

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

Views and Opinions.

*Sunday and the Sabbatarian.*

I do not think an apology is needed for recurring to the Sunday question. It is important for many reasons. First, it is one indication of the influence of Freethought propaganda. The movement for the civilizing of the day of rest is wholly Freethinking in origin, and only in proportion as the strength of British Christianity was weakened was it that a more rational and a more moral way of spending Sunday grew up. This weakening of Christian belief is to-day so marked that even the defenders of the Puritanical Sunday refrain from resting their championship of it on a religious basis. They are concerned, they say with securing freedom from toil for the working classes, and are deadly afraid lest if people are permitted to go to Cinemas and Theatres on Sunday they will be compelled to work seven days each week. Of course, this is sheer humbug, and none know it better than those who put forward the plea. Secondly, the question of Sunday being wholly a religious question, it offers one of the clearest indications of the evil of permitting religious questions to intrude on social or political ones. I hasten to add that, so far as I can see, so long as people have religious beliefs they cannot avoid applying their religion to political and social issues, and that the only way to prevent this evil is to end religious beliefs altogether. The notion that a man can have a genuine belief in Christianity and yet keep it from influencing his actions in politics and sociology is about as reasonable as to imagine that the sight of a nice fat baby will not affect the salivary secretions of a hungry tiger. The only good form of religion is a dead one.

*The Government and the Bigots.*

Our most squeezable of Governments where organ-

ized religious interests are concerned, has decided, so runs the political news in the papers, to introduce a Bill to amend the Sunday Observance Act that will leave matters pretty much where they were before the judges informed the London County Council that it could not legalize burglary by compelling the burglar to give a proportion of his plunder to a selected charitable institution. After profound consideration, Mr. Clynes has decided—with one may presume the agreement of the Cabinet—to leave matters where they are by bringing in a Bill which will regularize what was the practice before the Court took the L.C.C. to task. Local authorities are to be permitted to licence entertainments and to lay down conditions under which they are to be conducted. But it is also to be a measure that will be left “open,” that is, it will be put forward for discussion, and members will be left free to vote as they please. In parliamentary parlance there will be a “free vote,” members being allowed to vote according to what they believe to be right—which is a rather curious reflection upon the character of the ordinary voting. This, it is said, will enable Parliament to interpret every phase of public opinion—or to promise the Government the largest measure of support or avoid a most dangerous form of opposition. Political leaders must be quite sure that they are faithful followers of their supporters.

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*The Clerical Protectionist.*

If the forecast of the Bill is dependable, it is evident that the Government has taken its directions from the Churches and Chapels. For the forecast follows a recent manifesto issued by “The Council of Christian Ministers,” and signed by a number of the bishops and others of the Church of England, and by a body of representative Nonconformist leaders. The document has been widely printed in the press, and is in any case too lengthy for reproducing here. All that one need say is that it is frankly, almost shamelessly candid in its professional outlook, and saturated in the hypocrisy that has nearly always been associated with Sabbatarianism. It takes shelter behind the objection of some actors to theatrical performances on seven days in the week, to advocate the closing of theatres on Sunday, but “if Parliament deems it necessary to replace the Act of 1781, the decision as to whether Cinemas are to be open should be left to local governing bodies”; the local authority should also restrict the hours during which they should be open, and profit-making should be prohibited. All profits should go to approved charities. No employee may be permitted to work seven days a week, and must have a certain number of Sundays free. The local authority should also exercise a vigilant supervision over the entertainment offered, which should “appeal to the best moral sense of the community.”

Now this programme not merely leaves matters



where they are, for it is certain that if nothing is done the Act of 1781 will be ignored on an increasing scale, but it consecrates all the absurdities and humbug of Sabbatarian legislation in a new Act of Parliament. Observe that the Council graciously agrees that Cinemas may be open on Sunday, providing the local Council permits, but not theatres. Why not theatres? What reason is there that will justify the opening of the one and not the other? With consummate hypocrisy the reply is that a seven-day working week must not be permitted. But if with regard to Cinemas, it is enough to guard against this by providing in the Act that no one shall work in one week more than six days, why may not a similar provision be made with reference to theatres? Of course, the real reason for the distinction is that the Council of Christian ministers does not care a "twopenny damn" about the hours of labour or the conditions of labour. What it does care about is the opening of places of amusement which may serve as counter-attractions to their own places of business. The instinct at work here is aggressively commercial, or it would have denounced Sunday entertainments of every kind. It knows that all its protests will not stop people having some kind of Sunday amusement, so it seeks to limit the competition under a hypocritical profession of concern for the employee.

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#### No Local Option.

The application of local option to such a case as Sunday entertainments that are run on a business basis is monstrous. It implies that the question of Sunday entertainment is a question which the majority can properly and satisfactorily settle. That is most decidedly not the case. It is not a question of the rule of the majority but a question of coercing the minority. Those in favour of a healthy civilized Sunday have no desire to make others do a single thing they do not wish to do. They do not desire to force anyone to go to a theatre, or to a cinema, to listen to a band, to play games, or to go on an excursion, or to prevent their going to chapel three times a day. They merely ask that Sabbatarians shall do to them as they would do to Sabbatarians—that is leave them alone. It is the Sabbatarians who say to the others, "We do not want any of these things on Sunday, and because we do not want them, therefore you shall not have them." In many places it is extremely probable that the number of people in favour of a humanized Sunday would be large enough to compel local Councils to grant the necessary permission but in very many instances, it would mean that the most unenlightened, the professors of a form of religious belief, disowned by even educated believers, would exercise an intolerable tyranny over a more enlightened minority. And it would introduce a religious issue into all local elections. Men and women would be elected to serve on Councils as they stood with regard to this question not because of their administrative ability. A united chapel vote would be enough to throw local affairs under the control of the most bigoted section of the population. I doubt whether even the salvation of the present Government is worth paying this price.

The provision that there shall be no profit made out of Sunday performances is ridiculous. That, of course, was the provision insisted upon by those who set themselves above the law and issued a permission they had no legal power to grant—or refuse. But it may be imagined that "expenses" received a rather liberal interpretation, and that the day's work was not quite free from yielding the proprietors some profit. But the new proposal is that the accounts shall be audited by a certificated accountant, so as to ensure

that no profits are made. But why? Why should men pursuing a perfectly legitimate occupation be told that they must work for nothing if they choose to open on Sundays? Railways run trains on Sundays, trams and omnibuses run on Sundays, public houses and refreshment places open on Sundays, even the parson plies his trade on Sunday. On what ground is it to be decreed that if a man wishes to give the public a decent entertainment on Sunday, he alone must do it for nothing, and if there happens to be a loss, he must pay that out of his own pocket? To forbid all entertainments on Sunday is quite absurd but understandable. If they are wrong, religiously or non-religiously there is a reason for their suppression. But how does the not making a profit out of a thing suddenly transform it from being bad into something that is good? Of course, the reason here is, again, that the real desire is to stop Sunday entertainments altogether and to bring the country back to the dreary demoralization of the early Victorian period. The real cry should be "Let us keep Sunday miserable, for then we may hope to keep the people religious."

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#### A Time for Action.

Admittedly these Sunday laws never had any other purposes save those of the forced observance of a peculiarly narrow form of Christian belief, and the protection of the Christian religion. They had not the remotest relation to the prevention of men being overworked or of preventing dissoluteness, or improving morals. The seventeenth century Act plainly had no other purpose than to prevent the desecration of Sunday; and the 1781 Act as plainly aimed at preventing Freethinking discussions. The opponents of established Christianity were mostly poor men, and the cost of the meetings at which religion was discussed was paid by a small charge for admission. So it struck the promoter of the Act, that if such meetings were made illegal, these poor Freethinkers could not carry on. The entertainment part of the Act was a subsidiary thing. But the meetings went on in spite of this peculiarly mean, but quite Christian policy. Men like Carlile, Hetherington, Watson, and Bradlaugh were not to be frightened by an Act of this description. They treated the Act with contempt, and if public entertainers had followed the same policy the Act would have been repealed long since, or would have been quietly wiped off the Statute Books. Even now it is not too late for entertainers to reconsider their policy.

I began by saying that this most squeezable of governments will certainly give way to the religious pressure unless it receives assurance that there is a strong body of opinion in the country that is in favour of a brighter and better Sunday. I repeat here what I have previously said. There is a tremendous volume of anti-sabbatarian opinion in the country, and it should make itself heard. The thousands of working class organizations up and down the country might pass resolutions and so let the Home Secretary see that the voice of Chapels is not the only voice in England. Every Cinema in the country should have a roll at its doors asking for signatures. The opinions of public officials as to the beneficial moral effects of Sunday games, Sunday recreations, and Sunday entertainments should be kept well before the public. The right of young men and women to use the public playing fields on Sunday on the same conditions as they are used on week-days should be asserted. If necessary the tactics used at Manchester should be followed elsewhere. Fines inflicted by religious magistrates could easily be paid, and the infliction of them would not be persisted in for long. There is no time to be lost. A new Act on the lines foreshadowed will make



the task of liberating Sunday much harder than it will be with only old Acts to fight. The English Sunday has long been a byword and a jest to the civilized world. It has done more to demoralize the general body of the people than any other institution that has existed during the last three hundred years. It is time it met with the fate it deserves.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Fifty Years of Freethought.

"We take up the task eternal, and the burden, and the lesson,  
Pioneers! O Pioneers!"—Walt Whitman.

"More life and fuller that we want."—Tennyson.

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

THE most important provincial association connected with the British Freethought Movement is the Leicester Secular Society, which, this month, celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its inauguration. The record of this Society is really one of the romances of Freethought. Its story actually dates back to the "stormy forties" of the last century, and is an inspiring record of small beginnings, of struggles, and of ultimate brilliant victory. The original society sprang from a discussion class in the Leicester Mechanics Institute, a leading spirit of which was George Brown, one of the small but valiant band of pioneers who carried the flag of Liberty in those bad, old days when pioneers were not only pariahs, but too often prisoners for conscience sake.

Among the young men who gathered about him was Josiah Gimson, the father of Sydney Gimson. The intellectual subjects discussed in the class soon became the talk of this provincial town. Afterwards a school was carried on during the week, with lectures on Sundays, and a lending library was formed. The advanced views of progressive thinkers were discussed constantly, and Leicester thus had the opportunity of listening to new thoughts, and of widening its mental horizon. Out of this evolving institution, which adapted itself readily to changing circumstances, was organized the Secular Hall Company, and the site of the present hall was purchased. In 1881, the memorable year of the birth of the *Freethinker*, the hall was completed from the design of W. Larnier Sugden, an architect, one of whose hobbies was the publication of pretty little booklets of a Freethought character. It is a handsome structure on one of the best roads of Leicester, with ample accommodation for improvement and pleasure.

At the opening a large number of notable Freethinkers were present from all parts. That shy genius, James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, contributed a poetic address at the inaugural ceremony. This poem showed the vigorous Freethought of the poet, whose talents have won for him an imperishable name in his country's literature:—

"So, all the lands wherein our wandering race  
Have led their flocks, or fixed their dwelling place,  
To till with patient toil the fruitful sod,  
Abound with altars to the unknown god,  
Or gods, whom man created from of old,  
In his own image, one yet manifold,  
And ignorantly worshipped. We now dare,  
Taught by millenniums of barren prayer,  
Of mutual scorn and hate and bloody strife,  
With which these dreams have poisoned our poor life,  
To build our temples on another plan,  
Devoting them to god's creator, man;  
Not to man's creature, God. And, thus, indeed,

All men and women, of whatever creed,  
We welcome gladly if they love their kind;  
No other valid test of worth we find.  
Who loveth not his brother at his side,  
How can he love a dream deified?"

Another illustrious name associated with the Leicester Secular Society is that of Professor T. H. Huxley, the fiery apostle of Darwinism. Not only was he in agreement with the objects of the organization, but he was one of the financial supporters. This places Thomas Henry Huxley in complete accord with the principles of Freethought, and should clear away any misapprehension on the subject.

In the hall itself are portraits of Charles Bradlaugh, George Holyoake, James Thomson, and Josiah Gimson. The name and fame of the Gimson family can never be forgotten in the history of this society, or even in the records of the Freethought Movement. Another name for long associated with the Society is that of Frederick J. Gould, who was secretary and organizer of the Society from 1889 to 1908. His remarks on the Society and its work are of moment:—

I doubt if any hall in Europe, or America, or elsewhere, quite fulfils for its social environment just such a function, both intellectual and municipal, as this at Leicester. Perhaps it would be difficult now to establish another of like pattern. When it was founded movements which are now strong—labour, free libraries, Sunday lectures, and the non-theological press—were then relatively weak, and eager spirits discovered in the hall at Humberstone Gate, a unique centre for learning and discussing new ideas on religion, history, literature, economics, and the rest.

The lesson to be drawn from the inspiring record of the Leicester Secular Society is that "Unity is strength." Forgetting trivial distinctions in the face of entrenched and wealthy ecclesiasticism, these brave Freethinkers closed their ranks and stood shoulder to shoulder against the enemy. It is precisely because the hearts of these pioneers were aflame with love of liberty that their work has had such vital and permanent effect. They deserved well of their generation, for they hastened the day when the world will be one country, and to do good the only religion. If peace hath its victories no less renowned than war, this gallant exploit at Leicester surely deserves its due place among them.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Truant.

Why art thou sad?  
Because thy mistress thee forsook?  
Take heart; few things are quite so bad  
As they may look.

A little rest  
From one another may do good:  
Abstention gives an added zest  
To the best food.

She will return  
If only thou wilt play the man;  
For courage she will never spurn—  
No woman can.

Be not cast down;  
Nothing is gained by looking glum;  
For if thy mistress see that frown  
She will not come.

Just wait—and smile;  
And yet more kindly think of her;  
Then wilt thou see in a brief while  
Thy truant fair.

BAYARD SIMMONS.



## William Harvey and his Predecessors

THE natural history sciences participated in the progressive movement initiated by the Italian Renaissance. In picturesque and liberty-loving Switzerland, Konrad Gesner, despite various disadvantages, became a pioneer in Alpine studies, and composed one of the most monumental treatises ever published on biological science.

Issued from the press in four imposing folio volumes, Gesner's *Historia Animalium* ran to 3,500 pages. A work of encyclopædic range, embracing all then known, or conjectured concerning animal life, it appears to have been the earliest scientific publication in which pictorial art was utilized to illustrate the text. Gesner obtained the finest woodcuts the time afforded, and was most solicitous to secure their accuracy. Indeed, the great drawing of the rhinoceros is attributed to the mighty Albrecht Dürer himself.

Aldrovandi of Bologna (1522-1605) was another devoted servant to science. He also was a voluminous author and industrious observer, whose labours exercised a beneficial influence on biological studies. Rondelet, Belon, Vesalius, and others made important discoveries. Among all, Vesalius must ever remain immortal in the realm of anatomical research. A born innovator, he incurred bitter hostility when he criticized Galen, and gained first-hand knowledge by dissecting human bodies. His contributions, both to anatomy and physiology proved invaluable to his successors.

Nor must the potent influence exercised by Leonardo da Vinci be forgotten. Supreme artist and mechanic alike, he pursued a conscientious study of human anatomy, and the figures which he drew for the instruction of his pupils induced painters and sculptors in general to examine and compare the skeletal framework of man and the lower animals. The knowledge thus obtained exerted its influence on medical research throughout the sixteenth century.

Physiology made small progress from antiquity to the seventeenth century. The dicta of Galen and Aristotle still dominated the minds of men. While the anatomy or structure of the animal body became more clearly defined, the physiology or functioning of the organism was little investigated.

Galen himself had exposed the ancient error that the arteries and left ventricles of the heart were distended with air. He proved that these structures contain blood of a somewhat different character to that circulating in the veins. But he perpetuated many time-honoured illusions, and physiology remained much where he left it, so late as the sixteenth century.

Many physicians must have felt dissatisfied with the accepted doctrines, clouded as they were in mystical misconceptions. The discoveries of Vesalius and Fabrizio plainly rendered many current assumptions untenable. But mechanical and materialistic explanations of the circulation of the human blood would have been received with a howl of religious indignation. Men of science would have been promptly charged and convicted of the heinous offence of casting doubt on the existence of man's immortal soul. The theologians were athirst for heretical blood, and the Inquisition was ever ready to their call.

Yet, a strange speculative Spaniard appeared who was prepared to grapple with the vexed problem of vascular movement. This was the theological

mystic and martyr, Michael Servetus. In his first published essay he propounded doctrines concerning the Holy Trinity that scandalized Protestant and Romanist alike. He denied the dogma of the three gods—Father, Son, and Ghost—and asserted that the Son was not eternal. To avoid persecution, Servetus escaped from Strassburg and sought safety under an assumed name at Lyons. Here he was sheltered by a sceptical physician who interested Servetus in the science of medicine. Journeying to Paris, he was there instructed in anatomy by Vesalius himself. But his daring astrological speculations soon aroused a host of sacerdotal enemies, and he deemed it prudent to depart. For a few tranquil seasons he practiced as a doctor at Vienne on the Rhone. During this period he resumed his religious studies, and unsuccessfully endeavoured to convert Calvin to his views.

In an anonymous work, his *Christianismi Restitutio*, Servetus penned a bitter attack on Calvin, which that dour Protestant deeply resented. Servetus was arrested and imprisoned, but he contrived to escape to Geneva, where he trusted to find friends among the discontented Calvinists who were planning the deposition of the autocratic teacher of predestination. But Calvin saw to Servetus' safe custody, and the astute reformer utilized the long trial of the intensely hated heretic to strengthen his own despotic rule. Aided and abetted by several Protestant councils, the Court of Geneva sentenced the ill-starred Servetus, and he was burned alive in October, 1553. This was a Protestant crime against humanity, but as the Catholic Inquisition at Vienne was unable to burn Servetus in person, it had, just previously to his execution in Geneva, spitefully burnt him in effigy. One of the little ironies of religious history is revealed by the circumstance that Catholics now pretend to honour the name of Servetus, mainly, it is presumed, for the purpose of exasperating the Calvinists. Statues of the martyr now stand both in Paris and Madrid.

In probing the secret of man's immortal spirit, Servetus contended that it became essential to understand the wondrous workings of his bodily organs. In his searchings into the structure and functions of the human organism, he more and more realized the importance of the blood stream in sustaining life. Various of his findings were vague and visionary, and his researches were inspired more by a desire to establish a mystical theological theory, than to add to practical knowledge. Nevertheless, he propounded a theory of the pulmonary circulation which has been amply confirmed by the studies and experiments of modern medical science.

Several generations rolled away before the views of Servetus became common knowledge. The treatise which expounds his doctrines was penalized and practically suppressed by the authorities. In sober truth, a century and a half elapsed before the discovery of Servetus attracted any serious attention. Still, a few of his contemporaries seem to have entertained similar ideas, and in the later years of the sixteenth century pioneers were unconsciously clearing the road for Harvey's momentous demonstration.

A brilliant pupil of the renowned Vesalius, Realdo Columbus was also a pioneer in this fertile field. To his researches Harvey makes honourable mention, and Realdo indubitably assisted in the solution of the problem. Cæsalpino, who studied under Realdo at Pisa, was another Italian who very closely approached the truth concerning the circulation of the blood. Indeed, some of his countrymen claim that he anticipated Harvey. But it must be conceded that Cæsalpino, although he held sound opinions concerning the passage of the blood through the lungs, remained



in thrall to the teachings of Hippocrates and other ancient authorities. Some suspect that he deliberately compromised with orthodox errors, but he evidently believed that at least some of the blood percolates through the walls of the heart, although he was aware that the venous blood pours into the heart from the veins alone. Yet, Cæsalpino, with all his circumspection, fell into the clutches of the Inquisition, but being in the Papal service the intervention of influential friends saved him from the chronic foes of enlightenment.

As we have seen, many students of Nature made their contributions towards the final solution of the problem of the structure and functioning of the vascular system. The far-reaching importance of the question was universally recognized in medical circles, but despite all endeavours to elucidate the truth, the problem remained a problem still. But an Englishman was studying at Padua in Italy, who was destined to make an imperishable name with his great discovery and demonstration of the mechanical nature of the circulatory system. For an account of his achievement we must crave the indulgence of another article.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

## The Story of an Ex-Jesuit.

No, I did not die of my encounter with the demon motor-cyclist, eight months ago, as some of my readers surmised. Neither have I joined the Church of Rome, the Fundamentalists, the Salvation Army; or been "washed in the blood of the Lamb," and if I am now resuming my pen to continue a connexion with the *Freethinker*, which commenced thirty years ago, my readers have to thank, if so disposed, our worthy Editor, who has made it possible, and, as I hope, to continue to the end.

The story of an Ex-Jesuit is told in a book just published, entitled *Ex-Jesuit*, by F. Boyd Barrett (Godfrey Bles, 10s. 6d.). Those who search this book for revelations of the *Marist* order, or for illustrations of the maxim that the end justifies the means—the time-honoured methods of Protestant assaults on the Society of Jesus—will be disappointed. But those who wish for a truthful picture of modern Jesuitism as it really is, cannot do better than read this true and moving record of one who has been through the Jesuit mill, and here makes public his experience.

We say, truthful, because the author gives the names of all the characters he came in contact with, whether good or bad. There is no Mr. A— or Father X—. For instance, he tells the following story of Francis Hackett, the author of a recent popular work on Henry VIII, which happened while they were at boarding-school:—

Hackett and I sat at the same desk in the study hall, although he was a class or two in advance of me. He was a clever, dour, sarcastic boy, studious but unpopular, for he never played games. One evening on reaching my place in the study hall I offered Frank some candy, for I saw he had none of his own. He eyed me suspiciously for a moment and asked, "What are you offering me this for?" Then he added, "Don't you know that I will never give you any?" I told him that it didn't matter, so he took the candy and ate it with relish. He was true to his word about never offering me any in return. He did not envisage life as a good-will game among friendly, generous folk as I did. Sentiment seemed to him at the time sheer nonsense.

By which, and the worldly ways of some of the

other boys, he says, his "dream-bubble" of, the ideal college boy, was rudely pricked.

Mr. Barrett's father, a barrister-at-law in Dublin, died four years after marriage, leaving three boys, of whom Mr. Barrett was the youngest, they were left well provided for. Being the most impressionable of the three, he says, "piety gripped me more profoundly than it did the others," and his mother had a little altar to the blessed Virgin set up in his room, at which he kept alight for six years a little red lamp. He used to kiss, and pray, before the statue many times during the day; and when he began to read about the saints and their scourgings, he says: "I made a cruel little instrument of torture, a cord with a hard chestnut at the end, and with this I would at night whip my bare shoulders."

At the age of eleven he was sent to Clongowes Wood, a boarding-school in charge of the Jesuits, the foremost and oldest school in Ireland. Although so religious, the boy was no milksop; he was good at games, and so became popular, and became the best bat in the school. He could also take unmerited punishment without a murmur. One day a boy named Ryan, who had never been punished, it was said to be due to the influence of wealthy parents, was called out for punishment which consisted of slapping with a heavy leather strap. He seemed to be terribly frightened and Barrett tried to comfort him, when suddenly

came a loud shout from the dean. "What is this I see?" he cried. "One boy, laughing at another poor boy who is going to be punished. Go back to your place Ryan! Come out here, Barrett." And without more ado he gave me forty hard *pandies*.... I sensed that I had been made a scapegoat for the son of rich parents, but I took my punishment without complaint. . . . Then I said: "Thank you, sir!" when it was over, which was the Clongowes way of playing the game.

Another instance of punishment he gives, was that of a thin, delicate, nervous boy named "Cooly" Dolan, who endured a most ferocious and cruel lashing without a sign of fear. "The master was infuriated, and apparently bent upon breaking his will. As each brutal blow fell there was just a slight spasmodic twitch on Cooly's lips. The lashing went on for an interminable time, but Cooly stood it like a hero to the end, upright and fearless. At last the master was exhausted and departed hurling a threat of further punishment. Cooly quietly, and very precisely, for he was that kind, wiped away the blood with his handkerchief, and disdained even to discuss the matter later. He was a boy of about thirteen years at the time, and had a wizened little face."

These are the only two cases of punishment mentioned, and they may have been exceptional. It is to be hoped they were. Mr. Barrett himself, makes no complaint about the punishments inflicted. As in other schools, there were kind and sympathetic masters, and harsh and austere ones. It must also be borne in mind that the religious fanatic is always more severe in his punishments, because the offender not only breaks human laws, but he does worse, he offends God by breaking the divine laws. Therefore in punishing the sinner, the fanatic is earning the divine approval, and laying up credit for himself. That is why he punishes the heretic so severely when he has the power.

The nearest we get to the Novelist, as distinguished from the Protestant, idea of the Jesuit, was a priest who was destined to exercise an important influence upon the boy's life:—

He was the prefect of the higher line, and by far the best preacher in the school. Father Henry Fegan, "Tim," as he was nicknamed, was under medium size, thin, dark, and half-bald. He had



bright penetrating eyes, a most expressive face, and an inexhaustible source of nervous energy. He was a great story-teller, a great actor, and a shrewd judge of character. In a sense he was a religious fanatic; in a sense a leader of men. He could arouse to boiling point the emotion of any audience that he addressed. He could be exceedingly witty, marvellously courtly in his manner, diabolically sarcastic and lavishly generous. He was keenly alive to every phase of boy psychology, and could win boys to the state of almost worshipping him. . . . He was very observant, and before long he noticed my solemn earnestness in religion, and my transparent innocence. Probably he counted upon making a saint out of me, and he began to show me in various indirect ways that he had me in mind, and that he expected great things from me. He used to find occasions to say a few kind words to me in order to win me to him. And he succeeded. For years he was my hero.

Towards the end of the boy's last term, Father Fegan asked him: "Are you not ready to fight and die for Christ?" To which he replied, "Father, I will never cease striving to enter the Society of Jesus until I succeed or die." And, he adds, "No vow was ever more sincere. None was ever more frankly or spontaneously made." Somewhere, he adds pathetically, "that offering must have been registered . . . but in the mysterious dance of life much remains obscure." It certainly does if we try to reconcile it with an over-ruling providence.

It was during his second term at Clongowes, at the age of thirteen, that his "vocation," or *call* to the priesthood came. It happened during a three day's "spiritual retreat" (a period of retirement dedicated to meditation and prayer). A Jesuit missionary—what we should term a revivalist—came to conduct it, named Father Tom Murphy, who had the art of telling dramatic stories, with telling effect. He took for his text: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his soul." The boy was ripe for conviction, and says: "It was an easy conclusion for me that the right, the *only thing* for me to do was to give my life, to the service of God as a Jesuit. My vocation was thus irrevocably fixed at the age of thirteen."

This is the mystical process, known among Protestants as "conversion," or a change of heart. The present writer can quite enter into the feelings experienced during this crisis, for he also went through the same thing, at the same age, and at a boarding-school at Epping, presided over by a Nonconformist clergyman.

No one can understand the feelings experienced during this crisis, except those who have been through it. Any more than one who has never experienced the pains of neuralgia, or indigestion can realize the sensations of those who have, and is inclined to be somewhat sceptical of the pains for which he can see no visible evidence.

But there is nothing supernatural about it. It is a time of vague longings and yearnings for we know not what. The feelings are there right enough, but they are not due to spiritual influences. They are due to the coming into activity of certain ductless glands at the period of adolescence. We are the slaves of our ductless glands. Religion seizes upon the sufferer at this crisis and declares these feelings are messages from God, and urges him to dedicate his life to God's service. This conversion, in my case, lasted several months, but in less than a year it had completely faded away, and I became normal again, but this Catholic boy continued on the path, only after many years, to be disillusionized, and forced out of the Society to which he had vowed and dedicated his life.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

## The Book Shop.

A SMALL but interesting book has come our way, and, bulk for bulk, it compares very favourably with those heavy tomes, the reading of which, is like thrashing straw. It appears to be the chief publication of the "Christo-Buddhist Union of Non-Ritualists," and it is entitled *The Roadbook*, compiled by Beatrice Hastings, and printed in France by M. Geo. Tremont, 29 Rue de l'Argonne, Paris, 19c. 1s. post free. The contents are devoted to the main teachings of Guatama, the fourth Buddha, and those of Jesus Christ. There is a vigorous foreword, but what was of especial interest was the compressed and concise version of the teaching attributed to Buddha. I shall be forgiven in the present dispensation, when the world is bulging over with battalions of books, when a selected type of education is caterwauled over the wireless, when penny sermons have been supplanted by women in trances, when the only thing left to do with gold appears to be to drop it in the Atlantic together with gold experts, I repeat, I shall be forgiven for snipping the following good advice from Buddha on what not to do. By a process of elimination the reader will be in a much better position to use energy on the things that matter, and in addition have a sound standard of criticism of that giant of painted lath—Superstition. Here it is: "Do not believe anything by hearsay. Do not believe by faith in traditions, or because these have been transmitted by many generations. Do not believe a thing because it is said and repeated by many persons. Do not believe a thing on the witness of this or that ancient sage. Do not believe a thing because the probabilities are in its favour, or because, long habit leads you to accept it. Do not believe what you have imagined, thinking that some superior being has revealed it to you. Do not believe a thing on the simple authority of your elders or of your teachers." This category of doubt's is an excellent foundation for arriving at something approaching the truth; if taken to heart it would allay much heart-burning. Sir Edwin Arnold, in the *Light of Asia*, the circulation of which proves the innate love of many folk for something a little better than Christianity, introduced Buddhism in a popular form to the English speaking people. Even the poetical presentation of Buddhism is an effective answer to the major form of verbal humbug—Catholicism. Buddhism does not agree with the shedding of blood. Buddhism teaches a truth that some of us may arrive at by other ways—a reconciliation to ones own self. And in that is its strength. The Western world will not, however, swallow all of the doctrine that has only one flavour, that of salt. Under the heading of Christ is given the doctrine ascribed to him. There is very little in it to which serious criticism could be offered, and one small extract shall complete this paragraph. . . . "As St. Gregory wrote to his friend St. Jerome—'Nothing imposes on the people so well as verbiage. Our fathers and doctors have often said not what they thought, but what circumstances imposed on them.' These fathers and doctors who fought and kicked each other at the Councils, and for nearly two thousand years composed by their acts the awful records of the Christian Churches, have now had their day. Their verbiage can impose no more." A Freethinker's Amen.

The *Morning Post* has very obligingly collected a few statistics for me that make me thank the author of that famous saying about hope. You will remember Milton in his venture, that hope springs eternal in the human breast—it has always been my impression these last few years that more books were being read than formerly, and I find it confirmed by a leaderette in the daily paper mentioned above. Sheffield public libraries, we are told, lent in 1930, nearly as many volumes in excess of last year's (1929) figures as were issued during the year 1921. Another notable feature in connexion with the reading of more books was the growing demand for important contributions to the knowledge of our age. This is all to the good, but what I should appreciate more



would be if we could make it a fair conclusion by assuming that more books read meant less newspapers bought. We may flatter newspapers by overestimating their influence on the public; their influence for good with the public is nil; their power for bad is incalculable. That they splash headlines on the sorriest side of human nature, that they live on advertising, that they excuse themselves by saying that they give the public what it wants, stamps them as being utterly irresponsible and a reproach to anything as the nature of civilization.

Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., have published *One Looks at Russia*, by Henri Barbusse, translated by Warre B. Wells, price 6s. net. These well known publishers, whose books are always a credit to sound workmanship and general excellence, are to be congratulated on their courage for bringing to the eyes of the thinking public, M. Barbusse's version of present Russian affairs. Needless to say this version does not bear any resemblance to published accounts in our newspapers; the reader will remember in this connexion, the incapacity of one English newspaper correspondent to correctly report the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. After reading *One Looks at Russia*, I have come to the conclusion that the author is one of the honoured few who have remembered that the Great War was fought to make the world safe for democracy. He has translated the words into action, and, as only hostile criticism is allowed in newspapers the author has very thoroughly ignored it all, and set down what he saw, together with very comprehensive statistics. The book is good reading, and a commentary on one of the greatest experiments in the world. The problem of universal life, is, to paraphrase Mr. Chapman Cohen, how to live with nations from whom we may differ, instead of taking up the stupid and pre-historic standpoint of trying to destroy them. Henri Barbusse, in this generous appreciation of the Russian situation, acts as a good antidote to the English evangelical type of mind that cannot visualize Russia as containing one tenth of the population of the world. For that reason alone, the public, denied access to reliable information, should give this book a hearty welcome. This volume will be of particular interest to Freethinkers, students of economics, critics of bankers policies, and those only interested in literature. In one chapter, entitled "Beware of Illusions," the author, in a vigorous style has something of real importance to say, and it is worth the price of the book. Barbusse is in deadly earnest about the purpose of writing. He warns Russia of certain types of French authors, Marcel Proust, Girandoux, and Cocteau, and he gives his reasons, which are as sound as a bell. These writers are more or less mistletoe on the oak, and they could be matched by many of our modern best-sellers. They are in no sense "life-furtherers"—they bring no red blood to their work—to teach, instruct or warn the human race. *One Looks at Russia* is wholeheartedly recommended; Barbusse gave the world *Under Fire*, one of the best war novels. He is to be admired and encouraged in a sick age for his enthusiasm, his faith, and his belief in a better world order than that which met its doom in 1914-1918. And in his book, this man of the new age, does not overlook the significance of the banker and the priest; and for that he will not be forgiven by the hosts of newspapers and newspaper writers of the dark ages of 1930-31.

C-DE-B.

### Acid Drops.

Last week we mentioned the trade in magic cords, blessed, by proxy, by the Pope carried by the Union of St. Joseph. We see that one of the three gangsters, recently shot dead, in New York, had in his pocket the promise of the "grace of a happy death" through the intercession of St. Joseph. Of course, his prayer may have been answered. One cannot say. Certainly so Christian a man deserves consideration. We suggest that The Union of St. Joseph should add to its advertise-

ment some such legend as "Greatly used by all the leading gangsters of America." Al Capone himself might, as a good Christian, be induced to write a testimonial.

Budapest barbers have warned the world that self-shaving is contrary to the principle of civilization. Well, a similar kind of warning is periodically issued by priests and parsons. Nations will decay and civilization will perish, if the people neglect religion and refuse to patronize the professional savers of souls. While duly appreciating the sincerity of both the face-shavers and the soul-savers, we reserve the right to point out that the same instinct—self-preservation—is responsible for both warnings. As a postscript, we express the hope that this enlightenment will not be resented. Revelation of truth should be welcomed, no matter whence its source.

The Bible is, says a writer, the most superb story-book in existence; the Old Testament is packed with stories for children, which are unequalled in the literature of all time. It is as well to add that we are glad other literature has never attempted to equal many of the grossly coarse and indecent stories of Holy Writ. It is significant of the kind of culture professed by most Christians that the Bible should still be retained as a reading book for schools.

A new book is described by a reviewer as "a colourful piece of imaginative fiction." One wonders whether the reviewer could improve on that if a Bible was placed before him as something he had never read before.

"The Narcotic Menace" is the title to an article in a religious weekly. Drugs are indeed a menace. We have, for years in the *Freethinker*, been warning people about the dangers attendant on one potent drug—religion. As a result, quite a large number of persons have ceased to be addicts of this dope. And since the sale of it is unrestricted, all we can do is to go on warning people against it.

From Skegness a parson tells a daily paper that Mr. Charlie Chaplin's favourite hymn is "Praise the Lord, the heavens adore Him," and that the comedian has loved this hymn ever since his Sunday school days. This is worth knowing. It probably explains why a well-known journalist hails Charlie as the world's greatest Englishman.

A parson solemnly argues: "Man finds it as hard to walk on all fours as does a brother beast to walk upright. Is he not meant for higher things?" This is very convincing. The monkey can climb tall trees better and faster than man. So presumably the monkey is designed also for "higher things" than man. And perhaps, when a group of monkeys are chattering together, they may, for all one knows to the contrary, be gravely discussing the possibility of as hereafter and the goodness of God, and other "higher things."

The Rev. E. C. Urwin says that "Men like to live together, but they don't know how to live together; the reason for this is that the "social" instinct is weak compared with the instincts of sex and self-preservation." One might retort that religion and the Churches have never shown men how to live together, anyway. The proof of this fact can be gleaned from Christian history.

The Rev. F. Clifford Taylor is a flexible religionist. He thinks that the first requisite in meeting the call of the future where religion is concerned is in an attitude of adaptability. He attributes much of the present slump in religion to the failure to appreciate flexibility in regard to an ever-changing environment. Well, it was once said that the Bible was a "nose of wax" to be twisted as was thought desirable. The flexible religionists of to-day are improving on that. They are inventing an india-rubber religion that automatically shapes itself to any ideas which modern thought may press against it. Religion of the twentieth century will go down in history as the india-rubber creed, for its wonderful elasticity in fitting itself to its environment. Religion, of course, has always had to adapt itself or perish. But the remarkable



thing about twentieth century Christianity is its sensitiveness to the need for adaptation.

The Rev. F. H. Gillingham wishes people would "give up talking about religion and try to live it." His prayer is already answered. Thousands of Sabbatarian bigots are trying to live their religion by compelling other people to abstain from amusements and games on Sunday. They are making a really gallant attempt to put into practice what they believe. It is rather discouraging to note, however, that this "practical Christianity" is much resented by a large number of the bigots' fellow citizens, who foolishly imagine they have a right to exercise their own judgment and choice in regard to the use of Sunday.

The Rev. Bardsley Brash has been speaking about the "Challenge of Youth." Youth, he says, is lawless with the lawless inevitable to progress. He adds:—

There are those who say that youth will not submit to authority and is lawless? So it ought to be. That is the law of progress. The call to leave things as they are does not appeal to youth. It questions, it cross-examines; it cannot see why it should accept many of the ideas of its fathers. It will not be dragooned or bullied into acceptance of any dogma. It is not convinced by merely external authority. This is not wild Bolshevism, but youth's way of marching towards a richer and fuller truth.

Much of this is true enough. But what requires to be added is that youth has not acquired this new independence of thought from religion, or the churches, or the parsons. It has come through the influence of Freethought—either direct or via well-known writers who have been stimulated by Freethought philosophy. Mr. Brash and other parsons of his kind may profess to welcome this independence of youth, but we have no doubt that they find it deuced awkward to handle. And they spend a considerable amount of their time devising plausible answers to youth's questions, and trying to find ways and means of bringing youth to heel.

In the opinion of a pious contemporary, "there is no real evidence yet of a widespread desire for Sunday cinemas." Indeed! Then how does one explain the fact that wherever cinemas have been permitted to open on Sunday they have full houses? What is really needed, however, is not merely cinemas open on Sunday. If this is eventually permitted, there is not much advance made. Instead of the public's alternatives being church or pub, we have merely church or pub, or cinema. Such "meagre alternatives are not" good enough for twentieth century intelligence. There should be on Sunday every facility not only for rational entertainments and recreation, but also for education and culture.

The National Sunday School Union, the Free Church Council, the Lord's Day Observance Society, and the Alliance for the Defence of Sunday are all agreed that "definite opposition" must be made to any contemplated legislation, local or national, which "menaces the sacred character of the Lord's Day." Quite so. It is the preservation of Sunday as a taboo day which is the chief interest of these pious organizations. Their talk about Sunday labour, the preservation of the national health, etc., is mere clap-trap to catch the sympathy of the unreflecting. One of the arguments of these bigots is that there is ample opportunity for recreation and amusement during the week, now that the hours of labour are so much shorter. Anyone might fancy that the shortened hours of labour and the increased hours of leisure were brought about by the efforts of these Sabbatarian bigots!

Apropos of what we said a week or so ago, with regard to the general character of the popular newspaper, the following by Mr. Gerald Barry, Editor of the *Week-End Review*, writing in the *World's Press News* for February 18, is interesting:—

The popular papers of to-day show a hopeless topsyturvydom of values. They select and emphasize what is trivial, and suppress (if it does not suit them) or at all

events minimize because they consider it dull, what may be of genuine importance. In a newspaper a few weeks ago I observed that the main double-column news "story" on the front page was devoted, with gigantic headlines, to a sensational story of murder. At the bottom of a comparatively insignificant column on an inside page, a few lines of undisplayed type were devoted to the bare statement of a speech at the Round Table Conference, which, in point of fact, had marked the turning point in the history of the Conference, and for that reason perhaps in the history of the country and India, and indeed of the world. But India is not news unless an Indian extremist drops a bomb, or Mr. Churchill drops a brick; the relations of one of the greatest Empires in history with the greatest existing Empire do not count beside what the Duchess of X wore at Lady Y's cocktail party, or what the latest Hollywood star said when she divorced her sixteenth husband. This class of paper vulgarizes all it touches—even noble things. Miss Amy Johnson did something remarkable and courageous; and the papers made her look a fool. Even the majesty of death is not immune, as we learnt over the disaster of the R 101.

It sounds almost a quotation from Mr. Cohen's article and we are pleased to see it from the pen of one who is thoroughly acquainted with the world of journalism.

The Rev. Dimsdale Young, however, thinks the press is "amazingly good, in the ethical as well as in other senses." We are not surprised, for does not the press generally permit parsons to write as stupid a sermon in its columns as they preach in their pulpits, and, at the same time, protect them from all real criticism? For what more could they ask? Now, if the press really gave both sides of the question we should in all probability hear a deal of the lack of spirituality of the modern newspapers. We hope we shall not hurt the feelings of the more sensitive of our readers if we say that when one wants an example of falsification of facts no one need search further than the pulpit.

The vicar of Clifton-on-Tone, Worcester, in his will revoked certain gifts for religious purposes because his parishioners had refused to relieve him of paying for dilapidations. The good man only had £42,000 to leave as a consequence. Still, he could solace himself with the reflection that his Lord and Master had not where to lay his head, and £42,000 would have bought Jesus and his twelve disciples several times over. But things are better now. It was once said that the great distinction between Jesus and the "dignified clergy" is that he died on the cross and they live on it.

A very knotty problem has been facing the monks of Mount Athos. This is no less than the question of whether monks can keep female animals, to wit, hens, without committing a spiritual sin, or make themselves spiritually unclean. No female animal of any kind is permitted within the monastery, although travellers have placed it on record that this did not apply to bugs or fleas. But it was recently discovered that some monks had been keeping hens for the purpose of enjoying the fruit thereof. Hence numerous discussions, and gathering of councils, and citations of authorities. Then all hens were banished the monastery as from November 13 last. But some monks resisted the decree, so the President of the Greek Republic interposed, and hens are to be allowed and the monks will get their eggs. If the question had been referred to our Government, we imagine the decision would have been that hens might be tolerated if they were first baptized.

St. Barnabas' Sunday School, Derby, has struck a bright wheeze for catching the young. Instead of awarding prizes in the usual way, the school gives each child joining the kindergarten class a present as "a token of friendship." Another "token" is awarded when the child is promoted to a junior class, and again, when it ascends to a Bible class. This new system of entertainment seems rather suggestive of "rice Christianity." And in all probability will prove as successful as that—and for the same reason.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Owing to the editor's absence from London from Saturday morning until Tuesday mid-day, a number of letters, and other matters have had to stand over until next week.

A. RADLEY.—We are not surprised. The B.B.C. is substantially an endowed Christian institution, it aims at protecting Christianity and propagating it, and you must not be surprised if it declines to publish letters from licence-holders protesting against the dose of religion given with nothing on the other side. How otherwise could it make the lying claim that the present arrangement is satisfactory, and they receive but a few letters objecting to the propaganda of religion? Still, it is good to keep the protest going.

P. SHALLER. Thanks. But it is not serious, although a little troublesome.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 8) Mr. Cohen will lecture in Manchester at 3.0, and in the evening at 6.30, in the Chorlton Town Hall, Stretford Road. The evening lecture, which will deal with Professors Eddington and Jeans and the bearings of their writings on religion should prove more than usually attractive. On Sunday next (March 15) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth.

The Manchester Branch is holding a Social evening in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, on the evening of March 7. The function will commence at 6.30, and Mr. Cohen will leave London earlier than usual in order to be present.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings at Glasgow on Sunday last, the hall being quite full for the evening gathering. Mr. Cohen always faces a Scotch audience with pleasure. They provide a keen critical attention not easily equalled, and nowhere surpassed in the British Isles. A contingent came over from Perth and Paisley. In both places a band of energetic young men seemed to be determined to make things go. And they will succeed if they bear in mind the tremendous power of human stupidity. This will prevent their being disgruntled at not making an impossibly rapid progress, and make them content with whatever progress is achieved. "Its dogged that does it."

Our Shop Manager regrets that owing to the heavy advance orders for *God and the Universe*, there has been some delay in despatching the book. All the advanced

orders are now discharged. We are glad to say that the orders since the date of publication have been unusually large. The book evidently meets a want.

Judging from the comments made at the last Social in Caxton Hall, there will be general satisfaction in the announcement that the same hall has been booked by the Executive of the N.S.S. for a Social to be held on Saturday, April 18 next. There will be dancing, and musical items from 7.0 until 11.0 p.m. Tickets, including refreshments are 2s. 6d. each, and may be obtained from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or the offices of the N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

A course of three lectures has been arranged for the Labour Hall, Eastwood Street, Mitcham Lane, Streatham, beginning on Sunday evening, March 15, at 7.0 p.m., when Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture. Mr. G. Whitehead will follow on the 22nd, and Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe will complete the course on the 29th. We understand the hall is a very comfortable one, the meetings are being well advertised, and the help of all local saints is solicited towards making the meetings a success.

Subscriptions to the N.S.S. have been coming in quite good, a notable feature being the number of cases in which the subscription has been increased. The financial year ends on the 31st March, and the Executive hopes that where the annual subscription has not yet been forwarded, those members will do so in order that they may be included in the accounts for the current year.

We hope that the larger question of Sunday liberty will not be lost sight of in the attention being paid to cinemas and theatres. The whole question of making all public institutions, playing fields, etc., on Sunday must be borne in mind. It is monstrous that young people should be shut out of their own recreation grounds, and others out of museums, libraries, and art galleries because a number of bigots decide that their superstition demands it. And if the unwarrantable plan of local option is adopted by the Government, there will be a greater need than ever for all Freethinkers to work to kill the idea of a "sacred" day. It is the Freethought fight against superstition in general that has led to the present state of public opinion on this matter, and we must see to it that the essential issue is not overlooked. The liberating of Sunday is only an item in the war against Christianity, and in particular to superstition in general.

In *War, Civilization and the Churches*, Mr. Cohen ventured the opinion that not many journalists would care to issue to-day their war-time articles. At least one writer, Mr. Edgar Wallace, has been frank enough to admit this. He is a representative of the *News-Chronicle*.

There are propaganda novels I wrote during the war that I should be very sorry to see republished.

Most writers of that period trust to the forgetfulness of the general public.

To the same interviewer to whom Mr. Wallace expressed himself as above, Mr. Bernard Shaw said:—

Supposing a writer in his early days were an Atheist and later became a devout Roman Catholic, the republishing of early work containing Atheistic views would do him a great deal of damage.

We suppose it might. In view of what he once was, the public might regard his later work as showing senility or insanity. Otherwise it is difficult to conceive him becoming a devout Roman Catholic.

By the way, we are glad to be able to report that *War, Civilization and the Churches* has proved one of our best sellers. And it has sold almost as well in the United States as here. In addition to other sales, some hundreds of copies have been ordered for America during the past three or four weeks, and we are advised that further orders may be expected. It looks as though the work may have to be reprinted soon.



The weather provided the only flaw in Sunday's proceedings for celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Leicester Secular Hall. Snow and slush made the streets very cheerless and naturally effected the numbers present. Still the attendance at both meetings was good, especially in the evening, when the hall was comfortably filled. Enthusiasm ran high, and the conditions prevailing outside were soon forgotten. Speeches were delivered by Mr. John M. Robertson, Mr. H. Snell, M.P., Professor Graham Wallas, M.A., Mr. Charles Bradlaugh-Bonner, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, Mr. F. C. C. Watts, and an address written by Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner was read by her son, Mr. A. Bonner and Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner were on the platform at both meetings. The musical part was provided by Mrs. W. H. Scott, songs, violin solos by Miss Mary Ashmell, and piano solos by Miss Alice Stacey, L.R.A.M. Mr. E. H. Hassell presided at the afternoon meeting, and Mr. S. A. Gimson, President of the Society, was chairman at the evening session.

Monday evening was given up to a dinner, given to the members and associates of the Society by its President, Mr. Gimson. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, Mr. F. C. Watts, and Mr. Cohen were present, the President of the Leicester Society occupied the chair. The attendance was a large one, the dinner excellent, the speakers, brief and to the point, the entertainment all it should have been, and the whole rounded with a dance. The number of young people present gave excellent promise for the future of the Society. The Leicester Society deserves well of the whole city. Its influence has been wholesome and inspiring. May it long continue so.

Mr. George Whitehead will lecture for the Birmingham Branch to-day (Sunday), in the Bristol Street Schools, at 7.0 p.m., on "Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman." Now that the Branch is getting into its stride again, we hope the local saints will give every possible support.

The West Ham Branch N.S.S. will hold a social on Saturday evening, March 14, in the Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove. There will be dancing, games, and musical items, and all Freethinkers and their friends are invited. Admission is free. Commence 7.0 p.m. sharp.

## The Three Trials of George William Foote.

### I.

THE one thing always associated with the name of George William Foote is the twelve months imprisonment he suffered for "blasphemy." People who have never read a line of his work, or who never even saw a number of the *Freethinker* while he edited it, seem to know all about the twelve months and why he was sentenced, and it is surprising how hoary old legends stick. We know, of course, how tremendously difficult it is to catch up a Christian lie; it will go round the world with you hot at its heels, but it invariably gets there first, and the lie, promulgated by that pious old bore, Sir William Harcourt, whose pomposity and silliness easily out-jixed the Sir William of our generation, comes to the tip of a Christian's tongue directly Foote's name is mentioned.

Foote was, of course, sentenced for blasphemy, and there is no doubt whatever that, as the law stands he was positively blasphemous. He never denied it, and in that wonderful address of his before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, he proved to the total satisfaction of that great man, that he sinned in very high company. And that he was very little, if at all, behind most of them, in those qualities which are so near to greatness.

Foote was always of an independent nature. The glamour of big names meant nothing to him. He

judged the work associated with them and took his stand on his own judgment. He was out for truth, and often fought a lone battle, but he would stake his all on right and justice and humanity. Freethought was his stirring battle-cry, and he perpetuated it in his own journal, the *Freethinker*, so soon to celebrate its jubilee. What a proud and happy man he would have been had he lived to see it!

When Foote came to London from his native Devon, in the '70's of last century, he was already equipped as a fighting Freethinker. It took him very little to "know the ropes"; and those who were privileged to meet him then could see he was bound quickly to make his mark at the top of the Freethought movement. Before me lies one of his early pamphlets, dated 1874, entitled *Secularism Re-stated*. As his famous successor has done with Materialism, so Foote, in his youthful and audacious ardour, felt he ought to do with Secularism. He was not satisfied with the positions taken up by either Bradlaugh or Holyoake, and felt he could do better than either of those giants, and he invited a reply to his "impartial and unsparing criticisms." I do not know whether he got one, but though Foote was willing to admit both his youth and inexperience, there is very little of the amateur quality in his vigorous and extremely precocious pamphlet. He seems indeed (like Mr. John M. Robertson) to have started with a ready-made pen instead of having to go through a painful apprenticeship like most of us, but he knew what he wanted to say, and he knew it was worth saying, and I am not sure if his pamphlet would not be worth reprinting at this day. Bradlaugh and Holyoake's famous debate on "Is Secularism Atheism?"—this was not the exact title by the way—was worth while holding if only to define clearly what two such eminent protagonists of Freethought meant by such words as Secularism, Atheism and Scepticism, and Foote carefully examined their positions with, it seems so to me at any rate, a twinkle in his eye. He never lost that twinkle. It distinguishes almost all his work, and he revered the men who had it and used it, like Voltaire certainly, and Swift sometimes. It was only when genuinely roused he would exchange it for something denoting sardonic contempt, but the real Foote is the author of *Bible Romances*, that masterpiece of wit and knowledge.

Foote wrote his pamphlets and started one or two journals, but he was hungering after something into which he could put himself, and in 1881 he found it. Mid-Victorian Freethought seemed a little too frightened of humour. Be as serious as you like, take your opponents seriously, declaim your complete adherence to morality and ethics, but don't, for heaven's sake, poke fun at sacred things—even if you know they are not sacred. One has an uneasy suspicion that some of our noted Freethinkers were positively afraid of being funny. Was it because they thought it might be supremely vulgar? They had no hesitation in pointing out such absurdities as Jesus being carried about by a devil, but to poke fun at the absurdity was a different matter. Perhaps the real reasons were the abominable laws against blasphemy which could be put in motion at any moment and which, in the ultimate, were not worth fighting. After all, what was "blasphemy"? Foote had no difficulty in showing it was really "our old friend Heresy in disguise," and he knew, in the eyes of the pious, there were few sins worse than heresy. Heresy used to be punished in the torture chamber and by the stake, and when that was impossible by rigorous imprisonment and heavy fines. The Richard Carlyles are few, but Foote was willing to risk it. Into the *Freethinker* he put the whole of his unique individuality. It was to be "a relentless war against



superstition in general, and the Christian superstition in particular," and he would not "scruple to employ any weapon of ridicule or sarcasm that might be borrowed from the armoury of common sense."

Foote's success justified his bold and striking venture. The *Freethinker* made its mark in no time, its circulation steadily and triumphantly rose, and when Leo Taxil started his famous attack on clericalism in France, Foote felt justified in borrowing some of the hard-hitting Frenchman's weapons.

Taxil was publishing a serial work entitled *La Bible Amusante*, full of what must have appeared to any orthodox person, as dreadful and shocking illustrations. It can be admitted they were not artistic. Indeed, the artist was an extremely poor draughtsman. His drawings were also badly wood-engraved, the fault due perhaps more to questions of economy than to anything else. But the object was perfectly plain. If a story was, in itself, genuinely ridiculous, why shouldn't it be illustrated? Why should an obviously silly yarn, at which you were bound to laugh when merely read, directly you came to illustrate it, be surrounded with a halo of reverence?

The hopeless anthropomorphic conceptions of deity found in the early part of the Bible were naturally and particularly vulnerable, and the French artist made the most he could out of their gross absurdities. He would have done the same with Jupiter had that deity been the titular head of the Orthodox Church, and it was obvious he could see no difference between the antics of Jupiter and those of Jehovah.

And it seems to me his position was perfectly logical. Not a word would have been said had any book whatsoever been published containing almost any kind of caricature of Jupiter or Juno or Adonis or Osiris; and to make any difference of Jehovah merely because Jehovah was vouched for by our Church, which, after all, cannot establish its authority, is ludicrous.

At all events, Foote thought so, and it was not long before the very religious people began to sit up. Just as in the old days, the Church found it expedient to educate the illiterate masses with Bible stories as depicted by the great painters, with the result that the "vulgar," as they were called, began to know something about the Bible, so the sketches in the *Freethinker* made the bigots take notice that there was a frontal attack, and a very hefty one at that, being made on their sacred beliefs under their very noses. A reverant attack was bad enough, but, thank heaven, it could be ignored; but an irreverant one, a grossly blasphemous one, was a different matter. And Authority fully armed, determined to take action. What that action was, we shall proceed to show.

H. CUTNER.

(To be continued.)

## Ambiguous Agnosticism.

ONE of the chief drawbacks to rational thought and discussion lies in the shipshod use of ambiguous and abstract terms, as though their meanings were self-evident. Dictionaries cannot help us much, for their purpose is to give either the most usual meaning or else all possible meanings; and this is seldom an accurate guide to the particular meaning, or meanings, intended by any given speaker or writer.

The only satisfactory method of ascertaining what a writer means by an ambiguous term would be to ask him personally for an explanation. But, apart from the impossibility of answering all queries which would be certain to arise in this way, there is always the risk of rousing the writer's resentment. For to insinuate, no matter how politely, that a person's language lacks clarity is little less than an open insult. So we find that the lavish use of vague terms is a popular pastime amongst writers on all subjects, and it is one which can safely be indulged in by those who are unable to think clearly, and yet wish to give the impression that they are thinking profoundly.

In the very few cases where inquiry is not resented, the game is merely prolonged without definite result. For one is generally presented with a pseudo-explanation of the vague term in words which are no less ambiguous than the original. Few, indeed, are the users of language who realize that abstract or ambiguous terms can never be made clearer by definition in terms of other ambiguities or abstractions.

To define "God," for example, as a "supreme being" still leaves it open to question whether the word refers to a theoretical supposition or to some real individual like Mussolini. The only truly explanatory definitions of abstract terms are those which can be referred to the realities of experience. And when a writer uses words which he is unable to define in this way, it is conclusive proof that he does not know what he is talking about, or that he is deliberately trying to hoodwink the reader.

This preamble is necessary to a proper understanding of our objection to the continued use of the ambiguous terms "Agnostic" and "Agnosticism." And their ambiguity is clearly evidenced by the fact that they are used in both derogatory and favourable senses by the friends as well as the foes of rational thought. The only use—if such it can be called—to which these terms is now put is to confuse or evade important issues.

The Theist interprets the term Agnostic in the favourable sense as "one who is unable to deny the existence of God"; and in the derogatory sense as "one who denies the value of all religions." The Atheist, on the other hand, interprets the word in the derogatory sense as meaning "one who is an Atheist at heart, but who is afraid to confess the fact in public"; while the favourable interpretation for him is much the same as the derogatory one for the Theist. The Agnostic himself is in the comfortable, though equivocal, position of being able to choose whichever meaning may best suit the company he finds himself in.

As illustration of this we may take the broadcast pronouncement of Prof. Bronislaw Malinowski, of whom—from a logical standpoint—one might be led to expect better things. "Personally, I am an Agnostic," said the professor. "I am not able, that is, to deny the existence of God: nor would I be inclined to do so, still less to maintain that such belief is not necessary. But with all that, I am unable to accept any positive religion—Christian or otherwise. I cannot positively believe in Providence in any sense

Without justice we can have no guarantee of permanent peace. With justice the peace of the world is unassailable.—Lord Courtney of Penwith.

Man is certainly stark mad; he cannot make a flea, and yet he will be making gods by dozens.—Montaigne.

You are not very good if you are not better than your best friends imagine you to be.—Lavater.

All free governments are managed by the combined wisdom and folly of the people.—James A. Garfield.

The great man is the man who does a thing for the first time.—Alexander Smith.

Who's a prince or beggar in the grave?—Olway.



of the word, and I have no conviction of personal immortality." It is such pronouncements as these which make the logical thinker laugh and weep at the same time. For if we substitute the word "dare" for the two words "be inclined"—a not wholly unwarranted substitution seeing under what conditions the declaration was made—there is little to choose between the professor's words and a pretty mixture of the derogatory and favourable interpretations previously given. Like most Agnostics the professor is obviously making the best, and at the same time the worst, of all possible worlds.

Prof. Malinowski is unable to deny the existence of "God," but he is unable to believe in "Providence" in any sense of the word. Yet what is "Providence" in every sense of the word, when spelt with a capital P, and when used in reference to religion, but "God"? And what is the precise difference between an inability to deny the existence of something and the ability to believe in its existence?

It is, of course, perfectly clear from his use of the terms "God" and "Providence," that he is using the first in the sense of "Something about which I am hazy"; and that the second refers to "one attribute (of this Something) about which I am not hazy." And all he is doing is to repudiate just one definable attribute of an otherwise logically impossible conception. The pity of it is that he avoids stating what credence he gives to the many other attributes which have been ascribed to "God" by those "positive religions" he is unable to accept. We can hardly credit the professor with any genuine haziness concerning these, nor in regard to the fact that without them the word "God," as used by believers, would be utterly devoid of meaning.

It is this indeterminate attitude of Agnosticism which makes foolishness of the word itself and of the arguments employed by Agnostics. For the question is not whether we can possibly find something to which we can give the name "God"; but whether the name, as defined by any religion, does in fact refer to anything in reality which can be proved to exist.

As long as there is no more evidence for the existence of "God" than there is for the existence of the dead and gone "gods" of past religions, it is a quibble to declare that one is unable to deny "God's" existence. For the state of being unable to deny the existence of a given thing is not created by the absence of disproof, but by the presence of proof—that is, of verifiable evidence—of its existence. Were this not the case, then no one would be able to deny the existence of any fantasy which the simplest brain might invent. The existence of the god "Boobah" would be as undeniable as the existence of the god "God."

C. S. FRASER.

### Superstition.

IN a recent article upon the superstitions from which Dean Inge is himself free, he says, "I cannot understand how any one can believe in a God who is angry if thirteen people sit down to table," and so on for other superstitions. But has Dean Inge no superstitions of his own? We know how he boggles at transubstantiation—turning bread and wine into flesh and blood—it is not in his contract as a priest with his church, and within his limitations (like all of us) he is a sensible man, and is not going to swallow more magic than is necessary to retain his pulpit.

But the virgin birth and resurrection from the dead are in a different category; he cannot deny these and remain a Christian even if it does look like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. His mode of attack, however, can be carried further. Suppose we ask what sort

of a god it must be that would ask us to believe, on the word of a lot of ignorant, superstitious fishermen and their women-folk who lived 2,000 years ago, that a man was born of a virgin and rose from the dead? Yet Dean Inge must believe that his god was guilty of the incredible folly of working such a miracle and expecting us to believe it without providing a scrap of evidence that the thing ever happened, and even leaving us in the dark as to whether the victim of it ever lived at all.

I am afraid the Dean only shows up badly against the servant-girl and her baby he was telling us about in his Sunday night's broadcast talk. She had at least the grace to excuse it on the ground that it was "only a little one," but the Dean boggles at the little miracles and swallows the big ones as though they were all the order of nature. The Dean and the girl are in the same boat, and he and a few more like him. Dr. Barnes, for instance, would probably be well pleased if they could get rid of all this miraculous (awkward theological babies) their church at least requires them to profess.

In that talk the Dean said that the educated Christian accepted all the scientists from Copernicus to Eddington, and would accept Einstein too if he could understand him. But one does not need all this science, common sense is enough. Let Dean Inge apply his own method; let him put himself in his God's place 2,000 years ago. Would he then, as God, have expected people 2,000 years later—even if he had been foolish enough to act as stated—to believe he had worked such a miracle? Dean Inge would not. He has more sense than he gives his God credit for, and for him to profess to believe this miracle is either to rate the intelligence of his God very low, or to show his God as rating human intelligence below even that of the "sensible gorilla," he speaks about. Mankind is likely enough to be on the earth for millions of years to come; can anyone think that men will then still believe in a million year old cock and bull story of the virgin birth and resurrection from the dead.

Then we had Dr. L. P. Jacks, the editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, the following week. He led off by saying that God was the God of clear thinking (science) as well as the God of right living. But why should we need a God for these things at all, and even so, such a God ought at least to set us an example of clear thinking.

Once, during a course of lectures by A. J. Grant on the Roman Empire, the lecturer said the Romans had a god for everything, even a god for correct pronunciation, though he said he didn't know that it made them any more careful about their h's. At that time the present writer no doubt thought that the principal use of a god was to look after people's souls, and see to it that they were duly damned or saved as the case may be, and, like the lecturer, only smiled at the idea of a god bothering about pronunciation. After hearing Dr. Jacks, however, it would appear that the Romans were right, the only difference between Dr. Jacks and the Romans being, that instead of having a lot of little gods, one for every little thing, he has got an omnibus, all-in sort of god who looks after everything big and little alike. Unemployment, one might imagine, must be bad among the gods too, and would undoubtedly be worse than it is were it not for the Roman Catholics who still contrive with their saints and santas, to keep quite a lot of minor gods and goddesses on the go. These old gods die hard; they seem to have the vitality of microbes; you kill them as the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome; they crop up again as saints and santas in Christianity, and now they are worming their way into modern science, posing as Gods of Clear Thinking. It's enough to make a cat laugh.

There may be a God of clear thinking, but it is certainly not the "Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

C. PORTER.

For me has Homer sung of wars,  
Æschylus wrote, and Plato thought,  
And Dante loved, and Darwin wrought,  
And Galileo watched the stars.

Patrick McGill.



## Flogging A Dead Horse.

The *Freethinker* and the National Secular Society appear to be the two institutions in the country existing in defiance of the laws of survival. The only hope for both of them is repeatedly revealed by well meaning critics and advisers, and just as many times, not acted upon. Yet somehow out of sheer cussedness, one has weathered sixty-four summers—and winters, and the other is in its jubilee year, and both will continue to defy the prophets, and grow stronger.

How often have we been told the N.S.S. will never become a force until it adopts a political label. As the advice usually comes from non-members of the N.S.S., we appreciate the gratuitous solicitude for our welfare, but fortunately for our Society, for Freethought, and for England, our leaders judged the value of the advice correctly, and while the National Secular Society retains its independence, dignity, and fighting traditions, its suggested foster parent is rapidly becoming the Judas of the political world.

The "Economics" enthusiast was another who found solace in a tilt against our propaganda. To him, all the dirty work had been done. They had killed Christ with economics, had knocked all life out of the church and religion with the same prescription, and we were merely flogging a dead horse. That dead horse statement served them well. It looked and sounded as though there might be something in it. And best of all, any fool could use it. It could be flung about without the least supporting evidence, or appeal to knowledge. The dead horse seems to be having a cruel revenge upon those who killed it, and dragged the corpse about. We can now say with interest, what was said a few years ago. It certainly looks silly to flog a dead horse, but it is more silly still to hitch a dead horse to the labour wagon, and most silly, and ignominious, to be gradually swallowed by a dead horse. We can repeat again, as before, if Labour leaders imagine they are going to use the church for the furtherance of the Cause of Labour, they are more stupid than we thought they were. If it is a question of Labour making use of the Church in the interests of Labour, or the Church making use of Labour in the interests of the Church, we back the priest every time. He is a past-master at the game. We can now see what every Freethinker predicted, that the price the Labour Movement will pay for Church votes, will be the sacrifice of its independence, and its principles. That dead horse is now playing hell with the Labour Government. It has not only been able to defeat that Government, it has got it into such a tangle, and is making the escape so painful and humiliating, that the Government cries out for mercy, and the "Dead Horse" refuses to give it.

R. H. ROSETTI.

## TO A COMRADE IN THE CAUSE.

Let not your heart be troubled, nor yet your hopes too high,  
Nor trust too much, nor yet despise this poor humanity.  
The priest, the parson, paltry things, they must not own  
their juggles,  
While slow but sure they pass and change in spite of all  
their struggles.  
Freethought around, and in their hearts a strong Freethinker grows,  
Though it a while by pious guile of outward forms and shows;  
And, not the least, their livelihood they cannot, dare not, stake;  
And not alone the priestly breed, there's man a lesser fake.  
Our Bard has said an honest man is from ten thousand taken;  
More rarely still intelligence awakens in the brain;  
But when it does, let shine around, impartial as the sun,  
In happy task from day to day, though ne'er the task is done.

Andrew Millar.

## Thoughts on Courage.

It has often been said, both by Freethinkers and liberal-minded Christians, that it requires more courage to be an Atheist than a Christian.

Looking back over nearly half a century, I have come to the conclusion that in some respects this is a mistaken view. For when men are tempted to stray from the path of righteousness it must require far more courage for a Christian to succumb to the temptation than an Atheist, and as it would appear from prison statistics in this country, that many more Christians *do* succumb, we may reasonably conclude that there is a greater measure of courage among our Christian friends.

Take my own case: As a boy I was brought up in the faith of the Church of England and sent to Sunday school, where I was taught, and devoutly believed at the time, all the fables and fairy tales which go to make up that faith. I knew for a fact, then, that the Almighty had got his left optic focussed on me when I was on my way to Sunday school; did he not know and take note if even a sparrow lost a feather? and yet, knowing this, I had the courage, nay the audacity, to defy him by playing truant and, what was worse, spending the money given to me to put into the missionary box, on riotous living. (At least, I usually bought monkey-nuts, a delicacy I was partial to in those days.)

When, as sometimes happened, my parents wanted to know how I had come by the monkey-nuts, I would run still further risks of divine punishment by perjuring my immortal soul and declaring that a boy friend had given them to me.

Now that I have renounced the Christian faith I am amazed at the courage I must have possessed in incurring those risks, and am perfectly sure that I dare not invoke the displeasure of an almighty God by robbing his disciples of their dues, yet when I was a believing Christian I did it without turning a hair.

I believe it is a fact that the majority of the inmates of our gaols profess some brand or other of Christianity. They know, when they do wrong, that their every act is under the direct surveillance of their "Father which is in heaven"; they are aware, before they embark on their criminal career, that their intention is known to their "maker" beforehand, and yet they have the supreme courage to defy the deity and get on with the job.

Sometimes, no doubt, they think to escape divine punishment by sharing the swag with God, like the leading light of a certain chapel, who was sent to prison recently for frauds in connexion with the income tax, and who contributed largely to the funds of his church out of his illgotten gains.

But after all, the erring Christian needs far more courage than the Atheist who goes astray. The latter has only the earthly authorities to consider, and has a sporting chance of not being found out, but the Christian has not only the possibility of punishment by his fellows here, but the certainty of divine wrath to come.

So I want to suggest that we who are Atheists should not be too prone to pride ourselves on possessing courage superior to that of our Christian friends, although we may find some consolation in the fact that so few of us are found among the sinners, when by all ordinary reckoning we should expect to see a greater proportion of Atheists than Christians in the ranks of the wrongdoers.

FRED HOBDAV.

Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what is read ours.

Locke.

Nature knows no pause in progress and development, and attaches her curse on all inaction.—Goethe.

The desire of appearing clever often prevents our becoming so.—La Rochefoucauld.

Nature has given us the seeds of knowledge, not knowledge itself.—Seneca.



## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

## THE SINCERITY OF PARSONS.

SIR,—Mr. C. V. Lewis asks that parsons should be credited with sincerity. The sincerity of parsons, however, will always be open to suspicion. For they are fed, clothed and housed by their followers; their very existence depends on their being able to convince people that parsons are essential. Therefore, they will teach, either explicitly or implicitly, the necessity for parsons, whether or not they sincerely believe in the doctrines they expound. This being the fact, some scepticism as to the sincerity of parsons quite naturally follows. That scepticism will disappear only when the teaching of religion ceases to be a whole-time profession, and is done entirely as a spare-time occupation.

D.P.S.

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 27, 1931. THE President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Gorniot, Clifton, Corrigan, Easterbrook, Le Maine, Rosetti (A. C.), Ebury, Mrs. Quinton, Junr, and the Secretary.

A number of apologies for absence were read. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted, the monthly financial statement was presented.

New members were admitted to Bradford, Perth, Birmingham, Paisley, Chester-le-Street, N. London, and W. London Branches, and the Parent Society.

Progress was reported in the Montreal Blasphemy Appeal Case, and satisfaction expressed.

Correspondence from Liverpool, Burnley, Chester-le-Street, and Nelson was dealt with. Details of work for the coming season, and general items were discussed. The next meeting of the Executive will be held on March 27.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

## Society News.

## WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

MRS. ISABEL KINGSLEY'S lecture on "Spiritualism," at the Conway Hall, last Sunday evening, attracted a large and attentive audience. Mrs. Kingsley was unsparing in her criticism of Materialism and lack of knowledge on the part of many Rationalists of Spiritualism, and her remarks gave rise to a most interesting discussion. She was heartily applauded at the end of the meeting. Tonight (Sunday) Mr. H. Cutner will deal with "The Other Side of Spiritualism."—H.C.

## FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.

PROBABLY owing to the weather the attendance to hear Mr. J. H. Van Biene fell short of the usual number. But, those that were present were certainly given something to think about on Education. This Sunday, Mr. R. H. Rosetti is the speaker, and his subject will be "Nature, Man and God."

## Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street,  
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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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 Eborac Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 7.30. Messrs. A. Frank, G. Haskell and F. Day.

INDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Nature, Man and God."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, March 11, at 7.45, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—"Some Spiritualistic Experiences."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit—"The Pope's Recent Encyclical on Christian Marriage."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Henry S. Polak—"India and Constitutional Reform."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Winter Garden, 37 High Street, Clapham, near Clapham North Underground Station): 7.15, Mr. J. Turner—"P. Kropotkin—His Life and Teachings."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. David S. Muzzey (Columbia University)—"America's Share of the Responsibility for World Peace."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Town, N.W.1, facing The Brecknock): 7.30, Mr. J. H. Van Biene—"What do we Know?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.30, Mr. H. Cutner—"The Other Side of Spiritualism."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. George Whitehead—"Bernard Shaw: Man and Superman."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Meaning of Freethought." Questions and discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—City (Albion Street) Hall at 6.30, Mr. Reid, Sec., Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): 7.0, Dr. C. H. Ross Carmichael (Liverpool) Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. Norman Haire, Ch.M., M.D.—"Birth Control."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Chorlton Town Hall, 30 Saints, Manchester): Mr. C. Cohen (President N.S.S., Editor of the *Freethinker*): 3.0 p.m. "Ghosts"; 6.30, "God and the Scientists," Profs. Eddington, Jeans, and Julian Huxley.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bakers Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. Jas. Kerr—"Holy India."

PERTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Secular Room, 122 Canal Street): 2.0, Secretary's Report of Glasgow Meeting. Lecture by Mr. Jas. Wingate—"Evolution of the Gods." Questions and discussion.

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