and universally true? We know of only one—and that is not only true but identical—that men always act from self-interest.—*Macaulay.*

What an ornament and safeguard is humour! Far better than wit for a poet and writer. It is genius itself and so defends from the insanities.—*Walter Scott.*

How Long Will The Nation Stand It?

MANIFESTO BY THE SECULAR EDUCATION LEAGUE.

ONCE more in the history of English educational progress the nation has been held to ransom by sectarian interests; once more its efforts to give its children a better education have been frustrated; once more the child has been made the victim of a system which enables priests and denominationalists to imperil education and impose their sectarian needs upon the Government and the Legislature. And once more it has been proved that educational peace and progress will never be secured until the State, while loyally accepting full responsibility for the provision of a sound civic education, declines to relieve parents and Churches of the cost of providing whatever religious instruction they believe the children ought to receive.

In the end it will, it must, come to that. Every mere expedient has been tried and has failed. Generations of statesmen have spent themselves in the vain attempt to achieve educational peace by trying to meet the varying claims and interests of the Churches at the national expense. Their pathway has been strewn with the fragments of their rejected proposals because the task was impossible; the lines on which they proceeded were hopelessly and fundamentally wrong; they sought to promote an educational system under the dual, and irreconcilable, authority of both Church and the State. They failed, as Sir Charles Trevelyan has failed, and as every statesman must fail until he courageously faces the problem on the lines of complete State neutrality to all forms of religious teaching in State-aided schools.

The present system is unjust to the children, it is dangerous to national peace and progress, and it should be immediately abandoned. As the law now stands the religious sects get their specific doctrines taught at the nation's expense; they appoint and dismiss the teachers; and children are separated and forced into sectional schools under the plea that the nation is under a moral obligation to pay for whatever religious teaching the parents desire. It is therefore not surprising that under such a system the sectarian appetite grows with feeding, while a truly national education is starved or impoverished to meet ever-increasing sectarian demands.

The Secular Education League stands for the principle of complete State neutrality towards religion in State-aided schools. It favours a State neutrality which is neither friendly nor hostile to any form of religion.

The primary obligation of the State is quite clear. Its duty is to supply in its Elementary Schools a sound and adequate civic education to all the children attending them, without regard to the specific beliefs of their parents. The results of a national system of education are plainly seen in the improved standard of general conduct throughout the land. Illiteracy has been abolished, sobriety has increased, crime has diminished, and there have been established standards of cleanliness, conduct, honesty, and kindness which, beyond all comparison, are better than any that the nation had previously known. In the three generations that have passed since the Education Act of 1870, the advance has been wonderful, and if religious controversy had only been kept out of education, what marvellous progress might have been achieved!

The State, however, has never been sole master of its educational system; it has been harassed and impeded by the intrusion of a rival denominational system, which has been paid for mainly out of the nation's till. Religious denominations unblushingly demand that sectarian religious teaching should be placed and kept upon the dole. Under the ingenuously-devised cover of an educational curriculum, they insist that the State shall pay for the teaching of their specific doctrines. In justification of this demand they imply that their children are different from those of the rest of the community. The education given in the nation's schools may be good enough for other people's children, but it is not good enough for theirs. The average child must put up with such education as the State supplies, but their children must be provided with a particular "religious atmosphere"; they must be taught by teachers who have survived theo-

logical tests; by teachers whom the denominational managers choose and in buildings which they control. For this they claim that the nation as a whole shall pay, and they dare to make this claim in the name of equality of treatment!

How long will the nation allow the religious sects thus to dominate, and vitiate, its educational policy? The choice before it is clear and pressing. It may continue the present system with all its unjust impositions upon politically-weak minorities, with the result that crisis will follow crisis, and educational efficiency will be irreparably injured, or it may say clearly and finally what should have been said sixty years ago: "If the Churches consider that educational separatism is essential to their needs, they must have the courage to face whatever burdens such separatism involves. The State offers to every child in the land equality of educational facilities, but it cannot, and will not, make itself responsible for religious teaching in any of its schools, nor will it pay for such teaching in schools belonging to any church or sect."

There can be no permanent solution of the education question other than that of State neutrality in regard to religious teaching. The secular solution is justified alike by its absolute impartiality, its complete neutrality, and its necessity in the interests of educational progress. There can be no peace in education until this policy prevails and the nation, weary of the sordid conflict of sectarian interests, decides so to amend the Education Act as to secure that there shall be no teaching of religion in school hours or at the public expense in State-supported Elementary Schools.

[Issued by the Secular Education League, 12 Palmer Street, London, S.W.1. Copies of this manifesto may be had for distribution on application to the offices of the League.]

God's Flukes.

A STUDY IN PURPOSE.

LIVER-FLUKE Disease, by which sheep, goats and cattle are liable to be attacked, is a fatal complaint that frequently causes serious financial loss to farmers, and sometimes results in whole flocks being almost exterminated. Incidentally, it presents some pretty problems to the theorist who regards nature from a teleological standpoint.

We will start with the young fluke larvæ of little more than microscopic size attached to a stalk or blade of grass in marshy land or near a stream. How they got there we shall see later. These young flukes are covered by a self-produced protective substance, and are incapable of further development unless swallowed by a grazing animal. Then, however, the protective covering will be rapidly dissolved in the animal's stomach, and the free flukes will bore through the bowel walls to find a home in the liver, bile-duct or gall-bladder, where they can mature into bisexual adult flakes and lay some thousands of eggs. The activities of the parent flukes cause the liver and surrounding organs to rot, and the afflicted animal becomes very weak, wastes away and dies.

What happens to the fluke eggs is interesting. They cannot be hatched except under suitable conditions of warmth and moisture, so their future development depends on their being evacuated, mixed with dung, on suitably situated damp ground. Then, after a few weeks, embryo flukes hatch out, capable of swimming about for no more than a few hours of independent life. Their continued existence depends on their coming across a certain kind of fresh-water snail within this short time; and the fortunate embryo that succeeds in this bores its way into the obliging snail's interior, and is safe for further development.

Here it forms a chamber in which, during the next few months, it multiplies by division; until the colony of fluke larvæ becomes so large that the sac bursts and they all leave the body of the snail. For a short time they swim about, then they crawl up stalks or blades of grass, when their tails fall off and they clothe themselves in a protective covering produced from their own bodies.

Here we are back again where we began, with immature flukes, incapable of further development or self-pro-

pagation unless some unlucky animal takes them in while grazing.

We may assume that there is equal reason for including a religious instinct amongst the natural equipment of flukes as for postulating it for other living species. This being granted, it is easy to picture a colony of adult flukes building, in the liver of the animal that has provided them with a haven, a temple to the Deity who has watched over their eventful lives.

We can imagine them hymning His praises for arranging that the dung-encased eggs from which they originated should drop where warmth and moisture abounded for providing the proper kind of snail handy to meet the dire necessity of the hatched embryos; for guiding them in their later larval condition to certain well-placed blades of grass; and, above all, for finally directing the steps of a hungry animal to the right spot, thus rounding off the whole process and enabling them to reach their present state of perfection. Obviously, here is a revelation of the Great Spiritual Purpose behind the Universe, namely the continued preservation and progress of the Race of Flukes.

Perhaps it is a pity to spoil such a picture, but facts are facts. There exists, unfortunately, a Personal Devil in the Flukish Scheme of Things. He is a very cunning fellow, the Modern Farmer, and his activities are motivated by the low material purpose covered by the term "Mutton." He has discovered that his diabolical end is served by draining the land, keeping animals away from marshes and the banks of streams, destroying snails by spreading chemicals where they congregate, and, worst of all, dosing his animals with carbon tetrachloride. How he gloats at the wanton destruction of everything that the fluke holds to be good and beautiful!

Thus we see that the theological fluke must face the great problems of pain and evil, in common with all those who think teleologically about existence. And it is to be feared that any failure on his part to explain away the facts will lead to a deplorable outbreak of crass materialism in Fluke Society. Oh dear!

P. VICTOR MORRIS.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

A RATIONALIST SABBATH.

SIR,—I think Mr. Rowe is more anxious about my suggested Rationalist Sabbath than my article warranted. I should not dream of suggesting a compulsory observance of it, nor do I think Rationalists would ever crystallise a custom into a tyranny.

Mr. Rowe had an unfortunate experience in his youth with the Sabbath and with chapel people. Mine was quite different. Although of Nonconformist stock and brought up in a Nonconformist atmosphere I was never a Christian. But my difference from the Nonconformists was purely intellectual. Neither myself nor the rest of my chapel acquaintances were bored stiff on Sunday, except perhaps a few children whose parents were too strict. But on the whole the Nonconformists I know were a normal crowd. You had only to hear them sing to know they were happy enough.

What one may call the sociability faculties of a chapel are a great asset. A remark I have heard only a week ago was very illuminating. A Freethinker I know had, for business reasons, to go to live in another town. The remark was from his wife: "If only we had had a chapel to go to, we should have had more friends." They had got friends in time, but the lonely period was very long. *Verb. Sap.*

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

Every good writer is a writer of history, let him treat on almost any subject he may.—*Landor.*

Ideas must work through the brains, and arms of good and brave men or they are no better than dreams.

Emerson.

Obituary.

MR. TOM SHIEL.

ON Sunday, February 8, the remains of Tom Shiel, of New Herrington, Co. Durham, were interred in the burial ground adjoining the local church. Death came without the slightest warning on Wednesday, February 4, apparently from some undetected heart trouble. Aged forty-two at the time of death, he had led a very active life. He was a member of the Chester-le-Street Branch of the N.S.S., and ready at any time to help the Cause in any way possible. He was also secretary of the Miners Lodge, and as such won the respect and confidence of his fellow members to a marked degree. A long procession of mourners formed behind the coffin as it was borne through the mining village to the burial ground. At the graveside, before a very large assembly, a Secular service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti, supported by Mr. J. T. Brighton, Secretary of the Chester-le-Street Branch of the N.S.S. To the widow and seven children we offer sincerest sympathy, in their grievous loss.—R.H.R.

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 *Freethinkers* 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 Shorrolds Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 7.30, Speakers: Messrs. Haskell, F. Day and E. Bryant.

INDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Workers Circle, Great Alie Street, Aldgate, E.): 8.0, Mr. G. Bradley—"Amoeba to Man."

CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn): Tuesday, February 17, at 7.0 p.m. Mr. J. P. Gilmour—"Irrationalism and Imposture in Medicine."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Mrs. Emily Grout—"Lies told to Children."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Miss L. Susan Stebbing, M.A.—"Sir James Jeans and the Mysterious Universe."

RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn): Monday, February 15, at 8.0 p.m. Lantern Lecture by Professor Elliot Smith on "Man's Pedigree." Admission 2s. 6d., 1s. 6d., and 1s.

SECULAR EDUCATION LEAGUE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn): Tuesday, February 17, at 8 p.m. Public Meeting to advocate the "Secular Solution," to be addressed by Mr. Chapman Cohen, Mr. H. Snell, M.P., Mr. Ernest Thurtle, M.P., Dr. Walter Walsh, and others.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Mr. J. P. Gilmour—"Sunday Observance, Past and Present."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Science and Philosophy."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Winter Garden, 37 High Street, Clapham, near Clapham North Underground Station): 7.15, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Jesus, Who and What?"

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Town, N.W.7, facing The Brecknock): 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead—"Unemployment: Causes and Remedies."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 7.30, Colonel Arthur Lynch, M.D.—"Ethics—Authoritative or Scientific."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ACCINGTON, King's Hall.—Mr. Jack Clayton will lecture at 6.30. Subject, "Jesus Christ and Politics."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (New Room, above Burdons Shop, bottom of Front Street): 6.30, Mr. T. W. Raine will lecture. Important business before lecture. Members please note.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Determinism and Morals." Questions and discussion. February 22, "The Theory of Scientific Thinking"; March 1, "Illustrations of Scientific Thinking," by Mr. Fred Casey, of Bury, author of *Thinking: Its History and Science*.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY—City (Albion Street) Hall, at 6.30, Mr. F. Lonsdale—"Social Forces," South Side Socialist Choir will render selections.

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): Sunday, February 15, Mr. A. Cheshire, Junr., B.Sc. (Rock Ferry)—"The Development of the Human Mind and Its Bearing Upon Education." Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bakers Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. D. S. Currie—"The True Story of Noah's Flood."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street entrance): 3.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"Can We Live Without Religion?" At 7.0, "Rome or Reason."

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